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# American Committee on Africa

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George M. Houser  
*Executive Director*

Homer A. Jack  
*Associate Executive Director*

Dear Friend,

Enclosed is a memorandum on political developments relating to the Congo which may be of interest to you.

This is strictly background material, but may be useful to you as future events unfold in the Congo.

Sincerely yours,

Homer A. Jack

HAJ:mr

Enclosure

*executive board:* Nelson Bengston, Edward F. Gray, Maxwell Harway, Harold R. Isaacs, Joseph Jablow, Sophia Yarnall Jacobs, Elizabeth S. Landis, Stanley D. Levison, Frank C. Montero, John V. Murra, Cleveland Robinson, James H. Robinson, Bayard Rustin, William X. Scheinman, Adelaide Schulkind, Hugh H. Smythe, Hope R. Stevens, Peter Weiss.

is the only method of maintaining the confidence of the Congolese in regard to Belgium.

"To the question whether we want later to remain united with Belgium we reply: we do not in any way want the Congo to be integrated into the unified Belgian state. We will never even admit to a Belgian-Congolese federation imposed on us without our free consent or with the condition of our political emancipation. We hope that such a community would one day be the fruit of a free collaboration between two independent nations, joined by enduring friendship."

August 1956--ABAKO published a Counter-Manifesto.

Excerpts from Counter-Manifesto: "We are not in agreement with our friends from Conscience Africaine. They want to govern, but disdain the means by which one governs the country. An end should be put to the regime of absentee rule which has earned the Congo the title of the silent empire. Our position is clear and we declare it: 1-political rights, 2-all liberties, that is, individual liberty of thought, opinion, and press, freedom of meeting, association, conscience, and religion. By liberty we obviously mean the right to do everything which will not harm the next person.

"Regarding the plan of Van Bilsen, our friends from Conscience Africaine declare: "we demand principally in the most formal manner to be directly involved in the elaboration of the 30 year plan. Without this participation, such a plan could not have our assent." As for us, we do not aspire to collaborate in the elaboration of this plan, but its annihilation pure and simple, because its application would only retard the Congo further. It is basically only the eternal song of the shepherd. Our patience has passed the boundaries. Since the hour has come, we must be granted this very day the emancipation which would be delayed still another 30 years. "Belated emancipations are unknown to history, for when the hour is come, the people do not wait. If it is delayed, it is no longer emancipation which ends the crisis; it is hate, revolt, rupture," stated P. Ryckmans in his book, Dominer Pour Servir."

December 1957--First local elections held, with Joseph Kasavubu becoming mayor of Dendale (a commune of Leopoldville). 1958--Congolese living at African center at Brussels Exhibition had new opportunities to discuss Belgian colonialism. October 1958--Congolese National Movement (a political party) established. November 18, 1958--Belgium announced that it would issue a statement on the Congo's political future. December 1958--Patrice Lumumba, Gaston Diomi, and Joseph Ngalula attended the All-African People's Conference in Ghana.

--1959--

January 4-6--Riots in Leopoldville kill 49 Africans, with 330 Africans and 40 Europeans injured. ABAKO banned and Joseph Kasavubu imprisoned. January 13--King Baudouin of Belgium announced that the Government would work for the independence of the Congo and statement was made in Parliament.

Excerpts from statement delivered by King Baudouin: "In answer to what has long been awaited, the Government in Brussels will announce before Parliament today, a program of reforms which will open a decisive period for the future of our African populations. I feel that I owe it to the memory of my illustrious predecessors, the

founders and consolidators of our enterprise in Africa, to acquaint you personally with the character and spirit of this program. The purpose of our presence on the African continent was defined by Leopold II: to open up these backward countries to European civilization, summon their populations to emancipation, to freedom and to progress after having freed them from slavery, disease, and misery. Continuing these lofty aims, our firm resolution, today, is to lead the Congolese populations, without harmful procrastination, but also without thoughtless haste, toward independence, in prosperity and in peace. . ."

