Israel's Involvement in the Congo, 1958–68: Civilian and Military Dimensions

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By 1958 Israel considered ties with the Congo one of its most important economic and foreign policy objectives on the African continent. Yet, previous accounts of Israel's activities in Africa during the 1960s have left its relations with the Congo unexplored. This article examines the civilian and military dimensions of Israeli involvement in the Congo from 1958 to 1968, focusing primarily upon Israel's relationship with the regime in Leopoldville (renamed Kinshasa in 1966). This study evaluates the success of Israeli civilian assistance but demonstrates that Israel's principal contribution to the survival of pro-Western rule in the Congo remained that of significant military assistance which it extended to that regime both before and after Mobutu's 1965 coup.

This article examines the civilian and military dimensions of Israel's involvement in the Congo from 1958 to 1968, focusing primarily upon Israel's relationship with the regime in Leopoldville (renamed Kinshasa in 1966).[1] By 1958 Israel considered ties with the Congo one of its most important economic and foreign policy objectives on the African continent, and in June 1960 the Israeli minister of finance, Levi Eshkol, attended the independence ceremonies at Leopoldville. Yet previous accounts of Israel's activities in Africa during the 1960s have left its relations with the Congo almost completely unexplored.

During the years 1960 and 1961, 16 colonies in Africa became independent states. Four principal factors brought Israel to seek to establish ties with all of these countries.

First was the goal of avoiding the delegitimization that came of exclusion from conferences such as that of the non-aligned states at Bandung in 1956, which refused Israel participation. Israel's conflict with the Arab states made avoiding ostracism imperative, and this made obtaining African support at the United Nations (UN) a second factor.

Third was the exigency of establishing relations in the regions beyond the Arab confrontation states, and from the late 1950s Israel pursued this objective largely in Africa.

Fourth, Zionist idealism regarding the liberation of other peoples colored the Israeli view of Africa. Israel's leaders and diplomats, including Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and Foreign Minister Golda Meir, sought to realize the Jewish aspiration to be a 'light unto the nations'.[2]

In fact, of the African states that reached independence in 1960 and 1961 only Mauritania and Somalia, both of which eventually joined the Arab League, refused to establish relations with Israel. By the end of 1962 Israel had 22 embassies in Africa. Files in both the Israel State Archives and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) Archive, the declassification of which the author obtained for this study, shed new light upon Israel's diplomacy and strategy in Africa during that period. The US National Archives have also released documents that add an important dimension to the examination of Israel's activities on the continent in the 1960s. Israel's foreign intelligence agency, the Mossad, does not permit researchers to view its records. Nevertheless, the resources that are available make possible the identification of the goals that Israel pursued vis-à-vis the Congo, the means it used in order to achieve them, and the measure of success that attended its activities there. This article uses archival sources to demonstrate that Israeli assistance became a significant factor in the support of a pro-Western regime in Leopoldville.

Two principal phases mark the period under study here. The first phase commenced in 1958, when the Israeli Foreign Ministry initiated contact with the heads of the Congo's political parties. These ties created the basis for the establishment of diplomatic relations when the Congo achieved independence. During the first few months of Congolese statehood Israel changed its policy from that of a neutral party seeking ties with all of the major factions in the Congo to support of the position of the Western powers. The second phase, marked by a pronounced military role, began in late 1962, when Israel welcomed the US Department of State's suggestion that it train soldiers of the Armée Nationale Congolaise (ANC). This article elucidates the advent and circumstances of Israel's defense connection with the Congo and relationship with Joseph Mobutu during both his tenure as army chief-of-staff and head of state.

By the beginning of 1965 Israel sought to reduce the scale of its military involvement in the Congo. But Mobutu demanded that Israel continue to train his armed forces. His increasing sway and the coup that he carried out in November 1965 convinced the Israelis that ensuring their presence in the Congo would come at the cost of ongoing involvement with the ANC, and Israel continued to train the Congolese army. The Israeli Foreign Ministry attempted to place increasing emphasis on the expansion of aid and trade there. This study evaluates the success of Israel's civilian assistance and commercial endeavors in the Congo but demonstrates that

Israel's principal contribution to the survival of pro-Western rule in the Congo remained that of the military assistance that it extended to Mobutu's regime.

