# CONGO OPERATION

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JK: Ambassador Gullion, for the record would you explain the position that you held in the Congo during the time of the UN operation there and approximately the time that you arrived and the duration of your stay there?

Gullion: I was there from 1961 to 1963. I arrived there shortly after the "Luthanium" Parliament, so called, an effort by the UN to bring Katanga, that is to say Tshombe, and the Leopoldville area together. Although with many attempts, Tshombe came as far as Brazzaville and didn’t go farther which enabled them to form a government under UN sponsorship with Adoula as Prime Minister. As to the month, I’m not sure, but it would have been around the springtime because I had an interview with Hammarskjold just after the then new Parliament and he said that he had hoped to make some significant changes in the UN relationship to the Leopoldville government before June. He referred to it as beginning to move out of the "Sans Continaire" which was the apartment building which the UN had taken over and was their central headquarters.

JK: Who were the people at the UN in the Congo at that time that you were working with?

Gullion: Primarily Sture Linner who was the civil head in charge. He was a Swede who had had experience in Liberia, I
believe, with a Liberian American Company or perhaps in any case a Swedish company, and was a friend of Hammarskjold's. Khiary, who was political affairs, the Tunisian; of course the Commander and Chief, an Irishman; those would be the three top people. Monte, a Frenchman, from time to time, and intermittently in the US, U Thant or Hammarskjold or Indar Rikhye, who was the Military Chief of Staff for the Secretary-General at that time. But, of course, there were large numbers of UN personnel in charge of different activities but I don't recall their names now.

JK: Did you have any contact with Ralph Bunche?

Gullion: Certainly, especially at Kitona, which he had come to.

JK: Who were the principle actors both within the UN and the State Department and yourself included at the Embassy there?

Gullion: Well, at the State Department there was the African Desk and very importantly it was a triangular operation, not only the African Desk but also the International Organization area of the Department headed by Harlan Cleveland. The Congo having been a recently emerged colony, Western Europe still had a considerable interest in what was going to happen or what was happening.

McArthur was a very active Ambassador in Brussels at that time. He liked to continue an interest sometimes more than I thought was warranted, but he was interested
in the situation. In our Embassy, it was actually a rather small Embassy for the responsibilities that we had and the program to be administered partly because we could support the United Nations and second people or guide as well as support its activities. We had the usual distributions of sections in the Embassy, the political section, economic section, the US aid policy. I don't know if the names of those people are carried in our narrative or not, military attaches, and advisory missions.

JK: How often did you have contact with the UN people in the Congo?

Gullion: Weekly or daily depending on what was going on. I remember going out there with the idea that these were international civil servants who had something of the sanctity of judges. I came out there to find that they were a malleable instrument and in some cases lacked the physical and financial means to handle the mission. They were as afraid of breakup, because after all the UN was operating on the mandate to preserve the territorial integrity of the Congo, so they were as wary of Soviet activities as anybody else. Their position had to be different; I mean their official position. I remember at the time of the first run around of fighting of my time, which occurred almost immediately after my arrival, the British sent out Lord Landsdown, who is a big name in the
Foreign Office as is his father who is a well known British diplomat of the last century and up through World War One, to help pin the blame for this -- to get down to essentials -- on Conor Cruise O'Brien, that the UN had stepped in to stir up fighting and going too far. They wanted my help and I didn't do that. I thought it was not proper to try to influence an international civil servant in that way. I came to have quite a different idea of the UN. I found that we were going along the same path and there were a great many things that I could do to cause the UN to do the things that we wanted to have done.

JK: Was the Kennedy Administration generally supportive of the UN operation there and the goals of the UN?

Gullion: Yes, let's go back and talk about the origins of US policy. What really marked the Kennedy Administration, though it had begun before that, was the cascade of colonialism around the world. At the time that I came out there, there were new countries in Africa. There was a special concern on the part of Kennedy for Africa. Kennedy's first appointment even before he appointed Dean Rusk was actually to appoint Soapy Williams as Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, an indication of what he wanted to do. Administratively, I remember, there was a policy which Lloyd Henderson wanted to carry through. He wanted to get American Chiefs of Mission on the ground
soon in these African countries. There was a general preference of policy to have these people be young. I was young and others were young. In the UN, I could not recall the record of votes or how we actually did things, but had the Belgians actively opposed the Hammarskjold use of Article 99 there could not have been this resort to the UN. Whatever the interests of the Associate Generale or the Union Miniere the Spaak government had a view that they had to not buck these resolutions in the Security Council. This was after the Suez Crisis and the policy of "let Dag do it" (Hammarskjold) was very much in vogue in the State Department. It would have seemed obvious at the time, but now it might be pertinent to remark that the US was in an activist mode itself with respect to activities abroad. This was the period of the Eisenhower Doctrine. This was extended containment. The advantage of doing this containment through the medium of the UN was a brilliant idea whether it was serendipity or not.

JK: What were the advantages?

Gullion: This was not US imperialism. This was action based on the world organization. Our policies and the UN's coincided. When Lumumba visited the US in 1960 he had an interview with Hurder and he wanted US intervention of various kinds and Hurder told him, "no, that's not the way to do it. You'll get into trouble. You'll transport
the Cold War to your country." (I'm paraphrasing now.) "The UN is the way to go." So, Lumumba came back -- this was before my period -- and made some very laudatory statements about US foreign policy. Then he made the mistake of actually accepting or courting Russian assistance which was given him. The idea of restoring the unity of the Congo by force and restoring it with tanks. Actually it was not restoring anything by force. The policy of the Soviet Union as well as at that time of the Arab countries was disunion in the Congo. When I arrived there, there was not one secession but two. Gizenga had not yet seceded. I presented my credentials and these two men, two co-Prime Ministers -- I think his title was Deputy Prime Minister -- were behind the same desk, Gizenga and Adoula. That was going to be a long assignment. After that Gizenga had taken himself off to the Oriental Province in the northeast around Stanleyville, Kisangani, now. He stayed up there and Adoula thought that was fine, just give him enough rope to hang himself. That's exactly what happened.

