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BRIEF

SNIE 65-61: Main Elements in the Congo Situation

This Special National Intelligence Estimate was approved by the United States Intelligence Board on 10 January 1961. Significant judgments of the estimate are as follows:

There is still no effective central government in the Congo. Large areas of the country, as well as major elements of the National security forces, remain outside of Leopoldville's control. The Congo National Army (CNA) is a scattered, disorganized and undisciplined force consisting of about 20,000 men of the former Force Publique. Tribal animosities or immediate needs, such as food and pay, often determine the direction of CNA loyalties and the course of the troops' frequently capricious and disruptive actions. Nevertheless, the force remains a key factor in the situation since nearly all important Congolese factions depend upon some Army units for support. In some outlying areas UN forces have almost no control of the situation. Anarchy lies close to the surface and political fragmentation continues. The UN's diminished ability to serve as a restraining influence on the several external and internal forces maneuvering in the Congo has allowed tensions to rise. Under these circumstances new opportunities for short and long range Bloc exploitation are increasing.

→ ||| " Given present trends, we see little chance for signal improvement in the Congo situation, and virtually none at all for a decisive outcome which would bring early stability. As civil authority continues to be exercised in haphazard, often arbitrary, and sometimes violent fashion, tribal warfare and blood feuds are likely to lead to more widespread disorders. There is no indication that the Congo is developing a national leader, a national party, or a national consciousness. Political instability on a grand scale, probably leading to increased violence and other excesses, both organized and disorganized, appears to be the most likely prospect for the Congo for some time to come. This might result in the disintegration of the Congo into a number of separate states. As long as the UN retains an effective military presence it will probably continue to supply some modicum of public order, and more importantly to put some restraint upon the intervention of outside powers. Yet this restraint will be only partial. It is virtually certain that any individual or faction within the Congo which promises to gain enough power to provide a government will be supported by outside powers, but will be opposed by other Congolese factions which are also supported by outside powers, and so will be rendered largely ineffectual.

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