Excerpts from statement delivered by Mr. M. Van Hemelrijck, Minister of the Belgian Congo, in the Belgian Senate on January 13: "Under the protection of our Kings, the Congolese people, after more than half a century of civilization, have reached a degree of evolution which opens the way to new progress. This movement must be accelerated, as the development of institutions and human progress throughout the modern world are accelerated. . . Belgium intends to organize a democracy in the Congo which will be capable of exercising the prerogatives of sovereignty and of deciding upon its independence. As a co-signatory of the U.N. Charter, this country has furthermore confirmed its desire to lead the Congolese people to a point where they will be capable of self-administration. . . Universal suffrage will be established. Time limits will be set for accomplishing precise aims, taking into account the various stages essential to the shaping of democracy. The unshakable loyalty with which each of these steps will be respected will testify to Belgium's resolution to fulfill her pledges. . . The municipal and territorial councils will be elected at the end of 1959. The new provincial councils will be constituted for the session to be held in March 1960. . . The General Council of the Congo, which will replace the present Government Council, will be the preliminary form of a Chamber of Representatives. Parallel to the General Council, a Legislative Council will be instituted, the first form of a Senate. . . In March, 1959, each of the provincial councils will appoint two counsellors to sit on the Legislative Council. The General Council and the Legislative Council will jointly exercise that share of the power of legislation and decision which the law will gradually grant them. . .

"In the Congo also, the various rights that the Belgians enjoy must be assured by the basic law, and their application must be adjusted. All traces of racial discrimination will disappear from daily life as well as from the regulations. . . Economic prosperity can only be attained in an atmosphere of order, confidence, and work. The Government will do everything to keep this atmosphere from being disturbed. . . Belgium will hand over these responsibilities as the new Congolese institutions gradually prove they are capable of maintaining order and respect for public and private obligations, and the protection of persons and property. . . The Congolese people will show their wisdom and maturity by undertaking with us the shaping of the new structures, and by assuming conscientiously the serious responsibilities its future involves."

February 4--Belgian Minister to the Congo, Maurice Van Hemelrijck, criticized by white settlers on tour of Congo. March--Riots in Elizabethville and Luluabourg. March 28--A Belgian commission investigating the January riots reported that a prime cause was the attitude of white residents toward Africans. September--Royal Decree proclaimed guaranteeing freedom of press, association, assembly, and right to organize unions and political parties. November--Patrice Lumumba, president of the Congolese National Movement, arrested for inciting African crowds in Stanleyville. December 1-26--Urban and rural elections, with 1.8 million Congolese voting.

--1960--

January 20--Round Table Conference began in Brussels with 50 official delegates representing 16 Congolese parties. January 21--Patrice Lumumba sentenced to six months imprisonment for autumn disorders, but released to attend Brussels Conference. January 27--Agreement reached for the Congo to become independent on June 30. February 20--Brussels Round Table Conference ended with adopting of 16 resolutions.

Excerpts from Round Table Conference resolutions: "Central and provincial institutions in the Congo, as also a central government, shall be set up by June 30, 1960, so that the independence of the Congo may be proclaimed on that date.

"As of June 30 next the Congo, within its present frontiers, shall become an independent State whose inhabitants shall, under conditions to be enacted by law, have the same nationality and shall be free to move about and establish themselves within the confines of the said State, and in which goods and merchandise may also circulate freely.

"As of June 30, 1960, the Congo State shall be made up of six provinces whose geographical boundaries are those of the provinces now in existence.

"Without waiting for June 30, the first Congolese Government shall be formed as soon as possible after the elections. . . The legislature of the Congo State shall be exercised jointly by two national assemblies, temporarily referred to hereinafter as the House of Representatives and the Senate.

"The Constitution of the Congo State shall be drawn up by both Houses convened as a Constituent Assembly. They shall be convened in Luluabourg by June 30, 1960 at latest.

"In the exercise of its legislative authority, which is unreservedly acknowledged, the Congolese Parliament shall take account of the necessity of guaranteeing the safety of persons and property whether national, Belgian, or foreign.

"Insofar as the forthcoming elections are concerned, the right to vote is subordinated to the following conditions: All voters must be male, 21 years of age or over, residents of the territory or town for the past six months at least; this condition is not enforced in respect of persons who were forced to leave their place of residence; Congolese, or born of a Congolese mother; nationals of Ruanda-Urundi who have been living in the Congo for the past 10 years at least are also allowed to vote. Some delegations are also in favor of giving the vote to Belgians living in the Congo for six months at least.

"A treaty of friendship, assistance, and cooperation shall be signed as soon as possible between the governments of Belgium and the Congo. . ."

April 26-May 16--Conference on economic future of Congo held in Brussels with 60 Congolese delegates and 25 Belgian delegates. May 11-22--Voting for first national elections, with National Congolese Movement winning a third of seats in House. June 17--Parliament of Congo held first meeting (137 members of House or 1 to each 100,000 inhabitants, and 84 Senators or 14 from each of six provinces). June 24--Patrice Lumumba of the National Congolese Movement named Prime Minister and Defense Minister by vote of 74 members of House. June 27--Joseph Kasavubu of ABAKO named Chief of State. June 29--Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed by the Republic of the Congo and Belgium.