**JK:** We were talking about US policy.

**Gullion:** Our policy was that of the UN which was to preserve the integrity of the Congo. The resolutions taken by the UN were at base guiding, however, they could be read various ways and had the obvious disadvantage of being the
product of many hands and many countries and many policies. They did not exclude the use of force, by all means, and included the use of force if necessary. This could cause one to reflect that after all the UN is a military organization. The Charter, if you read the military sections of it, provides for strong sanctions. This is what was going to distinguish it from the toothless League of Nations. The stake of the UN in this was to carry out its mission. Had they failed in their operation it would have been a tremendous blow to the future utility of the UN. I would say that we and the UN had a considerable success in the Congo. We did achieve our mission. However, today even at the UN it is not so regarded. There are a lot of new countries that consider this an outside intervention. Some of them would say it was a veiled US intervention. In any case, the United Nations with guns in its hands and shooting them was something unheard of. Moreover, and this very much dominated the scene in U Thant’s period, was that the struggle between the US and the Soviet Union on the Congo was tearing the house of the United Nations apart. That has still left a mark there. In fact, the question is still not answered whether or not an operation by the UN like the type in the Congo could ever again occur. So, in that way you can say was it a success. But, we certainly achieved what we set out to do. Also,
something like the domino theory, the new African countries were composed of many pieces of a not very coherent mosaic. There are four principle languages in the Congo and maybe a hundred dialects. The country’s interior communications were poor. Their communications with the rest of the world tend to run through Europe. It could have set a pattern for dissolution. An unarticulated premise very much in my mind at the time was that if there were to be a secessionist Katanga backed up by a white South Africa that would precipitate a much earlier conflict that could be more continent wide and would have domestic repercussions in the US. Those were some of the stakes of the Americans in the Congo. One stake it did not have was a commercial or economic one which people find hard to believe. We had no investment out there. We had some missionaries, probably our principle investment in the Congo. We were clients for the outputs of the minerals, but, we had no hard investments and this was a frustration to the Soviet Union particularly on the ground. I heard their Ambassador in a meeting with Adoula saying that the US owned the UN, just like they owned the Union Miniere. I suppose there were American shareholders in the Union Miniere somewhere but they must have been very few. Therefore, the UN policy was entirely a sham. The American policy on the Congo was that we had no intention
of unifying or preserving the unity of the Congo. We wanted to make money out of it. The policies of everybody had an angle. The Belgians had a double mission, a complex attitude. There was a psychological and a patriotic involvement. This was their creation. The problem was that they were new boys on the block compared to the old European colonials, less total investment in set meddling in the country. It was more of a money making operation. Also, they did have tremendous stakes there, financial stakes as well as historical stakes and their own pride was involved. It was divided. One sensed the tension between the government and the financial interest. When the chips were down they did not oppose. They must have had, not mixed feelings, but not very happy feelings about seeing the US prominent in the activities of this problem.

JK: Was there much in the way of Soviet presence in Leopoldville?

Gullion: Yes, there was.

JK: Official or unofficial.

Gullion: Both. Also, at that time Arabs were in one of their anti-imperialist phases. The Soviets were backing the Gizenga operation up in Oriental. Twice their representation was thrown out. I remember once talking to Adoula telling him not to. I didn’t think it was in our interest to have them thrown out. I did not witness this
incident but friends of mine did. There was a ferry that ran across the Congo River to Brazzaville. On the ferry the Soviet Union courier had diplomatic envelopes with him and the Congo Endacas, the secret police, attacked this man and began to beat him up. He was chewing up his documents, but he seemed to be on the way to being killed and given a deep six in the Congo River when he was saved by a British spook. They had a very clumsy presence. They couldn’t understand the situation because to them it was a clear case of the high rent district and low rent district and they expected to see a big class conflict going through classical Marxian stages. They misread the play completely.

JK: Was Gizenga actually a communist?

Gullion: It is hard to say what he was or what an African communist is. To the degree that there was much higher education in African countries at that time, there were very few university graduates in the Congo. You could count them on two hands or maybe one even. But, you get a little smattering of the left by going to the European institutions. They know the tags and labels. There is too much tribal root. None of these Western things take deep root. The constitution jurist consuls at the UN would get together for the Congo all the modern appliances and modern conveniences that related to constitutions. If you are a diplomat and try to go by
predicting what is going to happen saying under their constitution they are to do this, no, you have to know where the center of the power is. And who is the center of power. The tribal influence and the regional influences are very strong. My impression was that the Russians were not up to this. One thing they did was to keep themselves in a compound which wasn’t too bad an idea. I don’t know how it works out there but I’ve got a theory that one of the drawbacks in some countries is the tremendous obvious presence of Americans in large numbers. If the Russians were on the street they were more likely to be taken for Americans in the Congo. The British had interests there in the plantation area. They wanted to decide the evolution of the Commonwealth in their own way. They did not want a pattern set for Rhodesia. They were nervous. Everybody was very nervous about things escalating into a major conflict. This was McArthur’s view. At one point later on when the Katangese Gendarmes started the conflict, there was great nervousness both in the US and Brussels that this would lead to prolonged and much increased conflict not necessarily confined to the Congo. At a much higher level they always thought that the fighting was more severe than it was, abetted by atrocity stories that the Belgian propagandists created. I remember McArthur telegraphing saying that the American Embassy should show
restraint. I remember telegraphing back, "We here all serene. This secession will soon be liquidated."

JK: You mentioned a conflict between Belgian officials and business interests.

Gullion: I have no recollection of documentation of the conflict between the Associte Generale or the commercial interests and the Belgian government. I just infer it because of their action at the UN. The Belgians had not visualized ahead an independent Congo. Very late in the day they grasped at sort of halfway measures. They did not have the people to hand over to because there had not been a great deal of higher education as I had said. They did have people at the foreman level and engine driver level. This thing started almost by an accidental spark, a riot down at the Matadi Port.

JK: Why did they grant independence so quickly when the government in the Congo was so newly formed and did not seem to be particularly ready?

Gullion: I think it was just simply the wave of the times. The end of the war was 1945. They could not afford for their world position to seem to be lagging behind this great liberalizing tendency that was going on. They obviously underestimated what was going to happen. Part of it was an accident. What cast the molds for the evolving situation was the fact that they thought that they could do a "cordon sanitaire" around Katanga. But, there was

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panic up there in the north. The Congo River was too easy to cross. The Belgians just left their houses and their dogs and went across the river. It was not easy for them in Katanga where their principal financial interest was.

