

(02)
R4

NON-CIRCULATING
YUN INTERVIEW
MARCH 26, 1990
MAJOR GENERAL INDAR JIT RIKHYE
JAMES S. SUTTERLIN, INTERVIEWER

UN LIBRARY

NOV 4 1990

Table of Contents

UN/SA CORRELATION

The Congo Crisis

Secretariat organization	2-4
Military peace-keeping organization	4-7
The mandate of the UN force	7-12
Control of national contingents	12-16
Protection of civilian population	16-19
Armament of UN forces	19-21
Contact with Mobutu	21-23; 29
Dag Hammarskjold role	24-25
Communication with the field	25-26
Hammarskjold's trips to Katanga	27-29
The Katanga operation	30-39

428

JSS

General Rikhye, as we begin I would like if I could to ask you to identify the position you were in at the time that the Congo crisis developed at the United Nations and also if you could state what you had been doing before you joined the Secretary General's staff.

RIKHYE

I was appointed military advisor for the Congo operations to the UN Secretary General and I arrived to take over my job 27 July 1960 in New York. Before that I had been given a very exciting and challenging military assignment of command of an Indian force which was being airlifted onto the borders of China and Tibet with my headquarters in Ladaq and I had only been there 4 months because prior to that I was chief of staff of the UN Emergency Force in Gaza. I had done that job for about 2 years and it was during that assignment that I met Dag Hammarskjold and Ralph Bunche during visits to Gaza. Dag Hammarskjold had expressed interest to get me to the UN as and when a need occurred and the Congo operation was obviously the assignment he required me for. Somehow he was able to persuade my Indian Prime Minister who, himself, had chosen me for the job in Ladaq. And so I was somewhat surprised when I was taken out of Ladaq to take over this assignment. Certainly it turned out to be very exciting.

JSS So that you had had the experience in a United Nations peace- keeping operations before.

RIKHYE That's correct. I first arrived in Gaza as commander of the Indian Troops which were the largest in numbers and the number of units provided to the UN Emergency Force. And shortly after my arrival in Gaza I was selected to be the chief of staff by General Tommy Burns, the Canadian UNEF Commander.

JSS Now when you did assume your duties as military advisor could you describe what the situation was at the United Nations at that point in the Secretary-General's Office and what the structure was. How was the situation being managed?

RIKHYE The Secretary-General was working with a very ad hoc group at that time. He had already sent Ralph Bunche to the Congo to represent him at the independence celebrations. Bunche had gone there and whilst he was there then, of course, the mutiny occurred and the UN was invited to assist the Congolese government. So Ralph became the Secretary General's representative in the Congo. In New York Dag Hammarskjold's main staff was built by Andy Cordier who was then called the executive secretary, the position now called chef de cabinet. And

with his immediate team and because of the shortage of personnel Dag Hammarskjold was able to obtain the services of Harry Labouisse who sat in Ralph Bunche's office and coordinated, or rather organized, the work of all the political officers, Brian Urquhart and some of the others who were there.

So when I joined Dag Hammarskjold I was given an office in the wing of Ralph Bunche's area because quite obviously that was where the most coordination was required between the military and the political day-to-day handling of the operations.

The Secretary-General had still not completed the formation of his cabinet for the Congo which eventually came to be known as the Congo Club. And he then was able to obtain Sir Alexander McFarquar who was resident representative in Bangkok and a former Indian civil service officer. He took over as the chief of the civilian operations. He was my immediate counterpart. I was responsible for the military operations. So that was the main team of the so called Congo Club which he formed. He worked in a very informal way; his style was really extremely informal. And he really worked around the clock.

When I arrived, which was on the 23rd of July, already more than 10 thousand troops had arrived in the Congo. The commander had just about arrived though he had not

really been able to take complete command and control of this force. The Commander was General Von Horn who had been brought from Jerusalem, where he was chief of Staff of the Un Truce Supervisory Organization. He arrived with about a dozen military observers to form his staff.

Basically the work was being done by Ralph [Bunche] in the Congo. And Ralph had the services of the British officer who was in charge of the Ghanaian forces. In fact he was chief of staff of the Ghana defense forces but had come out to the Congo because a major part of the Ghana forces had been sent to the Congo. So therefore, he felt he should be where most of his troops were. His name was Harry Alexander. And so he was virtually a token commander although on paper the commander was Ralph Bunche. Then when Von Horn arrived he took over. But almost at once, the whole command structure in the Congo became controversial. And there was the first serious crisis that I faced as soon as I arrived to join Dag Hammarskjold. I had no idea about even where the Congo was. I had attempted to ask the Indian Foreign Service officer who was briefing me in Delhi and if I remember correctly he pointed out Tanganyika. Then I learned subsequently from the Indian Prime Minister that Tanganyika had been showed to me because the charge in Dar es Salaam was the man that was sending the cables

