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SUBJECT: Umma Party Statements Following the Khartoum Riot

The official statements released by the Umma Party since the Khartoum riot of March 1, 1954 reveal: (1) a denial of Umma Party responsibility for the trouble; and (2) an unmistakable warning that if Umma views are not treated with consideration and if the Government fails to adopt a national policy, the Umma Party will not cooperate with the Government.

1. In a press conference on March 3 Sayed SIDDIK, Umma President, replied to whether or not the Umma Party might boycott the Sudan Parliament by saying, the Umma Party would not boycott "as long as the Government carries out the Sudan Agreement and follows a national policy."
2. In a press release issued at the above press conference the Umma Executive expressed regret for the Khartoum incident, denied Umma responsibility for it, and blamed the police for starting the trouble.
3. On March 6 the Umma Party issued a further statement counter-ing certain implications made by the Government about Umma responsibility. This Umma statement denied any Umma premeditation of such a riot, criticized the change in Neguib's route plan as a contributory cause of the riot, and again blamed the police for suddenly resorting to force.
4. On March 9 the Umma Party issued a third public statement dealing this time with cooperation within Parliament. Criticizing the NUP Government for adopting a partisan attitude, particularly in the matter of Egyptian interference in the recent election, the Umma Party declared, that since these elections the NUP Government was adopting "a purely partisan attitude which does not give room for cooperation." After pointing out that the Opposition (Umma plus the Southern Liberal Party) represented 270,000 voters compared with 230,000 voters for the Government, the Umma Party declared, "This state of affairs constitutes a flagrant challenge to the Opposition making any cooperation impossible." Bitterly criticizing the Government for "prejudging" the Umma

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Party's responsibility for the riot before "legal investigation," the Umma Party then ominously declared:

"In continuing our cooperation inside Parliament, despite all these things, we hope that the Government will realize its responsibility by tackling matters in a way calculated to restore confidence and promote fruitful cooperation.

We wish to make it clear that, should the Government not change its policy, the Umma Party will not hesitate to review their attitude regarding cooperation. We hope that nationality will prevail over prejudice so that the freedom and independence of the country will be achieved."

Comment: These statements indicate that the Umma Party is rethinking its parliamentary role. Some observers insist these statements are a prelude to an Umma boycott of parliament. USIO has been given to understand by Umma leaders that they constitute a warning-- and a very serious warning-- to the Government. The Umma Party does not want a boycott, a constitutional breakdown nor a civil war, but it feels that it has not been treated fairly by the Government and feels that the present "cold war" cannot continue indefinitely.

*Joseph Sweeney*

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