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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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FROM : CAIRO
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
DATE: January 7, 1954

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SUBJECT: IKHWANI COMMENTS ON SUDANESE ELECTIONS; NATIONAL GUARD; RCC.

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Enclosed is a memorandum of conversation which an Embassy Officer recently had with an Ikhwan follower of Hudaibi who opines that as a result of the recent NUP victory in the Sudan, many Egyptians are now willing to go along with the RCC's policies.

The source also stated that the National Guard now enjoys popular appeal among workers and many students, and that due to its organizational structure, it can in no way menace the Ikhwan.

He further pointed out that the aims of the RCC and the Ikhwan parallel each other, and sees no reason why they should clash.

Jefferson Caffery

Enclosure: (Confidential)
Memorandum of Conversation dated,
December 29, 1953.

Copies to:
London
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JAN 8 1954

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REPORTER

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Authority NARA 112
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Desp. No. _____
 From _____

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
 Cairo, December 29, 1953.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Jones
 Mr. Elting

FROM: Mr. Brown

On December 26, I called on my Ikhwan acquaintance and discussed in a general way the events which have taken place since we last met four months ago. He was exceedingly impressed by the outcome of the Sudanese elections. The N.U.P. victory apparently has added a great deal to the strength and prestige of the RCC among Egyptian intellectuals. He stated that it had been the consensus of opinion among the students and professors at Ibrahim University that without this victory the internal position of the RCC would have been so weakened that the regime could not have remained in power for very long, at least in its present form. He continued that he has only met Azhari, NUP leader, once at the home of a Sudanese Sheikh at Al Azhar but that he was impressed by his modesty, intelligence and unassuming manner. He said that Azhari has never established close relations with the RCC, but that he is a close friend of Ali Maher and certain individuals in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also commented that Azhari's strength is not political in nature but rather stems from support that he receives from various religious groups in the Sudan. As a result of the N.U.P. victory, many Egyptians are now willing to go along with the RCC, exhibit more patience in permitting the Government to negotiate for a Canal settlement, and ultimately accept just about any agreement that the RCC would conclude with the British.

Another event which has impressed this individual has been the organization of the National Guard. He reminded me that during our last conversation he had said that the Liberation Rally would end in dismal failure unless the regime devised a means of giving it popular appeal. He believes that in the National Guard the regime has found a solution to this problem. He acknowledged that the National Guard will never be used against the British and therefore its significance is its political and national character. As it is now organized it could never be utilized against any group of Egyptians such as the Ikhwan, therefore, it does not cause uneasiness among Ikhwanis as the organization of the commandos did last summer.

He has been through the National Guard training and he claims that it is truly popular among the workers and many students. The political indoctrination is such that those participating are imbued with the belief that as Egyptians they

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are now taking part in the movement and are preparing themselves to serve Egypt. Continuing this rationale, National Guardsmen are told that the regime has made possible the participation in the national cause by the people, and although all persons may not agree with the regime anyone who opposes it is certainly a traitor to Egypt. He further claimed that the indoctrination has been very effective. He continued that the National Guard given an organizational outlet for those who feel that they must belong to a group. He also believes that the true significance of the National Guard will become apparent when elections are held for the Parliament after the termination of the transitional period.

Concerning the possibility of the National Guard getting out of hand and "wagging the dog", he does not believe that this is likely. It is in the hands of low ranking officers who are loyal to the RCC. Furthermore, very few weapons are utilized in the training and would not be sufficient for any military move. The National Guard has no connection with the Army but is administered through the Liberation Rally. The indoctrination is all in terms of loyalty to the nation and adherence to the national cause. No individual is singled out for the loyalty of the guardsmen.

In discussing the general position of the Ikhwan, he said that in many ways the regime and the Ikhwan have the same aims and are headed in the same direction. He believes that the regime is providing the fellah, for the first time, with the rudiments of a social and political consciousness. He said that this is particularly the case in the villages of Lower Egypt. The Ikhwan is, however, still stronger in many of the villages than the regime, therefore, he thinks that the Government still has a great need for the support of the Ikhwan. While the two movements are headed in the same direction, the Government's actions are economic and social in character and those of the Ikhwan are religious and social. He sees no reason why there should be a clash between the two. Being a follower of Hudaibi, he believes that the Ikhwan should keep its actions limited and should not become openly engaged in politics. He recognizes that the rise of the regime will weaken the position of certain ambitious Ikhwani leaders but it does not weaken the goals or purposes of the Ikhwan itself. He stated flatly that as long as the Government keeps aims before it that are similar or complementary to those of the Ikhwan, the rank and file of the young Ikhwani intellectuals would not follow an Ikhwani leader into a political conflict with the regime. In response to questions on this point, he continually maintained that the majority of the young Ikhwani intellectuals are idealistic enough in their beliefs to follow such a course of action.

Only once did the conversation turn to the United States

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He said that it is believed by many persons of the University that the new U.S. policy will be one of attempting to demoralize Egypt in its struggle with the British. This will supposedly be accomplished by continually telling the Egyptian leaders in a pseudo friendly way that there is no hope of defeating the British forces in the Canal and that there is no hope of Britain making further concessions, therefore, Egypt must accept the agreement offered by Britain.

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