about the Congo. So there was a little bit of confusion. I really had no idea so I had to be briefed and I said that to Dag Hammarskjold. I had to be very frank. I said I'm sorry there's nothing I can do. I must know what the situation is; I must understand the geography, the politics, mission, the troop structure, command structure, the liaison arrangements. So he agreed that I should go immediately to the Congo to gain first hand experience and then return, possibly within a week. But before I could go, Nkrumah, who was challenging the UN on the question of leadership in the Congo, sent General Alexander to the UN to present his case which became the Ghana case.

The controversy was the Ghanaian point of view that (he was actually putting it very tactfully) he had come to the conclusion Von Horn was unsuitable for field command. And therefore he was suggesting Von Horn should be the thereafter commander and Alexander the field commander. Quite obviously having a British officer in that situation was absolutely unacceptable to the Secretary-General - for that matter to any of the important powers that had anything to do with the Congo. So on that principle alone it had to be rejected. But furthermore a division of that kind would have caused more problems. And so I spent my first few days in dealing with this situation which I could understand simply from the point

of view of principle and was able to advise the Security Force. Then I immediately went to the Congo to see what the situation there was like.

JSS And what was the real problem with Von Horn. He had only been there a short while?

RIKHYE He was an unfortunate choice for this assignment. He had done well as chief-of-staff UNTSO and I had gotten to know him extremely well when I was chief-of-staff of the UN Emergency Force in Gaza. We had Swedish troops. He would come to visit them and also we had Egyptian-Israeli mixed Armistice Commission headquarters in Gaza which was part of his set-up. He would come see them every so often. And he was included in all the festivities of the UN Emergency Force because he loved going to officers mess, listening to a band, watching a parade like we old soldiers do. And it sort of gets into our blood. He wanted to come out and he was a very likeable person. But his background, other than the early part of his training, had been in transportation. He ran the railways during the Second World War and then became involved in questions relating to the Red Cross, particularly exchange of prisoners. That is how he came to the notice of Count Bernadotte. In this way his name came to the UN and he was sent to Jerusalem. Now the

Observer Mission in Jerusalem has some military aspects but is very largely political and the UN had an absolutely outstanding political officer there, Vigier, who didn't have to look at a file - had it all in his head - and his successor or his number two was also extremely well chosen. It was an area of operation on which Ralph kept a hawk's eye on. He had negotiated the agreement in 1949. So therefore he found as long as Von Horn could manage the offices and kept the morale high and represented the UN rather well which he did, these are, of course, essential qualities for the commander. But he had no field command. He did not know how to deploy troops. He had no concept of supporting troops in the field, managing an operation as big as the Congo, a country which is twenty times as large as Sweden I suppose. He was a lost man.

JSS

Let me ask in that connection, by this time the Security Council had passed the first resolution pertaining to Congo. It is rather vaguely worded in regard to military responsibility. I wondered was it a problem with which you were involved to try to interpret both for the Secretary-General and also for the field command just what the wording meant: "such military assistance necessary until through the efforts Congolese Government, with the technical assistance of the UN, the national

security forces may be able, in the opinion of the government, to meet fully their tasks." That sounds very much like a UN resolution today. But were you, as I say, involved in trying to interpret this? And to tell the field commander who I can imagine would be rather puzzled by that wording just what the mandate meant?

RIKHYE

Well, you have pointed to the whole crux of the problem of the operational handling of the UN troops in the Congo. It was not clarified, or rather it was clarified sufficiently for the UN troops to carry out their operations in the Congo especially towards the latter part of our stay in that country. But in the early stages and certainly all through the time when the UN troops were deployed in different parts of the Congo it was really an impossible task; because there was an assumption in the resolution that the UN troops were going out there to assist the Congolese Government. This was an assumption which included that there would be the Congolese army, there would be the Congolese police. It was true that they had mutinied. But there was a hope and expectation that there would be a semblance of command and control by the Congolese Government over their security forces and that the role of the UN would be to provide technical assistance for them to use to be able to carry out the basic functions. This assumption

proved to be incorrect because the single major factor which contributed to the lawlessness in the country from the day we arrived until we left in June 1964 were Congolese security forces.

JSS In fact the resolution had to be interpreted to give the UN force a direct military role in the preservation of public safety in the Congo?

