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REPORT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LEOPOLDVILLE AREA

Telegram dated 5 March 1961 addressed to the President of the
Republic of the Congo by the Secretary-General

In the light of the grave events of the past few hours and with further reference to my letter to you dated 3 March 1961, I have the honour to protest to you most strongly concerning the unlawful acts which since 3 March have been perpetrated by the ANC, with the apparent involvement of Ministers of the Ileo regime, in the region of the Lower Congo against units serving under the UN Command. These developments raise the most serious questions of principle regarding the operation which the UN has undertaken, after an appeal from the Government of the Republic, upon decision of the Security Council, in pursuance of its function of maintaining international peace and security.

After grave developments, first at Banana and then, graver yet, at Matadi, in which ANC soldiers without provocation attacked UN units engaged in their assigned activity, there occurred an inadmissible threat of use of force to compel evacuation of the Sudanese UN unit from Matadi. In this connexion I must draw your urgent attention to the following points:

First, United Nations under Security Council mandate must keep complete freedom of decision as regards deployment of national contingents in performance of UN operation. In the exercise of its responsibility the placement of specific contingents will, of course, always be made with due regard to all the relevant circumstances. I am bound to consider unacceptable any attempt by force or otherwise to influence ONUC in this respect, including the setting of conditions as to the selection of units for Matadi. The forced withdrawal of the Sudanese detachment from Matadi today cannot be interpreted as derogating from this position of principle.

Secondly, the presence of the UN Force in Matadi is a vital condition for the carrying out of the UN operation in the Congo, especially for the prevention of civil war and the halting of military operations, for which, as you know, the Security Council resolution authorizes the use of force if necessary in the last resort. This point is necessarily subject, as regards placement of specific contingents, to the principles laid down in the preceding paragraph in the implementation of which the UN, on its own responsibility, takes into account all factors essential for the fulfilment of the task of the Force.

There is scarcely any need to emphasize that the decisions taken by the Leopoldville authorities within the next few hours will be crucial if the Leopoldville authorities are to convince the world that they continue to be committed, as you have assured me, to co-operation with, rather than defiance of the United Nations. I request you to initiate urgent action for immediately locating and returning to their units the 1 Canadian, 1 Tunisian and 7 Sudanese soldiers missing, as well as for the observance of the cease-fire that has been ordered. In this connexion also the next few hours will provide the Congolese authorities with a major opportunity to demonstrate that they are prepared to repudiate deplorable acts and attitudes and, with UN co-operation and assistance, to reassert control over unruly and irresponsible (ANC and civilian) elements. In any case full responsibility for the past events must attach to you and to these authorities.

In concluding I must reiterate the importance of the principles established in the paragraphs above. If, against my firm expectation, the situation in Matadi should not be redressed forthwith, the matter will of course become an urgent concern of the Security Council.