**JK:** In your dealings with Gizenga and Adoula and some of the others did you feel they were ready to take on the responsibilities that they had been handed?

**Gullion:** I certainly didn't have that feeling about Gizenga. I thought he was a snake. Adoula I had a lot of respect for. One thing that distinguished him in my mind was his span of attention. He could have an object in mind and persist in it. He did not seem to be force fed with a lot of Marxist tags. He was not a man to divide up the wealth because he said the wealth isn't big enough to divide. It was a simple enough answer. The pie is not big enough for too much distribution. He was an honorable fellow. I suppose the Security and Exchange Commission working on any factual information would not approve it, but once there was a question of what oil companies were going to operate, not only to market it but also to do a little exploration for oil off shore particularly. I was doing my bit for American companies. To my surprise and totally out of the blue the Italians got this, but not without putting a lot of his friends and relatives in directorships.
JK: What about Mobutu? Did you have any contact with him?

Gullion: Oh, yes.

JK: How was he to work with? Did he seem competent?

Gullion: Extremely competent. He was a very modest fellow in those days. He had not become the grand mogul at the time. He did have the army. He had been in the information office of the Belgians and he had military rank. He had the army. The triumvirate was Kasavubu as President, Adoula as Prime Minister, and Mobutu was Minister of Defense. We had some missions with the army occasionally, the green mission. He did develop a kind of ambivalence toward the UN partly out of national jealousy. After a while even if the UN is devoted to preserving a country against defection, still being done by foreigners and by Blue Berets. The army was there but it was not what you would call a highly disciplined force. I remember Godley saying to me the first night I was there. I decided to go for a walk and I got lost. The first fellow I ran into was this big kindly soldier. So, I went up to him and asked him where I was. Godley was horrified. The last one you want to approach was someone in uniform.

JK: What was the situation of law and order in Leopoldville where you were? You could speak from personal experience.

Gullion: The type of crime is what you'd call disorganized crime.
JK: Did you have to fear for your safety?

Gullion: That's a hard question to answer. You took precautions against the kind of primitivism. In the city of Leopoldville itself the Nigerian contingent of the United Nations provided a kind of police, but there were times when you did not want to go into what was called the Belge which was a sort of squatterville around the city. There were areas that you had to be careful of. There was a policy, that fortunately I never had to put into effect, that if you got involved in a hit and run accident you were supposed to run because of the fear of being torn to pieces whether you were at fault or not, even if it were just a fender bender. We had walkie-talkies and guard dogs. You somehow didn't feel any of this as personal danger. The UN was a kind of a police force, too, in this respect. I remember they were very mad at the British one day. I forget what it was the British had done to make them mad. I had a telephone call from the German Ambassador and he said, "Ed, Ed, from the window they are throwing the British Ambassador out." They had an office building and I looked out and I could see things going out the window. In the meantime the UN had gotten to him. Then at the same time they decided to go for the residence of the British Ambassador.
JK: Who was doing this?

Gullion: Just a mob. I forget just what the cause of this was. So, they got to the residence of the British Embassy and asked, "Embassy Britanique?" And the wife of the British Ambassador answered, "no, no, this is the Embassy of the United Kingdom."

JK: That was a clever response.

Gullion: The same Nigerian guard force that would walk along there would leave notes at the different guard posts where they would check in. The squad would find the notes. The German Ambassador had a small swimming pool and so he looked the next day after the patrol had been through and saw that the Nigerian had written, "all quiet in makes it water."

JK: In general were the Ambassadors of other Western Nations supportive of the UN operation there? Did they generally cooperate?

Gullion: Yes, the Western ones did with the different shadings that I had just mentioned. The French, for example, did not want to have the dissolution of the French Empire dictated by what the United Nations was doing there or what we did. Also, the UN troops were not made up forces from the Great Powers. The UN forces were purposely composed of less developed countries. The main force being Indian.

JK: You are talking about the UN troops.
Gullion: Yes, Indian, Pakistani. There had been Ghanaians, who did not distinguish themselves but were a little brutal; Gurkhas, at one stage; Irish, at sometime; Canadians at staff and signal and hospital. Our role was to provide logistics.

I would say that the Embassies there were not entirely in the loop, information wise. There is a book by Rosemary Higgins who has written about those days. I think she has ascribed much more influence to the British than I think they had in that situation.

JK: I also wanted to ask you about the communications that were available to you. Did you have adequate communications between your office and Washington.

Gullion: Yes, and the reason is this -- Godley could also tell you about this -- Timberlake, the last predecessor had a brother whom I also knew, General Timberlake, in the Air Force. And it was told to me that with his equipment he got very up-to-date signals equipment whatever was available in those days, cable code machines, and so forth. But commercially cables and wires had to go through Brussels, so we did a great deal of short wave business communication. I spoke to Kennedy a few times through this. The phone patched through a dentist in Newark as I recall. You'd get an amateur. Senator Dodd was thoroughly opposed to our policy. He was always trying to circumvent it. An amateur is only supposed to
say, "copy, I want a wave length of something, something, something," or "my frequent vibrator is oscillating." But, to use this thing substantively like we did was something else.

Compared to everything that has happened since, it is curious that there was so much public attention to the Congo at that time. This was the big thing. Now it has receded back somewhere to memory. It was the feature thing in the press for months, especially when the fighting was going on. But, we had a very good press. We had no problems with the press at all.

JK: Did the UN have as good communications between their headquarters in New York as you were able to have?

Gullion: No. They had communications. It’s interesting that you should bring up communications. There were two incidence: one, after the next to the last round of fighting, Kennedy asked me to get Adoula and Tshombe together at Kitona. And he had sent a message for me to give to Adoula which if I had given to him in that form would have kept Adoula away. So, I just deformed that communication and delivered my own kind of an invitation. He had to be reached and gotten. That is one small example. When the fighting really broke out and Hammarskjold’s plane went down, the UN called me because what they needed was a bigger net. So, I used an indicator, this priority kind of indicator, which at that
time -- I don't think it's any secret, now -- had a secret name. It had the effect of stopping everything and scrambling SAC. My reasons for doing this was, a) that we needed everything immediately to try to find the Secretary-General because nobody knew where he was and b) I wanted to get a head start on the Russians. I remember when I sent that message a fellow came out of the code room, the communications man, and his face was white and he said, "It stopped." I said, "What has stopped?" He said, "The world has stopped." I said, "What do you mean?" "This stills all communication," he said, "you've stopped the world here." I thought, "Good God, I'll be court-martialed." Nothing happened, though. I remember I got one little remark that you're not supposed to repeat that message to anywhere. I had repeated to Stockholm.

