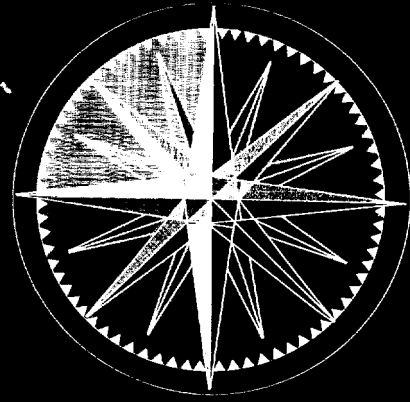


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SPECIAL REPORT

BELGIAN TECHNICAL AND MILITARY AID TO THE CONGO

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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ARMY review(s) completed.

State Dept. review completed

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BELGIAN TECHNICAL AND MILITARY AID TO THE CONGO

Belgian technical and military assistance, despite its many failings, is nonetheless the key element in the rehabilitation of the Congo. The various aid programs involve over 2,500 people and an annual expenditure of some \$80 million--a major undertaking for a nation with a shortage of skilled workers and chronic budgetary problems. The programs have enabled the Belgians to maintain considerable political leverage in the Congo and to ensure in some measure the security of the \$3-billion investment of Belgian business there. However, there is little likelihood that the technical assistance programs will ever be adequately staffed and financed, reorganized to exclude the self-interested and ineffective personnel, and able to train the Congolese to the extent necessary to permit them to establish a viable, long-term civil administration. The picture on the military side is brighter, because the Belgian logistics effort has been quite successful, and all reports indicate that Belgian retraining of the Congolese Army may prove effective.

Technical Assistance

The Belgian technical assistance effort in the Congo consists of two basic programs--one comprising some 2,000 "working level" technicians, the other consisting of 62 administrators organized in administrative teams with considerable authority over their counterpart Congolese officials, Congolese in subordinate positions, and the general population. The personnel of both programs are concentrated in the areas of large-scale Belgian investment--some 1,300 in the mining regions of Katanga in the southeast and the rest in the rebel-torn plantation areas of the north and east.

The Belgian program authorizes a T/O of 2,050 personnel, about two thirds of them teachers, under the regular technical assistance program.

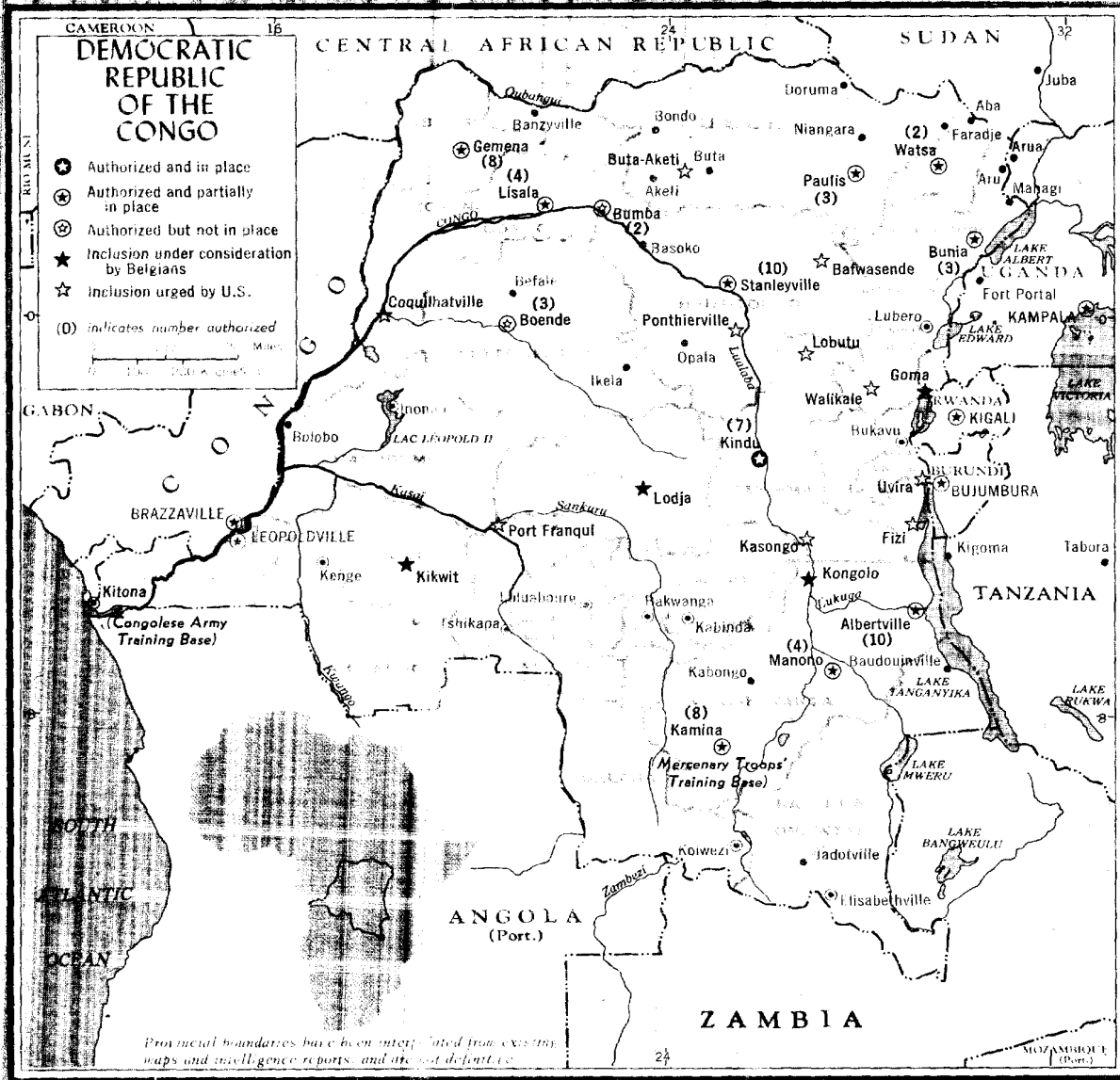
This undertaking represents for the most part a continuation of the Belgian participation in civil administration of the colonial period under a technical assistance program. It retains many of the personnel and much of the organization of its predecessor, but a measure of Congolese management and financing has been added.