RiKhye Exactly. In my earlier visits to the Congo I was not able to defend the resolution and so therefore I always returned cowed down by all the bullying I received from my military colleagues in the Congo. I came back and worked with Dag Hammarskjold and with Harry Labouisse, with Stavropoulos and our other colleagues and with several key members of the Security Council and leaders of the Afro-Asian Group on how we could possibly interpret this resolution to a level where the UN troops would be able to carry out their tasks. It finally was clarified on the basis of the right of self-defense, the exercise of the right of self-defense by the UN troops as well by the UN civilians in carrying out their functions. And this had to be redefined and honed and redefined time after time in order to meet new situations that we had not expected. So by the time we had finished there was so much legal, so many pages of legal

interpretation, that it was rather difficult for the soldiers to follow. So I then arranged with the command in the Congo to put out an operation instruction on self-defense which was then checked out by Stavropoulos. Ralph Bunche was by then back at the UN. Some had reservations about the use of armed force at all.

I think Dag Hammarskjold was perhaps more understanding, sympathetic on this issue; however, we had to take all these factor into consideration. We came out with a consensus which I found perfectly acceptable. The UN Commander was very unhappy with it but I found to my joy in fact that some of the key military commanders, General Kitanni of Morocco, General Asmar of Tunisia and the commanders of the Indian troops, they all agreed with the UN interpretation and they, themselves, felt very strongly that they must avoid every possible situation in which they might find themselves in confrontation where they might have to use force. They did everything possible to avoid the use of force because they all had their own bi-lateral relations to consider with Zaire. As Africans they had to consider their own set-up should such a situation happen in their country or in any of the others. Would they agree to accept or support an enforcement action or something close to enforcement. And certainly the Indians who had just come out of the colonial period were not willing to enter this. So

finally the interpretation of self-defense, and in practice what we were able to introduce, was that if the UN troops had to prevent an incident, instead of shooting, we would surround an installation, surround a house, physically protect individuals or equipment or materials or radio stations or airports with the presence of the UN troops who then would have to be attacked and that then permitted us to exercise the right of self-defense.

JSS I believe the situation was complicated further by different interpretation by the Congolese authorities as to what the resolution meant the role of the United Nations forces was. That must have affected also the operation in the field?

RIKHYE Absolutely. Lumumba's interpretation was that the UN forces were there to provide military assistance and he wanted the UN to assist the Congolese forces in the invasion of Katanga. He wanted our aircraft, our transport, our ammunition. UN troops should accompany them. And he simply, unfortunately, never, never understood that was not our mission. So that became I will say a crucial issue in the entire question of leadership, of relations between the Congolese and the UN. It became a major hurdle because the Prime Minister

simply did not understand how the UN operates. Similarly all the other leaders, as it applied to their own regions or their own communities or their own interests, they expected the UN to make itself available in every respect. They could never differentiate military assistance as it is given on a bilateral basis or by a regional alliance from the role of the UN in peace-keeping.

JSS

You have mentioned the varied make-up of the UN forces with the Ghanaian troops, and the other African troops. In quite a few places I think that the governments from which they came were associated with a faction, in particular with the Lumumba faction, in the Congolese government. I wondered after the definitive split between Kasavubu and Lumumba did this cause a problem in terms of the functioning of the forces in the Congo? Was the affiliation between the contributing government and Lumumba reflected in the attitude of the troops under the UN command.

RIKHYE

I'm glad to say that the discipline of the troops was not seriously affected. The major problem that arose was that the troops that you mentioned were receiving orders from their ambassadors which were different from the orders that had received from the UN command. However,

the loyalty of all these military officers was of such a high order that they always came and informed the UN command of the conflicting orders that they had received from their ambassadors and sought a way how they could overcome such contradictions. I think a typical example was the commander of the Egyptian troops who had been under orders of his ambassador and was behaving in a manner that was really becoming a problem. So the UN Force Commander decided to facilitate the task of this contingent by sending them out of Leopoldville. So he transferred them to Cohatville in the Equateur Province north. Now when the battalion was about to go the Egyptian ambassador came to the UN in desperation. He was required by President Nasser to keep the troops in the capital for the protection of Lumumba. And he was informed that that was the UN's function and that the UN commander could use such troops as he chose as long as he carried out his responsibilities. So the battalion was reloaded into river boats. However the Egyptian ambassador gave instructions to the commander of the Egyptian troops that one company should sneak back. So as they went up the river it was Lt. General Saad el Fawzi who became later the Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian forces (he was the commander who in '73 commanded the troops that invaded the east bank of the Suez Canal) - he took the battalion up and according to his orders he

told one company to find its way back. And of course they managed to get back some how and some of them sneaked back into the Indian contingent area. The Indians were providing the food and supplies. And so they turned up and said we need food. So the Indian supply officer looked at his list and the unit was not on the list. And so he said what the hell were they doing here. When it was explained he said that he can't issue them rations but they could go to his dining room and eat with his soldiers. Then he walked to his car and came to UN headquarters and reported that this company had acted in this manner. Well there was a very strong protest launched in Leopoldville. Hammarskjold sent a message to President Nasser at the same time and the troops were ordered back.

