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LETTER DATED 6 AUGUST 1960 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
BELGIUM TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to send you herewith a note containing the Belgian
Government's comments on the statement by the Government of the Soviet Union on
the Congo, dated 31 July 1960 and reproduced in document S/4416.

I request that this text be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) W. LORIDAN
Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the United Nations

COMMENTS OF THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT ON THE STATEMENT BY THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ON
THE CONGO, DATED 31 JULY 1960

The statement of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Congo dated 31 July 1960 (as reproduced in document S/4416 of 4 August 1960) contains the following passage:

"The Soviet Government has resolutely condemned the imperialist aggression against the Republic of the Congo. This aggression has also been condemned by the Security Council, which demanded the withdrawal of Belgian troops from the territory of the Congo. The aggression has not yet ceased, and the interventionist forces have not been withdrawn".

The Belgian Government wishes to protest against this statement which, to use diplomatic terms, constitutes an untruth. The Security Council never condemned any State for being an aggressor against the Republic of the Congo. On the contrary, it refused to formulate such a condemnation.

At the 873rd meeting, on 13 July, the representative of the Soviet Union had indeed proposed an amendment to the draft resolution submitted by Tunisia, consisting in the addition of the following passage:

"Condemns the armed aggression of Belgium against the Republic of the Congo".

When that amendment was put to the vote it received only one vote in addition to that of the USSR, namely that of Poland. Seven members of the Security Council voted against the amendment, and two abstained.

It is clear, therefore, that the Soviet Union's accusation against Belgium met with no response in the Security Council.

At the 878th and 879th meetings the representative of the Soviet Union submitted a draft resolution which spoke of Belgian aggression, but he did not press it to a vote, doubtless because he knew that it would receive no more support than that received by the amendment which he had submitted on 13 July.

The call addressed to Belgium in Security Council resolutions S/4387 and S/4405 cannot, in good faith, be interpreted as a condemnation for aggression, as the Soviet Government's statement suggests. The Belgian Government has given the most formal assurance that the intervention of its troops in the Congo was exceptional and temporary in character and had one aim alone - the safety of Belgian nationals, who had been placed in grave danger owing to the failure of the Congolese State to ensure protection for private individuals. This intervention,

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which pursues no political aim, implies no interference in the internal affairs of the Congo. The rescue duties are destined to come to an end wherever the United Nations forces are capable of assuming responsibility for the safety of individuals, thus making it possible for the Belgian forces to be relieved. This link between the withdrawal of the Belgian forces and the re-establishment of a state of affairs where human lives are safe stands out clearly from the discussions in the Security Council, and particularly from the statement made on 21 July by Sir Claude Corea, the representative of Ceylon, one of the sponsors of draft resolution S/4405, who said:

"There should be some connexion established between the withdrawal of the Belgian troops and those in charge of the United Nations force, so that we really place on the United Nations authorities... the right to decide how far the United Nations force has been strengthened, so that the people of the Congo and the Belgian citizens in the Congo may be assured that law and order will be maintained and that they will be protected after the withdrawal of the Belgian troops."

The action undertaken by the Secretary-General pursuant to the resolution of 22 July is based on that interpretation.

The Belgian Government must reject as pure slander the statement by the Soviet Government to the effect that the "aggressors" (and it would appear from the context that this is a reference to Belgium) are organizing hunger in the country and disrupting its economic life.

It is not the intention of the Belgian Government to become involved here in a discussion of the reasons and responsibilities for the "disruption" of the economic life of the Republic of the Congo. It merely wishes to state that no objective observer can hold Belgian intervention accountable for the present chaotic state of the Republic of the Congo.

However, as for the charges to the effect that the Belgian Government has contributed to causing hunger in the Congo, the Belgian Government wishes to point out that, despite the painful circumstances which the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs was obliged to bring to the Security Council's attention in his statement of 20 July, Belgium has dispatched considerable quantities of foodstuffs to the Congolese people.

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Since the proclamation of the Congo's independence, Belgium has sent more than 8,400 tons of food to the Congo. The Soviet Union mentions its own contribution of 10,000 tons of food of various kinds, but had its contribution been proportionate to that of Belgium - taking into account the sizes of the two countries' populations - the Soviet Union should have sent, not 10,000, but 147,200 tons.

Furthermore, the Belgian Government deems it necessary to draw the attention of members of the Security Council to the way in which the Soviet public is kept informed of the work of the United Nations and, specifically, the work of the Security Council in relation to the Congo. On page 5 of its issue of 22 July, Pravda, the organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, carried a report on the discussion at the 877th meeting of the Security Council. Quite properly, it devoted much space to the statements made by the representatives of the Republic of the Congo and of the Soviet Union. It also devoted a few lines to the statement of the United States representative, but it thought fit to leave its readers in total ignorance of the important statement made by the Belgian representative.

The Belgian Government can only deplore the fact that the organ of the Soviet Communist Party did not consider it its duty to inform the Soviet public of the Belgian Government's position on the question of the Congo.

