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UN INTERVIEW
Brian Urquhart
October 19, 1984
Interviewer: Leon Gordenker

Table of Contents

The Congo Operation

Dag Hammarskjold	1-5,14-39
Ralph Bunche	1,2,5-7,12,18,20,37,38
Joseph Kasavubu	1,2,9,13,14,16,22,23,25, 26
Patrice Lumumba	1-3,9,11,13,14,16,19,20, 21,23-25
F.T. Liu	1,5,15,18
Article 99	2,4
Secession of Katanga	2,13,17,18,24,26-33
The Belgians	2,3,6,10,11,12,27
17 Congolese with College Degrees	2
Mutiny of the Army	3,5-8,10,13
The Whites Fled the Congo	3
NATO Airfields	4
Soviet Union	4,14,20,22,24
Civilian Personnel	4
UN Troops	5,18,19,21,23,24,34,44,48
General von Horn	5
Sture Linner	5,22
UN Flag	7,8
Moroccan Troops	7-9,13
Setting up Congolese Administration	9,10,21
Communications	11,32
East-West Issues	12,14,16
The Congolese Army	13,19
Moise Tshombe	13,17-19,24-30,33,39, 41,42,45-48
Baluba Tribe	13,14,23
Mobutu: Coup d'Etat	14,15,22
CIA	15,35
Andrew Cordier	20,35,38
Rajeshwar Dayal	20,22
Nikita Khrushchev	22
Godefroid Munongo	24,25,46
Death of Lumumba	24,25
Cyrille Adoula	26
Paul Henri Spaak	27
Mercenaries	27,28,41
Conor Cruise O'Brien	28-40
Death of Hammarskjold	29,30,37-39

MASTER COPY

Mahmoud Khiary	31
Law Suit Against Urquhart	33, 34
UN Crisis on Congo	35
B.F. Osorio-Tafall	36
U Thant	39
Kidnapping of Urquhart	39-47
George Ivan Smith	39-43
Lou Hofferker	41, 43
Senator Thomas Dodd	40-43, 47

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URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984

1

Q: Brian Urquhart, we are going to ask you to turn your mind back to the events of the Congo, the United Nations involvement there, your personal role there and whatever reflections you have on the way the whole affair went. I think we could best start out by asking you to describe what you were doing when the Congo crisis began back there in June 1960: how were you involved in it, how did it touch you and what was your role.

A: In July 1960 Secretary-General Hammarskjöld had sent Ralph Bunche - for whom I worked - to the Congo to get there before the independence ceremonies at the end of June because Hammarskjöld had been to the Belgian Congo - as it then was - earlier that year and had been very struck by the fact that it was a very complex, very large country, in which apparently absolutely no preparations whatsoever had been made for independence, ~~and he~~ anticipated - as it turned out all too rightly - that when independence came there was going to be the most appalling mess. I do not think that even Hammarskjöld anticipated quite what a mess it was going to be. He sent Ralph Bunche there as the best, strongest person in the Secretariat with a very wide experience of colonialism and the problems of independence to see if he couldn't be of some help to President Kasavubu and Patrice Lumumba, the Prime Minister-designate, when they took over the reins of an independent Congo on 1 July. He took with him F.T. Liu, which left me practically in sole charge of the office *in New York*.

Q: Had you made any preparations for Bunche's trip?

A: No, we hadn't - except for briefing on the Congo - because it wasn't anticipated at that time that the UN would be involved operationally in it at all.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
2

So, I was more or less stuck in New York running the office and looking after the various things in the Middle East and elsewhere which we ran and waiting for Bunche to come back. When the crisis started we were of course in very close touch with Bunche, right from the beginning of the crisis in the Congo - we started in the early days of July - and we became increasingly concerned about what was happening, because ~~it was~~ ^{things seemed} completely out of control in that very large and, at that time, very strange country.

As you know, Hammarskjöld first got the request from Lumumba and Kasavubu to get the Belgians out when they came back after the mutiny of the army and then he got another request for military assistance. After weighing the dangers of all this he decided the thing was so serious, compounded by the secession of Katanga on 11 July, that he had no option but to invoke Article 99 - I think the first time that was ever done in history - to bring this matter to the Security Council.

Hammarskjöld was a very cautious man in some ways and had taken the precaution before doing that of talking to all the members of the Council privately. So he knew that that move would be well received and that the Council would probably be in the mood to take action. That was what was required, because what you had in the Congo was not only the panic but also the flight of ^{almost} the entire white population, who were the people who ran the Congo. Due to the Belgian system of colonialism, no Congolese had ever risen to any position of real importance at all, anywhere, in any sector. The highest Congolese rank in the Army was sergeant. There were supposedly 17 Congolese out of the whole population who had university degrees and none of them was employed in any position of responsibility. The entire

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984

3

infrastructure of the immensely complex colony - the transport, the waterways, the whole economic system, the mines - everything was run entirely by Belgians.

The Belgians had assumed that independence would be more or less a formality, and there was this famous equation which the Commander of the Congolese National Army, General Jansens, wrote on the blackboard of all the officers' messes saying "Before independence equals after independence", meaning that nothing would happen. They couldn't have been more wrong about that.

Q: Did Hammar skjöld speak to the Belgians too?

A: The Belgians, having given the country independence with no preparation, were completely ~~phased~~ ^{taken aback} (a) by Lumumba, who turned out to be a firebrand. But why on earth they didn't know that before God only knows - but they didn't, apparently; and then (b) by the mutiny of the army, which threw out all its Belgian officers and which meant that it had no officers ^{at all} and was ~~a sort of~~ officer-less army wandering about, getting into trouble, and most of the trouble it got into was beating up and raping the whites - it was a terrible mess; whereupon the whites panicked and left, whereupon the whole country broke down: because there was nobody in the power-station to do the switching, there wasn't anybody in the telephone exchange, there was nobody in the police station, there wasn't anybody in the whole transport system on which the country depended - it was like the Marie Celeste. It was simply amazing - and it broke down literally in 24 hours. They all legged it over the river to Brazzaville, with a very few notable exceptions. So you had a mutiny, a panic, a breakdown of law and order and of all effective administration in a very, ~~very~~ large and strategic country.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984

4

The second danger that Hammarskjöld was vividly aware of was that, the Congo, being one of the largest and richest countries in Africa, strategically placed bang in the middle of the continent, with two strategic NATO airfields, Kamina and Kitona, ~~it~~^{was} in those days was a very key strategic prize; and he was afraid that if there was a complete vacuum and chaos in the Congo both the United States and the Soviet Union would feel obliged to fill ~~it~~^{the vacuum} before the other did, ~~which in fact was true; they did.~~^{even in the Cold War} And, showing that sometimes wisdom surfaces, both the United States and the Soviet Union were anxious to have a third party fill it, namely, the UN, because there wasn't anybody else.

That was how we got into easily the biggest and most difficult operation the UN has ever done, literally in about 24 or 36 hours. It went through the Council in a single meeting lasting from 8.15 p.m. till about 3 o'clock in the morning.

Q: Hammarskjöld came into that meeting with a prepared document in essence. He talked about Article 99 and then introduced his views of the subject and in essence said 'I am prepared to get a force in there'. How much work did you do in preparing that?

A: Absolutely none, because he didn't do any work before. That was what was so astonishing: he hadn't had time as a matter of fact. Before that Council meeting, as far as I remember, we had done no contingency planning on the military or the civilian side. ^{IV} Funny enough, the civilian side was even more difficult than the military side, because we had to produce people like airport controllers, people who could run hospitals, ^{banks,} the whole food emergency food supply and that kind of thing. It had not been done for the very simple reason there hadn't been time and nobody had really understood at that point the magnitude of the crisis.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
5

The moment the Council meeting ended we all went up to the Secretary-General's conference room on the thirty-eighth floor and sat down for another three hours to figure out the rudiments of that operation. Hammarskjöld ran that meeting, occasionally taking the telephone to call up various countries to get the first troops, and by 6.30 that morning we had, I think, four countries with the troops actually standing by; we had the United States Military Air Transport Command getting ready to go and pick them up and, incidentally, the Russians who flew in Ghanaian contingent from Accra. We had a name for the operation; we had the beginnings of a logistical system; we had a Commander - a great mistake that was too - General Von Horn, a total disaster, which we all knew but for some unknown reason Hammarskjöld simply would not listen to any queries about that particular appointment; we had another Swede as head of the civilian operations, ~~Bykel~~ *Sture* ~~Stewart~~ *Linner* and Bunche, who was in Leopoldville anyway having quite a difficult time in one way or another, was made the temporary Commander of the Operation until Von Horn could arrive from Jerusalem where he was the Chief of Staff of UNTSO.

Q: That took 10 days, if I recall.

