

# Congo. U.N. Advisory Committee on the Congo - correspondence, statements, p...

*HS L 179:152*



Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Congo - 1961

24 Feb.

Master text of message to African States  
conc. the need for troops and the function  
of the Force with variations for individ. countries.

24 February 1961

Master text of message to African States concerning  
the need for troops and the function of the Force,  
with variations for individual countries.

.....

Addressed to:	Cameroun
	Central African Republic
	Chad
	Congo (Brazzaville)
	Dahomey
	Ethiopia
	Gabon
	Ghana
	Guinea
	Ivory Coast
	Liberia
	Madagascar
	Mali
	Morocco
	Niger
	Nigeria
	Senegal
	Somalia
	Sudan
	Tunisia
	Upper Volta

I know your deep concern for the effectiveness of the United Nations operation in the Congo and for the attainment of the United Nations objectives of peace and stability in that country. I wish, therefore, to bring directly to your attention certain considerations affecting the United Nations Force in the Congo which assume a new significance in the light of recent developments.

At present the Force commands a strength of approximately 17,500 all ranks, comprising 20 battalions. That strength is threatened with an early reduction to some 14,500 officers and men, or about 15 battalions, if the decisions of the Governments of Indonesia and Morocco to repatriate their troops without replacement are implemented.

In view of the new demands on the Force envisaged in the resolution adopted without negative vote by the Security Council on 21 February, the reduction of the strength of the Force at this time would be paradoxical and most inopportune. Operative paragraph 1 of Part A of that resolution "Urges that the United Nations take immediately all appropriate measures to prevent the occurrence of civil war in the Congo, including arrangements for cease-fires, the halting of all military operations, the prevention of clashes, and the use of force, if necessary, in the last resort;". In all such measures, the presence of a strong United Nations Force is indispensable. Thus, the United Nations Force must continue to have a sufficient number of troops deployed to prevent armed conflict and to protect life and property. The threats, now increasing, of civil war must be met; the withdrawal and evacuation of all Belgian and other foreign military, para-military personnel and

mercenaries in the Congo will have to be arranged; the ingress of further military personnel and materiel to the Congo has to be checked upon and stopped. All this requires more troops.

In order to meet the needs created by the new resolution, the Military Command of the Force perceives a required strength for it numbering about 23,000, or 25 battalion.

You will agree, I am sure, that the countries of Africa should be looked to principally for the new components needed by the Force. Thus, I trust that it will be possible for your Government to respond favourably to this new appeal for troops to serve in the Congo,

[and to provide at an early date a contingent of your troops of not less than a battalion in strength. (All African States except Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sudan, Tunisia and Morocco)]

[and to provide an addition to your contingent of a battalion or more. (Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sudan and Tunisia)]

[and to permit the Moroccan contingent to remain in the Congo, and if possible to reinforce it; but as the minimum, to defer for sometime its repatriation. (Morocco)]

Permit me, in this context, to add a few thoughts about the function of the Force.

Previous contributions of troops to the United Nations Force have been based on the Security Council resolutions of 14 and 22 July 1960, the latter one supplemented by explanations regarding the character and mandate of the Force contained in my report to the Security Council of 18 July 1960 (S/4389), which was commended by the Council in the resolution of 22 July 1960, and thus - together with later stands taken by the Security Council and the General Assembly - represents an authoritative interpretation of the position of the United Nations. New contributions in troops obviously have the same

basis, but must also take into account the resolution of 21 February, which, without any change of the United Nations mandate, widens its scope and application. I draw attention especially to the reference to the use of force for prevention of civil war, "as an ultimate resort". Regarding the interpretation of this last mentioned clause, I have to refer to the debate that took place in the Council.

However, I may here draw attention to the attitude of some Governments of African States, contributing considerable elements to the Force. Three Governments in that position have made it clear that they can not permit their units to become parties to an armed conflict in the Congo.

