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## Point of No Return in Congo

SHOCKING as the indignities and injuries inflicted on Mr Lumumba by Col Mobutu's soldiers or on, Mr Songolo by pro-Lumumba forces are, they do not; constitute the ultimate tragedy of the Congo situation. They are just a precursor of the calamity that may engulf all of Congo—indeed all of humanity—should the present trends continue. With the arrest of Mr Lumumba and the progressive decline in Mr Kasavubu's power, there is no longer any likelihood of a negotiated settlement between the rival contenders for power. The issue will apparently be settled by force, with the U N Command looking on helplessly. Whether or not the struggle between the two sides will be a bloody and prolonged one is difficult to foresee. This is not merely because of the uncertainty overhanging the position of some of the provincial Presidents, but also because nobody can forecast how intensively outside powers would be willing and able to participate in a shooting war.

At the moment Col Mobutu is well on the way to establishing a military dictatorship in the southern and eastern parts of Congo. Though technically President Kasavubu is his superior, it is only too obvious that the President's influence is on the wane. Mr Kasavubu has indeed put himself so completely in Col Mobutu's power that he can scarcely fulfil the functions of a head of state. Of the others, Mr Tshombe still remains in control of the rich province of Katanga. But his power, like that of Col Mobutu, derives from Belgium's support, and it would be surprising if eventually he did not find himself overshadowed by the Colonel. All these, however, mean that Col Mobutu would find it possible to intensify the pressure on the eastern and northern provinces to accept his supremacy. These provinces could still put up a fight for it and, as of now, they are inclined to dispute Col Mobutu's authority. Much depends, however, on the attitude that may be taken by Mr Albert Kalonji, President of Kasai Province. Should he join forces with the pro-Lumumba faction, the two sides may find themselves evenly matched, and consequently an open conflict' between them might devastate the nation.

The chances of the United Nations Command in the Congo being able to prevent this seem very slight indeed. Thanks to a series of mistakes that have undermined its authority, the U N Command there is now reduced to the position of having to confine its activities to protecting its own personnel. What is worse, it finds itself cribbed and cabined by Col Mobutu's forces on one side and the lack of clear-cut instructions from headquarters on the other. No matter who wins in the power struggle now going on in Congo, there is little doubt that the United Nations has already suffered a major defeat in this engagement.

Congo now faces the bleak prospect of either disintegrating into a host of warring camps or coming under the iron heel of a dictator. This would be true even if the pro-Lumumba forces managed to stage a comeback, since they would have reached the top, if at all, only at the end of a civil war. In either case, the blame will not rest only on the Congolese people.

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More than anything else, it is the so-called 'Congo policy' of the outside powers that will have been responsible for the outcome. Only the utterly blind or the utterly fanatical can fail to notice the external pressures that have been pushing Congo to the verge of a civil war. In the final analysis it is not the antics of Lumumba, Kasavubu, Tshombe or Mobutu which will have killed the nascent democracy. It is the obsession of each of the cold war blocs to drag the newly-independent nation into its sphere of influence that will have brought about this result. The outcome may be a famous victory in the cold war; but it will be a victory at tremendous cost to the people of the Congo and to the United Nations.

Clearly the United Nations has already been shaken to its foundations by the debacle in Congo. What is worse, there is still no sign of any serious effort being made to prevent a further weakening of the U N position either in Congo or outside. Having manoeuvred the recognition of Mr Kasavubu as the accredited representative of the Congo, the Western powers now are committed to supporting Col Mobutu against Mr Lumumba and his partisans. Since Col Mobutu is opposed to the entry of the Afro-Asian conciliation committee into Congo, the Western powers cannot give whole-hearted support to that Committee. For the time being, at any rate, they can seek refuge in the argument that the conciliation committee has not been invited by the 'recognised' Government of Mr Kasavubu. But this technicality only intensifies the conflicts within the United Nations. The African nations, which more than any others are apprehensive of a Korean-type conflict in the Congo, have given notice to the U N Secretary-General that they will not passively watch the disintegration of Congo, President Sekou Toure of Guinea has warned the United Nations that his Government might "seek other means within a purely African framework to support the Congolese people in their struggle against all forms of imperialism." Ghana and the United Arab Republic, have stated unequivocally that they do not approve of the U N policy in Congo and have threatened to recall the troops they have placed under the U N Command.

The continuation of the present policy by Western powers will only serve to harden this attitude on the part of the African and Asian countries. If these countries feel impelled to intervene in the Congolese conflict directly, it will not only not solve the problem in the Congo, but actually widen the area of conflict and pave the way for a rapid alignment of non-African nations on either side of the firing line. All this is not yet inevitable. But it will soon become so if within the United Nations and outside more time is spent on recriminations and the apportioning of blame for the deterioration in Congo than on finding a way out to strengthen the position of the U N as well as of the partisans of national freedom in Congo. Undoubtedly neither of

these will be possible if Western powers do not stop the moral and material support they are giving to one of the parties in the dispute. Indeed since one of Col Mobutu's primary objects is to throw the United Nations out of the Congo, the Western powers cannot any longer claim to be fully behind the United Nations in seeking the establishment of a stable parliamentary system of Government in Congo. The pity of it is not that they do not realise it or that they approve of the sort of treatment meted out to Mr Lumumba and his followers, but that they cannot bring themselves to subordinating the desire for transient gains in the cold war to the larger interests of peace and human progress.

## Power Shortage in Gujarat

By the end of the Third Plan, the demand for power in Gujarat is expected to exceed available capacity, on present estimates, by at least 30 mW. The shortage might be even larger in view of the impetus to industrial development given by the creation of the new State. After taking into account those sanctioned schemes which are likely to materialise within the Third Plan period, available power would be limited by the plant capacity at Sabarmati (217.5 mW). Shuwaran (200 mW) and Itran (67.5 mW), aggregating 480 mW. The proposed 300 mW nuclear station, power from which will be shared equally between Gujarat and Maharashtra is not likely to be commissioned before 1966. Any new hydro schemes that might be decided upon would not yield results until after the Plan period.

In anticipation of this expansion in power demand, Ahmedabad Electric has decided to repeat its earlier order of a 30 mW plant even before the first set is installed. Sanction for this new set has been received from the Gujarat Electricity Board but Government has yet to release sterling for it. The first set is expected to be commissioned in March 1962; and the second, if foreign exchange is released expeditiously, by March 1963.

Gujarat has vast potentialities for development of hydro power resources. By its very nature, however, development of hydro power is time consuming and so the new capacity which is proposed to be created will not be available during the Third Plan period. Gujarat is not the only State to suffer from a power shortage but, as compared with other States, it has a very enterprising class of industrialists who are eager to develop the resources of the State and have the means to carry this development through. It would not be surprising, therefore, if one hears more about power shortage in Gujarat than in other States in the near future.

While emphasising the probability of a shortage Shri A N Haksar, Chairman of Ahmedabad Electric, has once again drawn the attention of Government to the need for allowing a more reasonable rate of return to power companies and their shareholders. The withdrawal of the grossing up facility for dividend taxation has led to a general depreciation in the value of electricity shares. This has made it extremely difficult to attract further equity capital, which concerns like Ahmedabad Electric need for their large expansion programmes.