Now these were exceptions but I would say in other cases like the Ghanaians they quite often disobeyed their ambassador. Because their ambassador was really acting in concert with Prime Minister Lumumba even though he'd been ousted out of power and therefore was a problem. I would say the Ghanaian contingent commander was practically every day trying to find ways how he could deal with his own ambassador. We went out of the way to help him.

Where the serious split occurred was after the death of Lumumba. There was a meeting which came to be known as

the Conference of the Casablanca powers which was held in Casablanca. There they decided, a number of them decided, they were going to withdraw their troops from the Congo. The initiative was Egyptian and included Guinea, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and so on. Thereafter the contingents received orders that they would be non-operational and a request came to the UN Secretary General that arrangement should be made to send them out. Now this would have meant the departure of about 6 to 8 thousand troops which would have been a very hard vacuum to fill. From the operational point of view it was just impossible for us to let them go. But we redeployed our forces in a manner where they were not exposed to any critical situations and they had to carry out their job till we could arrange transportation. And that's exactly what happened. I must say that these contingent commanders really behaved in an exemplary military fashion. So other than small examples we really did not have too serious difficulties.

There's another very interesting case when we began to apprehend mercenaries in north Katanga. We had deployed the Nigerian troops there which had at times all British officers and the commander was a British brigadier, a very fine officer, very highly experienced officer. He had been apprehending mercenary officers and then he experienced that once he had taken the mercenary officers

away, the Katanga gendarmerie became very undisciplined and misbehaved - went into the local villages, beat up everybody, raped the women, looted the town and drank beer. So he felt that the UN policy was not correct in removing these mercenary officers - that they ought to be put under some kind of umbrella by the UN in order to facilitate the task of our troops. There was a certain amount of logic in it but that the UN couldn't accept. He, therefore, like a gentleman, said he would like to leave the Congo. So we were able to facilitate that. But other than this kind of thing, I must say that it for me was a wonderful experience how well the various contingents and various commanders behaved and their loyalty to the UN.

JSS Could I ask in this connection, how the troops fulfilled the duty they eventually had of affording protection to the civilian population throughout the Congo. This was such an enormous task. How was it done? How effectively was it done?

RIKHYE Never were we able to really provide complete protection because of the nature of the country, that I have already described. Apart from providing protection for the Congolese, themselves, who as you know, were so divided, the colonial policy had been quite often to look for

better workers or better factory workers, more educated workers; they had moved people around where there was possibly a plantation which was Belgian, or British or French, and the workers could be from another tribe. So therefore they were a target in a lawless situation. That itself, required some form of protection. It really was impossible to undertake this enormous task.

The second group which required protection were the Congolese leaders. I think the UN was able to do that reasonably effectively in that we did protect all the faction leaders; in fact, everybody in Leopoldville had a UN guard. For instance when Colonel Mobutu made a coup he was living under the protection of the Moroccan troops. He had left his daughter to live in the UN apartment building and my secretary then, who was a french girl, was taking care of this girl. She spoke a little bit of French. And he made the coup - came to the Royal - and declared he had carried out a coup. They were so dependent on the UN for their personal protection. And the president who was ousting the prime minister had a UN guard on his house. And the prime minister who was ousted had a UN guard on his house. And so on. And similarly in the provinces the UN guards were protecting leaders to the extent possible. It was when they left our protection, and they would go out, that it became difficult. We did our very best to follow them but

sometimes - they have a style of life which takes them to the beer halls and into the African community for dancing and fun and politics and all that. Quite often we didn't even know they had disappeared from the house. Next morning you discover that the bird had flown sometime during the night. We didn't know where he had gone. So there were some practical difficulties.

Then the third category was the European community. Now as far as the large cities were concerned and the towns I think we were able to do an effective job. Where we could do but little was when they were deployed in the plantations or in the various missions and that's where the tragedy occurred. We quickly moved troops there as soon as we heard something had gone wrong. But at that time we didn't have helicopters, helicopters were just coming into the armed forces in the early 60's. And a very expensive vehicle. We did not have enough of those. We simply had twin engine aircraft which required a certain length of the runway or a certain condition for us to put our troops in the air. So therefore that was not entirely taken care of. And so there were constant complaints by the European consulates and the embassies that we were not paying enough attention to the protection of these people and that we were delinquent. And I'm afraid we did not do a very good job.

