for release July 26, 1960

AMERICAN CITIZENS WELCOME PRIME MINISTER LUMUMBA OF CONGO

In an open letter presented today to Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba of the Republic of the Congo, the American Committee on Africa predicted that the Prime Minister's "search for sympathy and tangible aid will be successful in the United States" and expressed the hope that "American technicians, especially those of African ancestry, might come to the immediate aid of your country."

During a discussion with three members of the American Committee, Prime Minister Lumumba agreed to be an international advisor of the Africa Defense and Aid Fund, administered by the American Committee on Africa. Other international advisors include Tom Mooya of Kenya, Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika, and Kenneth Kaunda of Northern Rhodesia.

Recalling contacts with Prime Minister Lumumba dating to 1958, the American Committee announced that it was today asking President Eisenhower to take four immediate steps toward the Congo: 1-urging Belgian troops to withdraw from the Katanga Province; 2-discouraging a separate Katanga by refusing to recognize it; 3-appropriating "extraordinary sums" to the U.N. for a crash program of technical assistance; and 4-earmarking huge U.S. Mutual Security Funds for the Congo "without any political strings whatsoever."

This open letter was presented to Prime Minister Lumumba at a special interview in his suite in the Hotel Barclay. The delegation consisted of Mr. Peter Weiss, Vice-Chairman of the American Committee on Africa; Mr. George M. Houser, Executive Director; and Dr. Homer A. Jack, Associate Director.

The American Committee suggested to Prime Minister Lumumba that it was "confident that the African personality working with the community of nations will produce a new era in this African decade."

The American Committee on Africa, a non-profit, non-governmental organization working on African-American relations, concluded its open letter by declaring that "we do anticipate the closest cooperation between our peoples and our brothers in the great new nation of the Congo."

Full statement attached.
American Committee on Africa

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George M. Houser
Executive Director

Homer A. Jack
Associate Executive Director

AN OPEN LETTER OF WELCOME TO PRIME MINISTER PATRICE LUMUMBA OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO ON HIS ARRIVAL IN THE U.S.A.

Representing a non-governmental organization of Americans especially concerned with American-African relations, we greet you most warmly as you pay your first visit to our land. As prime minister of the newest independent country in Africa and the world, you honor us in making your first visit outside the Congo since independence to America.

The American Committee on Africa cherishes the contacts we have had with you during and since the historic All-African People's Conference in Accra in December 1958. We encouraged your efforts then toward the emancipation of the Congo and we have done so since by frequent communication, by personal visitation during the Brussels Roundtable Conference in January, and by representation at the Congo independence celebrations.

The American Committee on Africa has worked for an independent Congo since it was established in 1953. Our staff and some board members have personally witnessed the bitter fruits of colonialism in the Congo as elsewhere in Africa. We rejoice in your leadership, and that of President Kasavubu and others, in breaking the colonies. In the difficult days immediately after your nation's independence, our Committee supported the U.S. Government's decision not to send troops to your country and enthusiastically endorsed the idea of a U.N. Force composed primarily of African troops. Its creation by the Security Council on July 14th was a historic moment for the Congo, for Africa, and for all mankind.

You and your brave people need sympathetic assistance from the world community. This must come principally from or through the U.N. There is, however, much help that the United States can render to the Congo. We as American citizens want to inform you that we are today asking President Eisenhower to take these four immediate steps:

1-To use his good offices to urge Belgian troops to withdraw immediately from the Congo, including the Katanga Province.

2-To discourage by word and deed the separatist movement in the Katanga by refusing to recognize that government and, if necessary, by refusing to allow purchases of strategic materials from that area.

3-To appropriate extraordinary sums and make available thousands of technicians to the U.N. so that it may organize truly a crash program of technical assistance to your country.

4-To earmark huge Mutual Security Funds for direct aid to the Congo, but without any political strings whatsoever.

In addition, American foundations and private organisations can supplement the government. We hope that American technicians, especially those of African ancestry, might come to the immediate aid of your country and give several years of technical service.

The colonialists said that the Congo would not be free in a hundred years. You proved otherwise. They insisted that a Free Congo would not survive. You can prove otherwise. With what you do, we Americans might not always agree, but we will always be sympathetic, confident that the African personality working with the community of nations will produce a new era in this African decade. We will not expect identity of political forms or opinions, for that is the totalitarian way. We do anticipate, however, the closest cooperation between our peoples and their brothers in the great new nation of the Congo.

We salute you, Premier Patrice Lumumba, and know that your search for sympathy and tangible aid will be successful in the United States.

--The American Committee on Africa