

S

UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY  
COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

S/4451  
21 August 1960

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

OBSERVATIONS BY THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO ON THE MEMORANDUM BY MAJOR-GENERAL  
H.T. ALEXANDER (S/4445, Annex II)

The following observations by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Congo, Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, on the memorandum by Major-General H.T. Alexander annexed to a message from President Nkrumah of Ghana circulated at his request 19 August 1960, as document S/4445, is hereby circulated in accordance with the intention stated in that document.

I HAVE STUDIED CAREFULLY THE MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT NKURUMAH AND THE REPORT BY GENERAL ALEXANDER WHICH WAS ANNEXED TO IT, WHICH YOU SENT TO ME, AND I SUBMIT, AS SUGGESTED, MY COMMENTS THEREON. IN THIS, I WILL CONCENTRATE ON GENERAL ALEXANDERS REPORT.

I READILY ACCEPT THAT THERE IS MUCH ROOM FOR VALID CRITICISM OF THE UN FORCE IN THE CONGO. IT HAD TO BE QUICKLY IMPROVISED FROM NOTHING; ITS MILITARY PERSONNEL HAS BEEN RECRUITED FROM TWENTY-SIX DIFFERENT COUNTRIES; IT HAS ENCOUNTERED INTERNAL CONFLICT SITUATIONS INCLUDING SERIOUS INTER-TRIBAL WARFARE; AND IT HAS BEEN DROPPED INTO THE MIDST OF A COUNTRY AND PEOPLE WHO ARE TOTALLY UNPREPARED BY EXPERIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGY TO UNDERSTAND IT AND TO APPRECIATE ITS FUNCTION AND REAL WORTH.

GENERAL ALEXANDERS CRITICISMS, HOWEVER, IN THE MAJOR IMPORT, ARE NEITHER VALID NOR FAIR. HE DENOUNCES THE COMMAND OF THE FORCE FOR POLICIES FOR WHICH THEY ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE. AS THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IN THE CONGO, I AM THE RESPONSIBLE UNITED NATIONS OFFICIAL FOR INTERPRETING TO THE COMMAND OF THE FORCE THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE DIRECTIVES OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IN PURSUANCE OF THOSE RESOLUTIONS. IN SO DOING, FROM

THE OUTSET, I HAVE DESCRIBED THE FORCE IN THE CONGO TO MY MILITARY COLLEAGUES AS A "PEACE FORCE, NOT A FIGHTING FORCE". I HAVE STRESSED ALWAYS THAT THE ARMS CARRIED BY THE MEMBERS OF THIS INTERNATIONAL ARMY ARE TO BE USED ONLY IN SELF-DEFENCE, AND THAT THE FORCE IS IN THE CONGO TO DO HARM TO NO ONE, IF IT CAN BE AVOIDED. I AM WILLING TO ACCEPT IT AS A CRITICISM THAT I HAVE TRIED TO AVOID GETTING ELEMENTS OF THE FORCE INTO THE EXTREME POSITION OF HAVING TO SHOOT CONGOLESE. WE HAVE NOT ALWAYS SUCCEEDED IN DOING SO. THE TUNISIAN CONTINGENT IN KASAI FOR EXAMPLE, HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN SEVERE INTER-TRIBAL CONFLICT AND HAS HAD TO RESORT TO RIFLE FIRE IN SELF-DEFENCE WHEN IT HAS COME UNDER ATTACK WHILE ESCORTING UNARMED REFUGEES. IT HAS SUFFERED SOME CASUALTIES IN THE EXECUTION OF SUCH DUTIES.

THE UNITED NATIONS COMMAND HAS ISSUED ORDERS TO ITS TROOPS WHICH ARE VERY CLEAR ON THE SUBJECT OF THE EMPLOYMENT OF FORCE. OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE, FAMILIAR TO EVERYONE ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORCE, STATES, UNDER THE HEADING "USE OF ARMS": "AT ALL LEVELS, COMMANDERS ARE TO BE INSTRUCTED TO THE EFFECT THAT, ON NO ACCOUNT, ARE WEAPONS TO BE USED UNLESS IN CASES OF GREAT AND SUDDEN EMERGENCY AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF SELF-DEFENCE. IN SUCH CASES, THE COMMANDER ON THE SPOT WILL ENSURE THAT THE GREATEST CARE AND CONTROL ARE USED."

