

GEHEIM

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Zijner Excellentie
de Minister-President
Plein 1813, no.4
's-GRAVENHAGE

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Situation in the Sudan

All the indications are that the coup was motivated by purely Sudanese aspirations and executed without any outside help.. It is known that only a very small part of the army was engaged in carrying out the actual coup d'état, i.e. the parachute battalion (which is nominally under the command of the air force) and the armoured car battalion. No other military units were involved although other units have now pledged their support. The Khartoum garrison, the air force and police are now demonstrably working with the new regime.

2, The regime certainly enjoys at least the acquiescence of the provincial army commands and there is no evidence to show that these could or would effectively oppose the regime. All the senior officers of the Sudanese army who could be expected to oppose the coup are under arrest in Khartoum and there is no effective focus for military discontent.

3. It is beyond doubt that SADIQ EL MAHDI and Imam AL HADI were not connected with the coup: on the contrary there is reliable evidence that SADIQ has announced his intention to oppose the regime by every possible means. Both SADIQ and the Imam are holed up in their religious stronghold on Aba Island where they are relatively secure from any action being taken against them by the regime. For the present, at any rate, an ANSAR-sponsored counter coup must be regarded as extremely improbable, and if attempted doomed to failure. The regime has already demonstrated its ability to deal effectively with potential dangerous situations: on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday on the 28 May, the military were able to prevent the ANSAR supporters from holding their traditional rally before the Mahdi's tomb in Omdurman and pro-Moslem brotherhood students in residence at Khartoum University have been forced to leave and return to their houses without incident or resistance.

4. As for policy, the new regime has taken the line that it is simply a legitimate reversion to the Government that followed the downfall of ABOUD and that it will pursue the policies from which its predecessor was diverted. The regime is also now beginning to emphasise that the Sudan's African characteristics are on a par with its Arab characteristics.

5. Our assessment is that the regime enjoys a measure of support from the better educated classes; has no or little support among the non-communist lower and working classes; and is increasing its control over the armed forces generally and the country at large.

6. However the seeds of future possible dissension within the regime itself are discernable. In interviews and policy statements given by leading members of the regime over the past few days there have been noticeable contradictions between the military and civil

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statements. In particular the question of ultimate authority seems blurred: both military and civil wings have each claimed to be the ultimate authority of the state.

