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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

NIC 02461-85
13 May 1985

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Graham E. Fuller
National Intelligence Officer for NESAs

SUBJECT: The Libyan Game Plan in Sudan

1. The overthrow of Sudanese leader Nimeiri has been a major gain for Qadhafi's policies in Northeast Africa. Radical states in the region--Libya, Ethiopia, PDRY, Syria--all sense the importance of the next stage in the struggle for Sudan. Although the Libyan role in Nimeiri's collapse was highly limited when viewed in the context of the other huge sources of discontent in Sudan, Qadhafi had long worked at trying to destabilize Nimeiri, particularly through aid to southern Sudanese leader John Garang. From Qadhafi's point of view:

- Sudan was the only major base of operations bordering on Libya for the Libyan opposition to work from. That opposition has now been told to leave.
- Sudan has long backed the Camp David Accords and supported Egypt in most foreign policy initiatives. Sudan has now implicitly criticized those accords and will be far more cautiously neutral.
- Qadhafi has periodically made major efforts to inveigle Sudan into unity agreements with Libya--even attempting to include Egypt in the past. Nimeiri has been steadfastly opposed to such unity agreements in recent years. With Nimeiri's collapse Qadhafi will devote new attention to forging unity and probably views his chances as better now. Sudan, however, will remain circumspect.
- Qadhafi views Sudan as an important tool with which to weaken the Mubarak regime in Egypt. Water questions obviously play a major role. Libya reportedly planned to bomb the Aswan Dam last fall, and Libyan aid to southern Sudanese rebels effectively stopped Sudanese work on the Jonglei Canal which would have

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increased White Nile water flow to Egypt. (Nimeiri even claimed that Libya was intent on rechanneling part of the Nile to Libya. Libya's gigantic "man-made river project" also can have potential effect on Egypt as it draws down on the regional aquifer.)

- Qadhafi would view disruption of US access and prepositioning rights in Sudan as an important goal in diminishing the overall US presence in the area. These rights are very tenuous as of now and may not survive even the present moderate new regime.

2. The situation in Sudan is still up for grabs--an element critical to Qadhafi's hopes. Sudanese domestic radical forces could displace the present military regime which is making efforts to remain broadly neutral. It makes a lot of sense for Sudanese leader Suwar-el-Dhahab to offend no one--the USSR, Ethiopia, Libya, the US, Egypt--at a time when he is struggling to maintain himself. The question is whether Qadhafi will be able to weigh in more heavily upon this shaky regime.

3. The Libyan-Ethiopian Connection. Radical success in being able to gain power in Sudan will depend considerably on the extent of Libyan-Ethiopian cooperation against Sudan. The good news would seem to be that these relations--never particularly warm--do not seem to be greatly improving, and the two countries will have difficulty in closely coordinating a line of attack against Sudan--especially now that their common enemy Nimeiri is gone.

- Ideally, Libya and Ethiopia should be closely cooperating on a strategic basis growing out of the 1981 Tripartite Alliance between Libya, Ethiopia and the PDRY--an alliance fully blessed by Moscow. In reality the Libyan leg of that triangle has consistently been the weak link. Qadhafi has quarrelled with the PDRY, refused to support PDRY economically, and now has poor, low level diplomatic relations with them. Qadhafi has also quarreled with Mengistu and has disappointed the Ethiopian regime by failing to come through both in 1976 and after 1981 with any meaningful aid. Qadhafi has furthermore played around with occasional support to the Eritrean rebels in Ethiopia. And Qadhafi and Mengistu have been rivals for the OAU chair.
- Qadhafi's major goal is to establish a close unity between the states of Sudan, Libya, and Egypt. This unity is hardly attractive to Ethiopia which will feel threatened not only by the potential power of such a grouping but by its implicitly Islamic cast bordering Christian Ethiopia. Qadhafi's activities will most likely continue to fuel Ethiopian suspicions about his ultimate intent--and make him at best an ally of convenience.

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-- Libya and Ethiopia are furthermore unlikely to agree on the role of southern Sudanese leader Garang. While Qadhafi has provided major arms and financial aid to southern Sudanese rebels for many years, Garang is a Christian; Ethiopia knows that Qadhafi has limited sympathy for the Christian south. Garang is primarily a tool to Qadhafi with which to weaken an unfriendly Sudanese regime. As of now Qadhafi claims to be cutting off aid to Garang and reportedly is urging Garang to join the new Sudanese government.