But the UN did not have that capability, not of rallying it or moving it even within the country. Sometimes I could use their net that was more advantageous for me but, generally, for any communication out of the country we were quicker and better.

When this fighting started a lot of cold feet developed in Belgium, the UN, and Washington. There was a great fear that the fighting would cause the Kolwezi mines to be flooded, which did not bother me at all. I didn't think they would be. They thought that the
fighting should be stopped somehow and that they were not
to cross the Lufira River. I knew that they had already
crossed the Lufira River. They had already crossed it,
Prem Chand and Noronah. It suited me fine. But, there
was this panic and we knew better. One of the reasons I
was in on that is that I had sent down our military
attache and I had put a blue beret on him. That was
breaking the ground rules, explicit or implicit. We were
not in the ground troops, but we put blue berets on these
fellas and sent them down. They had a lot of
communication equipment with them. So, I could follow
what was going on. It was important to know. The other
thing was airplanes.

JK: The US provided air transportation.

Gullion: Yes, transportation by sea and air. And also, during
this there was a crisis because actually there was talk
about sending out American fighter planes. We did send
out transport planes and established these huge big
reservoirs for gasoline. They were interesting things.
They were just like a big above ground swimming pool but
of enormous dimensions that contained fuel. That scared
the Congolese and everybody else because they thought
that we were coming in full scale to do this.

JK: That was to make sure you had fuel for the aircraft?

Gullion: Yes, fuel for the aircraft. Actually what did happen is
that some Cubans came down to supply some air cover.
This was after Hammarskjold had died. They didn’t know what had happened. They thought he had been shot down. He wasn’t shot down. To this day people think there was some conspiracy about it.

JK: As long as we are on that topic, what actually did happen as far as you could tell?

Gullion: He appeared not to have known that the fighting had gotten to the extent that it had, I was told, until he had gotten to Acra. He was on his way to make a routine visit.

JK: Did you meet with him in Leopoldville when he arrived that day?

Gullion: Yes, I did. He and Linner, the Scandinavians in their white suits trying to look very calm, well, they were not. He said to me that he was going down there and he was going to try to mediate. He said, "I know what your government will say. I know this will not be helpful to them." I didn’t know what he was talking about and still don’t. I don’t see why he thought that was true. In any case, possibly because there had not been any communication with us about it. Perhaps he thought that this decision would take us by surprise. All that worried him was whether or not his mission would be allowed to get off the ground, that the Congolese in Leopoldville might stop him. Then somebody came from the Congolese government and gave him the necessary go ahead.
In the first place he had chosen to fly with a Swedish crew which was contract flying for the UN. They had flown far over what are so called minimums for pilot endurance and fatigue. They had filed a false flight plan because they didn’t want anyone to know where he was going. And this is important, the French had supplied Tshombe with three fuga magistere training planes. They were jet planes and they could have shot down anything that the UN had. They didn’t have any armed planes. We got some bombers out there later but, they wouldn’t let them have any bombs. They were not our bombers. They were Italians. The Italians had a bad experience later when one of their transport planes went down and the survivors of the crew were eaten.

JK: Was Hammarskjold’s flight at night?

Gullion: It was at night. As I recall the control tower at Ndola was not alerted or had gone off duty. What the pilots had done was to fly procedures which means to fly for a certain length of time for a certain distance at a certain height and come down and fly in another direction. That’s to help you navigate the terrain. There was pilot error and they flew in the wrong direction at the wrong height and they ran into a mountain. Hammarskjold had brought with him some UN guards, some cops that were around the UN building in New York. They apparently had some live ammunition which
exploded in the fire and that’s what made people think there had been an assassination, that the plane had been shot down or there had been an assassination. It was not. It was just a pilot error. They didn’t know where the plane was and thought that we could locate the plane. I got a hold of the Supreme Command in Europe to assist in the search. They sent down their guys and the head of communications.

JK: When the fighting broke out again in December of 1961, you had organized a meeting between Adoula and Tshombe at Kitona. Who initiated that meeting?

Gullion: Kennedy did and then it was up to me to get it together with the UN. Bunche came to it and Khiary was there and a Frenchman. I went down to pick up Tshombe in the President’s plane.

JK: Did Tshombe want to become involved in this meeting? Was he eager to come?

Gullion: No, in the first place I had my own difficulties in getting Adoula to go. Whatever the terms were, because Kennedy had invited him it would prejudice what case Adoula would make.

JK: You had trouble reaching Adoula. Where was he?

Gullion: He was off in another province somewhere but, in this case I was able to reach him through the UN. But, it was more the terms in which to get him there. Because Tshombe was a very hard guy to pin down or to believe and
he was afraid of trickery. Tshombe, on the other hand -- and they had a guest house there at Ndola where I went to pick him up -- came with his retinue. And he wanted to use this meeting as a meeting between states. He wanted it to appear as the President of an independent country.

So, you went down to Ndola to pick him up.

He had all sorts of conditions that he wanted to make. Among them and the most important was that he be there as the President of his country. He also wanted a cease-fire. He was interested in a cease-fire but, not prominently so. What I detected was that his entourage was very nervous about this. So, this gave me an idea. He wanted cease-fire and he wanted everything called off among the conditions. I said I couldn’t do that. The UN is it’s own body. It operates out of its headquarters in New York. I saw that his group was very frightened. They thought that there was going to be a big intensification of the fighting. So, I didn’t know for sure if he would come. I drove back into Salisbury. The British High Commissioner was Lord Eaton and I remember his saying to me, "Don’t be beastly to Tshombe. We think you shouldn’t be beastly to Tshombe." I didn’t intend to be beastly. I just wanted to deliver him. I said, "you can do something for me. I’m not sure he’s coming and I’m not going out to the airfield if I’m going to be stood up. So, I’m not going to leave the hotel here

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until he’s passed a certain point on the road. So, if you can signal to me when he’s actually done that then I would go to the airport." He was pretty exhausted when got to the plane. So, we gave him a beefsteak and put him to bed. When he came flying into Kitona, which was a disused Belgian air base with a hospital building which used for the meeting, he saw these troops of the UN. I had forgotten about security, believe it or not, and Tshombe was furious about them. I said, "What kind of a guard are you mounting down there?" They had enlisted some Nigerians and they were digging fox holes around the building. When we landed Tshombe looked out there and said, "Quelles troops sont ce-la?" I said, "sont les Nigerians." Then he said, "good, good, they’re much blacker." What he meant by that is that he was apparently afraid of Ghanaians. Maybe the Ghanaians that he knew were not so black. He thought that this was a trap that he was flying into.