EARLY CONTACTS AND 'FIRST AID'

On 14 January 1958 Golda Meir met with senior officials of the Foreign Ministry and decided upon a strategy of exploiting every opportunity to gain entry to the areas of Africa nearing independence. This meant creating ties with (British-administered) Nigeria in West Africa, British East Africa and the Belgian Congo.[3] Israel began to prepare the groundwork for diplomatic relations with the Congo, which was to obtain independence on 30 June 1960.[4] In December 1958 Ehud Avriel, Israel's first ambassador to Ghana and a close confidant of both Meir and Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, met with Patrice Lumumba, president of the nationalist and anti-colonial party Mouvement National Congolais (MNC) at the All-African Peoples Conference in Accra. In 1960 Avriel helped mediate the compromise that brought about the creation of the Congo's first government and for a brief period served as Israel's first ambassador to Leopoldville. At that time he assured Lumumba that Israel would extend assistance along the lines that it provided Ghana, with which it had, during the two years that followed Ghana's independence, a close relationship.[5]

In April 1960 Efraim Eilon, Israel's envoy during the Congo's pre-independence period, arrived in Leopoldville and began to cultivate ties with local leaders.[6] Eilon assured his Congolese interlocutors that Israel was keenly aware of their history of suffering. He also told them of Israel's eagerness to use the port of Eilat as the gateway to closer ties with all of Africa and willingness to make its expertise, primarily agricultural, immediately available to the Congo.[7] In truth, the Israeli envoy discovered that most of the Congolese politicians, including Lumumba, made little time for him yet expected much of his government.

At the end of April 1960 Eilon obtained a brief meeting with Lumumba, during which he urged him to visit Israel (the MNC leader never did).[8] In late May Eilon met with Antoine Gizenga, who led the left-leaning Parti Solidaire African. Gizenga expressed great interest in Israeli aid projects in Asia and Africa but evaded Eilon's suggestion that he visit Israel before the Congo's independence.[9] On 10 June 1960 Eilon met again with Lumumba, who this time told the envoy that he wanted Israel to host a Congolese delegation at Israeli expense, the members of which would then assess what Israel had to offer his country. Eilon reported his negative impression of Lumumba but attempted to convince the Foreign Ministry to comply with the demand in

order to gain favor with the man most observers assumed would head the independent Congo's first government.[10]

On 20 May 1960 Eilon met for the first time with Joseph Kasavubu, president of the (Kongo people's) Alliance des Bakongo (Abako) party. Eilon noted that the Abako leader evinced little interest in the interview until he told him of Israel's joint shipping venture with Ghana. The Congo's three ports were in Kasavubu's home region of Bas-Zaire, and Eilon promised to arrange a meeting for him with representatives of Zim, the Israeli government-owned shipping company.[11] One month later Eilon spoke with Moise Tshombe, head of the autonomy-minded Confederation des Associations Katangaises (Conakat). Tshombe also expressed enthusiasm at the prospect of Israeli assistance but like Lumumba demanded that the Israelis bear the cost of hosting a (six-man) delegation to Israel. Tshombe wished to send his envoys from the province of Katanga, and he added to Eilon's discomfort by insisting that Israel arrange the visit not through Leopoldville, but in coordination with the authorities in the provincial capital of Elisabethville (later renamed Lubumbashi).[12]

The Israelis considered more promising the rapport they established with Cyrille Adoula, the moderate co-founder of the MNC who had become a political independent and one of Lumumba's most influential opponents,[13] and with Joseph Ileo, editor of the newspaper *Conscience Africaine,* also considered a moderate. In May 1960 both of these men visited Israel.[14]

The first instance of Israeli assistance to the independent Congo came in the wake of the descent into violence that marked the country's first days of statehood. Within two weeks the army had mutinied, Tshombe had announced Katanga's secession, and Europeans fled the country in panic.[15] At the end of July 1960 Israel responded quickly to the urgent request for medical aid that Lumumba cabled to Meir. Within a few days the Foreign Ministry and the Israeli Defense Forces dispatched a team of 48 internists, surgeons, pediatricians and nurses, who remained in the Congo for several months.[16]

In fact, Israel's extension of humanitarian aid to the Congo became almost immediately connected with the exigencies of foreign policy. Thus, on one hand, UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold welcomed the medical team but insisted that Israel coordinate its operations with his offices.[17] The Israelis did so reluctantly, because Hammarskjold intended to include United Arab Republic (UAR, dominated by Egypt) officials among the personnel overseeing UN operations in the Congo. Israel's relationship with Hammarskjold was an uneasy one, but the Foreign Ministry appreciated the diplomatic advantages of demonstrating a willingness to cooperate with him.[18]

In fact, that willingness was due in large measure to the position of the US. Washington viewed the Soviet Union as the greatest threat to the stability of

the Congo and considered Egypt, Israel's principal rival in Africa, the major conduit for the influence (including military aid) that the Soviets by July 1960 had, through Lumumba, established in Leopoldville.[19] The State Department wished both to augment UN authority and to use Israel as a counterweight to the UAR in the Congo.[20] For that reason, the US pressed Israel to work with the secretary-general and provide its aid through the UN.

