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5 February 1965

BRIEFING FOR
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

THE CONGO SITUATION

- I. If I may now turn to the Congo--
- Since the capture of Stanleyville, Tshombe's government has managed to keep the military initiative, but the rebels are receiving substantial outside support, and the tide could turn.
- A. The main rebel force collapsed when Stanleyville fell, but largely uncoordinated insurgent bands continue to resist, and there are signs that a new army may be forming in the northeast, armed with Communist-made weapons and trained by radical Africans.
- (MAP, The Congo)
- B. A 5000-man government force is holding Stanleyville, but ventures out into the countryside only in armed convoys.
- C. Rebels continue to hold sizable areas elsewhere, notably around Fizi on Lake Tanganyika.

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II. Mercenaries and aircraft are primarily responsible for government successes so far.

A. There are about 700 ground mercenaries in the Congo now, of whom 200 are deployed.

1. Four hundred are Rhodesian and South African. All but 100 of these are new arrivals, training in Kamina.

2. The rest are Europeans, mostly Belgian and French.

B. Tshombe's air force, though small, has been extremely effective against the rebels.

1. The US has loaned the central government five B-26's and twelve T-28's, which are flown and maintained by Cubans.

2. Three US Air Force C-130's used for resupply are also in the Congo.

3. Finally, Tshombe has a small force of T-6's, some his own, some supplied by the Italians, piloted by the mercenaries under Tshombe's control.

C. The 30,000-man Congo Army contains a few moderately good units, but it is still largely ineffective and fights well only when accompanied by mercenaries or supported by air.

III. The main rebel military force lost what small cohesion it had when the government captured its communications at Stanleyville.

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- A. The principal rebel leaders fled, leaving the rebellion to run itself, while they sought outside assistance.
1. Of the insurgent leaders, only one, "The People's Liberation Army" General Olenga, showed much ability to command.
 2. The nominal rebel chief, Christophe Gbenye, is unimpressive.
- B. The rank and file insurgents, although sometimes imbued with a feeling of loyalty towards "African nationalism," are for the most part primitive tribesmen, many barely out of their teens. They included Congo Army deserters interlaced with a few Congolese trained in the bloc and in radical African countries.
- C. Government mercenaries, particularly in the northeast, have recently noted a marked improvement in rebel tactics and fire power.

(MAP, African alignment on Congo)

- IV. We have here a map which shows the alignment of African states on the Congo question. At the non-aligned conference in Cairo last October, 10 of these nations, which we refer to generally as the radical Africans, formed a consortium to give the Congolese rebels arms and training.

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- A. The 10 countries in the consortium are Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi (until recently), Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and the Brazzaville Congo.
- B. The principal suppliers of arms are Algeria, Egypt, and Ghana.
1. Forty-four flights have airlifted weapons to the Sudan and Uganda.
 2. These arms--many of which have been captured--are mainly weapons of Chinese and Soviet manufacture.
 3. A lesser source of arms has been Tanzania.
 4. Burundi, Uganda and Brazzaville have allowed the weapons to transit their soil at least since October, and have provided rebels with safe haven. Burundi is, however, now no longer a member of the consortium. The King has recently expelled the Chinese Communist mission there, and confiscated a large shipment of arms destined for the Congolese rebels. After a radical upheaval in early November, the Sudan also has provided transit rights, particularly to Juba, where most of the planeloads were delivered.

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5. Rebels now are being trained in Brazzaville, the Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, by instructors furnished by those countries, and others in the consortium.

C. Representatives of the consortium meet periodically, and recently have discussed whether to recognize a rebel regime formally. Some of them principally Ghana and Uganda, hope to use the machinery of the Organization of African Unity, or OAU, to unite Africa against the Tshombe regime.

V. As yet, no African combat "volunteers", except a few Ugandans, have appeared in the Congo. We do have two recent reports that Algerian and Egyptian military personnel are in the Sudan near the Congo. The numbers--given as 500 to 700--may be exaggerated, but if true, are more than required for mere training purposes. Their introduction would seriously threaten the government's currently favorable position.

