

DRAFT STATEMENT ON THE CONGO

We believe that the Congo crisis presents a major challenge to the conduct of United States foreign policy whose response will guide much of the future relations between the U.S. and the developing countries.

The combined Belgo-American Stanleyville operation, however laudatory its aim might have been, was interpreted by most independent African states as a threat to themselves. We do not believe that this reality can be ignored or that U.S. intentions will ultimately become clear after the excitement has died down.

Rather than putting a decisive end to the Congo rebellion, the Stanleyville operation has inflamed most of Africa into denunciations of Western intrigues. In this reaction, the Communist bloc has joined Africa.

United States policy thus faces a clear choice: intensified support for the Congo Central Government or disengagement from the internal affairs of the Congo.

The first choice, we believe, contains the fruits of a tragic failure. Only by choosing to disengage from the internal affairs of the Congo can the U.S. emerge from this crisis with honor and continue to act as an influence for progress and development in Africa.

Peace and stability can ultimately come to the Congo only if the warring factions can come to political terms with one another. The OAU has already given proof of its willingness to initiate such reconciliation talks.

We thus recommend that U.S. disengagement be phased into an OAU assumption of responsibility.

Our reasons for this recommendation are:

1. Neither the Central Government under Tshombe nor the rebel forces can hope for a clear victory without outside aid. Tshombe has called upon and has accepted American and Belgian assistance. He has relied heavily on white mercenaries for military victories. The rebels apparently have received some aid from China and some through other African states. This is likely to be increased now even though the rebel organization is at the moment headquartered outside Congo borders. There is no indication that the internal fighting will come to an end, but rather will be intensified with an increase in external assistance.

Continued reliance on military answers to the problem of unification is thus likely to deepen the splits in Congolese society, and to take the lives of thousands of persons. A long, drawn-out guerilla war should involve extensive bombing of villages, population relocations, establishment of internment camps, reprisal raids, political assassinations, and even the continued loss of life to missionaries and other foreigners working in the Congo.

2. As long as Congolese factions can count on outside military assistance, fighting will continue. The stakes are enormous; military aid needed to swing the balance of power is relatively small at present - a mere 300 paratroopers and as many mercenaries were sufficient to beat back (but not defeat) a rebellion that holds the world's attention. It is inconceivable that the rebels will not, in their turn, seek similar support. The prospect of escalating the Congo war into a serious and general conflict involving the leading blocs of the world, and oriented along the standard cold war axis, are too grimly apparent to ignore.

3. The warring factions must therefore be convinced that a political compromise is necessary. But they will only come to such political accomodation when they can no longer rely on external military assistance.

The common feature of most previous Congo round table discussions has been the tendency of leaders to maximize regional, ethnic or linguistic bases of power, rather than seeking to agree on a common national purpose. Foreign economic concessions have calculatingly exacerbated these differences. It seems to us that an examination and public accounting of the activities of these concessions is necessary if a political reconciliation is to be successful.

4. The solution to the Congo struggle must be in an African context. The OAU has the greatest responsibility. Both the Congo Central Government and the opposition must work with the OAU to find a solution if they cannot find it in direct dealing with one another. The African continent has the most to suffer by continual strife in the Congo and therefore should have the greatest role in finding a solution.

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If these conditions must be fulfilled, a change in the direction of American policy is called for. Present American policy is making a political solution to the Congo difficult by giving increasing assistance to the government of Moise Tshombe and thus reinforcing the belief that a military solution can be attained. The U.S. aid to Tshombe emphasizes the cold war conflict. U.S. aid to Tshombe makes an African solution difficult by conflicting with OAU efforts to bring about a reconciliation. Finally, by following its present policy, the U.S. is looked upon with suspicion and distrust by many of the African states.

We hope for an African initiative which will lead to an agreement whereby all big powers will remain out of the Congo, thus providing conditions in which a solution in an African context can be found.