AGAIN, IN ITS DIRECTIVE ON "PROTECTION OF INTERNAL SECURITY", THE UN COMMAND STATES THAT "THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORCE IN THE CONGO AS DEFINED IN THE PROPOSAL TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL IS TO ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT IN MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER. IN PURSUING THIS PURPOSE, THE UN OPERATION IN THE CONGO SHOULD EXHAUST ALL POSSIBLE PEACEFUL MEANS OF KEEPING ORDER BEFORE ANY RESORT TO FORCE. EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE EXERTED TO AVOID HARM TO ANYONE, SINCE PUBLIC REACTION TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF FORCE BY UN PERSONNEL MIGHT WELL PROVE DISASTROUS TO THE SUCCESS OF THE ENTIRE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION." "FIRING, EVEN IN SELF-DEFENCE, SHOULD BE RESORTED TO ONLY IN EXTREME INSTANCES. ANY EFFORT TO DISARM MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORCE IS TO BE REGARDED AS A LEGITIMATE CAUSE FOR SELF-DEFENCE. THIS PRINCIPLE SHOULD BE INTERPRETED IN THE LIGHT OF THE OVER-RIDING FORCE OF PRINCIPLE."

/...

IF I INTERPRET GENERAL ALEXANDERS CRITICISMS CORRECTLY, HIS MAIN COMPLAINT IS WITH THE COMMANDS POLICY WITH REGARD TO THE USE OF FORCE. IT APPEARS THAT HE CONSIDERS "SHOOT ONLY IN SELF DEFENCE" POLICY AS WEAKNESS. THIS CAN BE THE ONLY MEANING OF SUCH EXPRESSIONS EMPLOYED BY GENERAL ALEXANDER AS THE FOLLOWING: "THE SITUATION ... WILL CERTAINLY BE HOPELESS UNLESS SOMETHING DRASTIC IS DONE TO DEAL WITH THE FORCE PUBLIQUE."; "LOSING THE INITIATIVE"; "THE USE OF FORCE"; "LIBERTY OF ACTION EVEN TO USE OF MINIMUM FORCE"; "PERSUASION GETS NOWHERE". GEN ALEXANDER, A GOOD FIGHTING MAN, I UNDERSTAND, TAKES A FIGHTING MANS APPROACH TO THE UN FORCE. IT MAY BE THAT HE FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO COMPREHEND THE NATURE OF AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE FORCE, OR OF THE POLICY OF RESTRAINT AND COOPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY WHICH MUST GOVERN THE ACTIVITIES OF SUCH A FORCE. FORTUNATELY FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE UN FORCE IN THE CONGO AS WITH UNEF, THERE ARE SOME GOOD FIGHTING MEN WITH IT WHO DO NOT HAVE THIS DIFFICULTY.

GEN ALEXANDER URGES THAT "EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO PERSUADE THE CABINET OF THE CONGO REPUBLIC TO COOPERATE IN ACTION TAKEN TO RETAIN AND REFORM THIS ARMY THE FORCE PUBLIQUE, BUT WHETHER OR NOT THE COOPERATION CAN BE OBTAINED, UNITED NATIONS MUST DO ITS DUTY". GEN ALEXANDER HERE GOES TO THE EXTREME OF PROPOSING THAT THE UNITED NATIONS TAKE OVER THE MEN AND ARMS OF THE CONGO NATIONAL ARMY EVEN AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO. THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE ONLY BASIS THE FORCE HAS FOR OPERATING IN THE COUNTRY IS THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION OF FOURTEEN JULY, IN WHICH, ACTING UPON THE REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE MADE BY THE CONGO GOVERNMENT, THE SECURITY COUNCIL DECIDED TO "PROVIDE THE GOVERNMENT WITH SUCH MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS MAY BE NECESSARY, UNTIL, THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF THE CONGOLESE GOVERNMENT WITH THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES MAY BE ABLE, IN THE OPINION OF THE GOVERNMENT, TO MEET FULLY THEIR TASKS; ... IN THE LIGHT OF THIS RESOLUTION, OUR POLICY IN THE CONGO HAS BEEN ONE OF SEEKING TO COOPERATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND THIS, ADMITTEDLY, HAS BEEN NOT WITHOUT DIFFICULTIES. THE UN IN THE CONGO HAS NEITHER SOUGHT TO REPLACE THE CONGO GOVERNMENT NOR TO MAKE IT CAPTIVE. THE UN FORCE IS IN THE CONGO AS A FRIEND AND PARTNER, NOT AS AN ARMY OF OCCUPATION. IT HAS STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED ANY SUGGESTION OF REPLACING IN ANY WAY THE FORMER COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION.