Lastly of course taking care of all the installations -

the vulnerable points. All the railways, the bridges, transportation, the radios and electric power houses, all that kind of stuff. We put as many people as we possibly could but in some cases we were not enough. So, in total then, I mean to sum up, I would say that the level of protection that the UN troops were able to give, matching this experience with what happens in other countries, like my country for instance where we have had time and time again, different states have had lawlessness, I think the UN did a very good job, if you take that kind of example as a parallel. But for the UN I mean there would have been a terrible tragedy.

JSS

Now you have mentioned the helicopter, that they were not available in the early stage. And you mentioned earlier the definition of the mandate as being essentially in terms of the use of force only in self defense. I was wondering to the extent to which the armament of the UN forces changed in the course of the operation as the mandate was extended to purposes that went some what beyond self defense. How was this reflected in the armament that was available to the UN forces?

RIKHYE

We had to escalate the weapons which were available to our units in keeping with the nature of the weapons which were used against our troops. We used that as a

yardstick. In the early phases all the UN troops which were brought into the country only carried personal weapons, no heavy weapons like mortars or anti-tank weapons of any kind. However it was when we were made aware of the fact that there was an armored unit close to Camp Thysville for example, which was loyal to Colonel Mobutu and those armored cars were brought into the city of Leopoldville that we realized that we had no defense against such armament. So we allowed the units which were in Leopoldville to be equipped with anti-tank weapons. But the real increase in the weapons system occurred because of situation in Katanga. Gradually the Katanga gendarmerie equipped themselves with heavier and heavier weapons to be able to overcome the UN. They were determined to fight it out with the UN and that's exactly what they were doing every incident that occurred in the operation in Katanga. Looking back - I was mentioning to you earlier that I have just completed my own book, I have had a chance to study each of those actions very carefully from other reports and various publications, including Belgian and Congolese publications on the subject. They were battles as far as the Katangese were concerned, and we were, of course, working under the limited mandate of self-defense. So we could not in anticipation improve our weapons systems. We had to be hit, had to be hurt, take casualties before we could take

the case of providing adequate defensive weapons. So gradually we increased our weapons system. We had an armored car unit. When they began to shoot our aircraft in the air with the fighters (which they had obtained from France which came from France via Belgium) we had to immediately fly in anti-aircraft weapons. When they shot our aircraft in the air - they shot down one of our transport aircraft - then we had to bring in the fighters to protect transport aircraft in the air. So the whole escalation of our weapons systems was built on a very methodical system of minimum weapons required for self defense.

JSS You just mentioned Colonel Mobutu. Could you tell a little bit of how the initial contact between Colonel Mobutu and the UN forces took place. What was the relationship and how well informed were the UN forces concerning Colonel Mobutu's role on the Congolese side?

RIKHYE We had excellent connections with Colonel Mobutu more or less from the time that the UN troops first arrived in Leopoldville. He was first included by Lumumba in his cabinet as a junior minister of state for defense, and then he was made chief of staff after the mutiny. In other words before independence this was the planning. He was a literate person; he had been a journalist and he

had experience. He had been to Belgium and had received further education and was an active member of Lumumba's group. There was a good connection between them. But when the mutiny occurred Lumumba looked around and the senior-most man in the Congolese forces was a former sergeant-major of the medical corps who was then the major in Jadotville in Katanga by the name of Victor Hlovla. So he called him up from that service and made him chief of the army as a general. But he rightly realized that he needed somebody a bit brighter on the staff. And so he put colonel Mobutu in as chief of staff. So, when the UN troops arrived they had to establish contact with both of them. The Deputy Force Commander, General Kittani from Morocco, was chosen also to be the military advisor to the Congolese Government, for in providing the technical assistance this was our role. He, himself, incidentally happened to be the most battle experienced officer who served the UN - even more than the Indians, the Canadians or the British. He had a chest full of medals from World War II as a French officer. He had commanded a French division in the invasion of the south of France. He was quite an elderly gentleman and a very fine, very distinguished soldier. The UN was very fortunate in having a man like him in this particular assignment. So he took Mobutu in under his wing and he had a parachute unit and Mobutu and

his officers were very attracted to it. So he trained the military police to instill some discipline in the troops, to stop them from beating up people in the pubs and things like that. He also trained the first gendarme unit and the first parachute unit. So the major part of the training that was done was largely under the weight of General Kittani. And we made a good head start and then, of course, this was all interrupted because of politics.

JSS But at this point Colonel Mobutu was in a sense under the guidance, if you will, of General Kittani.

RIKHYE Absolutely. Kittani had tremendous influence over him.