A: Bunche had one person with him, my dear old friend F.T. Liu, and since he was about to become not only the Commander in Chief but also the Director of an enormous military and civilian operation, it was thought very necessary to reinforce him urgently; so I was told to leave immediately and get to Leopoldville somehow. It wasn't possible to get there by ordinary means because the airports were all closed and all civilian airlines had ceased to go to Leopoldville owing to the mutiny. I left that night for Europe. I went to London and then got a plane

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
6

from London to Kafno in Nigeria, which was a staging point for the Military Air Transport Command bringing people in, and managed to hitch a ride from there in an American Globemaster which, incidentally, landed at the wrong airfield in Leopoldville - it landed at the old airfield which had been closed - creating quite a stir, but we finally got to the right one.

Q: That must have been about 16 or 17 July.

A: I left on the fourteenth, I think, and got there on the sixteenth.

Q: What were you supposed to do there? What was your work?

A: I had assumed that I would be allowed to go into the town and have a bath having been travelling by that time for about three days by various means, but when I got to the airport I received a message from Bunche. Bunche very much liked handing you a hot potato; ~~He adored that,~~ he took great pleasure in that. I must say it was very nice in one way. I got a message saying: "Don't come into Leopoldville; stay at the airport because Bunche has a special assignment for you." I thought to myself "that doesn't sound so good"; none the less, I stayed there. It was very muggy and hot and the place was very confused, because the mutineers had tried to take over the airport and the Belgian paratroops ^{who} had then taken it back in quite a spirited military action, were running the airport and were ~~very~~ very trigger-happy and extremely nervous.

Q: Those Belgian paratroops had been flown in by then?

A: They had been flown in to deal with the emergency, but they made things much worse because they had become an obsession with the Congolese. The result was the Congolese thought anyone who was obviously not Congolese was a

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984

7

Belgian. That meant you had to be extremely careful about what you did. Of course, the Congolese had never heard of the UN either. They believed it to be some exotic tribe, so that the UN Flag meant absolutely nothing.

Anyhow, when I got to Leopoldville all the troops were just arriving from all over the place. Bunche came out to the airport at about 10 o'clock at night and I could easily see from the gleeful look in his eyes that he had thought of a really good one. Sure enough, he said: "I have a wonderful job for you: you are going to commandeer a train and go down the line with some Unit which will get off one of these aeroplanes and you are going to put down the mutiny." I said: "Oh, that's great; thanks very much." Specifically we were going to Thysville, the main headquarters of the Congolese Army, which was the centre of the ["]munity and then we would go on and get the ^{Atlantic} port of Matadi working again. It had been completely blocked at that point, nothing was working. Of course, the railway was not working either. I said: "All right, that's fine; but ~~the only trouble is~~ you are the Commnader in Chief, so you can very well depute one of these incoming units. You have to give them an order because I can't just go up to some friendly colonel and say 'Come on boys, let's go'."

At that point we were in the control tower and noticed the Moroccans ~~sort of~~ deplaning. I said to Ralph "They are very good-looking soldiers; they are excellent. That's just what we want." So, sure enough, we got hold of the Moroccan Colonel - who became ~~very~~ famous later - by the name of ^{DRISS BEN OUMAR} ~~Ban Omar Drisse~~, a magnificent soldier, and explained the thing to him and said the lot had fallen on his Unit. He was delighted; he said that would be fine if we could just have time to give them a meal, because they had not eaten for two days; that would be excellent.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
8

~~I then rustled around~~ and we found a train all right but could not find a driver. Finally, we found a very, very nervous Belgian who said he could drive the train and fortified him with a great deal of beer and gave him an escort and a car. He turned out to be very good, I must say. I said "How on earth do we find this train in the middle of the night?" He said: "I'll bring it to the airport. There's a railroad spur which goes that way and since there is no traffic we can just run it up there." They did that, picked us up, we got on the train and the Colonel and I and the regimental mascots, two black goats - which smelled to the high heavens, I must say, but they were magnificent creatures ^{and} - set off. We stopped at every station and got a rather mixed reception, one way or another. I don't think the mutineers were exactly enchanted to see this outfit, but we did all right.

Q: No shooting?

A: NO, there wasn't any shooting. Well there was at one place, but it wasn't specifically at us; it was just a sort of general nervousness, I think.

The Colonel was very ~~very~~ good. He gave these people the most tremendous show. The Moroccans had a band, and when things got really bad we deployed the band and the goats and that distracted people's attention. Fortunately, I had brought along about five UN flags and whenever we could find a flagpole we ran up the Congolese and UN flags - which sort of provided a kind of distraction - and the Colonel would make everybody salute it. He was very good, an absolutely marvellous soldier.

Finally, we got to Thysville where the real trouble was. There he did something that I had never seen done before. First of all, every mutineer we saw was ordered to report back to barracks and the Colonel then personally drilled an

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
9

honour guard for the raising of the UN Flag in the barracks. It took two hours before it was good enough, in his view, to pass muster. That had a tremendous effect. People came from miles to see this amazing spectacle. He was remarkable and the Moroccans were wonderful troops.

~~But he~~ ^{The Colonel} was in such good shape by that time and was obviously so good at peace-keeping, and I kept getting messages ^{from Bunche} over the radio, which was somewhat rudimentary, saying where the hell was I, didn't I think enough tourism was enough, and what about coming back to do some work, that I finally drove back to Leopoldville, which was a long and relatively hairy drive.

Q: In a Moroccan jeep.

A: Yes, I went in one of the Moroccan jeeps.

So that's how we started. But mostly what we did - really we did everything that came to mind, ~~apart from organizing and administering that force.~~ The Congo was great fun. Life in Leopoldville was just one emergency after another, 24 hours a day; it was fascinating.

Q: You had political duties too, didn't you?

A: Yes, we had the whole diplomatic corps in a state of frenzy. We had everybody always either being threatened or feeling themselves threatened, a lot of the time including Lumumba and Kasavubu. We had to deal with Lumumba because he did not know very much about running a Government, so we tried to help him with that. We had the whole business of trying to get some kind of emergency civil administration going.

Q: How did you do that?

A: We brought in all sorts of people: we brought in air controllers through ICAO, we brought in doctors from WHO, UNICEF took on the emergency food

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
10

supply - in fact they overdid it; they acquired about 70 times as much food as the Congolese could possibly eat. It was amazing. One could hardly move in Leopoldville for stocks of emergency food, but that was finally stopped. We had to clear Matadi, which General Wheeler did. We had to try to get the Belgians out, which was an enormous problem entailing endless negotiations with the Belgian soldiers and the Ambassador. We had to deploy the Force in order to give a pretext for the Belgians to leave, and that was a complication because there wasn't any headquarters. We were just bringing people in. It was a completely virgin country as far as that was concerned; there wasn't anything there at all.

Q: It seems to me that the big political task must have been that to which you just referred: on the one hand, bringing in your troops and deploying them and, on the other, convincing the Belgians that it was now time and place to depart. Do you want to talk a little bit about how that went?

A: The Belgians didn't like us at all - and, I must confess, we didn't like them very much either, because the feeling among all the UN people was they had wilfully produced a catastrophic situation and then behaved very badly about it. They had cut and run, they had brought in a lot of unbattle-trained, extremely immature, very young, very trigger-happy soldiers. They had therefore created tremendous panic among the Congolese. The Congolese were obsessed with Belgian parachutists; they just thought everything was a Belgian parachutist, and they were always arresting our people because of that. ~~They had done a lot I think~~ They had behaved ~~very~~ very badly, especially in Leopoldville. The sort of things they had done were wreck the police station, pull out all the police communications and things like that. ~~You know that is simply impossible.~~ It was a really very bad

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
11

show. There's no getting away from it. And when you could get Belgians back they were ~~very~~ sulky and ~~very~~ very hostile to the UN, believing us to be nasty decolonizing radicals. It was a really very unhappy relationship. They were unhappy because ~~they~~ had the jewel in the Belgian Crown, ^{The richest colony ever,} had turned overnight into a complete mess. It was terrible, they should have foreseen it, but they had done nothing.

They were terrified of Lumumba, who I must say was an extremely unpredictable character. I got to know him ^{quite} ~~very~~ well and he was really difficult. He was a ~~very~~ very clever, extremely irrational young man.

Q: He really was volatile.

A: He was volatile to a degree which I have never seen in anyone else in public life. One minute he'd be threatening you with instant expulsion, fire and the sword, and the next minute he'd be asking for a \$100-million loan. It was just amazing and it happened all the time. This did have a great effect especially on the white population who were frightened of him - and that made our life that much more difficult.

Communications were very bad, so that when we sent people off to Kivu, Stanleyville -

Q: Elisabethville.

A: We were sending contingents of troops there. Our communications were very bad. We didn't have any logistical pipeline to feed them with; we had to do it by emergency, and it was an ~~extremely~~ enormous job. It was a miracle, I think, that nothing really terrible happened in that period. In fact, the thing was widely regarded as a colossal success, especially by American journalists. I

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
12

remember Scotty Reston wrote an article on the op. ed. page of The New York Times entitled "The UN, a haven of peace and reason in a silly world". It was all about the Congo operation, ~~and~~ ~~se~~ ~~en~~. It was considered to be a - which it was - very remarkable experiment.