THE CONGO GOVERNMENT FOR SOMETIME NOW HAS BEEN CRITICIZING THE UN FORCE FOR "DISARMING" ITS NATIONAL ARMY -- AN UNJUST CHARGE, FOR WHEREVER ELEMENTS OF THE

/...

CONGOLESE NATIONAL ARMY HAVE LAID DOWN THEIR ARMS ON THE ARRIVAL OF ELEMENTS OF THE UN FORCE, THIS HAS BEEN A PURELY VOLUNTARY ACT. OBVIOUSLY, IF THE UN FORCE BEGAN TO USE ITS ARMS TO WOUND AND KILL CONGOLESE ITS DOOM WOULD BE QUICKLY SEALED, FOR IT CANNOT LONG SURVIVE AMIDST A HOSTILE PUBLIC. INDEED, THIS WOULD DEFEAT ITS VERY PURPOSE. I THINK IT NOT THE LEAST EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT THE UN FORCE GAINED VERY MUCH IN THE WAY OF PRESTIGE AND MORAL SUPERIORITY BY THE REMARKABLE RESTRAINT IT DISPLAYED, UNDER SEVERE PROVOCATION EARLIER THIS WEEK.

I NEED SAY VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE REFERENCES TO THE GHANA TROOPS AND THEIR OFFICERS. THESE ARE FINE TROOPS, SPLENDIDLY TRAINED AND OFFICERED AND THEY HAVE GIVEN GOOD SERVICE. THERE WERE, HOWEVER, SOME LAPSES AND MISTAKES DURING THE PAST WEEK, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH, CERTAINLY, COULD NOT BY ANYSTRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION BE BLAMED UPON "UNCLEAR INSTRUCTIONS". I REFER TO THE SUCCESSFUL EFFORT BY A GHANIAN OFFICER TO THWART THE ATTEMPT BY GENERAL RIKHYE AT NDJILI AIRPORT, JUST AFTER THE INCIDENT OF THE MANHANDLING OF THE CANADIANS, TO MARSHAL AND TALK WITH THE CONGOLESE SOLDIERS. THIS INCIDENT WAS FULLY KNOWN TO THE OFFICERS SUPERIORS, FOR BOTH LT COL ANKRAH AND BRIGADIER OTU APOLOGIZED TO GENERAL RIKHYE FOR THE OFFICERS CONDUCT AND ORDERED THE OFFICER HIMSELF TO APOLOGIZE. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER GENERAL ALEXANDER HAD LEFT LEOPOLDVILLE BY THIS TIME. I AM QUITE AMAZED, HOWEVER, THAT GEN ALEXANDER SHOULD HAVE INCLUDED IN HIS REPORT THE STATEMENT "I CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT THE ATTITUDE OF GHANIAN OFFICERS REFERRED TO IN THE SIGNAL REFERS TO BRIGADIER OTU...". HIS ASSUMPTION IS ENTIRELY INCORRECT AND DOES A SERIOUS DISSERVICE TO A FINE OFFICER. I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT GEN ALEXANDER WOULD HAVE SOUGHT TO BE SURE BEFORE BRINGING IN THE NAME OF ONE OF HIS OWN OFFICERS IN THIS WAY.

IN MY VIEW, GENERAL ALEXANDERS APPROACH IS UTTERLY WRONG. I AGREE, OF COURSE, THAT A REORGANIZED AND DISCIPLINED CONGOLESE NATIONAL ARMY IS A MOST, PERHAPS THE MOST, VITAL PROBLEM. BUT I AM CERTAIN THAT THE WAY OF FORCE OFFERS NO POSSIBILITY FOR AN INTERNATIONAL BODY OPERATING IN A SOVEREIGN COUNTRY AT THE INVITATION OF THAT COUNTRY.

-----

