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Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Delegation,
in the General Assembly on December 19, 1960

Item 85 -
The Situation in the Republic of the Congo

Mr. Chairman:

The developments of recent weeks in the Congo have been followed with serious concern in Canada, as they have in other parts of the world. As recently as December 15, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable J.G. Diefenbaker, informed the Canadian Parliament that he considered recent developments in the Congo to be most disturbing. He gave it as the Canadian Government's view that a continuation of some present trends could only lead to more chaotic conditions in that country.

While it is difficult to see a pattern emerging in Congolese political affairs, there is one possible future course of events which, in our view, can be predicted with some confidence; that is, what the future would hold if the United Nations operations should be allowed to fail. On December 13, the Secretary-General told the Security Council what he thought might happen in such an event. He was prepared to predict the most serious consequences. It may be that a number of delegations here have arrived at similar conclusions. We are inclined to believe that such consequences could follow - and follow fairly quickly - if the present situation were not somehow corrected. This is why my Government considers that this session of the Assembly, before it recesses, should take action to give direction at this critical juncture.

The Canadian Government considers that the United Nations operations in the Congo are of a significance which goes far beyond their immediate impact on the situation in that country. On August 1, the Prime Minister of Canada, in requesting the unanimous support of the House of Commons for substantial

support for the United Nations operations in the Congo, said that the United Nations force "represents a major step forward to that day when, wherever difficulties may arise anywhere in the world, . . . the nations comprising the United Nations will all make available to an international force whatever is requisite to assure peace." At the current session, the Canadian representative in the Fifth Committee has argued strongly that the question of providing adequate financial support for the United Nations operations must be considered in this same broad political context, and not merely as a financial and budgetary matter.

Since the United Nations was founded, the responsibilities which the Charter originally imposed on the Great Powers have to a considerable measure been transferred in practice to the middle and smaller members of the organization. In a special sense, the United Nations has come to be an organization to which the smaller and weaker countries particularly can look for effective collective action to preserve their independence. Indeed, the forces for such collective action are often provided by nations which would themselves find considerable difficulty in preserving a genuine measure of independence if an effective United Nations did not exist. This development is of the greatest present and potential significance for the entire international community. To its success, my government believes, the world has owed the preservation of peace several times in the past decade.

Seen in this light, the United Nations operations in the Congo assume far-reaching significance. Mindful of this background, it would clearly be unwise for the Assembly to judge events in the Congo from the point of view of day-to-day developments or considerations of narrow national interest; or to evaluate these operations merely in terms of their relative success or failure in meeting day-to-day crises or in promoting what one or another country might conceive to be the solution which is in the best interests of the Congolese people.

Awareness of this background has, in fact, determined the attitude which my Government has followed consistently during the crisis. It has governed Canadian participation in the Advisory Committee on the Congo; it has

determined Canadian voting in the Assembly; and it has dictated the strength of Canada's material and financial contributions to the United Nations operations. My Government could have wished at different times that different courses of action had been pursued in the Congo. It could have sought to influence the United Nations operations to serve particular purposes which Canada believed should be served. But we have considered that it was important to resist these temptations and to exercise a degree of restraint even when events were taking place, the immediate results of which were not to our liking.

In the Canadian view, what is at stake in the Congo is not only the future of that unhappy country, important though that is, but the continuing effectiveness of United Nations peace-keeping machinery, and my Delegation, in judging any proposal which is placed before the Assembly, must consider whether it would strengthen the peace-keeping function of the United Nations if it were adopted.

From this point of view, my Delegation experiences a number of difficulties in considering the draft resolution which has been presented in the name of India and a number of other Delegations. In its first operative paragraph, for example, the draft resolution asks the Assembly to consider "that the United Nations must henceforth implement its mandate fully." The obvious implication of the word "henceforth" is that the mandate has not been implemented fully in the past. Is this a just comment? My Delegation believes that it is not. The Secretary-General, in his recent speech to the Council, has pointed to what my Government believes is the real source of the difficulty. It is not that the United Nations mandate has not been implemented as fully as circumstances allow; the difficulty has been that it has not been possible to reach agreement on any definition of the mandate other than as interpreted by the Secretary-General and implicitly endorsed by both the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Secretary-General has objected, and with justice, in the Canadian view, to the practice of some member states of strongly criticizing the conduct of the United Nations operations in the Congo, yet failing to take the political responsibility for any re-definition of the United Nations mandate they may consider desirable. In these circumstances,

