

In The Nation

Contrast in the Sources of Foreign Policy

By ARTHUR KROCK

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The latest flare-up in the Congo, and President Kennedy's statement at his news conference today of United States policy toward Castro's Sovietized Cuba illustrated an interesting contrast in the strength and effects of two kinds of foreign policy-making. In trying to meet the problem of the Congo, the United States is a member of a policy partnership, in which it has granted seniority to the United Nations and leadership to its Acting Secretary General, But, as the President made refreshingly clear in his calm, factual and otherwise admirable statement today, he alone will decide which measures by the United States will be required in the Caribbean, and when, whether or not our Latin-American partners go along.

The new strain in the relations between Cyrille Adoula's central Government at Leopoldville and Moïse Tshombe's at Elisabethville also calls attention to one, if not the only, certainty in the Congo situation. This certainty is that a factual account and balanced analysis of developments in this dispute cannot be depended on from any of the principals—the State Department in Washington, the office of U. N. Acting Secretary General Thant in New York, or the official sources in Leopoldville or Katanga. Although a major purpose of the establishment of the U. N. was to collect objective information and analyze it with impartiality, these products respecting the Congo have long been mere tracts designed to justify the feudal character of the U. N.'s Katanga policies. The same is true of both the official statements of the department and its "background briefings" for news reporters and commentators.

Determining the Aggressor

Hence the American people are unable to reach firm judgment on whether there was aggression in Katanga yesterday and today, and, if so, which side was the aggressor. According to Tshombe, the "peace-keeping" military forces on the U. N. payroll that have been recruited from other countries killed two Katangan soldiers (in a group which refused to remove a roadblock as ordered) dropped firebombs on the capital and now are flying in troops for a new military offensive against the province. U. N. officials in Leopoldville denied these charges, completing the usual routine. And, which also is usual, invariably unidentified "diplomats" at the U. N. in New York dropped the suggestion to the press that Tshombe again was inventing an incident for an obstructionist purpose—in this instance to defeat the Administration's U. N. bond purchase request in the United States House of Representatives.

Where truth, if any, may exist in this latest controversy between Tshombe and the U. N.—which is in full support of Adoula and is fully supported by the Kennedy Administration—will remain inseparable from fiction so long as the quarrel is conducted in the pattern of Hatfields bent on wiping out all the McCoys. Among evidences of this feudal approach is a semantic ploy by the U. S.—U. N.

When Mercenary Becomes One

This requires that foreign military and civilian groups on Tshombe's payroll shall constantly be defined as "mercenaries," a word with a bad reputation, and constantly he is ordered to dismiss them. But the foreign civilian and military U. N. groups in the Congo are never, never to be called "mercenaries," although they are on the U. N. payroll (largely financed by the U. S.).

The State Department, backed by the President, has allowed United States Congo policy to be so suffused with the hue of the U. N. Acting Secretary General's anti-Tshombe vendetta that to examine this policy critically is to invite deep official resentments, personally expressed. The expressions include wondering aloud whether the critic has stock in the Union Generale Miniere or a hidden connection with the leader of Katanga that would not look nice in print.

What appears to be incomprehensible to such officials is that there is foundation for honorable criticism, and great need of it, when U. N. "negotiation" takes the form of endless ultimatums and the bombing of towns and villages; when it rates provincial secession from an inchoate complex of arbitrary geography as a crime calling for the death penalty, but overlooking the provision by the central Government of facilities for the invasion of neighboring nations.