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BIG QUESTION IS:

What will happen when U.N. men leave Congo?

By ANDREW DRYSDALE of The Star's Africa News Service

ANYONE WHO TRIES to prophesy on what will happen in the Congo when United Nations forces leave at the end of this month, "has got holes in his head." That is the view of an American who has a most intimate knowledge of the country.

He is Dr. William Close, honorary medical director of the Congolese Army.

Dr. Close, who has the uncommon education combination of Harrow and Harvard, has had four years in the Congo. He has got to know several of the country's leaders, including President Kasavubu, Gen. Mobutu and Mr. Tshombe.

Real threat

The Congo, he thinks, could find its own solution, provided there was no outside interference. But he sees Communism as a real threat.

Dr. Close, a former U.S. Air Force pilot, traces a telling tale of how Communist influence has gained ground under the prolonged chaos.

The main reasons for Communist infiltration, he says, are the past disunity of the Western Powers involved in the Congo, exploitation of bitterness among the unemployed masses, corruption in high places, deliberate fostering of racialism and subversive propaganda, arms and money.

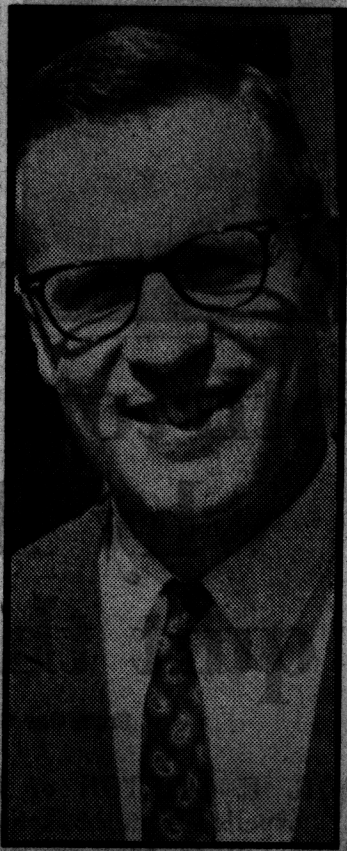
On a visit to Salisbury, Dr. Close said: "I don't expect a colossal blow-up as soon as the United Nations pull out, but I think the Congo is facing a second revolution—an ideological revolution."

Discipline problem

He pointed out, too, that while the 30,000-strong Congolese army is thinly stretched in parts, it has been responsible for maintaining law and order for the past two years.

The discipline of the national army is generally taken to be greatly improved, but Dr. Close accepts this only in part.

"There are some units that have good discipline, but others



DR. WILLIAM CLOSE

leave much to be desired. The discipline of a unit depends entirely on the officers.

"General Mobutu, a man of considerable courage, has had the job of rebuilding an entire army in a huge country, about a million miles in extent. Given time he will succeed."

Trouble in Kwilu

Dr. Close, who recently flew over rebel-held territory in the Kwilu, gave a graphic description of the troubles there.

"We saw village after village burnt out, deserted, missions destroyed and abandoned, and found villages that seemed whole, but devoid of people.

"As we flew over some of the forest country, we saw a few new huts in small clearings where families sought refuge. Roads leading into villages were cut up and blocked by rebels.

"A Red Cross girl told us that 5,000 refugees in Idiofa were on the point of starvation, and that rice and salted fish were desperately needed."

Peking-trained

The war in the Kwilu is fanned by Peking-trained Pierre Mulele, a former Cabinet Minister in the first Congolese Government. His aim is to set up a People's Republic.

Mulele's men, who now number around 15,000, employ terrorist tactics to swell their ranks. They recruit from village chiefs who are told that if they do not supply men and food, their villages will be wiped out.

"The Congolese army is operating against guerilla forces who fade into seven-foot-high elephant grass at the drop of a hat. The enemy is avoiding contact," says Dr. Close.

"Another Vietnam"

"I think they are very near to having another Vietnam war in the heart of Africa."

Dr. Close says the anti-Government activities which have broken out in and around Bakavu, capital of Kivu, are also Communist inspired, and are being fed with technical and financial aid from Communists over the border in Usumbura.

Turning to the departing U.N. personnel, Dr. Close maintains that the force did well. But he is sharply critical of the calibre of some top U.N. civilian administrators.

"Some of these men were weak," he says. "I think they have a very poor batting average compared with the men they put in the field. There were, of course, exceptions, such as Mr. Robert Gardiner.

"What the U.N. has done has not always been constructive, not by a long shot. Some of their

political forces have not been forces of unity. They have been just the opposite."

Dr. Close, who has travelled widely elsewhere in Africa, warns that the "forces of hatred and tyranny" are being fed by the situation in Southern Africa.

"The hardening of the position of the controlling White minority pours oil on the fires of bitterness of Black nationalists. This plays directly into the hands of the Chinese Communists, who use the colour issue as a main source of whipping up hatred.

"Even the moderate African nationalist nowadays says that the continent will be rid of White rule by 1970, preferably by consent, but by conflict if necessary."

Wrong revolutions

He says: "Some blame Communism for the troubles we have in the world today, and there is some truth in that. But many who blame the Communists make their advance inevitable by the way they live.

"We need an answer to the effortless superiority which always knows what is best for the other man. We need an answer to the arrogance which breeds bitterness and frustration, and leads to violence. All these factors foment the wrong kind of revolution."