

ENCLOSURE A

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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

JCSM-788-64

12 September 1964

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**

**Subject: Evacuation of US Personnel (U)**

1. Reference is made to a memorandum\* by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 4 September 1964, subject as above, requesting the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as to appropriate US military courses of action which could be pursued to rescue the 25 Americans presently held by the rebel forces in Stanleyville, Republic of the Congo, and an evaluation of the probability of securing the rescue of the individuals unharmed.

2. Basically, two courses of action are available:

a. The overt use of a joint task force in a parachute/air-landed assault operation, utilizing multiple drop zones and supported by tactical air, to seize and secure the Stanleyville airfield, rescue the US personnel, and withdraw the entire force. Additional details are contained in the Annex hereto.

b. The covert use of military forces to effect a clandestine night parachute landing west of Stanleyville, infiltrate by rubber boat or foot to the US Consulate and/or other known locations of US personnel, overpower the guards, and move with the rescued personnel to a prearranged exfiltration area for pickup by helicopter or C-46 air commando aircraft.

3. Modifications to either course of action would be required dependent upon the latest enemy intelligence, the location and surveillance/guarding of the personnel to be rescued, US force availability, and the decision as to whether all or only part of the US personnel were to be rescued.

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TOP SECRET CONTROL	
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Downgraded at 3 year  
intervals; declassified  
after 12 years

\* Attachment to JCS 2262/151

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4. Either an overt or covert operation has a reasonable chance of successfully rescuing the personnel unharmed, providing:

a. The precise location of the personnel to be rescued can be determined PRIOR to initiation of the operation.

b. The plan is NOT compromised and complete surprise is obtained.

c. The commander is authorized to use such force as is necessary to accomplish the mission.

5. Both of the courses of action in paragraph 2, above, might prove to be infeasible because locations of US personnel may not be known, because of the opposition of the Belgian Government due to anticipated reprisals against foreigners in the Stanleyville area, or because the element of surprise may be lost. Accordingly, a third course of action might be required which would provide for the capture of Stanleyville and its control long enough to transfer control to Congolese security forces and/or evacuate all foreign personnel. This course of action would probably require additional force.

6. From a military viewpoint, if a decision is made to employ US military forces to rescue the US personnel in Stanleyville:

a. The covert operation offers the best chance of successfully rescuing the US personnel unharmed.

b. The covert operation should be backed up by the pre-positioning of the overt force for contingency employment, if required.

7. To preclude undue delay in implementation, if directed, immediate authorization to initiate detailed planning and dispatch of covert planners to the Congo is required.

8. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend:

a. The broad course of action, envisioning the initial effort being conducted by covert means with the back-up overt force being pre-positioned and ready for contingency employment if required, be selected as the appropriate course of action, if US intervention is directed.

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b. Authority be granted for the immediate dispatch of the covert planners to the Congo, if detailed planning is desired.

c. Political coordination be accomplished with Government of Belgium officials and authorization be granted for on-the-scene military coordination between appropriate US and Belgian military personnel, if US intervention is directed.

d. The above views be transmitted to the Department of State substantially as in the Appendix and Annex hereto.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

SIGNED  
EARLE G. WHEELER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

**Attachments**

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APPENDIX TO ENCLOSURE A

DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Subject: Evacuation of US Personnel (U)

1. The following information is provided in response to 1  
 your request that the Department of Defense make an evaluation 2  
 of the problem of extricating the US personnel presently held 3  
 by the rebels in Stanleyville. 4

2. Basically two courses of action are available: 5

a. The overt use of a Joint Task Force in a parachute/ 6  
 airlanded assault operation, utilizing multiple drop zones 7  
 and supported by tactical air, to seize and secure the 8  
 Stanleyville airfield, rescue the US personnel and with- 9  
 draw the entire force. Additional details are contained 10  
 in the Annex hereto. 11

b. The covert use of military forces to effect a 12  
 clandestine night parachute landing west of Stanleyville, 13  
 infiltrate by rubber boat or foot to the US Consulate and/ 14  
 or other known location of US personnel, overpower the 15  
 guards and move with the rescued personnel to a prearranged 16  
 exfiltration area for pick-up by helicopter or C-46 air 17  
 commando aircraft. 18

3. Modifications to either course of action would be re- 19  
 quired dependent upon the latest enemy intelligence, the 20  
 location and surveillance/guarding of the personnel to be 21  
 rescued, US force availability and the decision as to whether 22  
 all or only part of the US personnel were to be rescued. 23

4. Either an overt or covert operation has a reasonable 24  
 chance of successfully rescuing the personnel unharmed 25  
 providing: 26