the Secretary-General can only continue to take, on his own, the responsibility for decisions which might more properly be assumed by the members themselves. If the Secretary-General is charged with this responsibility, he has to be allowed a reasonable degree of discretion in interpreting and implementing his mandate, and the membership at large cannot complain about the way in which he carries out his orders. For these reasons, the Canadian Delegation cannot accept the implication of the first operative paragraph of the seven-power resolution that the United Nations mandate has not been properly implemented in the past. In the very difficult situation which faces the United Nations in the Congo, it may be that there is a need for a more precise definition of its mandate. However, the seven-power text does not, in the Canadian view, give greater precision but rather tends to add further ambiguity, and ambiguity of a potentially dangerous kind.

Another main difficulty which my Delegation finds in examining the seven-power draft resolution is that, while it urges that certain steps should be taken, it does not define all these steps clearly, although some are stated clearly - nor does it say anywhere who is to take the steps which are urged. My Delegation considers that this constitutes a serious weakness. Despite the complications of the situation in the Congo, there are, after all, a number of fixed points of reference and factors of apparent continuing importance. On the one hand, there is a failure to co-operate with the United Nations. This failure arises from a number of sources. On the other hand, there is the fact of the United Nations presence and the fact that there are certain centres of power in the Congo, of varying degrees of legality. Some of these facts have been recognized in a formal way by the United Nations. The Assembly has, for example, accepted the credentials of President Kasavubu. The Canadian Delegation abstained in the voting on President Kasavubu's credentials on the very good grounds that Canadian membership on the Advisory Committee precluded our taking a stand on a question which, as it was presented to the Assembly, was an issue in Congolese internal politics. Nevertheless, these credentials have been accepted. The Canadian Delegation, therefore, has no reason to doubt that one of the constant factors which must be recognized by the Assembly is the fact and the legality of President Kasavubu's position.

The United Nations representative in the Congo, in a recent report, went further than this and indicated two sources of legal power in the country. In addition to President Kasavubu, he recognized the legality of the Congolese Parliament. This too, in the Canadian view, must be accepted - and the resolution before us, in Document A/L.331, does recognize this to the extent of urging the immediate convening of parliament. However, there are, in addition, a number of other political forces in the Congo. In fact, Colonel Mobutu obviously wields certain powers. In fact, Mr.Gizenga commands a political following. So indeed do Mr. Tshombe and Mr. Kalondji. There may be others.

My Government believes that it would be a waste of the Assembly's time (and potentially dangerous) to attempt to put forward a solution which did not take due account of the hard facts of the prevailing political situation in the Congo. A policy which is not based on a recognition of these facts is simply not likely to be viable. Whatever resolution the Assembly decides to adopt must take account of the need for either a clearer definition of the United Nations mandate, or recognition of the limits imposed by the mandate as now defined; it must also take account of the facts of the present internal situation. From this point of view my Delegation finds the draft resolution contained in Document A/L.331 disappointingly vague. The Secretary-General is not even mentioned, nor is there any specific reference to those authorities and political forces in the Congo who, in fact, will have responsibility for implementing the measures which the resolution urges.

For these reasons, and because the resolution is capable of interpretation in a sense implying interference in Congolese affairs in a way which is clearly contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and which would have very grave implications for the future of the organization and for international peace and security, my Delegation is compelled to vote against it.

The United Nations representatives in the Congo, in a recent report, went further than this and intimated the exercise of legal power in the country. In addition to President Kasavubu, he recognized the legality of the Congolese Parliament. This too, in the Canadian view, must be accepted - and the resolution before us, in document A/L.321, does recognize this to the extent of urging the immediate convening of parliament. Surely, however, in addition, a number of other political forces in the Congo. In fact, Colonel Mobutu obviously wields certain power. In fact, Lumumba represents a political following. So indeed do Mr. Kashamura and Mr. Kalondji. These may be others.

My Government believes that it would be a waste of the Assembly's time (and potentially dangerous) to attempt to put forward a solution which did not take due account of the hard facts of the prevailing political situation in the Congo. A policy which is not based on a recognition of these realities is not likely to be viable. Nevertheless the Assembly decides to adopt, must take account of the need for either a clear redistribution of the United Nations mandate, or recognition of the limits imposed by the mandate as now defined: it must also take account of the facts of the present internal situation. From this point of view, the draft resolution contained in Document A/L.321 disappointingly vague. The Secretary-General is not, we understand, for instance, any specific reference to the authorities and political forces in the Congo who, in fact, will have responsibility for implementing the measures which the resolution envisages.