SUPPORTING THE WEST

During the two months that followed the Congo's independence, the Foreign Ministry became increasingly concerned that Lumumba, at the behest of the Soviet Union and the UAR, would severely limit Israel's activities there.[21] Israel wished neither to become involved in the Congo's troubled politics nor to become openly partisan on an issue so sensitive to the African states.[22] Yet, developments brought Israel's policymakers to lend both covert and diplomatic support to the West over the Congo at a critical juncture. How did this come about?

In early September 1960 the impasse between Kasavubu and Lumumba led to the breakdown of the Congo's constitutional framework.[23] On 14 September 1960 Mobutu carried out a military coup (his first) and on 29 September set up a ruling group of university graduates and students called the 'College of Commissioners'. Subsequently, Mobutu ordered the Soviet and Czechoslovak embassies to leave Leopoldville within 48 hours.[24] The international community then divided its attention to the Congo between developments in that country and the attendant struggle at the UN over its future.[25] On 20 September 1960 Israel was one of the 11 countries that abstained on a General Assembly vote calling upon all states to refrain from providing military assistance to the Congo except at the request of the Secretary-General.[26]

Shortly after Mobutu carried out his coup, Kasavubu formed a political alliance with him and vied with Lumumba for the Congo's seat at the UN, forcing another vote in the General Assembly. On 22 October 1960 Lumumba asked Hanan Aynor, who had replaced Avriel as Israeli ambassador to the Congo, whether Israel would vote to install his delegation or that of Kasavubu. By that time, Lumumba was under arrest at his Leopoldville residence, surrounded by a cordon of Mobutu's troops but protected by UN soldiers. Israel had initially assumed that backing Lumumba was the best way to avoid the disapproval of as many of the African states as possible, and Aynor promised that his government would support Thomas Kanza, Lumumba's candidate. Aynor later claimed that he did not know that Ben-Gurion and his deputy minister of defense, Shimon Peres, had already decided to bow to

the pressure of Western governments, primarily the US but also France (which had since 1956 sold Israel all of its jet aircraft), to refrain from supporting Lumumba.[27]

On 18 November 1960 Israel succumbed to American 'lobby pressure and arm twisting', voting to reverse an earlier decision (that the Ghanaian delegation had initiated and the West opposed) to postpone the contest over the Congo's UN seat.[28] On 22 November the UN voted on the Kasavubu – Lumumba issue and Israel abstained.[29] Yet the 22 November abstention notwithstanding, Israel had with its vote on 18 November already provided the West with key support.

In truth, Ben Gurion's decision that Israel would vote with the US on 18 November 1960 aroused the consternation of some Israeli diplomats. From mid-1960 Israel had begun to extend covert assistance to pro-Western movements operating from the Congo against anti-Western forces in Angola.[30] Nevertheless, a number of senior Foreign Ministry officials feared that the failure to observe complete neutrality on an issue so laden with emotion to the African countries (those already independent and those yet to achieve it) would compromise Israel's efforts to present itself on the continent as a non-aligned alternative to the great powers. Michael Comay, permanent representative at the UN, protested to his superiors that Israel had undermined its own credibility by voting with the West, noting that Israel at the same time insisted that the African states maintain neutrality with regard to the Arab – Israeli conflict. Comay also pointed out that the result of the vote in the General Assembly had not hinged on Israel's decision, and abstaining would not have impaired its standing in the Western camp.[31]

Haim Yahil, director-general of the Foreign Ministry, defended the instructions he had given to the delegation in New York, noting that Israel had not voted against the African states as a bloc, because those countries were deeply divided among themselves over the Congo.[32] Yet, on the matter of the Congo, Israel had in essence abandoned its 'African neutrality'.[33]

BALANCING ACT, 1960–62

In December 1960 the Congo's foreign minister, Justin Bomboko, told Aynor that the fall of Lumumba and Mobutu's demand that Egypt, too, remove its personnel from the country made the Congo and Israel 'allies'. Bomboko told the ambassador that the new government of the Congo would 'open its gates' to Israel on condition that it provide military training at a level similar to its programs in Ghana and Ethiopia[34] and then bluntly announced that he was 'anti-Arab'.[35] During the same month Mobutu asked Israel to accept his officers for training at the IDF artillery school.[36] In fact, the Israelis regarded

Mobutu cautiously, and two considerations militated against defense cooperation at his initiative.