Most of the Belgians had served in the Congo prior to 1960; many left the country for some months or years during the chaos that followed independence, only to return when a semblance of order began to be restored. Others left during the continuing rebellion in the northeast, causing a net loss of 244 technical personnel between 1963 and 1964. (See table on Page 2).

Belgium's financial contribution to the program this year

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Belgian Administrative Team Personnel in the Congo



Belgian Regular Technical Assistance Personnel in the Congo

TECHNICAL SKILL	AUTHORIZED	ACTUAL	ACTUAL
	1964	1964	1963
Education	1219	1219	1199
Public Health	260	202	187
Economics and Finance	118	116	91
Agriculture	103	66	80
Justice	94	66	50
Communications	79	67	108
Public Works	65	63	107
Police	63	49	Not Available
Other	49	62	332*
TOTAL	2050	1910	2154

*Includes Police

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is \$19 million, most of which will go to pay and equip the Belgian technicians. Belgium gives the Congo no financial aid on a grant basis; it has not done so since independence, unless the servicing of the Congolese national debt--\$44 million in 1965--is included in this category. Brussels has offered a \$20-million credit in the form of a short-term, 7.5-percent interest loan, but Leopoldville is showing little enthusiasm for it.

Administrative Teams

The first administrative team began its duties in October 1964 at Kamina. These teams were established in early 1964 to provide high-level Belgian direction and control of the civil administration which might facilitate its rehabilitation. The teams must parallel a Congolese administration, not supplant it. They are limited to areas of pressing need and of immediate Belgian concern, mainly because the Belgians do not provide the resources for a nationwide program.

The basic team was to consist of a chief, an agronomist, a public works expert, an economist, and a financial affairs specialist. In practice the teams have had from 2 to 12 members, with skills and specialties depending on the needs of the designated areas.

Recruitment in Belgium has been slow--many of the personnel are "Congo hands," some have been

drawn from the regular technical assistance program. The Belgian Government provides only \$100,000 annually to support the teams.

Of the 64 administrators who are to make up the teams, 51 are in place and 11 others are expected to arrive by 1 November. In addition to the 12 locations for which teams are authorized, the Belgians are considering extension to four others, and the US is urging the inclusion of an additional 10. (See map on page 2)

Evaluation

Belgian technicians apparently account for virtually everything that is being done in their areas of competence, but the programs are poorly planned and managed, inadequately financed, and achieving far less than their potential. There is little coordination and cooperation between the Belgians and the Congolese, but both parties seem to prefer it that way. The Belgians like having a free hand, and the Congolese are content to have the Belgians do the work.

Officials in Brussels, however, feel little sense of urgency in filling personnel and material commitments to the Congo, since Belgian public opinion is at best apathetic on the matter. Consequently, the government's effort varies with the intensity of the pressures from the Belgian Embassy in Leopoldville, Belgian business interests in the Congo, and the United States Government.