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- a. The precise location of the personnel to be rescued can be determined PRIOR to initiation of the operation.
- b. The plan is NOT compromised and complete surprise is obtained.
- c. The commander is authorized to use such force as is necessary to accomplish the mission.
5. Both of the foregoing courses of action might prove to be infeasible because locations of US personnel may not be known, because of the opposition of the Belgian Government due to anticipated reprisals against foreigners in the Stanleyville area, or because the element of surprise may be lost. Accordingly, a third course of action might be required which would provide for the capture of Stanleyville and its control long enough to transfer control to Congolese security forces and/or evacuate all foreign personnel. This course of action would probably require additional force.
6. From a military viewpoint, if a decision is made to employ US military forces to rescue the US personnel in Stanleyville:
- a. The covert operation offers the best chance of successfully rescuing the US personnel unharmed.
- b. The covert operation should be backed up by the prepositioning of the overt force for contingency employment if required.
7. To preclude delay in implementation, should such a decision be made, it is necessary that detailed planning be initiated immediately. This would require the dispatch to Leopoldville, under cover, of covert officer planners from USCINCMEAFSA.
8. If you desire the initiation of detailed planning, it is requested that:

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- a. Political coordination be accomplished with Government of Belgium officials and authorization be granted for on-the-scene military coordination between appropriate US and Belgian military personnel, if US intervention is directed. 1  
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- b. Authority be granted for the immediate dispatch of the covert planners to the Congo. 6  
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## ANNEX TO APPENDIX TO ENCLOSURE A

## ADDITIONAL DETAILS REGARDING THE TWO BASIC COURSES OF ACTION

Overt Course of Operation

- a. Employment of a Joint Task Force in a parachute/ 1  
airlanded assault operation, utilizing multiple drop zones 2  
and supported by tactical air, to seize and secure the 3  
Stanleyville airfield, rescue the US personnel and with- 4  
draw the entire force. 5
- b. The force would consist of 2 airborne rifle 6  
companies, 8 tactical fighter aircraft supported by KC135 7  
tanker aircraft as required and 17 C-130E aircraft. 8
- c. The operation could be initiated in Stanleyville 9  
approximately 71 hours after ordered executed. This 10  
assumes detailed planning had been completed. 11
- d. Advantages and disadvantages: 12
- (1) The operation would show, in an area where 13  
turmoil will probably exist for many years to come, that 14  
the United States does not intend to permit its citizens 15  
legitimately in a country to be harassed, imprisoned, 16  
or otherwise molested. 17
- (2) There are various numbers of non-Congolese 18  
reported to be in Stanleyville with one figure being as 19  
high as four to five hundred. The rescue of US 20  
personnel alone, assuming there are other non-Congolese 21  
who would like to get out, could well react unfavorably 22  
to the general interests of the United States and her 23  
relationships with countries of western Europe and 24  
Africa. 25
- (3) The overt operation has every promise of re- 26  
capturing the city and making it feasible to secure it 27  
and return it to Congolese governmental control. This 28

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would, however, constitute US military involvement in 1  
 Congolese internal affairs versus a rescue operation. 2

(4) Since Stanleyville has apparently become the 3  
 capital of the rebellious-communist movement, its 4  
 reduction and pacification would constitute a serious 5  
 setback to the general movement and, in net effect, 6  
 would probably be more useful at this time than the 7  
 capture of the town of Uvira which is the rebel- 8  
 communist supply base. 9

Covert Course of Operation 10

a. Employment of military forces to effect a clandestine 11  
 night parachute landing west of Stanleyville, infiltrate 12  
 by rubber boat or foot to the US Consulate and/or other 13  
 known locations of US personnel, overpower the guards and 14  
 move with the rescued personnel to a prearranged exfil- 15  
 tration area for pick-up by helicopter or C-46 air 16  
 commando aircraft. 17

b. The force would consist of selected and tailored 18  
 US Army elements (approximate strength 75), US Air Force 19  
 Special Air Warfare detachments (approximate strength 25), 20  
 2 C-46 aircraft, 3 HU-1D helicopters and 3 H-34 helicopters. 21

c. The operation could be conducted in Stanleyville 22  
 beginning 11 days after ordered executed. This also assumes 23  
 detailed planning had been completed. 24

d. Advantages and disadvantages: 25

(1) It involves fewer complications than does the 26  
 overt operation. 27

(2) Casualties should be minimized and the 28  
 possibility exists that the mission could be accomplished 29  
 without any casualties. 30

