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NSC BRIEFING

3 November 1959

BELGIAN CONGO and CAMEROUN

- I. Severe rioting near Stanleyville--which has cost about ~~70~~⁵⁶ lives since 31 October--marks first spread of serious nationalist disorders in the Belgian Congo beyond lower Congo (Leopoldville) area.
 - A. Rioting triggered by Belgian authorities' arrest of a leader of the pro-independence Congo National Movement who made inflammatory statements at a party meeting.
 - B. Tension remains high and more violence possible.
 - C. In the Leopoldville area there have been sporadic troubles since the big riots of January 1959, and the situation there also remains uneasy.
- II. Reaction in Congo to moderate program (de Schrijver plan; should lead to Congo independence in about 4 years) outlined by Belgium on 16 October has been ~~entirely~~^{GENERALLY} negative.
 - A. Several African groups planning boycott of local elections scheduled for next month as first step toward self-government.
 - B. Congo notable for absence responsible African leadership; political groups want immediate independence, while tribal leaders interested primarily in perpetuating own local authority
 - 1. Leaders of Congo National Movement may have felt they had to take extreme position to keep up with Abako, the leading group in Leopoldville area which demands independence for the lower Congo apart from the rest of colony.
 - 2. At present, none of town leaders is a "national" leader, and each depends primarily on support of other members of his own tribe.

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3. Inter-tribal antagonisms are still strong in many areas, and some of the rioting this year has reflected these differences as well as political tensions between blacks and whites.

III. Brussels seems to be making genuine effort accommodate Congo nationalism; but it appears not to recognize rapid deterioration of political stability there, and reportedly was "surprised" by reaction to de Schrijver plan.

A. Congo question becoming a major issue in Belgian domestic politics; opposition Socialists may come up with own plan.

B. Brussels' 3 November offer to hold round-table discussions with Congo leaders late this month appears an effort to ease the situation and mollify Congo leaders who claim they were not consulted on de Schrijver plan.

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IV. Tension is also running high in nearby French trust territory of Cameroun, already scheduled for independence on 1 January.

A. Here Communist-supported extremists are engaged in last-ditch effort to oust moderate Ahidjo government and force new elections before independence.

-- BASED LARGELY OUTSIDE TERRITORY --
B. Extremists have stepped up terrorism and are reported plotting new violence involving attacks on US and British consular installations and a coup attempt.

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- C. However, extremists do not now have significant popular following in Cameroun and would need substantially greater external support than now getting from Ghana, Guinea, UAR and Communist bloc.
1. Extremist leader Mounie is now in Peiping, presumably seeking additional material aid.
 2. Four these leaders now in New York agitating at UN for immediate elections.

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