

representative, were to submit clear evidence which is not now available to us. In the meantime some scepticism may be permitted. It was no secret that some sort of expedition was planned; the requisition of the aircraft was public knowledge; anyone familiar with local circumstances would have known that they could not land at Bukavu and that Usumbura was the most logical landing-place. This much information, at least, was available, directly or by simple deduction, not only to the Belgians but to the UK, the US and probably others. It is difficult, moreover, although perhaps not wholly impossible, to believe that Belgium would not have been aware of the whole plan of the operation from the many Belgian advisers attached to the Leopoldville régime.

The Belgian Case

As to the general validity of the Belgian case, it appears that Belgian authorities acted contrary to paragraph VI of the September 20 UNGA Resolution in providing, in fact, passage and assistance to the military force from Luluabourg. Even granting that Kasavubu, as the recognized head of the Government of the Congo, has a legal right to request passage through Ruanda-Urundi from Belgium and even assuming, which is not certain, that Belgium, as the administering authority, would under normal circumstances have the right to grant this passage through its trust territory, nevertheless it would be under no obligation to do so and under the present circumstances its action is contrary to the UNGA Resolution which forbids "assistance for military purposes." There also seems to be no justification for transporting the troops to the border instead of requiring them to depart from Ruanda-Urundi in the aircraft in which they arrived.

The Casablanca Conference

It is doubtful whether the Casablanca meeting of African leaders added significantly to the dangers inherent in the Congo situation. These dangers include the possibility of civil war on an increasingly broad scale, with significant forces withdrawn from UN command but remaining in the Congo and aiding the Stanleyville régime; the possible defeat or forced withdrawal of remaining UN forces; and the possibility of open great-power intervention. These dangers remain very real. They were perhaps at their most menacing, however, in December, when the move to withdraw forces from UN command first gained momentum; they have, if anything, diminished slightly since then, if for no other reason simply because the worst possibilities have not materialized. It may be doubted whether the threats and demands of the extremist African leaders are more menacing for having been formally repeated at Casablanca; it might even be argued that they are less so, since leaders noted for the intemperance of their utterances have found so little new to say. There remains the threat to take "appropriate action" at an unspecified time, if the UN does not meet the demands of the African leaders. Without discounting this threat, however, one can doubt whether it really confronts the West with a new and newly-menacing situation.

The Appeal to NATO Solidarity

It would appear from the foregoing that there are legitimate doubts as to whether we know the full story of the Bukavu incident (although we might not wish to say this openly) and that the Belgian case is by no means above criticism, even on Belgium's own account of the facts. Finally there does not appear to be any new and overwhelmingly menacing situation which would make Western unity of overriding importance.

There would seem to be no reason, therefore, to alter our usual stand that NATO solidarity as such is not essential in a UN context. This is all the more the case insofar as the Congo is concerned, bearing in mind that we have continued to support the Secretary-General, and that the Secretary-General and Belgium are directly opposed to each other on this issue.