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Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Delegation,
in the General Assembly, on April 4, 1961

## The Situation in the Congo

Mr. President:

When this Assembly adjourned three months ago, it was in an atmosphere of deep concern over the course of events in the Congo. There is no need for me to review the developments of the intervening period. Some have been tragic. Some have been profoundly disquieting in their implications. Few have given much ground for satisfaction or for optimism. If there is one encouraging sign to be found, it is perhaps the evidence there has been in this debate of widespread concern to find a real and lasting solution to the problems which beset the Congo. Encouragement can be found in this fact, I believe, even though we cannot ignore, at the same time, the evidence of deep and fundamental disagreement over the direction in which any solution should be sought.

There is not, of course, just one single Congo problem. There are at least three Congo problems, and in one of these, I am happy to say, the United Nations and its agencies, with help from governments and other outside sources, have been outstandingly successful, and have earned the whole-hearted appreciation of the Congolese authorities. This is the whole field of social, economic and technical matters in which the United Nations Civilian Operations in the Congo have been functioning quietly and efficiently: bringing emergency relief, combatting famine conditions, assisting medical and health services, helping to restore communications, and co-operating in a wide variety of other

technical and administrative fields. In our concern with the more intractable aspects of the Congo problem we must not lose sight of these successes, or fail to pay tribute to the devoted and unselfish efforts which have made them possible.

The other two main Congo problems are what might be called in general terms the military problem, and the political problem. Both present unusual features, so far as the United Nations is concerned, largely because of the fact that "The Situation in the Republic of the Congo" - as it appears on the Assembly's agenda - is to an important extent the internal problem of a sovereign state. The United Nations, with its strong awareness - written clearly into the Charter - of the limitations which apply when matters of domestic jurisdiction are involved, has had no previous experience with exactly this type of problem. No such situation was envisaged, indeed, when the Charter was drafted.

Yet the involvement of the United Nations in the Congo was unquestionably right, and perhaps inevitable. The conflict which had broken out in the Congo was internal, but outside intervention was already a fact and the very real possibility of major international conflict growing out of the Congo situation was evident to all. Negative successes are difficult to document, but it is a fact that the United Nations has contained, though not yet eliminated, outside intervention and that international hostilities have not broken out over the Congo. It is not unreasonable to suppose, at the least, that the involvement of the United Nations and the physical presence of United Nations forces in the Congo have been a factor in keeping the peace internationally. More remains to be done, of course. My Delegation urges all member states concerned to comply with the terms of the Security Council resolution of February 21 and previous resolutions. Only if this is done will the Congolese people be free to settle their own problems.

Even at the outset, the military role of the United Nations was not solely a matter of dealing with outside intervention or of helping to prevent international conflict. From the start there was a concurrent role of technical and direct assistance to the Congolese government and armed forces. This was broadened, through subsequent mandates from the General Assembly and the Security Council and in recognition of the increasing degree of confusion and conflict in the Congo, until, under the Security Council resolution of February 21, the United Nations forces have a definite role, as well, in the prevention, halting and containment of civil war. At the same time, they remain under the clearest instructions not to be a party to, or to seek to influence the outcome of, any internal conflict; they are, in other words, to be completely impartial.

It would be difficult to argue that measures to bring an end to violence and bloodshed, to prevent or to contain civil strife, are not an essential concomitant to any successful programme for dealing with the two other Congo problems: the problem of needed civil assistance and the problem of a political solution. It can even be maintained, I believe, that they are vital to the other aspects of the military problem, for unrestrained civil strife constitutes an open invitation to outside intervention, and carries with it the possibility of international conflict. Yet for all their justification, it is in these respects that the United Nations operation is breaking new ground. Perhaps it is not surprising that it is here also that it has encountered the most serious difficulties and has met with the strongest criticism.

I do not propose to discuss these difficulties in any detail. For one thing, I do not believe that their solution will be hastened, at this juncture, by making them the subject of partisan debate. They can only be solved by the slow and unspectacular processes of patient negotiation and conciliation

undertaken with goodwill and good faith. For what they have already done in trying circumstances, my country pays whole-hearted tribute to the Secretary-General and his staff, and to the Supreme Commander, the officers and the men of all nations serving in the United Nations forces in the Congo.

There is one point upon which I must touch, however, and that is the regrettable circumstance whereby individual members and units of the United Nations force in the Congo have all too frequently found themselves in conflict with the forces they had come to the Congo to help. Sometimes these incidents have taken the form of obstruction or harassment of individuals or small units by clearly undisciplined groups of Congolese soldiers. On other occasions, as in the recent incidents at Banana and Matadi, what has happened has been, to some extent at least, a matter of deliberate policy and direction.

