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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



CONGO

The abortive political conference at Coquilhatville has again demonstrated Katanga President Tshombé's capacity to block courses of action in the Congo of which he does not approve. At the same time, his walkout at the conference--ostensibly in pique at Kasavubu's improved relations with the UN--dramatizes his isolation from other Congolese spokesmen. Most of the other local leaders appear anxious to resolve the

Congo's long-standing political crisis and willing to surrender a degree of their "sovereignty" to a moderate central government.

General annoyance at Tshombé's tactics appears to have led to his being "detained" by Congolese Army soldiers as he prepared to leave Coquilhatville. The army reportedly believes that Tshombé, having come to the conference, should stay in Coquilhatville until it is over.

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The Gizenga regime is not represented at Coquilhatville, but certain of Gizenga's followers appear doubtful of the ability of Orientale Province to exist apart from the rest of the Congo and uneasy about their isolation from the main stream of events. Congolese Army officers in Orientale Province reportedly have indicated to General Mobutu's representatives their support for a unified Congo, provided certain of Gizenga's demands are met. These include the appointment of a new government and the speedy reconvening of parliament.

Tshombé's attempt to dictate to the conference appears to have stemmed from his having played a key role in pressing for a Congo confederation at the March conference held at Tananarive. Post-conference interpretations of the Tananarive resolutions, however, revealed that most participants were prepared to go further than Tshombé in surrendering power to a central government.

Within Katanga, popular support for Tshombé has diminished as a result of his extensive reliance on Belgian advisers and foreign mercenaries. His harassment of the UN, moreover, has caused some Belgians to question whether he is not more of a liability than an asset.

Tshombé, who has largely ignored criticism of his regime as pro-Belgian, has granted the South African - owned General Mining and Finance Corporation mineral rights in an area comprising 8,000 square miles south of Elisabethville. The grant--which involved revoking exploratory rights previously granted to Union Miniere--is the first to a non-Belgian firm in recent years.

With Congolese President Kasavubu playing a more conciliatory role than in the past, the Leopoldville government has moved to improve its relations with the United Nations. On 26 April the UN announced that the Kasavubu regime had agreed to the return of UN troops to the supply port of Matadi for the first time since the eviction of the Sudanese contingent in early March. The first UN personnel to return to Matadi are expected to be a small group of Nigerian police. It remains to be seen whether the improved climate between Kasavubu and the UN Command will survive the return of senior UN representative Dayal, scheduled for late April or early May.

Dayal has charged that the Congolese Army has been the principal instigator of disorders in the Congo. However, the American Embassy in Leopoldville, in a commentary on the army, observes that discipline lately has considerably improved, and that when a USIS employee was roughed up by Congolese soldiers on 9 April the army took prompt action to discipline the individuals responsible.

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