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Both Jean Cordy, the coordinator of the regular technical assistance program, and Jacques Brassine, chief of the administrative teams, have shown an interest in extending their present mandates and programs to include the training of the local administrators required to meet the needs of the Congo. Cordy has been particularly frank in noting that the colonial administration's failure to provide technical education and training is the underlying cause of the present rebellion.

The students are generally free to attend the school of their choice. All scholarship applicants are tested in the Congo on their knowledge of French and mathematics.

About 44 percent of those at the college level were studying liberal arts, 30 percent economics and business, and 26 percent sciences, engineering, and medicine. This is a good balance, in contrast to the usual overwhelming preference for liberal arts among students from the less developed countries.

Military Assistance

The Belgian military aid program focuses on retraining the Congolese National Army (ANC) and providing operational support for the mercenary and ANC units that are engaging the rebels. Belgium also participates with the United States and the Congo in a logistics group which reviews the Congolese Government's expenditure of military credits.

Students in Belgium

Figures for the last academic year indicate that Congolese were studying in Belgium under scholarships totaling \$1.58 million. Of this number, 407 were at high-school level, 494 at college level, and 28 at graduate level. In 1960 there were only 76 Congolese students at the university level and considerably fewer at the high-school level.

As of mid-April 1965, approximately 240 Belgian Army personnel of all ranks were serving two-year tours in the Congo. This number is expected to reach 300 by the end of 1965 and 350 by the end of 1966. The majority (179) are technical assistants, about half of whom are assigned to the ANC training center at Kitona. The remainder are advisers to top Congolese officers or selected ANC units.

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There are also some 50-70 logistic advisers who provide operational support for the mercenaries and the ANC. They include infantry troops as well as supply corps personnel. Their tour is three months, and their number varies depending on the availability of volunteers for this duty.

The Belgians undertook the retraining of the ANC by default. When it was recognized during the course of the UN operation that this revamping was vital to the rehabilitation of the Congo, it was hoped that the UN or a combination of Western states would accept the task. The indecision of the former and the fears of the latter that massive Western participation would raise the specter of neocolonialism caused the Belgians to step in.

This program now is considered a vital part of the Belgians' effort to establish their influence over the chief security organs of the central government. It was many months after the initial agreement was made with Premier Adoula in 1963 and reaffirmed by Tshombé in mid-1964 that the Belgians commenced their effort in November of 1964.

The Kitona Project

The Belgians have staked the success of their retraining program on a single effort, the Kitona project. This calls for the training of three battalions totaling 1,800 men annually,

although the number presently in training is probably closer to 1,200 and only two battalions will be ready this year.

Belgians serve as instructor-advisers; much of the equipment is provided by the United States. All recruits must have a minimum of four years of primary schooling. They are screened and recommended for the program by the Belgians, but the ANC has the final say on their participation. The course includes six months of basic infantry training and four months of specialized training in weapons, communications, and the like.

The key elements and most controversial aspect of the program is the use of Belgian officers as instructors during the training phase and as advisers when the battalions move to the field. A Belgian will be at the elbow of each battalion and company commander, but the adviser's de facto command authority will depend on his personal relationship with his Congolese counterpart.

All reports from Kitona indicate that this aspect of the program is working well during the training phase in spite of occasional Congolese hostility toward the Belgians. Whether this will carry over to a field situation where Belgians will necessarily be advising Congolese to take action against Congolese is questionable. The Belgians hope to minimize friction by segregating the Kitona trainees as much as possible from the rest of the ANC.

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The first Kitona-trained battalion moved to Stanleyville in late August and is preparing to take on security responsibilities in that area. If this unit and those that follow prove effective, they will gradually take over the functions now performed by mercenaries.

It is hoped that all ANC officers and NCOs will eventually pass through the Kitona training center. At present about 100 are trained annually in Belgium.

The Belgian Air Force Role

The Belgian Air Force (BAF) program is separate from the regular Belgian-Congolese military assistance agreement, but is likely to be brought under it during the current renegotiation of the pact. The 165 officers and airmen involved are rotated every three months.

Morale, once a problem, now is high, and requests for reassignment to this duty have been numerous since the Belgians became active in the black market. It was concern with this activity which brought the BAF chief of staff to the Congo in May 1965. However, he was more impressed by the sharp improvement in morale than by the potential antagonisms that might develop between the Belgians and Congolese because of such activities.

During their three-month tour Belgian pilots fly between 100 and 125 hours each in six C-47s and a single C-54 to provide supplies for the mercenary and ANC units which are active

against the rebels in the east and northeast. Combat air operations are conducted for the most part by mercenaries.

The training of Congolese pilots and airmen is being carried out by the Italian Air Force mission. Difficulties have developed between the Belgian and Italian missions, the Belgians being torn between their fear of any potential challenge to their position and their desire to have other nations bear some of the manpower and financial burdens. At present the latter consideration, augmented by pressure from the United States, predominates and the Belgians are supporting a continuation of the Italian effort.

