

Nations, V.A. Zorin, demanded that the Security Council be convened to discuss “the threat to peace and security resulting from new acts of aggression by Belgium against the Congo” and further charged that the Belgian actions “represent an open armed intervention . . . and a gross violation of the international status of the trusteeship territory of Ruanda-Urundi.” A Security Council meeting is being held today to discuss this charge.

The Belgians in their defence to be presented to the Security Council claim:

(1) The trusteeship agreement grants Belgium over Ruanda-Urundi, in matters of security, the rights and powers of a sovereign state. Although it was physically impossible for Belgian authorities to prevent the landing of Mobutu forces at Usumbura because Kasavubu’s request was late in reaching Brussels, they did not go beyond the rights and powers of a sovereign state when they authorized Congolese forces to land.

(2) Article 6 of UNGA resolution of September 20 states that “without prejudice to the sovereign rights of the Republic of Congo” all states should refrain from direct and indirect provision of military aid to the Congo, etc. According to the Belgians, Kasavubu, who asked for the right of transit through Ruanda-Urundi, is generally recognized as being the legal authority of the Congo. They were therefore justified in agreeing to his request; otherwise Kasavubu might have accused them of interpreting the resolution in a manner prejudicial to the sovereign rights of the Congo.

(3) The Belgians claim that Mobutu’s operation was not a full-fledged military operation but could be considered as much a negotiating mission as a military undertaking.

In his statement to the PAC the Belgian Ambassador stated that Belgium and the West have both an interest and a moral responsibility in the Congo and added that Belgium could not make the necessary effort in the Congo alone. In respect to the Usumbura incident he stated that Belgium had very little time in which to examine the question before being presented with *a fait accompli* by the arrival of the troops. It was true that the Belgian authorities in Ruanda-Urundi could have disarmed the Kasavubu troops by force but nobody knew how serious the resulting fight would be. In any case there were political reasons for not taking this course of action; the Belgians wished to support the Kasavubu Government and did not see that the request was in conflict with the Security Council resolution which called upon member states not to hinder the Congolese Government in the exercise of its authority. He further stated Belgium’s argument that it is usual in times of peace to permit the passage of troops from a friendly country into another part of that friendly country. The Ambassador concluded by stating that Belgian reports indicated that the UAR and the Communists were definitely bent on setting up a separate government in Orientale Province. The decisions taken by the more extreme African leaders, at their meeting just concluded in Casablanca, pointed up the grave dangers to the West in the Congo situation. He concluded that it was necessary to face Communist-Afro-Asian unity with Western unity.

The Belgian argument received some support from the Netherlands representative who agreed on the need for unity on the part of the West in facing the Communist bloc.

The Belgian appeal raises a number of important questions. In the first place it is necessary to consider whether the facts, as stated by the Belgian representative, are accurate. Then there is the question of the validity of Belgium’s legal defence of its actions. There is the question of whether the dangers arising out of the Casablanca meeting have been accurately stated. Finally, there is the question of Canada’s response – in the light of these other considerations – to Belgium’s appeal for NATO solidarity.

### *The Facts of the Incident*

We have no alternative, at the moment, to accepting the Belgian version of what happened. This situation might change, however, if the Secretary-General, for example, or the USSR