[As you have said in a message to me: "The UN Forces in the Congo must not be found third party to any dispute which might arise." (Ethiopia)]

[From a statement of Ambassador Adeel, I understand that you share this view. (Sudan)]

[As you have said in a message to me: "In any case the Tunisian Government has no intention of engaging its forces against one or other of the parties concerned." (Tunisia)]

Without intending this to be an interpretation of the relevant clause in the resolution and with a view only to assisting in the clarification of the assumptions on which Governments base their contribution, I would like to make the following observations on the positions to which I have just referred.

The latest resolution, adopted by the Security Council, does not seem to me to derogate from the position that United Nations troops should not become parties to armed conflict in the Congo. The basic intention of the resolution is, in my opinion, the taking of all appropriate measures for the purposes mentioned, resort being had to force only when all other efforts

such as negotiation, persuasion or conciliation were to fail. If following such efforts, or measures taken in support of their result, United Nations troops engage in defensive action, when attacked while holding positions occupied in prevention of a civil war risk, this would not, in my opinion, mean that they become a party to a conflict, while the possibility of becoming such a party would be open were troops to take the initiative in an armed attack on an organized army group in the Congo.

If the position taken by the Governments referred to above, as I believe, does not derogate from the stand taken by the Security Council in the resolution, and if those Governments agree with the distinction just made, this distinction would obviously have to be observed in any instructions that have to be given to the troops by the United Nations Command.

[As you have yourself raised this question, I would appreciate your guidance in the form of comments on the observations just made. (Ethiopia, Sudan and Tunisia)]

That I address you on this general subject and to this length is a measure of the gravity of the situation and the urgency of the United Nations need. I would appreciate a reply at your earliest convenience.

Dag Hammarskjold  
Secretary-General

I know your deep concern for the effectiveness of the United Nations operation in the Congo and for the attainment of the United Nations objectives of peace and stability in that country. I wish, therefore, to bring directly to your attention certain considerations affecting the United Nations Force in the Congo which assume a new significance in the light of recent developments.

At present the Force commands a strength of approximately 17,500 all ranks, comprising 20 battalions. That strength is threatened with an early reduction to some 14,500 officers and men, or about 15 battalions, if the decisions of the Governments of Indonesia and Morocco to repatriate their troops without replacement are implemented.

In view of the new demands on the Force envisaged in the resolution adopted without negative vote by the Security Council on 21 February, the reduction of the strength of the Force at this time would be paradoxical and most inopportune. Operative paragraph 1 of Part A of that resolution "Urges that the United Nations take immediately all appropriate measures to prevent the occurrence of civil war in the Congo, including arrangements for cease-fires, the halting of all military operations, the prevention of clashes, and the use of force, if necessary, in the last resort;". In all such measures, the presence of a strong United Nations Force is indispensable. Thus, the United Nations Force must continue to have a sufficient number of troops deployed to prevent armed conflict and to protect life and property. The threats, now increasing, of civil war must be met; the withdrawal and evacuation of all Belgian and other foreign military, para-military personnel and

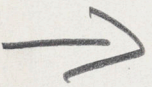
mercenaries in the Congo will have to be arranged; the ingress of further military personnel and materiel to the Congo has to be checked upon and stopped. All this requires more troops.

In order to meet the needs created by the new resolution, the Military Command of the Force perceives a required strength for it numbering about 23,000, or 25 battalions.

You will agree, I am sure, that the countries of Africa should be looked to principally for the new components needed by the Force. Thus, I trust that it will be possible for your Government to respond favorably to this new appeal for troops to serve in the Congo, and to provide at an early date [           battalion(s)] [and to reconsider the decision to withdraw the \_\_\_\_\_contingent or at the least, to defer that withdrawal for one or two months].

Permit me, in this context, to add a few thoughts about the function of the Force.

