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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

9 July 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: A New Crisis in the Congo

SUMMARY

Although President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Tshombe, working together, have brought a measure of quiet and progress to the Congo, their relationship appears on the verge of breaking up. They may realize the probable consequences of the collapse of their working arrangement, i.e., a revival of political infighting, a major resurgence of the rebellion and even possibly a new secession of Katanga under Tshombe. However, the situation is worsening and the Congo may be in for a return to troubles reminiscent of Adoula's administration in 1963-64.

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1. The working arrangement between President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Tshombe appears to be on the verge of breaking up. Kasavubu's unassailable legal position, combined with Tshombe's energy and administrative ability (plus his white mercenaries)

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have been responsible for the restoration of some order in much of the Congo during the past year. Both men would have a good deal to lose from a breakup of the present arrangement and it is by no means certain that they will not patch up their differences. But Kasavubu has apparently decided to assert himself and has begun working with anti-Tshombe figures. If Kasavubu were to go so far as to force Tshombe out of office the Congo government would lose its most effective man, Kasavubu would have against him the man who controls rich Katanga and who could cause him a great deal of trouble, and the rebel cause in the Congo would be likely to revive.

2. Kasavubu's trump card is his power to dismiss the prime minister or any cabinet official at will. Normally a "do-nothing" individual content to bask in the trappings of office, Kasavubu has permitted Tshombe to shoulder the burdens of stemming the rebellion and attempting to install some semblance of administration in the Congo. However, Tshombe's overwhelming victory in the recent parliamentary elections, and increasing speculation that he would run for president in the forthcoming elections, apparently have convinced Kasavubu that he should whittle Tshombe down to size. This has been the pattern

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of Kasavubu's actions in the past whenever a prime minister displayed signs of becoming popular.

3. Kasavubu has taken a number of actions to this end. He has been intriguing with some influential political outs, such as ex-Foreign Minister Bomboko, who have been stirring up his suspicions that Tshombe was scheming against him. More importantly, he has engineered the annulment of Tshombe's election victories in three provinces, and fired Tshombe's Katanga side-kick, Minister of the Interior Munongo. He is in touch with former prime minister Adoula and may bring him back to Leopoldville. His next move may be to terminate Tshombe's "provisional" government and to set up another government, with a new prime minister, to hold office until the presidential elections later this year. Either action would join the issue between the two and would probably lead to a political crisis.

4. Tshombe feels discouraged and insecure. He knows that he is boxed-in and that almost any move he can take would be extralegal. While Tshombe has developed a considerable following, even outside his native Katanga, he would probably consider it very difficult to take over in the Congo by a coup. He knows that General Mobutu is beginning to lean to Kasavubu, and that he

could take a considerable portion of the Congolese Army with him. Furthermore, he is uncertain of US support which he regards as crucial. And he knows that other black African states are looking for opportunities to do him in. The sine qua non of the Tshombe-Kasavubu working relationship was a degree of mutual tolerance if not trust. Tshombe is probably still agreeable to Kasavubu's remaining as president with himself as prime minister providing the president's powers are reduced. But the breach between the two is already very wide -- self-seeking supporters of both are seeking to extend it even more -- and it now seems improbable that Kasavubu will accept the relationship with Tshombe he has had before, unless forced to do so by external pressure.

5. Meanwhile, the Congolese rebels continue to roam large areas of the bush, though their cause has not flourished. However, large numbers still receive hospitality or active support and training, in part from Chinese, in neighboring countries: 2,000-4,000 in the Sudan, 4,000 in Tanzania, and at least several hundred in Uganda. Some of these trained rebels have already returned to the eastern Congo and the return of more would result in a considerable increase in the power of radical Africans. The only effective force which could dislodge the rebels from

remaining strongholds in the eastern Congo is Tshombe's mercenaries. If Tshombe is ousted, the mercenaries would doubtless go with him, and it is probable that the rebel cause would again flourish, particularly because few of the problems which brought it about have been dealt with as yet.

6. This is not to exclude entirely the possibility of a "Bantu" compromise. Tshombe is aware that Kasavubu is seeking to improve his bargaining position after his party was humbled in the elections, and there is some chance that Tshombe may buy off Kasavubu by expanding his cabinet to include a number of Kasavubu's backers. Should Tshombe convince Kasavubu that he will not run for president, or even less likely, should US-Belgian pressure on Kasavubu prove persuasive, crisis may be avoided. However, the chances that any of these solutions will come to pass seem to be declining fast, and there is a good chance that the Congo will again be plunged into a new round of troubles. These could take almost any form, but some plausible eventualities include rebel gains and concomitant radical influence, a primitive kind of civil war, or the return of Tshombe to Katanga followed by a secession of that state. In any case, Tshombe's departure would remove just

about the only Congolese national figure with much administrative ability, and diminish greatly prospects for stability and progress.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



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Sor

SHERMAN KENT
Chairman