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 By *AD* NARA Date *3/27/88*
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FROM : USLO, Khartoum
 TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
 REF : Khartoum's despatch 248, May 8, 1954

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SUBJECT: *0* Sayed Siddik's Arrest Imminent?

It is now believed in informed quarters in the NUP Government, in the Palace and by SAR and Sayed Siddik himself that Sayed Siddik will be arrested in the near future on a charge of involvement in the Khartoum riots of March 1. Twelve persons arrested at the time of the Khartoum riots are now at a hearing before the local magistrate. In this hearing the Government has approved the submission of police evidence showing Siddik's involvement in the riot. The local magistrate (who is British) may decide on one of two possible courses: (a) He may rule that it is obvious that Siddik is involved and that he should be arrested at once and tried in the same manner as the 12 men already arrested or (b) he may rule that the trial of the 12 men already arrested is a clear and separate matter and that although Siddik is involved he should not be brought into the case until it goes to a major court. The NUP Government hope the local magistrate will take the first course and the Palace hopes he will take the second course.

John Kenrick, Assistant Adviser to the Governor General on Constitutional and External Affairs, who is the ranking Palace official while the Governor General and his other staff are in the United Kingdom, said that his office could hardly talk to the local magistrate, but it had already taken steps to be prepared for either course. The Government too has ordered a detachment of SDF troops to implement the present forces now in Khartoum. Kenrick pointed out that the Chief Justice had thoroughly briefed the local magistrate on the full consequences of which ever action he might take. Kenrick does not believe there will be immediate trouble if Siddik is arrested but believes if Siddik should be arrested, kept in jail for a long period, and after three months or so sentenced to a long jail term there would be trouble.

The reporting officer discussed this matter with SAR and Sayed Siddik on May 9. SAR's position was that if the Government was sincere in its desire to let the law take its course then Siddik and other Umma leaders had nothing to fear. SAR vehemently stressed that there had been no conspiracy against the Government involved in the March 1 disturbances. What happened was spontaneous and was caused by the severity of the action of the police against the Ansars. In a fair trial he was convinced this would come out and Siddik would be acquitted.

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When it was pointed out to him that no one could pre-judge a case and that there was always a possibility of a case going the other way, he said he refused to think of this, although he would go so far as to say that an attack against his son ~~was~~ an attack against him.

The local press has discussed the possibility of Siddik's involvement and there is general apprehension that it will lead to trouble, although the preponderant opinion is that no trouble will come for at least two or three months since it will take that long for a decision to be given.

Joseph Sweeney

Joseph Sweeney
United States Liaison Officer

cc: London
Cairo

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