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OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Origin

ACTION: Amembassy RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY

Info:

INFO: Amembassy BUENOS AIRES
Amembassy BRASILIA
Amembassy LISBON
Amembassy KINSHASA

STATE

SUBJ: Possible Brazilian Help in Present Congo Crisis

1. As Embassy aware, Congo Kinshasa Govt faced with critical situation, which if not ameliorated may push Congo into Soviet and Cuban arms. Some 100 mercenaries and allied Katangan Congolese soldiers have occupied certain key cities in northeastern Congo. Mercenaries and Mobutu Govt agreed to ~~evacuation~~ evacuation of rebel force but solution failed when Rwandan Govt refused go along. Mobutu now confronted with problem of eliminating rebel challenge before OAU Foreign Ministers and Chiefs of State conferences scheduled begin at Kinshasa on September 4. Congo-Brazzaville and Soviets have both entered picture, former offering Mobutu 200 Cuban soldiers to fight mercenaries and Soviet Ambassador suggesting USSR may be willing provide squadron transport aircraft.

2. Mobutu's greatest need is indeed for long-range transport aircraft and qualified pilots for them. In early July we sent three C-130's, only one of which remains in Congo, transporting troops for govt. We are not able

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contribute further help this field. Mobutu could use not only C-130's but also C-119's, C-47's and C-54's (with pilots) for troop transport duty. Our present estimate is that if some free world country does not give Mobutu this type of aid there is strong possibility he will in desperation accept aid from Cuban/Congo-Brazzaville side and/or Soviets. Such move could pave way for gravest kind of communist subversion in central Africa.

3. Brazilian Embassy here recently took initiative to ask for briefing on Congo and other near-by developments. Dept officer sketched roughly above picture for them and concluded by posing theoretical question whether Brazilian govt might be helpful in situation. Brazilian Embassy officers brushed question aside. However Brazilian Charge August 24 indicated interest in receiving further information on Congo situation and gave impression of being up to date on news dispatches from Kinshasa. Dept officer promised send him information soon.

4. Dept realizes chances probably slim Brazilians would be inclined provide pilots or aircraft but nourishes some hope GOB might be brought to make some statement of moral support for Mobutu Govt in present crisis. We believe such statement would be welcome and useful. Dept does not plan pursue matter with Brazilian Embassy here (except for innocuous briefing paper) without your concurrence. Welcome your comments on manner in which you believe we should proceed, either here or in Brazil, as well as your estimate our chances Brazilians might make some constructive move.

5. For Buenos Aires: Dept would appreciate receiving Embassy assessment of ~~MA~~ GOA reaction if approached.

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