JSS So, General Rikhye, if we could go back to the situation in New York really from the beginning of the Congo operation, to what extent were you giving daily advice more or less to the Secretary-General regarding the military situation in the Congo? And to what extent was the Secretary-General, himself, involved in giving direction to the military side of the operation?

RIKHYE The Congo operation was Dag Hammarskjold's, every aspect of it, particularly the political-military aspects. He had personal charge. He consulted equally with me and

with any of his other colleagues and there was hardly a meeting in which I was not present in which my views were not taken into consideration. I had complete access to all the information that came in, including my own copies of all the personal cables that the Secretary-General was receiving. Occasionally when I may not be present, perhaps I had been in the Security Council and I had to go back to my office to attend to something and I may have missed a discussion between him and Ralph [Bunche] or between him and Andy [Cordier] or with Mongi Slim, who was president of the General Assembly and one of the key advisors to Dag Hammarskjold, Dag would make sure that I knew what exactly had taken place - either when I'd come down he'd whisper in my ear, or catch me in the corridor. So his ability to lead and to move and to engage the military in a political function was absolutely outstanding. I think he set a great example to that extent. He took advice but he made his own judgement. And this is exactly what I expect of my boss. My job is to give advice but he makes the decisions. And since we did not disagree too often there was never any serious confrontation. Of all the political leaders, senior political persons that I know, he stands out as the one who was really a soldier's political leader. He understood that. I think it's his background which explains it. He had a family tradition of civil service,

politics, and the military which are integral to his background. And therefore he had no hang-ups. There are a lot of people in the UN who have terrible hang-ups about working with the military. He had no such hang-ups. He was an ideally suited man. Similarly when he went to the field he was able to get the best from his senior military commanders. So I found that a very satisfying aspect. And we could get precise instructions from him.

I saw from him that the various UN resolutions, or the political discussions that we had in the Congo Club, would end up in a precise cable to the Force Commander. I was able to get that with the exception of the difficulty we discussed earlier on the question of self-defense. Because it had limitations. We could not possibly use force in any other way except in the manner in which we finally deployed it.

JSS So the communication between New York and the field was consistently good. There were no lapses in understanding because of failures in communications?

RIKHYE No, I think we had some handicaps. There were no voice communications which was a serious handicap. Sometimes the UN representative - first, Ralph Bunche, or Dayal or whoever succeeded him afterwards could get through on the civilian telephone system but that was very inadequate,

totally imperfect. So that was a serious handicap when you had to speak to each instead of doing a telex conversation. With messages and other forms of communication there was no delay and similarly within the Congo once the UN had established it's own communication network, which took several months by the way. So in the early days there was a great deal of inability to communicate and therefore chaos. But once the UN field service established it's communication network, the telex network, then we all knew what was going on except there could be delay if there was a jam-up on the telex communications. So everyone tended to use higher priorities. Because everyone used priorities that, too, got jammed up. So with that exception I think the communication was adequate.

JSS Did you go with the Secretary-General on his trips to the Congo?

RIKHYE I went on every one except the one on which he was killed. On that one he left me behind because things had gone wrong in Katanga. There was an apparent weakness in the command in Leopoldville in exercising control over his troops in Katanga. And so at the last minute he told me to stay behind, that I wouldn't be required and work with Ralph Bunche, who would also be staying, as well.

And so this was the only trip that I did not make.

JSS

Now on the previous trip, when he did go to Katanga was there some contact between you and the Congolese government and, in particular with Lumumba, with regard to this trip to Katanga which became so controversial later?

RIKHYE

The decision to go to Katanga had been made by Dag Hammarskjold, in fact, in New York. When I was sent out to the Congo for the first time, he told me to come back earlier but then he decided to come and he told me to wait there for his arrival. And when he arrived there at that time the situation in Katanga was critical and he made the decision that Ralph [Bunche] would have to go in to check out the situation. He returned and told me to return with him. I came back here and within a week I was sent back to be present when Ralph [Bunche] went. And then that was aborted. Then he told me to return to New York and then he decided to go himself. Then he sent me back. He went by Belgium to facilitate his entry to Katanga, seeking Belgian help. And I went ahead and waited for him. In Leopoldville the view of Lumumba was very clear that it had to be an operation that would be conducted by the Congolese; that it would be an operation in which he would exercise control; that there would be

at least his representatives; that there would be Congolese troops. This, for obvious reasons, was not acceptable to the UN because we would never have been allowed to enter Katanga under those conditions. It had to be a third party, to really get geared up and see what the situation was like. And so Dag Hammarskjold arranged that I went with him and F.T. Liu and some of the other officers. Ralph [Bunche] was left behind on this particular trip to manage the government in Leopoldville. And then a letter was sent to Lumumba informing him that Dag Hammarskjold had gone after Dag Hammarskjold had departed. Now these were the tactics that we had agreed on as being the best since we didn't want a scene at the Leopoldville airport. Certainly the Congolese army would have liked to arrive and block his departure. That did not go down well at all with Lumumba which you could understand. He got very mad so this did not help his relations with Dag Hammarskjold.

