

745W.00/6-1752

Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Byroade) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

WASHINGTON, June 17, 1952.

Subject: Anglo-Egyptian Question: A Proposed Further Approach to the British on the Sudan Question

Discussion:

Since your meeting with Mr. Eden on May 26 in Paris there have been almost no developments in the Anglo-Egyptian question. This is due in part to the lack of new proposals, in part to the continued stalemate on the Sudan and in part to the habitual summer doldrums in Egypt. The Egyptian-Sudanese (Mahdi) talks have now recessed and the Sudanese delegation has returned to Khartoum. The Egyptian Foreign Minister has informed Ambassador Caffery that the Sudanese "gave the impression that they were definitely sympathetic to the Egyptian point of view".¹ The Acting Governor General of the Sudan, Sir James Robertson, on the other hand has informed the Foreign Office in London that he doubts that the Sudanese delegation has been persuaded to accept Egyptian sovereignty and that in any event other groups in the Sudan have a powerful voice. While there is no definite information as yet, it appears that there is an inclination within the Egyptian Government to prolong and possibly extend the scope of the Egyptian-Sudanese conversations. Rumors circulating in Cairo regarding next steps include the possibility of a meeting between the Mahdi and the Egyptian Prime Minister, the sending to Khartoum of an Egyptian delegation, headed by the Egyptian Minister of Interior, and a visit to Egypt of Sayyed Sir Ali Al Mirghani Pasha, the head of the Khatmia and opponent of the Mahdi.

It does not appear that your suggestion regarding British consultation with the Sudanese has been given the attention in London it merits. This may be due partly to a misunderstanding of the nature of the proposal and partly to a definite reluctance on domestic political grounds to do anything which might subject the present government to an attack in Parliament in which probably

¹ Ambassador Gifford reported from London in telegram 5793, June 18, not printed, that the Foreign Office had told him that it had information to the effect that the Mahdi's representatives in the Egyptian-Sudanese talks made no commitments to the Egyptians, that they declined to accept Farouk's claim to be King of the Sudan, and that the Sudanese had tried but failed to secure Egyptian acceptance of the Sudan Government's constitution. (745W.00/6-1852)