(3) Explanations to other countries as to why their 31  
 people were not also liberated would be unnecessary. 32

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(4) The covert operation would appear to have a 1  
greater chance of successfully accomplishing the 2  
mission in view of the rebels announced intention of 3  
taking reprisal action against US personnel if the "US 4  
imperialist" continued to intervene in Congolese affairs. 5

## ENCLOSURE B

## DISCUSSION

1. Overt military operations would require the commitment 1  
of a Joint Task Force (JTF) consisting primarily of two 2  
rifle companies, eight tactical fighter aircraft supported 3  
by KC135 tanker aircraft as required and 17 C130E aircraft. 4  
The JTF would conduct a parachute/airlanded assault, on 5  
multiple drop zones and supported by tactical air, to seize 6  
and secure the Stanleyville airfield, rescue the US personnel 7  
and withdraw the entire force. The operation could be 8  
initiated in Stanleyville 70 hours and 50 minutes after 9  
ordered executed provided detailed planning had been completed. 10

a. Advantages and disadvantages: 11

(1) The operation would show, in an area where 12  
turmoil will probably exist for many years to come, that 13  
the United States does not intend to permit its citizens 14  
legitimately in a country to be harassed, imprisoned, 15  
or otherwise molested. 16

(2) There are various numbers of non-Congolese reported 17  
to be in Stanleyville with one figure being as high as 18  
four to five hundred. The rescue of US personnel alone, 19  
assuming there are other non-Congolese who would like 20  
to get out, could well react unfavorably to the general 21  
interests of the United States and her relationships 22  
with countries of western Europe and Africa. 23

(3) The overt operation has every promise of recapturing 24  
the city and making it feasible to secure it and return 25  
it to Congolese governmental control. This would, how- 26  
ever, constitute US military involvement in Congolese 27  
internal affairs versus a rescue operation. 28

(4) Since Stanleyville has apparently become the capital of the rebellious-communist movement, its reduction and pacification would constitute a serious setback to the general movement and, in net effect, would probably be more useful at this time than the capture of the town of Uvira which is the rebel-communist supply base.

2. Covert operations utilizing military forces would require the commitment of a Joint Task Force consisting of selected tailored US Army elements (approximate strength 75), US Air Force Special Air Warfare detachments (approximate strength 25), two C-46 aircraft, three HU-1D helicopters and three H-34 helicopters. The JTF would effect a clandestine night parachute landing west of Stanleyville, infiltrate by rubber boat or foot to the US consulate and/or other known locations of US personnel, overpower the guards and move with the rescued personnel to a prearranged exfiltration area for pick-up by helicopter or C-46 air commando aircraft. This operation could be conducted in Stanleyville beginning 264 hours after ordered executed provided detailed planning had been completed.

a. Advantages and disadvantages:

(1) It involves fewer complications than does the overt operation.

(2) Casualties should be minimized and the possibility exists that the mission could be accomplished without any casualties.

(3) Explanations to other countries as to why their people were not also liberated would be unnecessary.

(4) The covert operation would appear to have a greater chance of successfully accomplishing the mission in view of the rebels announced intention of taking reprisal action against US personnel if the "US imperialists" continued to intervene in Congolese affairs.

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3. If a decision is reached to undertake the recovery of the US personnel in Stanleyville by covert methods, consideration should be given to the next course of action should the covert undertaking fail. If the covert undertaking should fail, the rebels in Stanleyville would know that the US instigated the effort and would expand and exploit it for propaganda purposes to the maximum. Therefore, it is believed that the overt operation should be laid on as a backup with all necessary forces being placed secretly at their staging bases prepared to move rapidly to Stanleyville and conduct the overt operation.

4. Either an overt or covert operation has a reasonable change of successfully rescuing the personnel unharmed providing:

a. The precise location of the personnel to be rescued can be determined PRIOR to initiation of the operation.

b. The plan is NOT compromised and complete surprise is obtained.

c. The commander is authorized to use such force as is necessary to accomplish the mission.

5. Both of the foregoing courses of action might prove to be infeasible because locations of US personnel may not be known, because of the opposition of the Belgian Government due to anticipated reprisals against foreigners in the Stanleyville area or because the element of surprise may be lost. Accordingly, a third course of action might be required which would provide for the capture of Stanleyville and its control long enough to transfer control to Congolese security forces and/or evacuate all foreign personnel. This course of action would probably require additional force.

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6. Additional discussion is contained in CINCSTRIKE/ 1  
USCINCMFAFSA message, STRJ5 594/64, DTG 072130Z September 2  
1964.\* 3

\* On file in Joint Secretariat

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