Previous contributions of troops to the United Nations Force have been based on the Security Council resolutions of 14 and 22 July 1960, the latter one supplemented by explanations regarding the character and mandate of the Force contained in the report of the Security Council of \_\_\_\_\_ July 1960, which was commended by the Council in the resolution of 22 July 1960, and this represents an authoritative interpretation of its position. New contributions in troops obviously have the same basis, but must also take into



account the resolution of 21 February, which in important respects clarifies and widens the mandate. I draw attention, especially, to the right, "as an ultimate resort," to use force for prevention of civil war. Regarding the interpretation of this last mentioned clause, the Secretary-General ~~is not in a position to give an authoritative interpretation and must refer to the debate that took place in the Council for clarification.~~

*He wishes to draw attention to the attitude of*  
 However, some Governments of African States contributing considerable elements to the Force *These governments in that position* have made it clear that they can not permit their units to become parties to an armed conflict in the Congo. This condition for the participation of troops from those countries is obviously not in contradiction with the terms of the resolution, and it must <sup>be</sup> observed by the United Nations in issuing instructions. *if as necessary, we are to preserve the participation of troops from the countries concerned.*

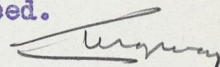
Were a conflict between armed units with different political allegiance to develop, United Nations troops would obviously become automatically parties to such a conflict if, in prevention of a civil war risk, they were to take measures involving an armed attack on any one of the two groups. On the other hand, it would not, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, mean that they become a party to the conflict if they engage in combat action when attacked, while holding positions occupied in prevention of such a risk. Thus, the wider authority granted in the resolution, which represents a valuable new element, will, because of the stand taken by contributing countries, have to find its unavoidable limitation in the rule so far maintained and approved by the Security Council to the effect that the United Nations troops can not use armed force other than for defensive purposes, including now, naturally, the defense of positions held in prevention of civil war.

*The general character of wounded was changed by the etc but considerably widened*  
 Without intending this to be an interpretation of the relevant resolution the S.S. wish to make following observations on this stand. *down to*

For the elaboration of the instructions called for by the new resolution, the Secretary-General would appreciate it if Governments contributing troops would clarify their views on the question that has thus arisen. Such a clarification could usefully state whether instructions, based on the conclusions drawn above from the stand of certain contributing countries, would fall short of what your Government would accept or desire, or whether they would exceed what the Government accepts.

That I address you on this subject and to this length is a measure of the gravity of the situation and the urgency of the United Nations' need.

Highest consideration,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Ugurey', written in a cursive style.

Je sais combien vous préoccupent l'efficacité de l'opération des Nations Unies au Congo et la réalisation des buts de l'ONU au Congo, à savoir la paix et la stabilité de ce pays. Je tiens par conséquent à porter directement à votre attention certaines considérations touchant la Force de l'ONU au Congo qui prennent une signification nouvelle eu égard aux récents événements.

A présent, la Force comporte un effectif d'environ 17.500 militaires de tous rangs, qui constituent 20 bataillons. Cet effectif menace d'être bientôt réduit à quelque 14.500 officiers, sous-officiers et soldats, soit une quinzaine de bataillons, si les Gouvernements de l'Indonésie et du Maroc mettent à exécution leur décision de rapatrier leurs troupes et de ne pas les remplacer.

Etant donné les nouvelles tâches prévues pour la Force dans la résolution que le Conseil de sécurité a adoptée le 21 février sans aucun vote négatif, il serait paradoxal et tout à fait inopportun de réduire en ce moment l'effectif de la Force. Dans le paragraphe 1 du dispositif de la partie A de cette résolution, le Conseil "demande instamment que les Nations Unies prennent immédiatement toutes mesures appropriées pour empêcher le déclenchement d'une guerre civile au Congo, notamment des dispositions concernant des cessez-le-feu, la cessation de toutes opérations militaires, la prévention de combats et le recours à la force, si besoin est, en dernier ressort". Pour toutes ces mesures, la présence d'une puissante Force des Nations Unies est indispensable. La Force des Nations Unies doit donc continuer de disposer d'un nombre suffisant de troupes déployées pour prévenir les conflits armés et protéger les personnes et les biens. Il faut faire face aux menaces de guerre civile, qui augmentent en ce moment; il conviendra d'assurer le retrait et l'évacuation de tous les personnels militaire et paramilitaire belges et d'autres nationalités, ainsi que des mercenaires, qui se trouvent au Congo; l'entrée de nouveaux personnels et matériel militaires dans le Congo doit être contrôlée et arrêtée. Tout cela exige des troupes plus nombreuses.