Then at one point in the negotiations he wanted me to fly him to Brazzaville. He wanted to quit but, I said I couldn’t do that. It was twice that he wanted to be flown away from there. The next excuse I used was that the plane was there but, "we don’t have a co-pilot. He has gone back to Leopoldville and we can’t fly without a co-pilot." Then there was a rumor that there was a troop of the Congolese army coming up the road from the river,
from the seaport to get Tshombe. We had the aircraft there and we did have the one pilot. And Bill Close, who was an Oxford group Buckmanite physician, the father of Glenn Close, the actress, who turned out knew how to fly. I put him in the plane and he flew reconnaissance down to see whether troops were coming up the road. He said if they were coming on the road, it was under water and they couldn’t get along it if there were troops that way. I had also brought along a couple of marine guards from the Embassy, each of them about seven feet tall, and they stood behind Tshombe’s chair. I guess he thought I had a whole lot of them because I rotated them but, in fact, there were only a few of them. But, that made him feel more secure. Bunche got the word that they were coming up there. He said come to my room I just got some very important news. This was the news that they were coming up the road to kill Tshombe. The marine was there and he said there was a UN ship just off shore, over the horizon anyway. It was a logistics ship and the marine said there was a marine company on board. That gave me a lot of security. So, I thought if they’re coming up the road we’ll get that marine company. I only found out afterward that there was no marine company.

The reason I brought Close along is that I expected some stunt from Tshombe. Tshombe at one point retired to his room. He said he had a real attack of thick blood
and he wasn't going to play anymore. So, Close went into see him and it was an impasse. Then Adoula wanted to go home and I had to chase Adoula around the bushes and try to persuade him to stick around. It was either Khiary or the Frenchman that found the formula. And that was that each of them would not exchange letters or agreements but, each of them would write similar letters to the UN and that would be the device for an agreement. Everything was all right then. I remember on the plane flying home I dictated this but, Tshombe ducked out of that one.

JK: We had been talking about the meeting at Kitona and while I was turning over the tape you were explaining to me the objectives of the meeting.

Gullion: The objectives were to make a beginning toward the unification of the Congo and resolution of the conflict between parties and put an end to the hostilities, and on a wider horizon to set up the mechanisms for the different activities that would be merged and a rationalization of the structure. This was to have been a first step. There were big, deep reservations on the part of both sides about coming to the meeting. That was the purpose. I remember Tshombe making one excuse saying that, "this is all right but, of course, I have to get the agreement of my Parliament." There wasn't any such thing. If there were a Parliament it would have no
bearing on what he did or on what they did in Leopoldville. This was a wonderful trick he had borrowed from the Western democracies to say, "well, I have to see what my Parliament says."

JK: What about Tshombe? What kind of a person was he?

Gullion: Obviously a strong man and a clever man. Devious is the word I would use for him. He had done business with the Societe Generale. His principal man, Munongo, had the reputation of being a staunch anti-communist. But that was not we were all about. The Russians were actively trying to influence things but they turned out to be so dumb about it. They were backing secession, sure. It turned out that Munongo was taking pay from the Soviet Union, maybe through the Arabs, who at that time were just the opposite of the Egyptians today. Tshombe had the type of physiognomy which in repose resolved itself into a grin. The dental formation was such that you thought that he was this jovial fellow. If he opened his mouth it was a grin. It was hard to tell if he was eternally grinning or not. It was a trick of his face.

JK: Was Tshombe heavily influenced by the Belgians and the Union Minière?

Gullion: My guess in retrospect was that it was whatever suited him. What grew into secession grew out of the idea of protecting this Province. For a time, at least, Tshombe served the Belgian purpose. But I don't think that they
kept on with him.

**JK:** At that point he had developed a certain popularity.

**Gullion:** Yes, his popularity was partly based on tribal group. One trouble with Adoula was that he was detribalized and did not have a numerous tribal backing. He had a reputation of being a trade union man, for whatever existed as a trade union there. He was a man of high character.

I don't know what happened to Tshombe, whether there was any foul play or not. He died on an island in the Mediterranean somewhere. What happened there, I don't know. He wanted to be where the biggest power was. He was the fountain of secession. When I left there things were beginning to fall apart. Then all of a sudden he glimpsed the possibility of being head of the whole thing, head of the Congo. Adoula and Kasavubu tried to steer him out of this.

**JK:** There were many criticisms of the UN operation. Did the US have any criticisms of the UN operation?

**Gullion:** There were things the US wanted to have investigated. The idea of the Katangese at that time was to play up the brutality of the UN and mark all sorts of atrocities and exaggerate them. Some of the stories were just ridiculous. They didn't happen. A dramatic one was when two ladies ran a road block in their volkswagen and were shot. This was a nervous trigger at a road block. That
became a famous "cause celebre" and was played up. It was a big atrocity in the American press. Although I was doing things that don’t often fall a diplomat to do -- and it was a very very busy operation -- my problems were at home, really. Even though I had the support of Kennedy, Rusk sort of stood aside, and George Ball began to waiver because of the problem becoming more intense and risk spreading. Kennedy, in general, would back me. When, however, his good friend, Ormsby Gore, later Lord Harlick, the British Ambassador there, would have a visit with him I fancied that I could see Kennedy thinking, "well, now wait a minute. Let’s think it over again a little bit," a sort of momentary hesitation on Kennedy’s part. I did not have any moral problems with what was going on or any ethical or intellectual problems with it. It seemed to me a clear case. We had an absolutely united Embassy. So much of my service had been in Saigon and just to contrast the two from day one when I first hit Saigon in 1949 where we had a bitterly divided Embassy as to what to do, they were completely different. This was not the case in the Congo. I can’t say that there was any real dissent. But, at home you had the church groups who felt this was awful stuff fighting. They thought the UN was supposed to be like the Quakers. You had the Young Americans for Freedom, Herbert Hoover who had spent some time in Rhodesia a few years back.
Harriman had met Tshombe and thought he knew Tshombe. And there were people who were against American involvement in some place far away that we knew nothing about. That was nothing like the protest you'd have today on that. But the kind of opposition or misgivings that were more serious were those people like Dean Acheson, my former boss, who's opposition was on the grounds that this was a struggle that was dissipating our concentration and we ought to be thinking about the main centers and the European problems and so on. That was the more respectable opposition.