You had asked me about contacts with Mobutu. I had already been there three times by the time I went to Katanga. I had already called on him; he had come over to my apartment. We'd been out to dinner, we had already established a personal rapport. The UN interpreters were flown out from different countries and we were using them because I didn't speak French. I read French but I don't

speaking it. And so I used an interpreter but I was quite used to using interpreters, having spent two years as chief of staff in Gaza. So I really don't have the difficulty socially in carrying out a conversation. So we had good rapport with Mobutu. He was not upset with this question, I think he understood, that our game plan was the best under the circumstances. But it was Lumumba who was angry with Dag Hammarskjold and Ralph Bunche who had not consulted him and were going off without his representatives.

JSS Now to go ahead to the next and last visit of the Secretary-General to the Congo. As you were mentioning there were apparent difficulties in Katanga. From what you said the Secretary General was aware of that before he left New York.

RIKHYE He was aware of the fact that Connor Cruise O'Brien was acting in a manner which was not entirely satisfactory to the Secretary-General. He spoke out to the press on a number of occasions. He's Irish; with that background he's very anti-colonial in his attitude. And perhaps some of those were the qualities for which he was selected to go there. But he was not as restrained as was expected of him by the UN leadership in New York and therefore that had caused some concern. There had been several

complaints about it coming from different embassies, particularly those who were friendly with the Belgians, that Connor Cruise O'Brien was acting in a manner which perhaps was not the best, was not in the best interests of the UN. So I think to that extent Dag Hammarskjold knew what kind of person he was. He chose him for that job not simply because he liked some writing he had done but he realized the man's make-up and he thought that would be a good person to have - an Irish anti-colonial. Considering what he had to do his own strategy had to be constantly to win the Belgians and Belgium's western friends to his side. So he wanted some kind of checks and balances there to project an image which was more acceptable to the UN's wider membership. So the purpose of his selection was correct but he found that O'Brien was less manageable than he had anticipated and therefore he was concerned. Then there was an exchange of communications between him and the UN Secretary-General and with Khiary who was then carrying the ball in Leopoldville. He was chief of the civilian operations but was carrying out most of the negotiations for the UN because Sture Linnér was sort of keeping himself back obviously because he didn't feel he had sufficient diplomatic and political experience to handle the situation. Khiary was a very, very able man, an absolute superb politician. And so he felt more comfortable with

that arrangement. And the Secretary-General in his communications had been given certain recommendations which included the use of the UN troops and the arrest of the leaders and so on and so forth. But he had said very clearly in his cables which are available that this plan was not to be implemented. He had said nothing should be done, when he decided to go out, that no action should be taken until he personally visited Leopoldville, where he intended to take charge of the initiative. As you know when he arrived in Paris he was given the first press ticker which informed him that the UN troops had already taken action contrary to his wishes. So he was as surprised as we were back in New York. I have gone through this very, very carefully. I was with Dag Hammarskjold; I was with Ralph [Bunche]; I was with Andy Cordier. It is inconceivable that anything else had been agreed to except what is already on record. I am simply not prepared to accept that there was any hint on the part of the Secretary-General, which I know some people attribute to him, that certain action might be taken. He was clear in his instructions that nothing would be done until he arrived.

JSS

You were saying that you sent out guidance to the field with regard to what should be done in the Congo in the winter of 1962. Action was taken, but I judge from what

you were saying there were differences in the Security Council and perhaps in the understanding of the Secretary-General, himself. Would you say that or not? Did he understand the extent to which force might be used?

I think the Secretary-General understood that very clearly. In spite of the management of the operations that Dag Hammarskjold wanted as I described to you earlier, he did maintain communication with me on a personal basis. Quite often he would send for me in his office where we just sat around and talked. And so he was most interested particularly when we came closer to ending the Katanga situation. He was particularly interested in the various aspects of the operation - the information side, the military, to be sure in his mind the military aspects had to be sufficiently taken care of - that they would be done properly. This time we had called for the operational plans which had been sent to us. Ralph Bunche had gone out there to Katanga and had met all the important leaders of the UN at the higher level and talked to them in detail about the various tasks. And I'd been to Leopoldville a couple of times and discussed the distinct and various aspects of it. We made comprehensive planning or contingency planning to take care of various situations. The whole concept of the

