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NSC BRIEFING

31 July 1960

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- I. The status of Katanga Province and of Belgian bases in the Congo remains a major source of friction between UN and Belgian officials.
- A. The Lumumba government is showing increased impatience at the failure of the UN to take steps to occupy Katanga. If UN does not, Lumumba may revive threats to call for Soviet intervention.
- B. UN officials in Leopoldville sympathetic to Lumumba's evacuation objectives, since Katanga's "independence" not generally recognized and Brussels-Leopoldville agreement on bases never finally ratified.
- C. Belgians, meanwhile, are concerned about safety of their nationals and have reiterated their unwillingness to withdraw from their bases or from Katanga.
1. Brussels' withdrawal of 1,500 of their 10,000 troops appears designed as a gesture in the direction of the UN resolution calling for a "speedy" Belgian troop withdrawal.
- II. Belgian policy appears to be one of delay. Belgians probably hope that with passage of time Lumumba will prove willing to negotiate with Tshombe concerning Katanga, and will meet his demand for a loosely-joined Congo federation of semi-autonomous provinces.
- A. Tshombe--probably acting on advice of Belgians--continues to talk tough and to refuse UN troops entry into Katanga.
- B. But his bargaining position is not strong. Not even Belgians have recognized Katanga's "independence," and parliamentary opposition group has left assembly in protest over Tshombe's policies.

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III. Despite Lumumba's withdrawal of his threat to request Soviet intervention, and his remarks concerning his desire for Western assistance, Congo's posture appears one of Soviet-oriented neutralism.

A. His vice premier has claimed that the Bloc has promised arms to the Congo once the Belgians withdraw.

1. But Lumumba wants aid from any and all quarters; he is therefore not anxious to burn his bridges to West.

B. A Guinean general now in Leopoldville reportedly has delivered political lectures to Congo ministers to show them way to "true independence."

1. He also strongly attacked UN Commanding General Van Horn's order to disarm Force Publique.

C. Soviets appear disinclined to intervene militarily in Congo, but will continue efforts to expand influence there by other means.

IV. Although arrival of more than 10,000 UN troops has lowered tensions, threat of violence remains.

A. US Embassy in Leopoldville has characterized UN military effort as lacking direction.

1. UN failure to disarm Force Publique, and fact that UN troops *Guinean troop believed mission was to kill Belgians.* from Ethiopia appear to have themselves participated in depredations, cast some doubt on effectiveness of UN force.

B. Unemployment is a potential security threat in Leopoldville and other urban centers; in Leopoldville alone, an estimated 80,000 are unemployed.

1. Although food shortage considerably alleviated, many Congolese lack money to buy food.

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- V. Restoration of public order is only a prelude to solution of critical problems facing Congo, especially that of obtaining technical assistance in exploiting resources to provide economic basis for independence.
- A. Thousands of skilled Belgians have left, and many more will follow if Belgian troops are withdrawn.
- B. Congo is almost totally lacking in qualified native personnel to replace Belgians.
1. Foreign Minister Bomboko is only man in government with college degree, and there are only about fifteen others in entire country.
 2. Congo has no native engineers or medical doctors.
- C. UN is formulating plans for technical assistance, with first objective to determine what must be done.
1. UN office for coordination of technical assistance has been set up in Congo.
 2. A UN telecommunications official and an agricultural expert are in Leopoldville for a survey, and a member of the UN's Economic Commission for Africa is en route to help set up governmental administration.
- D. Moscow statement on 31 July charged continuing "imperialist aggression" in Congo and reiterated Soviet offer of economic and technical aid to Congo.
1. Statement asserted aid to be "without any conditions of a political, military, or other nature liable to prejudice the interests or sovereign rights of the independent Republic of Congo."

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2. Also said Soviet ship to leave shortly for Congo with 100 trucks, spare parts, repair depot, and group of instructors.
3. Statement promised prompt dispatch of medical personnel, medicines, and medical equipment.

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