For these reasons, and because the resolution is capable of misinterpretation in ways implying interference in Congolese affairs, it is my Government's strongly considered view that the United Nations and its officers would have very serious implications for the future of the organization and of international peacekeeping, unless the operation is conducted to vetoes and limits.

On the other hand, the resolution in Document A/L.332, which stands in the names of the United Kingdom and the United States of America, seems to us to afford guidance to the Secretary-General and at the same time to reaffirm certain basic principles which can be directly related to the development of the United Nations role in the Congo.

This resolution puts emphasis in its preamble, and again in operative paragraph 5, on the obligations assumed by the United Nations for assisting the Congolese in the maintenance of law and order, including the safeguarding of civil liberties, in the Congo. It thus touches upon a fundamental condition for any emergence of a free and democratic political and social system there. Moreover, paragraph 5 of the resolution emphasises - and this seems to us very important - that "no measures contrary to recognized rules of law and order will be taken by anyone against any persons held prisoner or under arrest anywhere in the Republic of the Congo."

The draft resolution also asks the Secretary-General to do everything possible to "assist the Chief of State in establishing conditions in which Parliament can meet and function in security and freedom from outside interference". We welcome this recognition of the importance of parliament. We recognize the difficulties in the way of the free and secure functioning of parliament in the prevailing conditions in the Congo, but we feel strongly that this objective must be pursued.

We are glad to note that in paragraph 7 of the resolution there is a recognition of the constructive role which we consider that the representatives of the Advisory Committee who are proceeding to the Congo for the purpose of reconciliation could play. We hope and expect that the Congolese authorities will lend their full co-operation to this mission of conciliation, and indeed that they and all other groups in the Congo will afford the United Nations the maximum positive co-operation within their power.

When the Canadian Government was invited to contribute Canadian personnel to the present United Nations operation in the Congo, Canada responded in the spirit of co-operation with the United Nations which has since the beginning been a central part of Canadian policy. We know that others did the

same. We did not assume that the United Nations could, on its own, settle the problems of the Congo. These can only be settled by the Congolese people themselves. Recognizing this, we were actuated only by the desire to help, not to impose solutions. But this help cannot be fully effective without the co-operation of all Congolese who have the interests of their country and of international peace and security at heart. This co-operative undertaking cannot be allowed to fail. We believe that resolution A/L.332 , if implemented fully by all concerned, will contribute to the success of this complex and difficult United Nations endeavour in the Congo, and thus to the return of conditions of stability in that country. For this reason the Canadian Delegation will vote for the draft resolution sponsored by the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I should like to express my admiration for the great integrity and steadfastness of purpose of the Secretary-General. He and his lieutenants, within the limitations imposed by the constitutional, material and human resources at their command, and on behalfof the Congo, of Africa, and of world peace, have taken up a very onerous burden indeed. They have carried this burden courageously and objectively in the interests of the principles and purposes of this Organization in which the faith of a great majority of states reposes. The violence of the attacks spear-headed by the Soviet bloc, built on a tissue of mendacious invective, has only served to demonstrate their real motives. Superficially these attacks have been directed at the Secretary-General and at alleged imperialist intrigues of the NATO allies. This must, incidentally, include my country, but who, I wonder, could honestly believe that Canada has imperialist or aggressive designs against the Congo? The real objectives of these propagandistic attacks by the Soviet bloc must surely be clear to four-score-and-ten states represented here. These are: to achieve control where they can; to subvert what they cannot control; and to destroy what they cannot subvert to their own ends. This applies to the United Nations itself, whose success in promoting the welfare and genuine independence of new states is threatened by such policies. It particularly applies in the

case of the Congo, where the development of peace, tranquillity and self-determination on anything but Soviet terms is impeded by every device at their command which they judge will not result in the ultimate conflict. The international community must dissuade them from this course, which puts in jeopardy not only the United Nations operation in the Congo but the future of this organization.

ree of the Korea, where the achievement of peace, reasonability and self-determination on anything but Soviet terms is invaded by armed devices in their command which they judge will not result in the ultimate conflict. The international community must disassociate from this course, which now is jeopardy not only the United Nations operation in the Korea but the future of this organization.