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November 8, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KAYSEN

SUBJECT: Indications that the UN May Resort to Force in the Congo

There immediately follows excerpts from a series of State cables on the subject;

The Canadian Charge in Leopoldville said that at the meeting of the Congo Advisory Committee on October 12th U Thant thought there would be only two effective ways to show Tshombe that the UN means business: (a) use of overt force, but the UN has no specific mandate to defeat Tshombe and lacks the necessary force; or (b) to cut off the flow of revenue to Tshombe -- which he preferred as the most practical solution. He noted that implementation of the latter might bring about severe fighting (Leopoldville A-174, October 30).

October 18th: The SYG and Bunche were much concerned over a report they had received that Katanga aircraft had been carrying out bombing raids in North Katanga. While the raids had apparently not been directed at the UN, Gardiner had been instructed to protest to Tshombe, warning that if the bombing continued UN aircraft might have to intervene (New York 1348, October 18).

October 19th: Gardiner told McGhee that he was ready to take decisive action against the above-mentioned Katanga aircraft which he alleged were piloted by mercenary pilots. Gardiner said he was authorized to issue a stiff warning that this air activity cease and that if the warning were disregarded to shoot down the planes caught while operating offensively (Leopoldville 962, October 19).

October 19th: A member of the Pakistani UN Mission told Carl Rowan that U Thant was quite pessimistic in a meeting of the Congo Advisory Committee. U Thant expressed fear that another round of fighting would become necessary. He said that if fighting erupted again he doubted the ability of present UN forces to cope with the situation (New York 1356, October 19).

October 24th: A member of the UN Field Service telephoned a member of the USUN Mission to obtain the reaction of the USG to a possible UN request to supply napalm bombs for ONUC F-86s (New York 1446, October 24).

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October 25: Ambassador Gullion reported that ONUC offensive capability was crippled by the absence of bombs. He said that the main mission of the ONUC was the destruction of enemy aircraft on revealed fields if hostilities break out. He said that it is against these deficiencies that the ONUC request for napalm bombs must be made (Leopoldville 1002, October 25).

October 31st: Bunche told Carl Rowan that the UN wants to "buy, charter, borrow, or beg" two C-130s or C-24s. He said these were vitally needed for a period of a month to transport heavy vehicles in the Albertville and Kamina areas. He said the UN would have to fight if it moved the vehicles over land (New York 1571, October 31).

October 31st: Bunche reportedly told a member of the Belgian Delegation that the UN would not take military action to resolve the Congo problem (New York 1572, October 31).

November 7th: A well-placed UN source in Elizabethville said he believed there was "a possibility the UN might provoke" an incident within two weeks to start a fight. Another UN source stated that Gardiner will arrive in Elizabethville on November 8 and will give Tshombe a two-week ultimatum to implement the UN Plan (Elizabethville 717, November 7).

November 7th: Bunche, in assessing the situation in the Congo, told Harlan Cleveland that the UN was militarily stronger now because of the ability of the ANC to perform functions which formerly tied down UN personnel. Bunche saw a gradual, continuing attrition of Tshombe's position and said it would not be long before the UN would be in Kolwezi and Jadotville (New York 1672, November 7).

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Samuel E. Belk

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