What was very interesting about it - to me, at any rate - was that that was the only two months in my whole nearly 40 years here ~~aw~~ when the Secretariat was actually running something entirely without interference, because nobody was anywhere near it, nobody would get in because they were too frightened, and we just had to do what we thought was right and couldn't even get instructions, because nobody told us what to do. It was ~~very~~ fascinating and, I think, Bunche came out remarkably on this. He was simply marvellous.

Q: You had no Belgian opposite numbers in essence?

A: We had the Belgian Ambassador, who was in fact a very decent guy called Van ^eDon Bosch, but the poor man was very bewildered. Then we had the Belgian military who were pretty difficult. I am not surprised; they were in an impossible position. They could not win. The only thing they could do was get out and hope for the best - and if they got out they would be blamed for whatever happened to the remaining whites, not to mention Belgian property.

Then, of course, in all this great confusion ~~and I must say it was a most fascinating period~~ what some of us failed to observe was the old East-West problem cropping up. That was somewhat in abeyance for the first week or two we were there, then when the Belgians delayed getting their soldiers out there began to be rumblings in the Security Council from the Soviet side, then the Soviets talked very much against the fact that we were using the American Air Force for

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
13

virtually all the troop lift. Well, we had nothing else. But that caused them to begin to say this was an American operation in disguise - which it simply wasn't, because if ever anyone was totally resistant to being told what to do by the Americans it was Ralph Bunche. Being American himself, he felt very strongly about this. But it was unfortunate that the only aircraft we could get were these marvellous American Military Air Transport Command aircraft. However, the relations between Lumumba and Kasavubu were what really put the hat on it. They had always been on very bad terms, even before independence. They had just managed to stick together through independence and the initial chaos, the mutiny and all that.

We had ~~then~~ immediately started a huge training programme for the army under the Moroccans. We had 400 Moroccan officers under a really remarkable General called ^{Kettani} ~~Katani~~, whose sole job was to train what was then called the ANC, the ^{Armée Nationale Congolaise} Congolese National Army - which under the Belgians was called the Force publique. They had started on that job, and I think that if the whole thing hadn't broken up ^{politically} they might have done a very good job. But just as they really got going in August, the other great strain on the situation, ~~was~~ the secession of Katanga, the richest province of the Congo, under Moise Tshombe. ~~That~~ became an obsession with the Central Government, ~~and~~ it was very clear to us that if we did not solve that problem the Central Government would fall to bits between the extremists and more or less moderate people.

Lumumba launched a most ludicrous military expedition, supposedly to recapture Katanga. We told him not to do it, but he did it any way, and the soldiers of that expedition were simply airlifted into Kasai and proceeded to massacre the Baluba, the rich ^{east} tribe of the Congo, and there was a terrible massacre involving thousands and thousands of people. ~~It was terrible.~~

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
14

Q: Did you have soldiers there then?

A: We had a very few Tunisians, and they did what they could to stop it. We finally managed to stop it simply by closing all the airfields so that the aircraft with the soldiers in them could not take off. The Congolese Army had acquired 16 Ilyushin Soviet transports and were flying them all over the place to commit mayhem, and we finally simply closed the airfields. That really did it with the Soviet Union.

Q: You were there still then?

A: Yes. I was sent up to close the airfield in Stanleyville - and we did it too, with a lot of difficulty but it was all right.

Then, right on top of the airfield closing business - which really precipitated the East-West struggle in the worst form in the Security Council; and that was the first time the Russians not only accused all of us but also Hammarskjöld of misdoing, being pro-American and that kind of thing - Kasavubu dismissed Lumumba and Lumumba dismissed Kasavubu. That produced a very complicated constitutional controversy about who had the right to dismiss whom. It didn't seem to matter very much to me, but in fact essentially the country then broke up into two warring factions.

Lumumba ^{was} being much more able and much more articulate and a great demagogue, but ^{he had} ~~having~~ one enormous disadvantage over Kasavubu - which ~~was~~ that his tribal base was the other side of the country in Stanleyville; whereas Kasavubu's was right there in Leopoldville, the Bakongo tribe which is the biggest tribe in that area - ^{and he} had a tremendous advantage of having a political base. That was bad enough. On top of that, Lumumba's old Chief of Staff, Colonel Mobutu ^V, with whom we had dealt

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
15

throughout as the only person on Lumumba's staff who in times of complete lunacy could display a certain amount of reasonable common sense - and we used Mobutu mostly to get our people out of gaol and that kind of thing - and who was a sort of upwardly mobile Congolese soldier suddenly appeared in our quarters and said he had left Lumumba.

We said "You can't do that. As the Chief of Staff you can't possibly do that. You must go back, keep the army out of politics and preserve your country." He took that advice all wrong, I think. It was F.T. and I who told him that. F.T's. French is impeccable; mine is not. Three days later ^{Mobutu} he appeared again in our headquarters and said he was very tired, so we put him in our bedroom. F.T. and I shared a room; we were very ^h sort of space. He asked for a radio, so we gave him a little Philips radio which seemed harmless enough. I seem to remember also giving him a bottle of whisky at some point to sort of cheer him up a bit. Then suddenly, over the radio, the cha-cha-cha which normally played for 24 hours a day on the Congolese radio went off and a voice was heard taking over the country and handing it over to a Commission of Experts. That was Mobutu's voice, ^{and he pointed at the radio saying} saying "C'est moi! C'est moi!". We said, "All right, that's it, out you go. You can't declare a coup from our headquarters. That's impossible. You go out on the street if you are going to declare a coup d'état with your supporters and do it." He didn't like that at all. He was very upset about it. He said he had thought we were friends. I said it had nothing to do with that. So we threw him out. And that added a third, totally confusing, element to the scene. Nobody really knew who was running Mobutu, and I don't know to this day. In those days it was always said it was the CIA. I don't believe it was actually, but still it doesn't matter who it was; it had the same confusing effect.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
16

We then basically had three Governments; two of them eventually more or less combined, Kasavubu and Mobutu, but they were illegal under the Constitution and there was no way to establish legality, except to convene under the loi fondamentale - the provisional constitution - the Congolese Parliament for that body to choose a Prime Minister, since everybody was in dispute.

You couldn't convene the Congolese Parliament, because the Members of Parliament were so scared that they wouldn't appear in Leopoldville. They thought they would be killed - probably quite rightly too. So it took nearly a year to get them together. They finally were got together under UN protection in Louvainium, which is the university in Leopoldville. But there was a whole year when the constitutional position was extremely vague. It was made much worse by the fact that the West then backed Kasavubu and the East then backed Lumumba, creating a sort of East-West confrontation bang in the middle of the Congo which was complicated enough already.

That was the beginning of the immense crisis into which Hammarskjöld and we all sank - because we had to try to prevent people from killing each other in the Congo, we had to try to keep the place running, and that included, incidentally, completely revamping the whole banking system, the currency system, getting the transport system working, getting at least the minimal services working and all that kind of thing, and actually training people to do it. We had to do all that in the middle of a constitutional crisis with very strong overtones of a civil war. In addition, we had to protect inordinate numbers of persons who were frightened - not only whites but a lot of Congolese as well.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
17

Q: Let's go back a bit now and just establish some fixed points here. You were there in the Congo when Dag Hammarskjöld visited in July 1960. We have 28 July -

A: He went twice: that's right, he came in August as well.

Q: He came in August as well and said he was there to help arrange UN entry into Katanga - Katanga by that time having apparently declared secession, split off in some way. Was it your mission's initiative that got Hammarskjöld there? Was it his judgement? How did he happen to come there then?

A: Needless to say, at that time the Congo operation was in world headlines. It was the most important thing of that kind going on in the world and it was a very spectacular, dramatic and ~~extremely~~ event, because nothing like it had ever happened before.

Hammarskjöld was convinced, and we were all convinced, that if you did not solve the Katanga problem quickly - which meant getting the Belgians out of Katanga and getting Tshombe in some way to retract the secession - the whole thing would fall to bits, because the Central Government would devote all its energies to trying to topple Tshombe, to the total exclusion of all the things they really had to do; you would have a civil war, to some extent on tribal lines; and it would be a total disaster. Furthermore, you wouldn't escape getting the East-West business into that, because there would be no way in which you could keep it out. So it would have been a total disaster.

Hammarskjöld decided to try to pre-empt that by a personal initiative of his own. The first time he came out he didn't really have the Security Council ^{behind him} - the

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
18

Security Council had managed to fudge the Katanga secession in all its first decisions on the Congo. It hadn't really dealt with it at all, except to refer to the territorial integrity of the Congo as one of our objectives. He came out first to see if it wouldn't be possible by a personal initiative to put UN troops into Katanga, with the co-operation of Tshombe, as the pretext for getting the Belgian troops out - which was the first step that had to be taken in order to do anything about the secession - and he sent Bunche down with F.T. to see if it was going to be possible to land UN troops in Katanga. The thing about our troops is that they are not equipped for assault landing; we have nothing like that. They would have to land peacefully and in an unmilitary fashion. They would just have to ~~drive~~^{fly} in and deplane. Bunche, after a rather hectic 24 hours in Elisabethville with all sorts of alarms and excursions, came to the conclusion that it was absolutely out of the question to do that, particularly since we didn't really have the authority to do it from the Security Council.