JK: Did Dean Acheson want the US to back off on the unification of the Congo?

Gullion: No, it was more whether the end justified the means that was their consideration. And there is something to be said for the point of view that the effect on the alliance was bothering them, France, Britain, Belgium. And my answer was there not going to through their aprons over their heads and run out of the kitchen, anyway. But I thought that was a more respectable concern than the mixed bag of people like Senator Dodd. I don't know what the hell was the matter with him. You can read about Dodd in Hammarskjold's book.

JK: You mentioned in the interview in the Kennedy Library that Tshombe had asked for a visa to come to the US.

Gullion: Yes, I remember we all trooped over to the White House,
Rusk, myself, and I can’t remember who else was along. But, I remember at one point Kennedy asked, "Do I have to give this man a visa?" We said, "No." So, he said, "Then I won’t give it to him." It was as simple as that. But, that was a silly sort of thing.

JK: If he had come would he have tried to garner support for the secession?

Gullion: I suppose he would have. There was this brilliant guy here named Streulens, who transformed this into a fight for the brave little Tshombe, brave little Katanga, brave little anti-communist where this mixed bag of mongrel UN troops are committing atrocities. He was selling that story.

JK: So, Kennedy did support what the UN was trying to do.

Gullion: Yes, over all you’d have to say a strong support. But, he would rather have seen it done without a lot of bloodshed.

When I had just arrived there I had gone straight to make a courtesy call to Linner. I had short wave communication with Elizabethville. Something Linner said didn’t add up to me. So, on the same day I said I wanted to come see him again. Then he told me there was going to be this temporary police action to clean up the areas here, get the post office clear and that sort of thing.

JK: They wanted to remove the Belgian advisors and the mercenaries from Elizabethville. So, at that point they
were taking some control so they could do that more easily.

Gullion: Right. They never expected it to blow up the way it did. One of the biggest problems was to retain the UN troops there and with the death of Hammarskjold and his removal from the scene, U Thant had a much more cautious, wary policy. I had to see him a couple of times and he said pleasant things about us and about the US. But, what had happened was there had been resolutions -- maybe Harlan Cleveland talked about this -- for the removal of the troops. I thought that would be a disaster. I went to the pain of canvassing all the other embassies as to what their reaction would be, even the opposed embassies. And they agreed with me. Then I went to the UN. First I had to talk to our own delegation at the UN to tell them that we were on the right path and not to be faint hearted about it. And I guess that went over. And I talked to U Thant about it and he said, "Look, you just don't have the votes." What appeared to be the case was that the Arab caucus was leading the UN delegations in the direction of ending this engagement.

JK: This was in the General Assembly?

Gullion: In the General Assembly, but I'm talking about in the delegations individually. The Arabs seemed to dominate the conversations about it. I said to U Thant that it amazed me because my reading of it on the ground had been
the opposite in the embassies. He saw what I did was to recircularize it through the capitals of the countries involved and got back the same view, that it would be a great mistake to pull these troops out prematurely. But, what happened was that in the UN -- the lesson that I learned from it -- a lot of the African countries did not have representation in the sense that the main contact was with our ambassador there rather than with our ambassador here in the US. So, they were not instructed. What really happened was in the end that the troops were allowed to stay but only for six months. That was not even a half victory. It wasn’t even a quarter victory. Because when troops are given a date for closing down, they close down. The UN would not move after that. They would not move the entire force for just a step in the cross roads. Boil it down to the individual, no man wants to fight if he’s just ready to go home. So, saying you were going to leave in six months was essentially emasculating the force.

JK: You also mentioned in your interview at the Kennedy Library that McGhee had come to the Congo. Could you describe what the McGhee mission was about and what the controversy was?

Gullion: The purpose of that mission was to prevent another outbreak of fighting. I, on the other hand, thought that nature should be allowed to take its course. I didn’t
want it stopped. I was confident that it would be done easily and there would be no after effects. I remember talking about it to Bob Gardiner, who was then based there with Linner. He was a great fellow, Ghanaian. I was saying that you have to protect your rear. He said, "Well, I’m not bothered about my rear. What about your rear?" The Katangese made it an open and shut case. They pulled down the road blocks. They precipitated the fighting. There wasn’t any open aggression by the UN.

**JK:** General Prem Chand had conducted troop movement across Katanga to end the secession. Was it intended originally for them to move all the way across Katanga and to cross the river?

**Gullion:** I don’t know what the actual battle plan or campaign plan was. It was probably just what they needed to make their gain secure, to secure against resurgence. That probably involved getting across the river and putting the river behind them.

**JK:** You had talked about the McGhee mission that had come to the Congo shortly before that to try to avert it. Were they concerned about the troop movement?

**Gullion:** Later on there was the worry that these vital installations like the Kolwezy mines would be put out of action forever and that fighting would continue. There was an effort to have it stop short of the Lufira River. I knew that they had already crossed the Lufira River. I
cited that as a failure of communications. I think they simply wanted the ventilate the area that they had pacified and put a secure perimeter around it. I don’t there was an intention to exceed what they were capable of doing. After all, the Congo is as big as the United States east of the Mississippi and there were not enough forces of the UN to try to go beyond a very modest extension. I can’t remember the distances now involved from their start line to the Lufira River but it was not far. We are not talking about a Vietnam. Vietnam is also a big place. People think it’s a small place but it’s not.

JK: We have discussed in the interview the quality of the peace-keeping UN troops. Was the quality good and how was the discipline amongst the troops?

