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FROM : USLO, Khartoum

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF : Khartoum's 44, September 18, 1954

October 23, 1954

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SUBJECT:

The Juba Conference

1954-10-21, Azhari, South, Conference

After a three-day delay the highly publicized Juba Conference commenced on October 18. The Opposition insisted that this conference had been summoned by Southern Chiefs. Therefore at the last minute it decided not to send any Umma representative to it. In actual fact of course the conference was organized by Buth Diu, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and Abdel Rahman Soli, Secretary of the Southern Liberal Party. The Prime Minister managed to knock the props out from under the Juba Conference before it began by announcing a series of concessions to Southern tribal leaders and chiefs (see Khartoum's 62, October 14). In addition, the Prime Minister convinced all Southern members of Parliament adhering to the NUP that they should not attend the conference.

Reports from Juba on the success of this three-day conference are diametrically opposite. The Government claims the conference was a failure, that it had very small attendance from Upper Nile and Bahr El Ghazal Provinces, and that the total number present did not exceed 400. It pointed out that neither Buth Diu nor Abdel Rahman Soli were elected to any conference office. The Opposition, on the other hand, claims that over 400 people attended the conference, that it represented the united voice of the South and was a great success. From what USLO has learned the Juba Conference was a failure. The Government successfully destroyed its reason for being by making concessions to Southern opinion. The Prime Minister refused to attend the conference, although he was physically present in Juba, and this dealt a blow to the prestige of the gathering. It now appears that the NUP Government can count on the majority of Southern members of Parliament. It is also obvious from statements issued by the Prime Minister that the Government will devote a considerable amount of time and money to the betterment of living conditions in the South which it has with political astuteness blamed entirely on the previous regime, i.e., a combination of the Umma Party and the British Government.

Joseph Sweeney

Joseph Sweeney
 United States Liaison Officer

cc: Cairo, London

J.Sweeney/ht
 REPORTER

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