All BAF personnel were scheduled to leave the Congo by the end of September 1965 under an agreement reached at Belgian urging during Ambassador-at-large Harriman's visit to Brussels in March 1965, but it was later agreed that they would remain as long as deemed necessary. The US had maintained continuous pressure on the Belgians to remain until an adequate alternative could be found. The lessening of BAF agitation for withdrawal after the chief of staff's May trip also contributed to the government's decision to continue the operation.

Any increase or even a continuation at the present level would probably require NATO acceptance of a further weakening of Belgium's capacity to fulfill its commitment to the defense of Europe.

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The Logistics Group

A logistics group was established in early 1965, and is supported by credits of \$4 million from the Congo, \$2 million from Belgium, and \$2 million worth of equipment from the United States. It was conceived by the Belgians to ensure a measure of control over the ANC and to secure a formal material commitment from the United States. The chiefs of the Belgian and US military missions and the commander in chief of the ANC comprise the group, and must unanimously pass on the ANC's expenditure of the available fund.

The group also advises the Congolese Government on the spending of its own defense budget, but formal checks are difficult, because of third-country purchases and the like. It was in this forum, however, that the US and Belgium were able to convince General Mobutu, the Congolese Army chief, to scale down his dreams of a 100,000-man army to a more easily financed, trained, and disciplined one of 25,000.

The Mercenaries

Belgians comprise a large part of one of the principal mercenary battalions, the 6th Commando. At the beginning of the year the unit numbered some 330, spread around in various locations which it garrisons throughout the Congo. The quality of the soldiers of the 6th is generally low and most of the real fighting is done by the South African 5th Commando, led

by Colonel Hoare. The 6th performs a valuable function, however, by freeing the more effective South Africans for active duty. The 6th is not part of the Belgian assistance program, but is paid and equipped by the Congolese Government.

Also present in the Congo are a considerable number of Belgians hired as "industrial guards" by plantations and factories in locations exposed to rebel harassment. There are, for example, Belgians guarding a textile mill north of Albertville, a tin mine in Kivu, and a palm oil plantation near Bumba which has frequently been subject to rebel attack.

Military Problems

Many of the problems besetting the technical assistance program also hamper the military aid effort. The Belgian public is apathetic; planning seldom goes beyond the project of immediate concern; funds are lacking; and the personnel, all volunteers, are generally not first rate, as service in the Congo is not helpful to a career in the European-oriented Belgian armed forces.

There are few in the Defense Ministry who believe in the Congo involvement and few who have any sympathy for the requests for men and materiel coming from the Congo. Moreover, the more sympathetic Foreign Ministry has little influence on the Defense Ministry under the Belgian constitutional

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system, which emphasizes the independence of individual ministries.

The Belgian chiefs of staff are scheduled to visit the Congo this fall to familiarize themselves with the locations and situations mentioned in the continuing requests for support. The trip comes at a time when the Defense Ministry is under pressure to trim its budgetary estimates, and the chiefs probably regard the Congo allocations as the most expendable. On a more positive note, however, it has been suggested that these officers have finally come to accept the fact of a long-term commitment to the Congo.

Outlook

Most of the Belgian public and many officials in the Belgian Government are unenthusiastic about or openly hostile to the Belgian involvement in the Congo. A few powerful financial interests and government officials, however, are able to exert enough influence to ensure a continuation of Belgian assistance, as long as they believe that in some measure these programs are safeguarding Belgian commercial interests in the Congo. At the same time, the efforts of these interested officials vary with the intensity of the pressure from the US--a pressure to which Foreign Minister Spaak, in particular, has responded.

The Belgian Government may at times threaten to discontinue its aid to exert leverage on the Congolese political scene, but it seems unlikely to carry out such threats barring a complete breakdown of Belgian-Congolese relations. The Belgians are easily riled by Congolese criticisms, such as the recent attacks on the technical assistance program by Interior Minister Nendaka, but at the same time they are willing to learn to live with just about any Congolese politician.

The Belgian Government which took office in July 1965 has shown every indication of implementing its pledge to put forth a balanced budget for the next fiscal year. To the Belgian voter, cuts in defense and foreign aid expenditures are much more palatable than a decrease in his social benefits or an increase in his tax burden. Moreover, if a reduction in defense spending must come, the defense establishment would first seek a substantial cutback in the Congo operation.

Spaak and other interested officials can probably keep the aid effort going at its present level, but any chance of increasing it is slight. A markedly demonstrable success of either the technical or military assistance programs would greatly strengthen their position. The Kitona training program seems to be the best hope of providing such a success.

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