Gullion: It varied with the national commitments. They didn’t come out with the same rules of engagement. For example, the Nigerian national policy was not to get on the front line of this thing. They were in the area of policing. The Canadians were limited to signal and support. The Gurkhas were the Indians who were the main fighting forces. As to quality, it is sort of invidious to rate them by quality. You’d have to say that the Indian troops were very efficient. There was great concern over a beleaguered Irish garrison. I don’t think the Irish had a full hearted commitment to this thing, in any case.
The forces were deficient in those things that you would expect a multinational force without a strong command to be deficient in. That is to say, in military justice. It was very hard to take sanctions against one unit if the thought was doing it to another. Logistically, there were problems. To begin with, the most glaring of the problems was lacking their own major transport which the US supplied and the very meager airport facilities and no combat air facility. That was only started when Tshombe got the fuga magister jets. I remember at one point there was a question of bringing over some Ethiopian fighter air units. All kinds of problems were seen with that idea particularly by the American air people in Ethiopia who thought their guys would never even make it across there much less use them. A lot of improvisation, of course. There was an ambiguity about what the mission actually was as the troops saw it. The UN did a remarkable job. It is not the role of the UN to fight or to attack. If you look at the stakes that the major powers involved had, as I tried to outline in the beginning, and if you look at the limitations on the force, as I just explained, the final results in terms of everyone's desires in Leopoldville, the UN, the major excolonial powers, I would say that it was a remarkable and unique success. The fact that the UN was actually involved in fighting is one of the things that has
influenced making it very unlikely that this kind of thing would ever happen again, either a Korean type of operation or a Congo type of operation. And second, is where the UN is involved in the Near East, whether or not it is realized by the people on the ground, they are very much under the precedents that were set. They are not fighting.

When Hammarskjold came into Egypt and started to pick up the pieces and remedy the mistakes, sew it together and show people a way out, it was the withdrawal of troops around Acaba later on that caused subsequent difficulties. I think in a way it was a great success but, I also think that it inhibited the future use of the UN forces.

JK: You worked with Hammarskjold and later with U Thant. Were there differences between the two men?

Gullion: They were such different men! Oh my! There were tremendous differences. Hammarskjold was a very mystical character, if you want to use that word. He was a kind of a mystic, if you read his poems you’d see what I mean. But, on the other hand, in conception he was very daring. The whole Urquhart/Hammarskjold application of Article 99 using the Secretary-General’s line of command and staff in areas where the Security Council were not operating very effectively was a Hammarskjold creation. U Thant was a sort of clerk-like appearing Burmese school
teacher. I don’t know whether he was a school teacher. He had a lot on his hands. He felt that he had been burdened with the Congo and saw it as destructive of the UN. It was causing division among the membership, not only between the US and the Soviet Union but, also in the matter of financing. They had to have extra assessments to pay for the forces. The Soviet Union didn’t want to do that and instead wanted to set up a troika to make the Secretary-General’s office a triple staffed organization, giving them a kind of day to day veto. The UN tried to float bonds to cover these costs. I don’t remember the final outcome. It was financed in some way. I don’t know if the bond thing ever worked out, whether they were able to sell any bonds. How do you make a return on the bonds?

JK: Did U Thant have the same vision of the UN’s operation there in the Congo and his role?

Gullion: I don’t think so, no. He came in at a very different time. He was laboring under a fundamental misconception that the membership was united for pulling the troops out, which was just the wrong reading. I think he was led to think that by the Arab delegations, who somehow emerged as spokesmen in the absence of instructions to the delegations. He was such a different fellow than Hammarskjold.

JK: We haven’t mentioned Adlai Stevenson. He was the US
Ambassador to the UN.

Gullion: I remember having a long session with the delegation and Harlan Cleveland, but I don’t remember talking to Adlai. I remember talking to him subsequently. He was out of town or something.

JK: We have talked about the unfortunate death of Hammarskjold. Another tragic death was that of Patrice Lumumba. I understand that happened before you were in the Congo, but was there any information available to you that would indicate that there was any CIA involvement in Lumumba’s death?

Gullion: Not to me at that time. There was a mad man running around the Congo at the time saying that he was the one who had pulled the trigger. I tend to believe it but I don’t even know who that was. What happened was Lumumba was put on the plane down there and he was beaten up on the plane by Balubas. I don’t know if it was done on purpose, but he was put in the hands of the tribal group that was most opposed to him. I have the impression that this was discussed in the Senator Church investigations, by Senator Church’s Committee. I was not involved in that either before Lumumba or the subsequent investigations into that.

JK: So, you had no information regarding the CIA?

Gullion: No. The CIA had warned Mobutu of an assassination attempt, which he was able to foil personally. Just as
the fellow came he had gotten the warning just as he was about to be attacked.

JK: We have covered most of what I had wanted to ask you. Are there any other comments you'd like to make about your time in the Congo?

Gullion: In summary, it was an operation that seemed less egregious at the time than it would seem if it were done today. For the reason that I indicated, US foreign policy with respect to intervention was bolder, and for good reasons. This is pre-Vietnam. It was consistent with everything we had done. The communist threat there was not intrinsically a problem. It really failed because of their incompetence. The communists intentions were bad but they were just dumb as I could see it. They have learned an awful lot since then. The results were consistent with the resolutions of the UN and the policies of the United States itself despite the occasional wavering or weakening at points of intensity. We followed through on it. By in large, it was remarkable. It was popular with the American public, despite the opposition elements I spoke of. It is popular as long as it succeeds. In Vietnam if we had succeeded in a quick one year action, it would have been very popular. Nothing succeeds like success. Nothing fails like failure. Part of that was because we had a good press. The press supported us. On the economic
side we had an economic aid program that partly used the UN forces and enable us not to deploy a great many people to do it. One of problems was that we had an essentially open frontier between Brazzaville and Leopoldville. The river was only indifferently patrolled. You could take a package of AID flour across to Brazzaville and sell it for Brazza francs, come back with Brazza francs and change them into piastras and you’d have a great racquet going. So, once a correspondent was talking to our AID counsellor and he mentioned this and said, "Oh, look, there goes one of them now." There was a market woman with a sack of flour on her head. Somehow this story ended up on the New York Times front page, a big story, what happens under an American operation out there. So, a special team of inspectors was sent out. I needed that like a hole in the head, at this point.

JK: This was flour that was being supplied through AID.

Gullion: Yes. There were also AID chickens which the Congolese tried to boycott for a while because they thought the chickens had been inoculated with something that took away the manhood of the men who ate it. So, they boycotted the chickens.

