

Value of UN Presence

Yet the involvement of the United Nations in the Congo was unquestionably right, and perhaps inevitable. The conflict which had broken out in the Congo was internal, but outside intervention was already a fact and the very real possibility of major international conflict growing out of the Congo situation was evident to all. Negative successes are difficult to document, but it is a fact that the United Nations has contained, though not yet eliminated, outside intervention and that international hostilities have not broken out over the Congo. It is not unreasonable to suppose, at the least, that the involvement of the United Nations and the physical presence of United Nations forces in the Congo have been a factor in keeping the peace internationally. More remains to be done, of course. My Delegation urges all member states concerned to comply with the terms of the Security Council resolution of February 21 and previous resolutions. Only if this is done will the Congolese people be free to settle their own problems.

Even at the outset, the military role of the United Nations was not solely a matter of dealing with outside intervention or of helping to prevent international conflict. From the start there was a concurrent role of technical and direct assistance to the Congolese government and armed forces. This was broadened, through subsequent mandates from the General Assembly and the Security Council and in recognition of the increasing degree of confusion and conflict in the Congo, until, under the Security Council resolution of February 21, the United Nations forces have a definite role, as well, in the prevention, halting and containment of civil war. At the same time, they remain under the clearest instructions not to be a party to, or to seek to influence the outcome of, any internal conflict; they are, in other words, to be completely impartial.

Violence Must be Ended

It would be difficult to argue that measures to bring an end to violence and bloodshed, to prevent or to contain civil strife, are not an essential concomitant to any successful programme for dealing with the two other Congo problems: the problem of needed civil assistance and the problem of a political solution. It can even be maintained, I believe, that they are vital to the other aspects of the military problem, for unrestrained civil strife constitutes an open invitation to outside intervention, and carries with it the possibility of international conflict. Yet for all their justification, it is in these respects that the United Nations operation is breaking new ground. Perhaps it is not surprising that it is here also that it has encountered the most serious difficulties and has met with the strongest criticism.

I do not propose to discuss these difficulties in any detail. For one thing, I do not believe that their solution will be hastened, at this juncture, by making them the subject of partisan debate. They can only be solved by the slow and unspectacular processes of patient negotiation and conciliation undertaken with goodwill and good faith. For what they have already done in trying circumstances, my country pays wholehearted tribute to the Secretary-General and his staff, and to the Supreme Commander, the officers and the men of all nations serving in the United Nations forces in the Congo.