a long time. As you know we built a big gap between the last operation and this one. And here I must say very openly and frankly that when the UN thinks of peace-keeping it thinks of largely third country troops or neutral or medium powers. But when it comes to logistics, when it comes to movement, when it comes to quick resupply it's impossible for the UN to do that from inside. It has to go out and seek it. The attempts to obtain commercial aircraft, commercial shipping are extremely difficult. They are committed everywhere. The only recourse is to use military aircraft of the big countries. And when it comes to the big powers there is only one country that has ready resources which is the United States. So this means that politically the Secretary-General has to carry the United States. All right, you can get three planes from the Soviet Union and two Brittannias from the Britts. You'd be interested to know that I needed three hundred C 124 airlifts to prepare the UN troops for the Katanga operation. There was only one way we could do it . We had to move bridges from Germany. It was the only resource we could use. Otherwise we could get them from India but the hauling is much more. The Indians have it; the Pakastanis have it and the troops in Germany have it, too. But it was easier to bring it from Germany. All had to be done by air. Ammunition, POL problems, gasoline problems, food

the commanders there are like. Are they going to be able to use it as effectively as Rikhye has said they could? So Truman went there with a small team and was so impressed with the command - which was General Prem Chan and the field commander was General Naron, who unfortunately died since then and the various other officers, the Ethiopian General and so forth and so on - he was so impressed he came back and said let's do it. So we had that tremendous logistic backing. And everything moved forward closer to the field before we undertook this operation. It was the largest military operation every undertaken by the UN. It's not likely to be repeated. Therefore it was done with the support of the US Air force and the US Logistic Command. It really was a very fine operation and went very well. So the point was when you have such preparation and suddenly the situation occurred when things became mobile, things became flexible, the commanders moved forward and they were able to achieve it. Now publicly, officially we have said there was a great breakdown in communications. There was no breakdown in communications. It was a political breakdown in communications. It was the middle of an operation when the troops were streaming forward, the Secretary-General gets told by the US Administration that the Congress is getting worked up; the Katanga lobby is doing this, that or the other;

of the political motivation of the other order?

RIKHYE I think so, I'd say he was very sensitive. So was Reggie Naronna who eventually became one of the top Indian Generals - very sensible at that level.

JSS I believe George Sherry was at that point the political officer in Elizabethville. He has indicated that there was a delay in the receipt of the order, which wasn't processed or something so that in fact the order did not actually reach General Prem Chan until after Jadotville was taken.

RIKHYE That is probably more accurate; but Prem knew that this thing had come through. The delay was in Leopoldville where the officer in charge was not available. But he knew what the orders were and therefore he became unavailable. But on the military network the information had gone to Katanga that these orders had come from New York. The military officers are running around communications officers all the time. We had a very effective operation in Leopoldville.

JSS In effect this operation brought about the end of the secession of Katanga, which is a good place to end this interview.

NAME INDEX

Alexander, General Harry	4-6
Asmar, General	11
Bernadotte, Count Folke	7
Bunche, Ralph	2-5, 11, 26, 27, 30, 33, 38
Burns, General E.L.M.	3
Cordier, Andrew	3, 32
Dayal, Rajeshwar	26
Fawzi, Saad el	14
Hammarskjold, Dag	1-6, 10, 11, 15, 24, 25, 28-30, 32, 33
Hdovla, Victor	23
Horn, General Carl von	5-8
Kasavubu, Joseph	13
Khiary, Mahmoud	31
Kitanni, General	11
Labouisse, Harry	4, 10
Linnér, Sture	31
Liu, F.T.	29
Lumumba, Patrice	12-15, 22-23, 28-30
McFarquar, Alexander	4
Mobutu, Joseph-Désiré (Sese Seko)	1, 18, 21-24, 29, 30
Narona, General Reginald	37-39
Nasser, Gamal Abdul	14, 15
Nkrumah, Kwame	6
O'Brien, Connor Cruise	30, 31

Prem Chan, General	37-39
Sherry, George	39
Slim, Mongi	25
Stavropoulos, Constantin	10, 11
Taylor, Maxwell	36
Truman, General	36, 37
Urquhart, Brian	4
Vigier, Henri	8

UNITED NATIONS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT

I, Indar Ist Rikhye (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 James S. Sutterlin (Interviewer) on 3/26/90 (Date) at Bronxville (City), n.y. (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.

Indar Ist Rikhye

(Interviewee)

March 26, 1990

(Date)

James S. Sutterlin

(Interviewer)

3/26/90

(Date)

(For the Institution of Social
and Policy Studies)

(Date)