It is difficult for me, as a Canadian, to take a detached view of these matters. Canada's contribution to the United Nations forces in the Congo is small in terms of total numbers, but this fact does not make the life or the welfare of any one of these men a matter of any less concern to the Canadian Government and the Canadian people. It is not an easy thing to see these individuals endangered or humiliated, in what can only seem to be a completely pointless manner. In addition to Canada's understandable concern about its own forces, the incidents to which I have referred have grave implications for the United Nations as a whole. What is at stake here is not some obscure point of interpretation, but the fundamental meaning and dignity of the United Nations organization and the personal safety of its representatives in the Congo. It is Canada's view that a most unequivocal stand in this regard must be taken by the United Nations and that it must be unreservedly supported by all the members of this body.

Our strong view on this matter of adequate security for United Nations personnel in no way detracts from our recognition

of limitations governing the use of force by United Nations troops in seeking to prevent violence and civil war as provided for in Security Council Resolution of February 21. This is an entirely different matter. Clearly the United Nations is not a party to the conflict in the Congo, nor is it pitted against any faction there. It must by its mandate, as I have already noted, be impartial. It can employ force, under its mandate from the Security Council, but only as a last resort. This qualification must be taken to mean precisely what it says and must be applied in each case according to the circumstances. For the rest, the United Nations must make its best endeavour to bring about an appropriate understanding of its aims and objectives in the Congo, and to eliminate the misunderstandings which have been a tragic source of trouble in the past. My Delegation has urged repeatedly in the appropriate quarters, and urges once more, that these efforts be vigorously pursued.

I have said that it is difficult for countries and governments to take a dispassionate view when the dignity, the safety, and even the lives of their nationals seem to be being placed pointlessly in jeopardy. It is almost equally difficult to be forced to watch while the complex and painful problems which I have described are cynically used, by some, to mount a vicious attack against the fabric of the United Nations and against its dedicated Secretary-General. I can only say that it has bolstered my country's confidence in the soundness of the United Nations that this cynical attempt to exploit the tragedy of the Congo for extraneous and unworthy purposes has met with so little positive response.

I shall wish to revert to the military asepcts of the Congo problem in another context before I close, but I should now like to turn to the third type of problem I mentioned earlier - the political problem. Here we encounter a fundamental dilemma.

We can all agree, I think, that the ultimate achievement of a political solution in the Congo is basic to the final success of the United Nations intervention. For whatever may be done - in implementation of General Assembly or Security Council directives - to contain the threat to international peace and security and to restore order, and whatever may be done by other agencies of the United Nations to deal with the many other tragic problems which beset the Congo, these can be no more than stop-gap measures in the absence of a real and lasting political settlement. Conversely, it cannot but be recognized that a clear-cut political solution would do more than anything else to remove the threat to international peace and security, and to hasten the solution of the other problems I have mentioned.

But - and here is the dilemma - it has been clearly recognized that a political solution, with agreement on the constitutional and legal forms which should prevail in the Congo, must of necessity (and quite properly) be matters for the Congolese people alone to decide. Stated in its simplest terms, a political solution is vital to the United Nations, but the United Nations cannot intervene to achieve a political solution.

I am well aware that, while lip-service is paid to a policy of "hands off Congo politics", many if not most states represented here today have their own ideas of what the solution should be - ideas which usually correspond to those of one or another of the contending factions in the Congo itself - and they are not above doing what they can, internationally, to foster the solutions they favour. This is a subtle kind of intervention in the internal affairs of the Congo - and a sort of interference which unfortunately no United Nations operation can prevent.

Yet, oddly enough, for this very reason, it remains true that the United Nations could not - even if it wished - impose a political solution on the Congo, for there could never be agreement on the solution to impose. Differences of opinion, reflecting to

some extent the basic ideological and other differences with which we are all too familiar in the United Nations, would always prevent such agreement. No proposed solution for the Congo, no faction in its internal political conflict, can win an absolute majority of support here.

What is perhaps worse is that the divisions here to a considerable extent inhibit the reaching of a solution there. It must already have been remarked in the Congo that, although we insist here that the Congolese should settle their own political differences, there is no corresponding enthusiasm - there may, indeed, be outright condemnation - when some of the political leaders in the Congo get together and do in fact attempt to settle some of their political differences.