Excerpts from paragraph 2 of Article 6 of the Treaty: "Belgian troops at present in the Congo may be used on Congolese national territory only upon the specific request of the Government of the Republic of the Congo, in particular, on the specific request of the Congolese Minister of National Defense."

--Independence--

June 30--Independence celebrations in Leopoldville as the Belgian Congo became the Republic of the Congo. July 1--Prime Minister Lumumba cabled U.N. requesting membership, declaring that the Congo "accepts without reservation the obligations stipulated in the Charter of the U.N. and undertakes to abide by the same in absolute good faith." July 5-6--Congolese troops in Thysville locked up their Belgian officers and attacked members of white population; members of the Force Publique in Leopoldville refused to obey orders of Belgian officers. July 7--U.N. Security Council/unanimously recommended to the General Assembly Congo's admission to membership in the U.N.

Excerpts from speech by H.E.M. Walter Loridan, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the U.N. on July 7: "The Belgian Government is pleased and proud to support the Congolese Government in its application for membership of the Republic of the Congo in the U.N. On 30 June 1960, a joint declaration was solemnly signed which stated that the Congo accedes, in full friendship and agreement with Belgium, to independence and to international sovereignty. Thus, Belgium has fulfilled the obligations which it had adopted unilaterally under Article 73 of the Charter and which only confirmed its traditional policy in the matter.

"In order that the political leaders might carry on with their work, Belgium is quite prepared to provide technical and financial assistance. In particular, it has placed under the direction and control of the authorities, officials, magistrates, officers and the teachers which the Congolese Government might wish to retain in its service. A treaty of friendship and cooperation lays down the great principles for this collaboration, which must associate two free sovereign independent States, tied by friendship, and have them benefit mutually from the assistance that will stem therefrom."

July 11--U.N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold returned suddenly to U.N. headquarters from Geneva to study proposals for U.N. technical assistance to Congo to overcome "the present transitional difficulties as may be forthcoming." July 12--As Secretary-General met with U.N. diplomats from 9 independent African states, President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba requested Secretary-General the "urgent dispatch" of U.N. military assistance, calling dispatch of Belgian troops to Congo "an act of aggression." They requested military aid "to protect the national territory of the Congo against the present external aggression which is a threat to international peace." July 13--Congo leaders in a second message said that if U.N.

U.N. military force is not received without delay they will be obliged "to appeal to the Bandung Treaty Powers." The Security Council met and Secretary-General said that the presence of Belgian troops in the Congo was "a source of internal and potentially also of international tension." July 14--Meeting until 3:22 a.m., Security Council approved (with China, France, and the U.K. abstaining) the Tunisian resolution.

Full text of Tunisian Resolution: "The Security Council, considering the report of the Secretary-General on a request for United Nations action in relation to the Republic of the Congo; considering the request for military assistance addressed to the Secretary-General by the President and the Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo; calls upon the Government of Belgium to withdraw their troops from the territory of the Republic of the Congo; decides to authorize the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the Government of the Republic of the Congo, to provide the Government with such military assistance, as may be necessary, until, through the efforts of the Congolese Government with the technical assistance of the United Nations, the national security forces may be able, in the opinion of the Government, to meet fully their tasks; requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council as appropriate."

July 14--Prime Minister Lumumba sent message to Russian Premier Khrushchev urging him to follow situation since the Congo may need Russian military intervention if aggression is not stopped. July 15--First troops--Ghanaian and Tunisian--of the U.N. Force arrive, as Prime Minister Lumumba declared that the Congo was breaking diplomatic relations with Belgium. July 16--Prime Minister Lumumba gave ultimatum to U.N. to get Belgian troops to withdraw from Congo within 72 hours or Soviet troops would be called in. July 18--Secretary-General made first report on implementation of Security Council resolution, indicating that 3,500 troops had arrived in the Congo from four African countries. Congolese Senate rejected any Soviet military intervention. July 20--Congo cabinet decided to appeal to Russian or any Asian-African bloc country to send troops to the Congo unless Security Council took effective action to expel Belgian troops. Security Council met at request of Secretary-General and Thomas Kanza, minister delegate of the Congo to the U.N., was invited to participate in the meeting with the Foreign Minister of Belgium. Secretary-General reported that U.N. Force consisted of 12 African battalions and two European battalions, calling it "the biggest single effort under U.N. colors, organized and directed by the U.N. itself. He asked that there be no "hesitation because we are at a turn of the road where our attitude will be decisive, not only

not only for the future of this Organization but also for the future of Africa; and Africa may well in present circumstances mean the world." July 21-22--Security Council continued its deliberations and unanimously approved the resolution of Ceylon and Tunisia.

