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UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION  
IN THE CONGO

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

4 July 1961

A: Colonel J.J.Quinn, Acting Chief of Staff  
DE: S. Habib Ahmed, Chief Administrative Officer  
OBJET: Banana Base

... Following our meeting yesterday I am sending herewith a copy of a note on the Banana Base prepared along the lines of our discussions. I should be grateful if you will let us have the decision of the Force Commander in the matter in due course.

*namery*

FC

a request for a small <sup>land based</sup> Naval Det  
from Sweden or Ireland may be  
the answer.

*he*

5 Jul 61



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LEOPOLDVILLE  
REPUBLIQUE DU CONGO  
CABLE: ONUC LEOPOLDVILLE

INTER - OFFICE MEMORANDUM

26 June 1961

A: Mr. S. Habib Ahmed, Chief Administrative Officer  
De: G. Mollet, Base Administrator, Kitona  
Objet: Banana Base

I refer to your Leokit 123 of 25 June.

I have visited Banana Base on two occasions; once as reported in my Kitleo 537 to see what work had to be done, and once as reported in my latest fortnightly report, to meet President Kasa-Vubu.

I estimate the strength of the ANC at Banana Base at about 150. They are commanded by Major Kapeta, an ex-sergeant who appears to have little control over his troops. When Kapeta was riding in a jeep with Col. Solihin they were stopped by one of Kapeta's own sentries who refused to let them proceed; during my visit the ANC captain who was conducting me was harangued by an ANC soldier who seemed to disapprove of the UN being let into the Base.

As stated in my latest fortnightly report, work at Banana Base has been suspended owing to lack of transport, though the most urgent work on the Nzadi has been completed. Three of the seven workers at Banana are now working at Kitona.

However, Mr. Borgonovo, the Base engineer, was working at Banana on Saturday afternoon and Sunday in order to put the radio station back on the air. This was a private arrangement made, with my approval, between Mr. Borgonovo and the Belgian radio operator, for assistance in an emergency.



2.

Mr. Borgonovo reports that he was well received and had no difficulty in moving in and out of Banana Base. I believe the Tunisian officers also visit there.

Colonel Masiala of Boma is Major Kapeta's superior and is of higher calibre. He seems well disposed towards ONUC, though there has been little contact with him so far.

Social relations between the Tunisian and ANC officers are cordial; the Tunisian soldiers are confined to camp.

The civilian population of Moanda and district is faintly hostile towards the ANC at Banana.

To answer your questions: I think the time would be appropriate to take up negotiations for the return of UN troops to Banana Base, in view of the settlement of the Matadi question and the improvement in relations between Kitona Base and the Boma authorities.

I believe that the reaction of the ANO at Banana Base would be initially hostile; they still think that they have a right to be on Kitona Base; and to its non-UN equipment, and would no doubt have the same proprietary feeling about Banana.

I should emphasize that it is primarily the lack of transport which has prevented us from carrying out maintenance work at Banana Base. The ANC would presumably argue that as they do not prevent us from moving in and out of the Base, there is no need for troops to be stationed there.

4 July 1961

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The ONUC forces stationed at Banana evacuated the Base early in March as a result of incidents with the ANC. No United Nations personnel was able to visit the Base subsequently but as a result of contacts recently made by Mr. Mollet, Base Administrator at Kitona, the ice has been somewhat broken. Mr. Mollet was asked to give a report on the latest situation which he has submitted in his memo dated 26 June, copy enclosed.

Consideration has been given to the question as to whether the time was ripe for discussions with the Congolese authorities for the return of United Nations troops to the Base. The general view of senior ONUC Headquarters officials is that it would be preferable if such negotiations were deferred until ONUC forces had resumed their position at Matadi. On the other hand it is felt that since the ANC unit at Banana would constitute the main obstacle to the return of U.N. troops to the Base, preliminary discussions might be opened with General Mobutu, with a view to preparing the ground for eventual discussions with the government authorities. In this connection the senior ONUC military officers are of the view that since the Banana Base is of little significance at present from ONUC's operational standpoint the possibility of stationing there a small ONUC naval unit which would serve the dual purpose of providing the United Nations presence at the Base and undertaking some training activities might be more practicable and also perhaps acceptable to Congolese authorities. This proposal would be further considered by the Force Commander who may in due course submit it formally to Headquarters, New York, for consideration and obtaining the services of a small naval unit from a country such as Sweden.

In the meantime ONUC would continue to discharge its responsibility for the maintenance of the Base by continuing to maintain the services of seven Congolese workers and such visits of engineers, technicians and administrative personnel from the Kitona Base as could be arranged with the local ANC. It is recognized that this arrangement does not constitute the fulfilment of United Nations responsibility for the maintenance of the Base. It could only be regarded as an effort towards the eventual restoration of United Nations position at the Base.

S. Habib Ahmed  
Chief Administrative Officer  
ONUC