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DEA/6386-40

*Note du chef de la 1^{ère} Direction de liaison avec la Défense
pour le sous-secrétaire d'État adjoint aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from Head, Defence Liaison (1) Division,
to Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs*

SECRET. CANADIAN EYES ONLY.

[Ottawa], January 8, 1963

U.N. ACTION IN KATANGA

The two attached telegrams to New York (DL-9† and 10† of January 7), repeating the text of reports from the Canadian Commanding Officer in the Congo, describe the circumstances under which the U.N. Command in the Congo reportedly decided to send troops toward Jadotville “regardless of New York’s wishes.” You will recall that this incident was also reported in telegrams from New York, Brussels and Leopoldville.

2. While this decision is understandable and may prove best in the Congo’s long-term interests, this division which has general responsibility for liaison with DND on the conduct of U.N. “peace-keeping” operations, is very much concerned about the precedent which may have been established. The chain of command between the U.N. Headquarters and the troops actually engaged in “peace-keeping” operations has always left something to be desired. In this case, if the allegation is confirmed, the local U.N. Commanders have taken a decision to proceed with military operations because of military considerations and of their assessment of the political situation in opposition to the political assessment made by the Secretary-General himself. Such a move, in our estimation, endangers the whole concept of peace-keeping operations as they have been supported consistently by Canada since 1956. It is essential, if such operations are to be successful, that troops serving under the U.N. banner be able to show greater restraint in any circumstances than could be expected from other armed forces. One may recall that in a similar situation, but a different political context, General MacArthur was asked to resign U.N. Command in Korea in 1951. At that time Canada would have strongly resented any independent move made by U.N. Commanders in the field.

3. It would seem that the Secretariat itself has appreciated the gravity of the incident and that the departure of Mr. Bunche for the Congo⁴ may be related to it. This should help to restore the chain of authority between New York and Elisabethville. We wonder, however, whether what has already occurred may not have far reaching consequences. It may later on help to persuade Governments that to agree to the presence of U.N. troops on soil would be risky; at the very least it would induce them to insist on controlling the nationality of the local U.N. Commanders. There is no need to stress the dangers raised by this precedent insofar as it would affect the conduct of future U.N. “peace-keeping” operations.

4. I suggest that we should first endeavour to establish the facts. Even though there is little doubt that U.N. Commanders in the Congo did not fully obey orders from New York, it would be necessary to ascertain the terms of the instructions which were received from New York and how far U.N. Commanders were prepared to go against these. I suggest that the facts can best be obtained in Washington and a telegram is attached for your approval.†

⁴ Voir/See *Foreign Relations of the United States 1961–1963*, Vol. XX (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1994), documents 400, 401; *American Foreign Policy, Current Documents, 1963* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1967), pp. 641-647.