Hammarskjöld then flew back to New York and got a decision out of the Council to introduce UN troops into Katanga - well, more or less, that it was. He then came back and decided the only way he could do this without taking an enormous risk of casualties would be to lead them in himself. I must say that that was a fairly remarkable decision, because nobody had the faintest notion what the Katangese were going to do. They had said they were going to resist the UN with all means, including poison arrows - and that, to some extent, was a lot of empty talk. None the less you never quite knew what was the truth and what wasn't in the Congo in those days. It was a place where very fantastic claims were made on all subjects, and some fairly fantastic things happened too.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
19

Hammaraskjöld

He decided that the only way he could do this would be to land first, himself, talk to Tshombe and then explain to Tshombe that three planeloads of Swedes - his own nationality - were arriving as his personal troops. Most of our soldiers were Africans, but since one of the main problems in Katanga was the white population who were terrified of Lumumba's coming in with the Congolese Army and massacring them - they had a very, very ^{fantastic} elaborate idea of what Lumumba was like, I must say - the Swedes, being white, would spread reassurance - this was wishful thinking as it turned out - and that that would allow the Belgians to decide to pull their troops out of Katanga, ~~where they were totally illegally.~~

He did this, he landed - it was a very squeaky occasion, I must say, because there was an effort then to stop the troops from landing, but Hammarkjöld managed to deal with that by personally going to the control tower, simply taking over control and telling Tshombe that this was going to happen, or he would leave immediately and summon another meeting of the Security Council, which would take enforcement action. Tshombe then gave in.

Unfortunately, this extraordinarily courageous and dashing effort had a number of unexpected effects. In the first place, it reassured the Belgians tremendously and they decided that they were perfectly safe to keep their troops in Katanga alongside the UN troops - which wasn't at all the intention. The second thing was that, in order to get this done, Hammaraskjöld had to dissociate himself from Lumumba because Lumumba was ~~really~~ anathema not only to the whites in Katanga but also to the whole Katangese population. They were terrified of him - they thought he was the Devil incarnate - and any association of this operation with Lumumba would have been totally fatal. They would have resisted by force. So ~~he~~ ^{*Hammaraskjöld*} had to go

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
20

through Leopoldville on his way to Katanga without contacting Lumumba, and Lumumba was desperately trying to insist that he and his ministers would come too and bring their personal troops from the Army and so on - which, of course, would have been the end. Hammarskjöld simply had to bypass that. When Hammarskjöld came back, having succeeded in doing it himself, Lumumba was absolutely furious, and at that point I think Lumumba decided he would go over to Soviet support entirely.

That was when ^{Lumumba} ~~he~~ got the 16 Soviet transport planes which we had so much trouble with later on, ^{or} ~~and~~ really was the end of relations not only between Hammarskjöld and Lumumba but also between Bunche and Lumumba, because Lumumba believed that Bunche had been the architect of this plan. He was humiliated and insulted and became very, very difficult. That's the reason why Bunche decided that he ^{sh} ~~would~~ be replaced, but that was all overtaken - I believe I have it slightly backwards - by the process I mentioned just now, the airfield crisis, the constitutional crisis, the setting up of the Government and then the Mobutu takeover.

Q: By that time, then, Andrew Cordier was there?

A: Cordier took over for about a week, until the arrival of Rajeshwar Dayal, who was Bunche's successor.

Q: And you stayed on?

A: I stayed on with Dayal for about a month and then I came back at the end of September.

Q: During that period from July to September, as you indicated, the United Nations set up what amounted to a shadow civilian Government. You were running things there; there wasn't anything else around.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
21

A: Well there wasn't anybody to do it.

Q: How did that really work? Did your people really go into offices and give the orders?

A: No. They simply ran the installations. ~~They-theoretically-sat-
beside-~~ There were ministers, I think 28 of them in the first Congolese Government, something enormous to accommodate all the tribes. I can't remember what it was. Our people were ordered to work with those people, never try to supplant them in any way, not to re-establish a second colonialism, but to try to help them do the job. It was of course quite difficult, because most of those people - no fault of their own - were totally incapable of doing the jobs they had been given. They just never heard of it before. No Congolese had ever been within miles of a responsible job in the administration or government of the Congo. They just didn't know anything about it. Even Lumumba hadn't. They were in a terrible position and we tried to help them. On the whole, I think if it hadn't been for the Kasavubu-Lumumba-Mobutu embroglio actually both the training of the Army and the civilian operation, which was very large, probably would have borne fruit quite quickly. In fact, once the Congolese could get going, ~~very-good,~~ they learned quickly and wanted to to learn.

They were very anxious to get out of this state in which they were much despised by some of the other Africans. I remember our Ghanaian troops were extremely scornful and contemptuous of the Congolese, on the grounds that they were uneducated, they did not know anything, they were undisciplined, and so on. And the Congolese minded that; they wanted to get out of it and I think they would have

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
22

done well. The trouble was they were always being interfered with by political, constitutional or civil-war events that broke the whole thing up again.

Q: Was Sture Linner running that at that time?

A: Yes, he was. He had been there originally. He was appointed as what was then called the Technical Assistance Representative, now the UNDP Resident Representative. He became head of the civilian operation, which was a much larger thing than any technical assistance thing.

Q: When you returned to New York in September, you came back into a political situation with regard to the Congo that was explosive, difficult -

A: Well, it wasn't just the Congo. By that time the whole thing had blown up. We had the famous Assembly, which in one sense was the greatest circus we ever had here - it was unbelievable - including the all-out assault not only on Hammarskjöld but also on the institution of the Secretary-General, with the troika and the tremendous effort by Khrushchev to break it. That was a ~~very~~, very emotional period in which Hammarskjöld, by opposing Khrushchev publicly finally, did become the ~~great, great~~ sort of ^a heroic figure in the West - which was the last thing he wanted to be. He wasn't at all interested in that. He was interested in trying to get the ~~constitutional~~ split in the Organization healed and not at all interested in having Khrushchev and de Gaulle as his enemies. That was the last thing he wanted. But it did not work that way. It was a very dramatic period. And then, of course, the Congo got worse and worse and worse; it got deadly worse.

Poor Dayal had endless trouble. He ended up not being on speaking terms with either Kasavubu or Mobutu. Finally he had to be removed, simply because the

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
23

assassination threats against him were so great we could not afford to keep him there. He was never replaced. Hammarskjöld simply was not prepared to risk anybody else in that job, and he did not put anybody else in. He kept Linner there as the so-called Officer in Charge.

Unfortunately, the United States then led a move to have the General Assembly recognize Kasavubu as the legal Government which, on constitutional grounds, was, to put it mildly, pretty thin. There was a vote in the General Assembly which by a narrow margin gave Kasavubu the seat in the Assembly - which hadn't been occupied up to then. That, in turn, caused Lumumba, who was living under UN protection in the middle of Leopoldville, to leave and try to do a sort of political tour through the Congo to rally support and end up in his own power base in Stanleyville - where I think he had intended, if necessary, to establish a rival Government which, more or less, existed there anyway.

That led to a terrible tragedy, because he was caught, confined by the Mobutu Government, extremely badly treated and then they decided - Lumumba had great charisma; of all the Congolese leaders, he was the only one who had this kind of popular magic - that keeping him in gaol was a very dangerous proposition because he attracted attention. They therefore took but him - we had spent a great deal of time trying to get him out of gaol altogether on the grounds that he had parliamentary immunity, but that did not work - and secretly put him on an aircraft that was supposed to go to Kasai, the Baluba country, where the Balubas would have taken care of him. They hated Lumumba, because they regarded him, rightly, as the source of their great misfortune - and that would have killed him instantly. When the aeroplane got over the airport they discovered that it was occupied by UN

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
24

troops and did not want to land there, so they flew on to Elisabethville. Tshombe, who was a sensible man in some respects, did not want to get stuck with this one. He knew very well what was going to happen and tried to refuse permission for the plane to land, but the plane was completely out of gas - I think they had about five minutes left - and the pilot simply landed anyway.

Then this whole disastrous thing occurred. Lumumba was taken off the plane. He was in terrible shape. I think he was dying when he arrived. The guards on the plane were Baluba tribesmen and they had beaten him up solidly the whole way. He was in terrible shape. He vanished from the airport, and then there was the most elaborate put-up story by Godefroid Munongo, the rather ghastly ~~administrator~~ ^{minister} of the interior of Katanga, the secessionist state, who was pretty rough stuff.