This is a deplorable situation, and it prompts me to ask very seriously indeed: Is the United Nations incapable of assisting the Republic of the Congo to find a solution to its political problems? Must we perpetuate, in that unhappy country, the differences which plague us here?

This need <u>not</u> be so, I believe - but on one condition. This condition is that we admit the truth of what I have just been saying: that none of us can hope to win majority support here for the particular type of solution he favours for the Congo, or majority acceptance of the particular Congolese leader or faction he endorses. Once this is admitted, I believe that the United Nations can in fact leave the Congolese people to settle their own political problems - can even give them impartial and constructive assistance to that end.

It is clear that the United Nations cannot, and should not, remain indefinitely in the Congo. Perhaps it is not too early, therefore, to ask ourselves what minimum conditions of order, stability and security should be met before the task of the United Nations forces there can be completed. Looking forward to that day, we should be prepared to admit that the situation which

the United Nations will leave in the Congo may be less than perfect. But is this so surprising? How many of us would claim that political conditions in our own country are ideal? Given their slender preparation and their underlying problems, should we expect more of the Congolese?

It is apt to be forgotten, I think, that one important effort has already been made in the direction of a political settlement. The Conciliation Commission was not - despite its commendable achievement in this field - primarily a fact-finding Commission. The first task of the Conciliation Commission was to conciliate. It would appear, moreover, that it came very close to succeeding - I have in mind, particularly, the statement on this point by the distinguished representative of Ghana in his observations in Annex XX of the Commission's report. The Commission has, moreover, indicated a variety of ways in which the United Nations could assist the Congolese people to find a solution, and I commend them to the Assembly's attention.

Most particularly, I would urge upon all member states the wisdom of abandoning the sterile sort of dispute which seeks to discredit all but one or another favoured faction in the Congo on the grounds that the others have no valid claim to legality or constitutionality. The view of my Delegation is that legality and constitutionality have for so long been disregarded in the Congo that no faction is immune from this type of attack. This is not intended as criticism of any of the de facto authorities in the Congo. A wise Asian colleague in the Advisory Committee has remarked that legality is not apt to be a feature of revolutionary situations, and this is very true. At the same time I would urge the authorities in the Congo to return to legality and constitutionality in their actions as rapidly as possible. I would draw the Assembly's attention to the Conciliation Commission's recommendations in this connection, because this seems to me to be the best

way, and possibly the only way, in which the views of the real sovereign authority - the Congolese people themselves - can be adequately taken into account.

It has been generally recognized that it is of crucial importance to the United Nations effort in the Congo that there should be a legal and effective Congolese Government for it to deal with, and I have suggested measures which might help towards the achievement of this objective. In the meantime there is, in Canada's opinion, a considerable field for constructive co-operation between the United Nations authorities and the de facto authorities in the Congo. My Delegation urges that this area of practical co-operation be widened in every way possible.

Before leaving this general subject of the role of the United Nations in the Congo and the relationship between the world organization and the Congolese, I should like to re-state Canada's conception of the essential nature and purpose of United Nations involvement in the Congo. In our view, the fundamental objective of the United Nations effort is to help the Congolese people to solve their problems themselves. Whether in vital first steps to restore public order, or in the formulation of more substantive measures for a return to constitutional procedures or, when these initial problems are overcome, in bringing to bear all the varied resources of the United Nations in re-building the economy and administrative services of the country, the United Nations can assist the Congo effectively only in co-operation with the Congolese. The United Nations should not seek to impose solutions to the problems of the Congo.

It is relevant to observe that the objectives of the United Nations operation in the Congo have apparently not been fully understood by the Congolese people, nor indeed- and this is more important - appreciated by the majority of Congolese leaders. Efforts are being made to correct this situation. But since the success of the United Nations' efforts in the Congo must depend

on working with the understanding and support of the Congolese, this should be one of the most urgent and important tasks of the United Nations representatives in the Congo.

Mr. President, I have described the problems facing the United Nations in providing civil assistance to the Congo, in dealing with the various military questions which have arisen, and in fostering a political settlement. I have spoken of the successes achieved, of the difficulties faced - many of them new in United Nations experience - and I have suggested various ways in which, in my Delegation's view, we might profitably proceed in the future. I have not laid much stress on what is at stake for the United Nations in the Congo, because I think there is no lack of awareness of it. What is at stake, of course, is nothing less than the continued ability of the United Nations to take effective action in cases of threats to peace and security. This awareness is indicated, among many other ways, by the response to the Secretary-General's recent appeal for additional troops to serve with the United Nations in the Congo. In this regard, I should like to pay special tribute to the Government of India for its action in making available very substantial numbers of troops at a critical juncture.