So, these inspectors came and I had a meeting with them the first morning. They were still jet lagged. I tried to explain the problems to them. Then I had a funny inspiration and I said to them, "How many of you
men are married? I ask the question because we will go on the river tonight and I'll show you what the problem is." So, I got to work on this and I got the military attache. The naval attache was a timid type. I said to Colonel Rowsand(?), "Get me two boats tonight. We're going out on the river." And I said to these fellows, "We'll meet here in the lobby at the embassy after sundown but late around 11 o'clock and we'll get ready to go." I said, "Wear rough clothes and we'll probably go in black face." Then the naval attache got word of this and he came strolling into this group, while we were getting ready for our mission, all dressed up in a white uniform and gold braid. I said, "No, you're excused from this mission. You can get out of uniform." It was a dark and stormy night and we went down to the naval dock. It was the rainy season and the rain was pouring down. We had these two huge Congolese guards and we got these two boats. They had 50 caliber machine guns in the prow of each of them. These fellows were jet lagged and frightened to death. We had walky-talkies. One was a trickle charger in our bedroom. My wife was there. Mrs. Toppe, she was called. So, I kept in communication with her with this walky-talky from the boats. We took the boats on the river to show them how open the river was and how at any of these points boats could run stuff back and forth. There was nobody there. There were these
islands in the middle of the Congo River. All of a sudden we passed one and there were all these long native canoes lined up. So, one of them said, "What do we do now?" I said, "Well, I guess we hit the beach." So, we hit the beach and there were four guys with their canoes and they were covered over with palm fronds. So, I said, "Let's see your cargo." And there was contraband cargo consisting of — and this is a true story — bibles in English that they had stolen from the missions. They were going to sell them. I don't know what they thought they were going to do with them. We had no more problems with the inspectors. They saw this problem. However, had there been a State Department inspector along he would have said, "What the hell is this bastard doing monkey shining on the Congo River at midnight?" But, they got to see it first hand. It worked and there was not further problem. Everybody understood the problem.

The Congo River hurdles passed at this point because it is rushing towards the rapids. It is a huge river there. It bellies out into a kind of a lake, nevertheless, the stream is rushed and it is full of matiti which are great clumps of lilies, big mats, practically islands. You get out on these boats and the current is rushing at you. To take the ferry over to Brazzaville you have to head up stream and let the stream push you around in a curve.
JK: Did you get out into some of the provinces and observe the troops?

Gullion: Yes, and also to make contact with local authorities, governors of the provinces and that sort of thing. I remember one night a unit of British officers -- this was very unusual because the major powers were not involved -- were commanding either Malay or Indonesian troops. This was up at Lake Kivu, on the shores of the lake. They decided that the British officers would put on some entertainment. For the entertainment they showed Shakespearian movies. They had it reel by reel and I seem to remember they had about 15 reels. In the Congo everybody goes to sleep when the sun goes down so, sitting through this seemed so damned incongruous. Here we were with Malay troops on the shores of Lake Kivu watching some kind of educational reels on Shakespeare.

JK: Did you see any of the situations that the UN troops had gotten involved in?

Gullion: No, but the nearest thing to that was I flew with some of these Cubans. I went up with them and my wife went with me. The problem there was there had been some violence in this province. And the American missionaries were threatened there. These Cuban pilots didn't have much to do. Their planes were 8D6 trainer planes but they were armed.

JK: These were planes that were provided and flown by the
Cubans?

Gullion: I would say it was probably a CIA mission that had brought them there. These were not Cubans from Cuba. These were refugee Cubans. The thing was to use the loud hailers to go over this tall elephant grass to try to get these people and find them and also to centralize them. There were helicopters and I don’t know how the hell it was that we could talk. There was one woman who got her name in the papers for being famous because she didn’t stand up. The word was from the plane, "Stand up, stand up where we can see you. Stay down till we say so, but stand up when you can be seen and then we can pick you up." She didn’t stand up and the press heralded her as the great heroin because she wasn’t going to leave her flock. She was going to stay with her mission. She was in my office later and I said to her, "Why didn’t you stand up?" She said, "I did stand up but I’m only four feet tall."

JK: OH no, so they couldn’t see her. Who was it that was attacking them?

Gullion: I don’t think it was a regiment. I think it was just a guerilla band. I don’t think it had anything to do with the fighting. It was just a local thing. But there was no other mission for these Cuban planes. I don’t recall whether we had put the UN insignia on them or not. It was a kind of a SWAT operation.
JK: Those are very interesting stories and can only be explained by people who were there and could see it happening.

Gullion: The story about the river, no one would believe. I was down visiting a friend, the Ambassador to Venezuela, and he happened to have a reception there for a visiting team from different government departments. I happened to be there and this fellow from the Department of Agriculture said, "Oh, I remember you. You're the guy that took me out to get killed on the Congo River." He remembered it.

JK: Thank you very much for taking the time to do this interview. We appreciate your help and we will be sending you the transcript.
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UNITED NATIONS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT

I, Edmund Gullion (Interviewee) hereby agree to participate in the United Nations Oral History Project, sponsored by the Yale University Institution for Social and Policy Studies, and consent to the recording by magnetic audio tape of (an) interview(s) with Jean Krasno (Interviewer) on May 8, 1990 (Date) at Winchester (City), Mass. (State).

It is my understanding that a typed transcript will be made of such tape(s) and returned to me for any necessary corrections. I hereby agree that if for any reason I have not returned the transcript with my corrections to the Institution for Social and Policy Studies within three months of the time it was sent to me, the Project Staff may edit the transcript and make it available for research and other use as provided here below.

In the understanding that the tape(s) and transcript(s) will be preserved at the United Nations and made available for historical, scholarly and (as deemed appropriate by the United Nations) public information purposes, and that copies will be placed on deposit at Yale University for research and study, I hereby grant, assign, and transfer legal titles and all literary rights in the tape(s) and transcript(s) to the United Nations. However, it is agreed that neither the United Nations nor Yale University will publish or authorize publication of the transcript(s) or any part thereof during my lifetime without my written permission.

Edmund A. Gullion
(Interviewee)  5/8/90  

Jean Krasno
(Interviewer)  5/8/90

(For the Institution of Social and Policy Studies)