It was said that Lumumba had been apprehended by some villagers. Well it was completely untrue; I don't think he was killed the first night he was there. Nobody quite knows what the ~~absolute~~ ^{actual} end of Lumumba was. Nobody has ever discovered his body. There were many different stories about it. That wasn't really the point. The net result of this was a total uproar, not only in the Congo but all over the world, including here - it was the only time we had an uncontrollable riot in the UN building - and, of course, Hammarskjöld was blamed. He was blamed by the Americans for having protected Lumumba. He was blamed by everybody else for not having protected Lumumba. The Soviet Union went absolutely wild on the subject. It was a ghastly period and more was to follow.

What then happened was the Security Council voted extra power to the forces in the Congo and that we could use force not only in self-defence but also to prevent

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
25

civil war, ^{and} arrest mercenaries, ~~and I forget the other thing~~. Anyhow, that in fact created a great expectation that we would end the secession of Katanga, because Tshombe was also blamed for the death of Lumumba although in fact he had very little to do with it, as far as I know, and had got stuck with him. I think ~~Munongo~~ ^{Munongo} had a great deal to do with it, but Tshombe certainly didn't. In fact, Tshombe had a tape which he once played to me of the telephone conversation between him and Kasavubu when the plane was on the way - a very sickening telephone conversation - in which Kasavubu said "I have three parcels I am going to deliver to you and you will know what to do with them." Tshombe knew perfectly well what they were and said he would have nothing to do with it, it would be a crime, the plane would be refused landing rights, Kasavubu would do his own dirty work and that kind of thing. That was his great alibi. I believe it actually. I think it was probably real.

The uproar created a tremendous trauma in the UN generally, because it divided the Organization completely down the middle. It wasn't just the Russians and the West; the African Group was divided, the non-aligned Group was divided, everybody was divided. Everybody was very discontented with the Congo Operation, nobody knew what to do. We were stuck with going on with it, because if we pulled out at that point what was just a horrible situation would have become a blood-bath. There is no question of it. Hammarskjöld was completely stuck with this, and it was a terrible situation. I think it took a great toll on him; he became extremely irascible, extremely emotional, on this subject - I think with good reason - and it really was a very gloomy time. It was pretty awful.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
26

Q: All the same he was armed with new power.

A: ~~But the trouble with it was~~ I was always against ~~this~~. ^{the UN using force} Having once been a soldier myself, I have always maintained that. ~~Actually, we will come to that in a minute.~~ ^{and} But I had a chance ^{later on} to test out whether or not I was right and I was. Later on, in Katanga, I was in charge when we actually did have to fight and I must say it was a disaster, because there is no way you can empower a UN peace-keeping force to use force since ^{the moment} ~~when~~ it uses force the whole press will go right on the air and say "You are killing Congolese. What are you doing? You are a peace force." Thus you are stuck; your hands are tied right behind your back. In military matters if you do'nt use maximum force you don't win, ^{if} if you are going against people who are using maximum force. There is no way you can do it. We were in a no-win situation. I thought it was a terrible decision and said so at the time, but nobody paid any attention.

The 1961 summer was spent trying to get to legitimacy in the Congo as the only basis on which we might then begin to try to sort out Katanga. That was finally achieved in, I think, July or August - I don't remember. It is probably in here - with, as I mentioned, the meeting of the Parliament in ^{Louvain}.

Q: It was in July. Kasavubu made his speech in Parliament in July and in August the Central Congolese Government -

A: was formed under Adoula. That's right.

That meant for the first time in a year there was a legitimate Government - headed, incidentally, by a remarkably sensible and decent guy, ^{Cynille} Adoula, who had a lot of trouble, but he was a good man - and Hammarskjöld then decided that he must try to do something about the Katanga problem before the Assembly, because if he

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
27

didn't we would have a repetition of what had happened in 1960 and it would be appalling not just for the Congo but also for the whole UN. That would again produce a poisonous session of the Assembly. He therefore decided to accept an invitation from Adoula to go to Leopoldville with the intention - he didn't tell anybody about it - of trying to get Tshombe to come to Leopoldville with him and they would have a kind of reconciliation which would effectively consolidate the Government of the Congo and end the secession of Katanga. Knowing Hammarskjöld, I believe that if everything had gone well he probably could have done it, because the Congolese were very respectful of him and he was ~~extremely~~ marvellous at this very kind of thing. He was very, very impressive. I don't know anybody who was more impressive as a ~~sort of~~ conciliator.

Unfortunately, the powers given after the murder of Lumumba ~~had been a sort of~~ *was* used in a half-baked way in Katanga to round up the mercenaries. After the Belgian forces left, there was a new Government in Belgium in the spring of that year with Foreign Minister Spaak. When he came in he took the Belgian forces out of Katanga and was very co-operative with the UN.

Q: May I just make a distinction here: he took the official forces out completely.

A: He left the Belgian military advisers, who were a pain in the neck. But when the Belgian forces left that, unfortunately, coincided with the Algerian revolt of the French parachutists against de Gaulle, and the first French Parachute Battalion, the *je ne regrette rien* the boys who mutinied somewhere in North Africa, were then exiled from ~~France~~ and a great number of them showed up in Katanga as military advisers to Tshombe. They were very bad stuff. The ordinary

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
28

mercenaries were a bunch of clapped-out British, South Africans and things who were mostly adventurers; this lot were, in the first place, professional soldiers and, in the second, had a huge battle experience. They had ~~been~~ been in Diem ⁿ Bien ^{Phu} ~~to~~, Algeria and God knows where else, were very, very good officers and were fanatical, all-white, anti-black, right-wing officers. They were led by a guy called Faulques René ~~Faulques~~, a colonel, who became the chief military adviser to Tshombe. They were real trouble. What they did was to start to try to organize the whites in Katanga - a lot of whom were pretty stupid anyway - and whatever Katangese they could get into a kind of nibbling-away operation on the UN troops in Katanga, who theoretically were not allowed to use force.

That got so bad that finally Conor Cruise ~~George~~ O'Brien, who was then the representative in Katanga, in August was authorized to round up these mercenaries. Unfortunately, he did not complete that operation - though it went rather better than everybody might have thought - and an awful lot of the mercenaries got away and were hidden in the Belgian Consulate and various other places and so lived to fight another day. When ^{the UN people in Leopoldville} ~~they~~ learned that Hammarskjöld was coming to the Congo, for some unknown reason - and nobody has ever managed to clear this up, to my satisfaction at any rate; and I think it came from a very, very tough Tunisian called Mahmoud Khiari who was Lenner's ^{deputy} ~~second~~ ~~day~~ - O'Brien was told to round up the rest of the mercenaries to complete the previous operation and, if possible, finish the secession of Katanga. ~~and~~ ~~he~~ did this in the most cloth-headed manner, by repeating exactly the operation they had done on 28 August - which everybody was expecting - so that the thing was a nightmare and they did not get anywhere with it. The opposition was tremendous, fighting broke out and it broke out when Hammarskjöld was literally

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
29

flying over the Atlantic for this supposedly triumphal, last visit to the Congo to patch the whole thing up.

So, instead of arriving as a sort of deus ex machina of all Congolese and arranging ~~in a grandiose~~ manner a reconciliation between Tshombe and the Central Government, he arrived to find a very nasty little war going on in Elisabethville in which his own people were ^{on the ropes,} ~~up to their necks.~~ ~~what's more, they were losing,~~ too. The first thing ^{Hammarskjöld} ~~he~~ had to do ~~instead~~ was to get a cease-fire. He decided the best way to do this would be to meet Tshombe outside the Congo - a decision that was violently opposed by a great number of people, but the trouble with Hammarskjöld was that if he decided to do something he did it and it didn't much matter what anybody said.

Q: "A great number of people", including you?

A: No, I didn't have anything to do with it. I was here, in New York; I was not in the Congo at that point.

~~He arranged to do this.~~ He refused to have O'Brien along, on the grounds that O'Brien had become part of the problem. What he wanted to do was, first of all, get Tshombe to order a cease-fire - which I think would have been easy to do; and then, if possible, to persuade Tshombe to come back to Leopoldville in his aircraft to have a grand Congolese reconciliation. That might have been fairly difficult at that point, but I think he might have done it, because, curiously enough, Tshombe was a very malleable man, very susceptible to argument, to charm, to authority and that kind of thing. One of his great troubles was that he always agreed with everybody and got himself into a terrible muddle in the process. I think it possible that Hammarskjöld might have succeeded, in which case things would have been very different. Of course, unfortunately, what ^{actually} happened was that he never got there because his plane crashed on coming in to land - and that was the end of it.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
30

Q: I want to ask you one or two questions about that. That has been covered in a lot of material and there are a lot of myths about it. I am going to ask you procedural questions.

Why was Ndola picked as this place and why could it be picked, in view of Roy Welenski's interesting meddling in the Congo problems?