-- It is unlikely that Garang will join the government. Ethiopia obviously does not want him to do so, and the Southern Sudanese forces show no sign of responding to Qadhafi's tactic. Qadhafi himself would lose his major point of leverage were Garang to join the Sudanese government. Furthermore, if Qadhafi does not feel that efforts are moving favorably in Sudan, he is sure to reopen financial and arms aid to Garang. The Ethiopians, in the meantime, have Garang ensconced in Ethiopia and there are signs of unease between Libya and Ethiopia on how to best handle the Garang question. Garang would seem to be an even more important card for Ethiopia than for Qadhafi.

-- The PDRY has reportedly gotten into the act by hosting a visit by Garang last week. It is uncertain what the PDRY could offer to Garang other than political and moral support--and maybe some weapons if he needs them. PDRY is hardly in a position to financially assist Garang. Unlike the Libyan tie, the Ethiopian-PDRY axis of the Tripartite Alliance has always been relatively good. PDRY has continued to provide training to the Somali Liberation Front from Aden which is in Ethiopia's interest.

4. The USSR, as the godfather of the Tripartite Alliance, would obviously like to see coordination among these three states to strengthen radical forces in the region. Any distancing of Sudan from Egypt and the West is a net gain for the USSR--while Moscow will profit directly from radical state efforts in Sudan, Moscow's favored vehicle would of course be the Sudanese Communist Party. Despite Moscow's hope for the Tripartite Alliance, Qadhafi has not been especially cooperative.

5. Syria and Iran. As part of the radicals' efforts to try to turn the tide in Sudan, Syria's Assad is reportedly planning a visit to Sudan himself, certainly to try to shore up the present regime and with the hope of pushing it in an anti-US direction. Iran, too, may shortly wish to lend a hand--and could supply critically needed oil to the new regime.

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6. Egypt views the Sudanese crisis as very dicey to its own interests. While Egypt and Sudan enjoy an extremely close historical relationship based on geography and culture, there is great ambivalence in the Sudanese view of Egypt as an often obtrusive big brother. The new Sudanese regime will feel it wise to avoid too close an identification with Egypt--by both distancing itself from Nimeiri's policies and by appearing more broadly neutral. Egypt would like to play a more important role in developments in the Sudan but is wisely mindful of overplaying its hand with counterproductive results. Egypt could conceivably play a military role in the Sudan but would probably require US transport assistance to deliver its troops there and even then would probably not move unless it felt that pro-Qadhafi elements were about to seize power.

- Recognizing the advantages Libya has already accrued from the change in the Sudanese regime, Egypt has moved further and more publicly toward support for the Libyan dissidents by granting them facilities in Egypt for anti-Libyan broadcasts.

7. Qadhafi has showered the new Sudanese regime with a barrage of proposals designed to push the regime in Tripoli's direction. Libyan number two man Jallud and Foreign Minister Turayki have just been there on a heavyhanded week's visit. Libya constantly beats the drums for an "independent Sudan" which will return to its rightful place in the Arab world--a codename for abandoning Egypt, Camp David and the access agreement with the US. Libya has called for a visit of the entire Sudan cabinet to Tripoli, referring constantly to the historic precedence of the 1976 abortive unity scheme, has called for a close coordination of foreign policy between Sudan and Libya, and has already established some joint agriculture projects. Libyan money could prove to be critically important to Sudan during its time of crisis--and only likely to be offset by Saudi money, if any. Qadhafi has furthermore sent in several dozen Sudanese bullyboys trained in Libya headed by Abdullah Zakariya--posing a major threat to the American presence and to all moderate forces in Sudan should terrorism increase.

8. Qadhafi views this as a major opportunity to reorder the balance of forces in the region. Libyan success would obviously threaten Egypt significantly, strengthen the Tripartite Alliance (while placing some potential strains on Libyan-Ethiopian ties), and would increase Libya's leverage on Chad and the rest of the Sahel region just below North Africa. The Saudis would be dismayed by a Qadhafi takeover in Sudan where they have tried to support moderate forces for several decades. A triumphant Qadhafi will only grow that much more dangerous in his handling of Tunisia and in "strengthening" the Libyan-Moroccan tie.


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9. Internal Sudanese forces will play the major role in determining Sudan's future course. But if Libyan-Ethiopian cooperation can remain limited, Suwar-el-Dhahab will face a slightly less daunting challenge than he would if Addis Ababa and Tripoli worked fully in tandem. Nonetheless, Qadhafi may soon start to play much harder ball if he feels events are not going well for him in Sudan. He would view the stakes there as very high indeed for Libya.

(This Memo has been shown to both NIO/Africa and NIO/USSR.)



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