Pour faire face aux besoins créés par la nouvelle résolution, le Commandement militaire de la Force estime qu'il faut un effectif d'environ 23.000 hommes, soit 25 bataillons.

Vous admettez, j'en suis sûr, que c'est avant tout aux pays d'Afrique qu'il convient de s'adresser pour obtenir les nouveaux éléments dont la Force a besoin. Je compte donc que votre Gouvernement sera en mesure de répondre favorablement à cette nouvelle demande de troupes pour le Congo, et de fournir à une date rapprochée [ bataillon(s)] [et de reconsidérer sa décision de retirer le contingent ou, du moins, de différer ce retrait d'un mois ou deux].

Permettez-moi d'ajouter à cet égard quelques considérations au sujet du rôle de la Force.

Les précédentes affectations de troupes à la Force des Nations Unies reposaient sur les résolutions du Conseil de sécurité en date des 14 et 22 juillet 1960, la dernière de ces résolutions étant complétée par des explications touchant le caractère et le mandat de la Force contenues dans le rapport au Conseil de sécurité en date du juillet 1960, que le Conseil a approuvé dans sa résolution du 22 juillet 1960 et qui constitue par conséquent une interprétation autorisée de sa position. Les nouveaux envois de troupes reposent évidemment sur la même base mais doivent aussi tenir compte de la résolution du 21 février, qui à d'importants égards clarifie et élargit le mandat. J'appelle en particulier l'attention sur le droit de recourir à la force "en dernier ressort" pour prévenir la guerre civile. Au sujet de l'interprétation de cette dernière clause, le Secrétaire général n'est pas en mesure de donner une interprétation autorisée et il doit renvoyer, pour plus de précisions, au débat qui a eu lieu au Conseil.

Cependant, certains gouvernements d'Etats africains qui fournissent des éléments considérables à la Force ont donné clairement à entendre qu'ils ne pouvaient permettre

à leurs unités de devenir parties à un conflit armé au Congo. Cette condition mise à la participation des troupes de ces pays n'est évidemment pas en contradiction avec les termes de la résolution, et les Nations Unies devront l'observer dans les instructions qu'elles donneront.

Au cas où un conflit surgirait entre des unités armées ayant des allégeances politiques différentes, il va de soi que les troupes des Nations Unies deviendraient automatiquement parties à un tel conflit si, pour prévenir un risque de guerre civile, elles devaient prendre des mesures impliquant une attaque armée contre l'un quelconque des deux groupes. En revanche, elles ne deviendraient pas, de l'avis du Secrétaire général, parties au conflit si elles se livraient à une action de combat alors qu'elles seraient attaquées pendant qu'elles tiennent des positions occupées pour prévenir un tel risque. Ainsi, du fait de l'attitude prise par des pays participants, l'autorité plus large conférée par la résolution, autorité qui constitue un nouvel élément précieux, devra inévitablement trouver ses limites dans la règle, observée jusqu'à présent et approuvée par le Conseil de sécurité, en vertu de laquelle les troupes des Nations Unies ne peuvent pas recourir à la force armée si ce n'est à des fins défensives, y compris maintenant, bien entendu, la défense de positions tenues pour prévenir la guerre civile.

Pour pouvoir élaborer les instructions qu'exigent la nouvelle résolution, le Secrétaire général saurait gré aux gouvernements qui fournissent des troupes de bien vouloir préciser leurs vues sur la question qui s'est ainsi posée. Ces éclaircissements pourraient utilement indiquer si des instructions fondées sur les conclusions ci-dessus tirées de l'attitude de certains pays participants resteraient en-deçà de ce que votre Gouvernement accepterait ou désirerait, ou si elles dépasseraient ce qu'accepte votre Gouvernement.

Le fait que je m'adresse à vous à ce sujet et que je le fasse aussi longuement donne la mesure de la gravité de la situation et de l'urgence des besoins des Nations Unies.

Veuillez agréer l'assurance de ma très haute considération.