A: It was picked as the nearest place to Elisabethville that Tshombe could easily get to and also because the British Secretary of State for -

Q: Dominions and Colonies, or something, a man called Lord Landsdown

A: happened to be in Leopoldville at that particular point, and Hammarskjöld said: "I want to find a place where a meeting can be arranged with Tshombe to which he can get." Landsdown volunteered Ndola as the easiest town - it is very near to the Congolese border - for him to get to and in fact went on ahead in Hammarskjöld's own plane to arrange for the meeting, since that was still a British Territory in those days. I think that was a perfectly simple reason. I don't know where else they could have met. Actually that was reasonably near to Elisabethville.

Q: You mentioned ^{wise} Connor Cruze O'Brien. O'Brien wrote a book - which you reviewed in The Times literary supplement rather negatively, I may say.

A: Extremely.

Q: In that book - which, for good or ill, has become one of the standard books that people consult about the Congo - O'Brien goes on at great length about the "Congo Club" that was running things here on the 38th floor. You were part of that, of course, if there was such a club. What's your reaction to all this, and what did you have to do with it?

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
31

A: I had a rather special relationship with Connor; he was a very old friend of mine before all this, somebody I knew very well. I was horrified when Hammarskjöld appointed him to Katanga, because I don't believe he was a suitable personality to send there. Connor was a brilliant man, a remarkable writer, highly imaginative, ^{of} rather subjective man, with a very large ego. It didn't seem to me that in the kind of mess in which we were in Katanga he was necessarily the person who would last very well - and he didn't. He got into a terrible tangle. He had no idea of military affairs at all. He had a very inefficient military opposite number and he was taken in by that. He got very excited and made an enormous number of contradictory public statements to the press which just simply confused matters even more. On top of that I think he got ^{bamboozled} ~~led-in-for~~ it by Khiari.

There are two O'Brien versions of these events. The first was a series of articles he wrote in The Observer just after he came back. I succeeded Connor in Katanga in that job. I never saw him, because he came out as I went in; we crossed in the middle Atlantic. ~~In~~ the articles in The Observer entitled "My case" I ~~think~~ they are probably more or less the truth as Connor saw it at the time. They are completely different from the book - in fact, they are the exact opposite. In those articles - which really don't reach any conclusions - the tendency is to suppose that Linner and Khiari wanted to present Hammarskjöld with a kind of "apple to the teacher" when he arrived in the Congo and, therefore, insisted on O'Brien going ahead with an operation which he didn't really believe in.

By the time he came to write his book all sorts of other rather complicated things had happened to Connor, including a big personal crisis in his life, and he decided that in fact he had been betrayed by Hammarskjöld. This was quite

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
32

convenient, because ~~by that time~~ Hammarskjöld was dead any way and wasn't around to defend himself. I think that book is really not only very self-indulgent - that wouldn't matter - but is also extremely dishonest, because it deliberately distorts a great number of the things that happened in order to make a case for saying that fighting old Confor O'Brien, the true blue hero, was betrayed by this overly cautious, dishonest Swede - which simply isn't the case. There is a great deal about this in my book on Hammarskjöld because I went with great care into all the communications on this, and the fact of the matter is ~~it was a colossal mess~~ ^{deal} because Hammarskjöld didn't know what his people were doing, had no idea of what they were getting into, and would certainly have violently disapproved of it if he had known.

Q: Why didn't he know?

A: Because the communications were very bad. I think he didn't realize the mood into which people had got. Confor was extremely frustrated - with good reason.

I must say that when I went to Katanga I was entirely, 100 per cent, on O'Brien's side. I thought he had been treated absolutely disgracefully by the Western press, by the British and American Governments in particular, and by his own Government up to a point. We all felt the same; in fact, I felt very, very sorry for Confor. I thought that he'd done his - he's a courageous man - best and had simply suffered tremendously; that he was a scapegoat. Of course, he also, by implication, became the scapegoat for Hammarskjöld's death - which is completely unfair.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
33

But when he wrote the book I thought it outrageous, because in fact what he did was to stand the truth on its head and put a case which made him look good and made everybody else look absolutely terrible. I don't think that was very sensible. I think everybody was at fault: ~~I think~~ Conrard was at fault for being unrealistic; I think our military in Katanga were hopeless; ~~I think~~ Khiari was an extremely Machiavellian and ~~very~~ dishonest man who had a very firm view of his own about how things ought to be done in the Congo and put it across on Linner, who was a very weak man - let's put it that way - and didn't really know what was going on. Of course, none of them knew what ^{Hammarskjöld} ~~Conrard~~ had come to the Congo to do. That was another thing. I think it would have helped if it had been hinted, at least, that the idea of Hammarskjöld coming to the Congo was to get Tshombe back into legality again - which was his idea - but he didn't tell anybody that. That, I think, was a great mistake on his part. None of that is in O'Brien's book; he doesn't explain it.

O'Brien also got into a great tangle because the one thing we couldn't do was to end the secession of Katanga by force. It was ~~completely~~ illegal and Hammarskjöld had always refused to do it. In the book he says that his orders were to do this but ~~in fact~~ then everybody had welsed on it. It is not true, because ^{the orders} ~~they~~ were't to do that. They were very specifically not to end the secession by force but by political manoeuvring which, in fact, was what Hammarskjöld was coming to try to do. So I felt that book was really appalling. ^{he} ~~he~~ then sued me for libel - which was a great mistake on his part as it turned out. ^{+ said so in a review in the TLS.}

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
34

Q: I wasn't aware of that.

A: Yes. He sued me and the London Times, but then when confronted with what was going to happen in court when the case came up his lawyers dropped it; they didn't pursue it.

~~I think it was a pity.~~ I think Connor became extremely emotional - as well he might over this thing - and his own personal problems at that time certainly added to it. It was just a very sad episode. But I am sorry you say that book is taken seriously, because it is ~~just~~ a tissue of nonsense.

Q: It's been taken seriously. As you point out, he's a good writer and it's an extremely dramatic book.

A: The only trouble about it is it's good fiction but not very good history.

Q: Well, this happens of course.

What about his notion that there was a constant conversation up here producing policy guidance for the field, informing Hammarskjöld and keeping things running in the Congo? What I am really asking you is how did you direct the thing.

A: Well, there was. When I was here - I was partly here and partly there because I went back to the Congo after this.

Q: I am going to get to that.

A: We had, as I remember, endless meetings, because there were a tremendous number of political angles to this. To keep troops in the Congo you had to do a ^{great deal} ~~tremendous~~ amount of talking to Governments. The Indians, for example, who were the backbone of our operation in Katanga were extremely dubious about staying. We had endless meetings with the Congo Advisory Committee. There were

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
35

endless logistical details to deal with. There were endless political complications here. This was a very hot political issue. The whole ^{life} thing of the Secretary-Generalship was at stake. ~~That~~ was the biggest constitutional crisis this Organization had ever been through. There wasn't exactly a shortage of things to talk about.

I think Confor, later on - he even wrote a play about it, as a matter of fact - developed, by implication at any rate, the idea that ~~this~~ ^{the UN operation} was all run by the CIA, which is really quite funny when you come to think of it. In the play, called "Murderous Angels", poor Cordier is ~~portrayed~~ as a CIA agent.

You see, one of the interesting things - and this is, I think, partly Hammarskjöld's fault too - was ^{that} Hammarskjöld was a very bad judge of character. He was very easily swayed by extraneous factors. He had greatly admired Confor's writing and especially a book about French catholic writers - the name of which I cannot remember now - a marvellous book, a great work of literary criticism, and he had heard that Confor was in the Irish Foreign Service, a marvellous sort of renaissance diplomat; he thought he was like St. Jean Perse in fact - which he wasn't - and so he appointed him without ever having met him. I remember, because I rode down in the elevator with Hammarskjöld one day and he said "I think at last we've got the right man for Katanga." And I said: "Oh really. Who's that?" He said: "You wouldn't know him. He is an Irish man called ^{is} Connor Cruise O'Brien." I said: "God good! Not Confor! It can't be. You must be joking." And he got furious. I said: "Well, I know him extremely well. You shouldn't send him there." And he said: "Do you often speak like that of your friends?" I said: "Most of my friends I wouldn't make a doorman in this building. That isn't the

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
36

point. The point is that he is temperamentally unsuited to this climate; most people are. He is a wonderful man. I know him very well." He'd met O'Brien once at lunch here.

He had meant to appoint to that job a Spaniard called Bibiano Osorio Tafal who is still alive and now lives in Mexico. Bibiano had been the Commissioner for Internal Affairs in the Spanish Republican Government during the war. He was a marvellous man. He had been our representative for the Development Programme in various very difficult places - Indonesia, Egypt and others. He was an extremely competent, politically immensely mature man. He was going to appoint him, and then it was pointed out that since we were already in grave difficulties with the United States he would almost certainly become a target for the neo-conservative ^{colonists,} ~~colonists, of whom there were about six in those days including the~~ in the U.S.

Q: There were a number in the closets then.

A: because he had been in the Spanish Republican Government. Osorio was brought here and we all briefed him, and then at the last minute Hammarskjöld said: "I am terribly sorry but I simply can't send you for this reason: I am not going to put you into that position. I've already had that with your compatriot Gustavo Durand. It's completely unfair; it was a monstrous position to put him in and I won't do it. ^{to you} ~~This is a very exposed position.~~" So he didn't send him, and then he had to find somebody else and found O'Brien.

