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*L'ambassadeur en Belgique
au secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Ambassador in Belgium
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

TELEGRAM 498

Brussels, July 27, 1960

CONFIDENTIAL. PRIORITY.

Reference: Your Tel M-458 Jul 25.†

Repeat London, Washington, NATO Paris, Paris, Permis New York (Information).

By Bag Lisbon, Accra, Pretoria, Lagos.

CONGO: WITHDRAWAL OF BELGIAN TROOPS

I think we have come to about the same conclusions as you have. Specifically I think we should do what we can to keep the interpretation of the Security Council Resolution⁷ flexible as Belgians have requested. By doing so we would avoid adding to the already very serious domestic political difficulties of Belgian government. I think Belgians will continue to be reasonable if they are not repeat not pushed too hard. At the same time we should quietly press Belgians to begin to withdraw some troops from Congo to Belgium as soon as local conditions permit. The arrival of some 8,000 UN troops in Congo would seem prima facie justification for at least a token withdrawal which should be a further calming influence and should help create an atmosphere in which the main problems might more easily be solved. I would prefer Canada apply any such pressure through NATO and the UN rather than directly as UK is planning to do since our interests and responsibilities in Africa are more general.

2. As for Belgian military bases in Congo, the essence of the problem seems to me to be not repeat not Belgian right to them under the treaty of friendship, though this might be evoked to gain time, but whether the bases are really needed. With Congo independent and no repeat no other overseas territory, Belgium cannot repeat not justifiably claim on her own account to need Congo bases after order is restored.

3. In general we think that we should, when framing a Canadian policy, bear in mind the attainment of three main objectives: first the restoration of order; secondly the restoration of unity; and thirdly, restoring conditions under which relatively normal life of the Nation can be resumed.

4. (A) On the first problem, order is in the course of being restored by the UN. The policy is established and is now being implemented. Evidence of good faith on all sides seems more important than the speed at which the UN troops replace Belgian, especially in the Katanga; hence the importance in our mind of at least a token Belgian withdrawal. (B) As for the restoration of unity, the best hope seems to lie in some new arrangement between Katanga and Congo proper on a confederal basis, but such an arrangement does not repeat not seem possible until Congolese leaders are more surely in the saddle, whether these be Kasavubu and Lumumba or their successors. This would seem to depend on achieving the third objective: re-establishing relatively normal conditions under which the social, economic and political life of the country could resume. And this in turn depends on outside help. To mitigate the cold-war aspect, this help should come from the UN, the UN in mufti.

⁷ C'était la résolution du 14 juillet.
This was the resolution of July 14.