A. The fighting quality of the insurgents has not been much better than that of Congolese troops.

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- B. Algeria's President Ben Bella declared publicly late last November, after the Stanleyville operation, that he would send "volunteers."
- VI. The Communist nations have been involved, in one way or another.
- A. Moscow now reportedly has assured Algeria and the UAR that it would replace arms shipped to the Congolese rebels.
1. Soviet pilots are flying the Algerian and Ghanaian planes delivering arms to Uganda and the Sudan.
- B. Eastern European countries are also involved in aiding the rebels, but to a lesser degree than the USSR.
- C. Cuba's involvement is now small but may increase since Che Guevara's junket around Africa in January. Cuba has trained at least a dozen Congolese in various types of subversion.
- D. Chinese Communists are also involved.
1. The Chinese have had diplomatic missions in Brazzaville and Burundi since early 1964.
 2. The Chinese mission to Burundi--before its expulsion last week--had given money

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and arms to the rebels, and encouraged the former Burundi cabinet of its support of the rebels.

3. Chinese diplomats in Brazzaville have also furnished money, and have assisted in training Congolese insurgents at Brazzaville camps.
4. Recent information indicates China has agreed to support Algerian weapons deliveries.
5. Despite frequent reports, we have found no Chinese in the field with the rebels, although on a few occasions last summer Chinese diplomats from Burundi crossed over into Uvira to look things over.

VII. The radical Africans' support of the rebels stems from their conviction that Tshombe is an "imperialist" puppet, and a stumbling bloc to the liberation of southern Africa from white control.

- A. He is detested because of his reputed--but unproven--involvement in the death of Lumumba.
- B. His use of white mercenaries, particularly South Africans and Rhodesians, is repugnant to even moderate Africans.

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C. Radical Africans believe that during the Katanga secession, he was a front man for the Union Miniere interests, and that he now is close to the detested governments of South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal.

VIII. Within the Congo, however, Tshombe is popular.

A. President Kasavubu supports Tshombe's policies, including the use of mercenaries, and non-rebel politicians are falling all over each other for positions on his coattails. March elections are scheduled.

B. The leaders of the Congo's security forces also back the premier.

C. Tshombe's popularity stems from his charm, his political acumen, and his seeming ability to get things done.

1. Unlike his predecessor, Adoula, Tshombe frequently visits the interior, delivers speeches, and butters up local chiefs.

IX. Tshombe's relations with Belgium are becoming increasingly rocky.

A. The basic dispute between the premier and the Belgians is over the status of financial

holdings of Belgium in the Congo. Tshombe is now in Brussels in an effort to reach a settlement on these questions.

- B. The independent Congo inherited a substantial interest in these holdings from the colonial Congo.
1. Belgium, however, has kept de facto control of this interest, represented by documents and funds held in Brussels.
 2. Before turning over its de facto control, Belgium wants the Congo to (a) take on some of the colonial Congo's liabilities, and (b) provide businesslike management for the assets so that Belgian investment will not be injured.
- C. Foreign Minister Spaak is reluctant to give the Tshombe government further aid unless the financial negotiations are settled.
- D. Belgium is in a dilemma, however.
1. If it supports Tshombe to the hilt it strengthens his position in the dispute. He might, as he did in Katanga, make their financial position increasingly precarious.

2. If Belgium withdraws aid, the likelihood of a rebel takeover increases sharply, and a radical government probably would nationalize everything in sight.
- E. Tshombe needs Belgium, too.
1. The Belgians have close to 500 military personnel in the Congo, one of Tshombe's main props.
 2. Belgium also supplies most of the people who keep the Congo's economy running.
- X. The Congo's immediate problems are voluminous.
- A. Probably the most pressing are military.
1. The continuing arms supply and the training of rebels abroad seem to preclude an early end to the insurrection.
 2. The introduction of "volunteers" could escalate the conflict so that mercenaries alone might not be enough to shore up the Congo regime.
- B. Tshombe's image as an "imperialist puppet" will probably continue to make support of him unpopular in Africa.
- C. At present, other than a radical regime, there appears no alternative to Tshombe.

1. No other moderate Congolese politician commands anything approaching the domestic support he enjoys.
2. If the US and Belgium withdraw their assistance, Tshombe, to maintain himself in power, is likely to turn to the South Africans and Portuguese, who would probably be willing to give him covert military support at least.
3. If Tshombe finds his power base crumbling in Leopoldville, he may try another Katangan secession.

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