O'Brien never understood Hammarskjöld - he'd met him once; he ~~simply~~ didn't know him at all - and Hammarskjöld didn't know O'Brien. That was, I think, primarily Hammarskjöld's fault; he should have known better what he was doing. But

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
37

he was very ~~very~~ vague about personalities. He always was. I think that was a great pity, and it led to this ^{great} ~~general~~ confusion - which actually finally did kill Hammarskjöld, because Hammarskjöld wouldn't have been flying to Ndola if there hadn't been a war going on in Elisabethville.

Q: How did you personally hear the news of Hammarskjöld's death? And what was your personal reaction as you remember it?

A: I can tell you exactly. I had stayed in Massachusetts for the week-end, I drove back on a Sunday evening and had just gone to bed when I was called up by Ralph Bunche, who said: "You've got to come into the office immediately, because I just know something terrible has happened. We are without news of the Secretary-General; he's overdue at Ndola and I think you'd better come in at once." So I came in about 4 o'clock in the morning, I remember, and then we sat around for about six hours desperately trying to find out what had happened - not helped, I may say, by The New York Times which, on 18 September 1961, had a front-page story describing Hammarskjöld's arrival at Ndola - one of the cases of "All the news that's fit to print" not being true. They'd mistaken Lord Landsdowne for him, but they've never really corrected that either.

About 10 o'clock in the morning we received a message from the United States Air Force. There was a wonderful guy called Ben Matlick who, I think, was the air attaché or something like that in the Embassy in Leopoldville. He had simply taken off and gone and overflown the area and finally spotted the wreckage. What was scandalous was that the British authorities in Ndola should have found it instantly. They actually saw the flash, but they didn't like Hammarskjöld, they

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
38

didn't like the UN, and they just closed down. They didn't even look for the wreckage. It was spotted by the American. That was really one of the more seamy footnotes to the whole ghastly episode.

It was absolutely devastating. It was terrible. Hammarskjöld, you know, was not somebody one got to know very well. He was extremely aloof. I worked with him a great deal, but I never claim that I knew him at all. If you were on trips or something you would have a marvellous evening with him and he'd be simply enchanting, but the next day he would be the same old, slightly Garboesque Swede. He was very impressive. ~~I think he was right about that; I don't see what's wrong with it. It seems to me.~~ It was his personality and it was great strength for him.

So we were all quite surprised at what an enormous emotional shock that was - that this absolutely extraordinary person should have simply gone in that grotesque way. ~~It really was terrible.~~ It was a terrible blow. I think it was felt to an extraordinary extent throughout the Secretariat and the delegations. Even people who didn't like Hammarskjöld very much suddenly realized that they'd seen the last of someone who was totally unique; that there was never going to be anybody like that again. It was awful. That really was a very low point.

Q: Did you and your colleagues begin thinking immediately about his successor?

A: I didn't. Well, I suppose we must have thought about it. Actually what happened was that Bunche and Cordier really ran the show - for the next several weeks at any rate. I wasn't here very much, because I was sent out to take O'Brien's place in Katanga.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
39

(It was late October)

Q: When was that?

A: I went out in - let me see - it must have been early November. I am not quite sure: it was either late October or early November, one of the two.

Q: And by that time U Thant had not yet been -

A: U Thant was elected after that. I had never met U Thant, as a matter of fact.

Q: Who gave you your instructions when you went out there? How were you told what to do?

A: I knew very well what to do; there wasn't any great mystery about it. Bunche gave instructions.

Q: How did you see your job there? What were you supposed to do?

A: I went out in the hope that, in the aftermath of all these disasters, including a round of fighting between the UN the Katangese and the mercenaries and the tremendous tragedy of Hammarskjöld, it might be possible to carry on from where Hammarskjöld left off and get Tshombe back into legality. What I had reckoned without ~~were~~^{was}, by that time, the manoeuvres of Tshombe's military advisers, ~~because~~^{is} what they had set out to do, having scored a rather considerable success over O'Brien in September and having been encouraged by Hammarskjöld's death, was have another round of fighting in which they would win, - ~~which~~^{but} was actually a very great mistake on their part, ~~and~~^{but} to that end they did a whole number of things, starting off with trying to kidnap George Ivan Smith and me.

Q: You want to talk about that a bit?

A: This is a mere footnote to the whole thing. This happened the first day I got ~~there~~^{to Elizabethville}, practically speaking.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
40

George had been sent from Leopoldville to hold the fort until I arrived. George came up to Leopoldville to meet me and we flew down together. It was a long flight; in those days it was about five hours. At that time we had a house which was very pretty, as a matter of fact. It had been O'Brien's house ^{and it} ~~that~~ had a whole company of Gurkhas guarding it because O'Brien was a big target for everybody. I was somewhat dismayed at that because I don't like having a guard. Senator Dodd - not the present Senator Dodd but his father, who was a jerk - was the big lobbyist for Tshombe in the Congress to the tune of \$10,000 a month, as we discovered later. What was interesting about Senator Dodd was that he knew nothing about Africa, he didn't know anything about the Congo and he didn't speak French. It was really very difficult for him to establish what was really going on; none the less, he was unabashedly pro-Tshombe and tremendously anti-UN.

Before I left I had got the American Ambassador in Leopoldville to insist that we should give Dodd a briefing on what was going on and take him around - which he didn't want to do; he wanted to go around with Tshombe. However, that was all arranged. In fact it was to take place the day after my arrival. I remember we had laid on a very complicated briefing and a sort of luncheon so he could meet all the officers and things like that. ~~Then~~ there was a reception for him that evening at the American Consulate. After that there was a dinner given by the representative of Mobil, I think, a very nice guy whose name escapes me at the moment.

Q: American or Belgian?

A: He was American. We all went off to the ^{American Consulate} reception. The reception was pretty spooky, really, ~~because~~ I had ordered all our people to go as a matter

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
41

of courtesy to the American Consul, who was perfectly legitimate. He was head of the Consulate in Elisabethville, a very decent guy called ^{He Hacker} Lou Hofferker. Tshombe had brought all his hangers-on, including the mercenaries and God knows who; there was the Senator with his group; and, sort of hanging on on the outside of the crowd was a bunch of extraordinarily disagreeable looking whites who didn't appear to have any particular raison d'être in this party but were there none the less. Our military people said to George and me: "You should be extremely careful because those people are pointing you out too much. You should get out of here." I said: "Oh come on; we can't do that. We will get out in all good time and then go to this dinner." Of course, they were right.

We took off, we were followed, got as far as the dinner in a little housing development just on the outskirts of Elisabethville and then we were jumped by this big goon-squad. In the first go round we managed to talk them out of it.

Q: Had you been ambushed or was there -

A: No, they just simply tried to take us out of the car. After a great deal of arguing we persuaded them that we were going to this house outside of which we had stopped and that they shouldn't interfere. Actually, the great thing with the Congolese at that time was that if you argued long enough they got bored. The great thing was not to get out of the car until you got them really bored. Never get out before, or else they would either shoot you or hit you over the head. So we managed the first time.

We had with us Confor's girlfriend, ^{McEntee} Mara McIntye, who, ^{poetess,} as a result of all this, he subsequently married. Mara is an extremely emotional, very articulate, Irish poetess - and also in the Irish Foreign Office - and she was getting very excited. I said: "Look, Mara, for God's sake, shut up. All we need is a sort of

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
42

Gaelic carrying-on here." She was rather grouchy. But none the less, finally we managed to get into this house and there was everybody - the British Consul and everybody else - sipping cocktails when, suddenly, the doors flew open and a sort of reinforced goon-squad came roaring in, directed by two whites, and made a beeline for me and George. Somehow George managed to get behind a piano or something like that but I was right out in the open. The first thing that happened was somebody hit me over the nose with a rifle butt, so there was a tremendous flow of blood that added to the general colourfulness of the scene. Mara - her finest hour, I must say - greatly to my annoyance, then stood in front of me and said in French "You will have to kill me before you touch my friend." I said: "Mara, knock it off. For Christ's sake don't do that. If you do that it is going to get much worse, I tell you, because they are very unreliable."

The thing with ^{soldiers were given} the Congolese ~~was to get them to do anything they used to give~~ them a mixture of beer and ^{chanvre} ~~change~~ - which was the local hemp - and it was quite powerful for a short time. It didn't last very long, but during that time they were absolutely out of control. That's what that group was like.

Needless to say Mara was rather quickly brushed aside by the group, and then they decided to get George and me out of the building. I, having once been in the commando ~~and~~ was quite good at that kind of thing, it took them exactly 15 minutes to get us from the drawing room, down the driveway into the street where their truck was. That was fortunate as it turned out, because the guest of honour at this rather grotesque dinner was Senator Dodd, and just as I had more or less given up hope, suddenly coming along the road was Tshombe's motor ^{cycle} escort of these grotesque motor-cycle policemen in the full Presidential outfit of third empire

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
43

and uniforms
helmets ~~stuff~~ - the whole thing was pure Marx brothers - and there was the President's car and in it were Dodd, Mrs. Dodd and dear old Lou Hofferker, the American Consul.