For Canada's part we have attempted throughout the course of the United Nations involvement in the Congo to provide what assistance we can in the most appropriate manner open to us, in the form of technicians, emergency food supplies and medical aid. Because of Canada's contribution of non-combatant military personnel serving in the Congo, Canada has had a place on the Secretary-General's Advisory Committee. It has always been our intention to play what I might call a non-combatant role in that context as well. But without violating the confidential nature of the deliberations of the Committee, I think I can say, Mr. President, that we have found it to be for the most part not only a non-combatant committee but a thoroughly hard-working and constructive one.

I should now like to turn for a moment to some of the broad financial implications for the United Nations of operations such as that now being carried on in the Congo. The years since San Francisco have seen this Organization assume increasingly extensive functions and responsibilities,in the economic and social as well as in the political fields. Step by step with this development, which all of us must welcome, the financial resources required have also swelled to magnitudes not contemplated in 1945. The regular annual budget for the United Nations alone already stands at some 73 million dollars. Quite apart from the resources made available to the International Bank, the International Development Association, and the International Monetary Fund, the total annual contributions to the United Nations Specialized Agencies, the Expanded Programme, and the Special Fund now total approximately 250 million dollars. To the strain of these commitments have been added in recent years the heavy demands of peace-keeping activities. These last, I need hardly add, lie close to the heart of the United Nations concept, and appear in the Charter as the first of the co-operative purposes which must guide us in the implementation of our responsibilities.

The United Nations in the Congo is the most complex and costly peace-keeping operation ever undertaken by this organization, and it has placed an unprecedented burden on the already strained financial resources available to the United Nations. So far, the operation has not been placed on a firm financial footing and temporary measures have had to be employed to obtain the necessary finances. These have involved heavy borrowing from the Working Capital Fund and from the reserves of the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme. The result has been what is unquestionably the most critical financial crisis the Organization has ever had to face.

In these circumstances, the Assembly's attention must be directed urgently to reaching a decision, on the estimates

submitted for the Congo operation in 1961, which will ensure the continued financial health of the Organization, and ensure also that its vital peace-keeping activities will not be jeopardized simply for want of the necessary financial means. To put it more bluntly, the question is whether the Congo operation will be allowed to succeed - whether, in other words, the Organization is prepared to provide the financial resources required to implement its own decisions.

The extreme gravity of the situation which will face the United Nations if no suitable solution to the financial problem is found, and found quickly, will be immediately apparent when viewed in the political context in which the Congo situation has evolved, a context which I have already described. Quite apart from its other novel aspects, the Congo operation represents a further advance in United Nations efforts to develop effective machinery to keep the peace, when the Great Powers, which are charged with this responsibility, are unable to reach agreement. If this machinery is to continue to be available in the service of international peace, this Assembly must make adequate financial provision for it. A failure to do so at this critical juncture would not only run dangerous risks for the Congo, but would place in jeopardy the ability of this Organization to take effective action in other situations in the future in fulfilment of its peace-keeping responsibilities. Of particular significance is the fact that financial instability could also jeopardize the ability of the Organization to maintain the pace of its vital economic and technical assistance programmes. All aspects of the Organization's work are therefore threatened.

These thoughts should be before us as we consider the costs of the Congo operation. I do not minimize the difficulties which members will face in meeting the financial commitments which this operation makes on them. My Delegation recognizes that the burden will be particularly onerous for those members in

the process of developing their economies, many of whom are themselves receiving international assistance in one form or another. Nevertheless, we believe it is important that the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations should continue to be regarded as a collective responsibility requiring that each member bear his fair share. The principle which must be maintained is that the collective benefits we all reap from the existence of a strong and effective United Nations lay upon all of us a collective duty to take up loyally the responsibilities - in political, military and financial terms - which our membership entails.

Mr. President, there is at issue here the future not only of the Congo but also of the United Nations. This challenge is for all members of the United Nations, large and small, to meet, but the middle and smaller Powers have most at stake because they have most to lose if the United Nations fails. As has been truly said before in this Assembly, it is the middle and smaller Powers, and especially those who have recently reached independence, which are the principal beneficiaries of a strong and sound United Nations. It is principally those Powers which look to the United Nations for the defence of their independence and for disinterested economic and technical assistance. And it is to those Powers that I appeal particularly to support the United Nations in this time of trial.