Excerpts from speech of Thomas Kanza to Security Council: "It is not often that, barely two weeks after a country has achieved its independence, it is obliged to present itself almost as an accuser before the Security Council because, contrary to what we might have hoped, the country which was formerly the colonizer, and which normally should have become a friendly country, will be the first to have violated, on three occasions, the treaty which we signed on 29 June, on the eve of accession of the Congo to independence.

"The Congolese Government is prepared to recognize that abuses have been committed. But the Congolese Government is gratified that it has been able to maintain order and tranquility in the country while the provocations have multiplied.

"These are four points which the Congolese Government has instructed me to present to the Council. . . if the whole of the world still wishes Belgium to win back the hearts of the Congolese--hearts which are at present closed to Belgian friendship but which are ready to be opened to that understanding with Belgium in the future: 1-An end would have to be put to the aggressive action of the Belgian troops in the Congo. . . 2-The evacuation as soon as possible of these Belgian troops from our national territory. . . 3-Ask you not to permit a certain recognition to an independent Katanga. . . 4-General technical assistance. . ."

Excerpts from speech of Foreign Minister Wigny of Belgium to Security Council: "It would have been better. . . to recognize also, first of all, that frightful things have happened, frightful things which, naturally, have caused the departure of all the Belgians who trustingly remained among you.

Our intervention. . . is not an aggression. Nor is it an act of madness. It is an action justified not by our hostility towards a people whom we love and to whom we have just granted independence, nor by hostility on the part of the Congolese people toward us, but by the fact that the Congolese Government--certain of its members, and perhaps one of them alone--was incapable of re-establishing order.

"In these justified, necessary interventions we have always done everything to limit them to the maximum possible extent. . . Our present position is this. We sent troops. They intervened strictly because of our sacred duty to protect the lives and the honor of our fellow citizens. The action of our troops was always limited to these specific objectives. Our troops received orders to refrain from any interference in internal affairs. As soon as the U.N. troops arrive in sufficient numbers, so that their Commander is able to assume full responsibility for the re-establishment of public order, then, and to that extent, we are prepared to withdraw. Members of the Security Council would not expect the representative of a civilized nation to admit of a gap, an interval, in which massacre may start again. All that we ask is that safety be reassured. As soon as the attacks cease, we shall withdraw.

"There are recollections which are terrible, but a country acquires greatness by its sufferings and a country does not build its future only by remembering the past."

Full text of resolution submitted by Ceylon and Tunisia: "The Security Council, Having considered the first report by the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council Resolution S/4387 of 14 July 1960; Appreciating the work of the Secretary-General and the support so readily and so speedily given to him by all Member States invited by him to give assistance; Noting that as stated by the Secretary-General the arrival of the troops of the U.N. Force in Leopoldville has already had a salutary effect; Recognizing that an urgent need still exists to continue and to increase such efforts; Considering that the complete restoration of law

and order in the Republic of the Congo would effectively contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security; Recognizing that the Security Council recommended the admission of the Republic of the Congo to membership in the U.N. as a unit; Calls upon the Government of Belgium to implement speedily the Security Council resolution of 14 July 1960, on the withdrawal of their troops and authorizes the Secretary-General to take all necessary action to this effect; Requests all States to refrain from any action which might tend to impede the restoration of law and order and the exercise by the Government of the Congo of its authority and also to refrain from any action which might undermine the territorial integrity and the political independence of the Republic of the Congo; Commends the Secretary-General for the prompt action he has taken to carry out Resolution S/4387 of the Security Council and his first report; Invites the Specialized Agencies of the U.N. to tender to the Secretary-General such assistance as he may require; Requests the Secretary-General to report further to the Security Council as appropriate."

July 23--The evacuation of Belgian troops from Leopoldville had been fully completed according to U.N. sources. July 24--Prime Minister Lumumba arrived in New York for talks with Secretary-General Hamarskjold, later going to Washington and Ottawa.

July 28--Secretary-General Hamarskjold arrived in Leopoldville, after stopping in Brussels enroute.