As they arrived, in the headlights the scene was as follows: George Ivan Smith had been loaded into the truck and was sort of looking out the back like a ~~sort of~~ walrus in a zoo; there was a Belgian banker who'd been just dumped in there who was a rather decent guy who tried to help us; and I had just been knocked unconscious and was being thrown in. Mrs. Dodd is alleged to have said: "Why, that's that nice Mr. Smith!"

alder
Hofferker - an extremely courageous man, I must say - was furious. He was an old chum of George and mine and came out of his car fighting mad, having told the Dodds to lie on the floor. He is a small man too. He came in in a rage, pushing these people aside and yelling that he was the American Consul, and managed to pull George out of the truck. He couldn't get to me because, unfortunately, at this point I wasn't paying any attention much and he couldn't find me at all. I was somewhere in the back. Anyway, he got George *and the banker*. Then the truck roared off, leaving a somewhat ~~I mean~~ *It* certainly messed up the dinner party. ~~I'd tell you that~~ *Everybody* was a little disconcerted by the whole thing.

I woke up somewhere in the middle of the country being driven along in this *truck*, thing. I was lying on the floor. It was a troop-carrier with benches down the sides, and the troops on each side were rhythmically stomping on me - which I thought was a little bit much. After looking up I took the nearest foot and gave it a very sharp twist, and there was a frightful scream of rage. That stopped the stomping for a bit and after that I managed to get up on the seat. At that point I had lost one half of my trousers, my shirt and half my coat.

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
44

- Q: And your bearings as well.
- A: But I had my tie on, for some unknown reason.
- Q: Oh you did?
- A: Yes, I don't know how that had happened.
- Q: It was a good quality tie.
- A: It was a very bizarre set up altogether.
- Q: You had no idea where you were?
- A: No idea.

We finally got to this camp - which was not a very happy place - where everybody was extremely trigger-happy; they were nervous as hell and all they could talk about was the Gurkhas. They were right, as a matter of fact, because the Gurkhas were our No. 1 troops in Elisabethville and they were extremely good, very effective, and good at night too. That's their big thing: night patrols with knives. I said: "You are right to be nervous about the Gurkhas. Why the hell did you bring me here? You are absolutely crazy."

The Katangese were mad about weapons and they kept loading and unloading their submachine-guns which made me very jumpy. They would suddenly put one down in a chair and two chaps would come up and put guns to each side of your head and say "If you move you are dead", and things like that. I said: "I have no intention of moving. Where in the world would I be going?"

Finally we managed to get things down to the conversational level. There was a very nasty French officer there who was wearing a parachute beret who made the mistake of - I had a broken nose among other things - twitching my nose, which was extremely painful, and I let him have it. I said: "You know, you are a disgrace

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
45

to your uniform. I don't know what you are wearing that uniform for, but I can tell you one thng: I put the first of those berets on the first French soldier. I was the parachute instructor to the first Free France French Parachute Battalion and I am ashamed to see you wearing it. You are a disgrace. I am going to tell these people here they shouldn't pay you any attention." And the poor young man was very upset about it. He said: "I didn't know who you were." I told him: "You shouldn't behave like that. Officers don't do that kind of thing."

Then we got down to a practical discussion and I said to him: "You people are in very serious trouble. Here I am, 45 years old, not feeling too good anyway ~~and but~~ I have ^{had} a perfectly good run for my money, ~~but~~ I can tell you one thing: if my Gurkha troops find me here in this condition there is not going to be one of you left with your head on your shoulder; they are going to get very mad. I think you'd better start figuring how you are going to get out of this mess. You don't have very much time, because I don't know how but they will find it." Everybody got into a terrible panic and started rushing around. They even made a tremendous effort to clean me up - which was very painful because they didn't have any proper stuff to do it with. Anytime anything went by along the road - which was about 100 yards away - they would all get down into their firing positions and so on and leave me sitting in the middle.

I said to them: "Why don't I call up your President, Mr. Tshombe, with whom I was having a drink only two hours ago. That would be the best thing to do." Then, of course, the telephone wouldn't work; we couldn't get through. We did all this endless screaming with the telephone and nothing happened. I then said: "One thing I think you'd better do, I would strongly suggest. I am not in any shape to

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
46

run anywhere: I have no clothes on, for a start, but if I go down ^{to the gate} there's some chance that we will be able to make some arrangement."

They more or less agreed to that but, unfortunately, the first person to arrive was Tshombe's Aide-de-Camp, who also was dressed in ceremonial operatic uniform with a sort of plumed hat and a lot of gold braid and stuff - he was a perfectly useless young man - and I went down and let him in. The moment they saw him they went absolutely berserk. They arrested the guy and were about to shoot him. So I said: "Look here, wait a minute. That's your President's Aide-de-Camp. It has nothing to do with this whole thing. The poor guy is just trying to get you out of a mess. That's all." After a bit we got him out, and I said to him: "You go back and tell your leader that the only way I am going to get out of here alive - and, indeed, all these people are going to get out here alive - is if the President himself comes out in his white open motor-car so that they can see him. Otherwise we are going to have the most frightful mess. Please tell him that." He said: "How can I prove that I have seen you?" I reached for my pocket, but then of course I had lost it. So I said "I would give you my identity card, but I don't seem to have it." Finally, I gave him my signet ring and said "You can take this" - because nobody conceivably would have anything like that - "but I want it back." So he took it and went off.

Then, finally, after about another hour and a half, I saw approaching very slowly one motor-car. Sure enough it was Tshombe's white motor-car, unmistakable. In those days everybody in the Congo was always in full evening dress. I never understood why. There were Tshombe and Munfango, both in dinner jackets, looking extremely jumpy; they stopped at the gate and I waved. They said: "Come on!

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
47

Venez! Vite! Vite!" I said: "Wait a minute, these chaps are really quite sensible. It is not their fault they got into a terrible mess. I have to say goodbye to them." They said: "No, no." They were terribly upset, so we finally drove away, and I was very pleased to see as we were driving along - I was sitting on this white upholstery at the back - a large puddle of blood formed all over it. I was very happy with that. It certainly messed that car up!

We got back to the American Consulate where there was a pretty nasty situation, actually, because they'd just brought in the body of ~~the~~^a Gurkha Major who had gone out to look for me and had been shot. Everbody was in a very sultry mood. Senator Dodd was praying into an arm chair. I don't know what he was praying about, so I tapped him on the shoulder and told him to ~~move the~~^{cheer} chair up, ~~at~~ ~~is~~ That, more or less, was it.

Q: How long were you in the hospital?

A: I just went in for some X-rays then we went back to work. Really, the thing was so messy by that time I really had to; it was getting very nasty. They'd begun to shoot at people and our people had got so jumpy that it wasn't any time to be sitting around. I was there till about 10 o'clock the next morning, I think. I had some X-rays and stuff.

This is personal reminiscence; it's not that interesting, actually.

We then went back to the whole business of trying to deal with Tshombe, ~~and the~~ ~~thing, and~~ by that time they, I think, had come to the conclusion that they wanted to have another battle. They began, first, harassing our people; then they began kidnapping then; and, finally, they killed about six people. At that point they put roadblocks down, all over the town, so that you couldn't go to the airport, our headquarters or anywhere. So I gave Tshombe 24 hours to stop that. He then left

URQUHART
19 Oct. 1984
48

the country for a moral rearmament conference in Brazil - which wasn't very helpful - leaving Kimba and Muningo in charge; and I said "If you don't remove the roadblocks in 24 hours we are going to remove them for you, and that will mean a battle." They said: "All right." So we did that and we then had about a three-week battle - which was quite disagreeable and very costly - which we finally inevitably won, ^{It was} marked by some fairly awful situations on both sides, including our Ethiopian troops getting out of control - which was terrible; and the death - which is unheard of - of the Red Cross representative, a man called Oliver^{at}, who had been shot, as it turned out, by the Ethiopians. It was a very, very messy period. We finally got a truce and had it stopped.

Q: Did you have artillery?

A: No; we had mortars. We had a very unpredictable air component of Indian Canberras who, if you looked away for three minutes, would go and bomb something undesirable. They took out the post office at one point, for example; it was extremely annoying because all the mail stopped. Things like that. They were absolutely ~~completely~~ completely out of control, and I was very bothered. The whole military setup was deplorable and I hadn't had time to get to it. I had been there for only 24 hours when all that ~~happened~~ started.

Then we put tremendous pressure on Tshombe ~~right away~~ to get in line and to send the Katangese Deputies to the Central Parliament. Finally, in January, they did it. The only trouble was that, having done it, they then tried to go back on it; and we spent yet another year fooling around with the whole thing.

We have now reached February 1962.