First, Israel wished not to circumvent the UN prohibition upon providing military assistance to the Congo that did not have the secretary-general's support.

Second, some Foreign Ministry officials were convinced that Mobutu would be unable to withstand a new challenge from Gizenga,[37] Lumumba's former deputy prime minister. In November 1960 Gizenga had set up a secessionist 'eastern' government in Stanleyville with the support of the Soviet Union, the Arab states, Ghana and Guinea.[38] The murder of Lumumba in Elisabethville in mid-January 1961 and the fact that at that point Leopoldville ruled only two of the country's six provinces made even more bleak the assessments of Mobutu's ability to maintain control in the Congo. For those reasons the Israelis proceeded carefully, steering discussions with the Leopoldville government away from the subject of a defense connection.

In early 1961 Mobutu acquiesced to the demise of the College of Commissioners, and Kasavubu convened a round table conference leading to a government in late February that Ileo headed.[39] Israel maintained close contact with Adoula, who served as Ileo's minister of the interior. Adoula kept the Israelis well briefed on the Congo's political developments and promised his government's support on the refugee issue at the UN.[40] In July 1961 he replaced Ileo as prime minister. Moshe Leshem, who that month became Israel's new ambassador to Leopoldville, established a close personal relationship with Adoula, and during the months following the latter's assumption of the prime ministership met with him frequently.[41]

Adoula was keenly interested in cooperation with Israel and discussed with Leshem the means by which Israel could extend aid to the Congo. He sought closer ties with the Histadrut (Israel's General Federation of Labor) and wanted the Israelis to train large groups of Congolese youth in Israel at *moshavim* (agricultural collective settlements) that could later be copied to the Congo.[42] Israel also promised to help Adoula's minister of the interior, Christophe Gbenye, organize the Congolese police.[43]

Israel considered a government under Adoula the best avenue for stable relations with the Congo and wished to keep Leopoldville out of the hands of the radical 'Casablanca' African states (Ghana, Guinea and Mali).[44] The Foreign Ministry was highly interested in helping Adoula's government create what Bomboko termed a 'Lagos – Leopoldville axis' that would provide a counterweight to the influence of the Casablanca group.[45] Israel was also concerned that either Gizenga (in Stanleyville) or secessionist Katanga would bring about the fall of the government in Leopoldville[46] and assured Adoula that it would under no circumstances recognize a separate government

in Katanga.[47] The Foreign Ministry feared that were Adoula's government to face a sovereign Katanga, the leftist opposition in Leopoldville would exploit the situation to force the government to court the UAR, turn the Congo against Israel, and undermine much of what the Israelis had already achieved in Africa.[48]

In October 1961 Meir met with the Congo's foreign minister, Justin Bomboko, and again promised her government's support in preventing Katangan independence. On 23 November 1961 Meir used her first meeting with U Thant, who upon the death of Hammarskjold in September 1961 had become acting secretary-general of the UN, to emphatically urge him to make more effective use of UNOC (UN Operation in the Congo; the UN peacekeeping force) in order to ensure the survival of Adoula's government.[49]

In November 1961 the UN, over the strenuous objections of Mobutu, appointed Ethiopian General Iyassu Mengesha, who had earlier served as UNOC chief-of-staff in Leopoldville, to oversee the reorganization of the ANC.[50] Mengesha accomplished almost nothing, and his failure was due in great measure to Mobutu's unwillingness to cooperate with the UN.[51] Leshem observed that the Ethiopian general 'wandered aimlessly about Leopold-ville'.[52] Mengesha's fecklessness heightened the determination of both Adoula and Mobutu to find a source of training for the ANC that was both militarily competent and prestigious. The Congolese considered advisers of Asian or other African origin undesirable, both because hosting them carried little status and out of disdain for the armies of countries that were themselves the recipients of Western instruction.[53]

In contrast, the Israelis aggressively marketed their military proficiency, and their success in doing so created the expectation among African governments that diplomatic relations with Israel automatically entailed the benefit of its defense expertise. In late December 1961 Adoula told Leshem that he wanted Israel to rehabilitate the Congo's 'rotten' army.[54]

In fact, the principal feature of Israel's involvement in the Congo during the first two years of that country's independence was civilian aid. Israel's technical assistance to the Congo included the training of its foreign service in the use of communications and ciphering equipment.[55] Also during this time, Israel received close to 150 Congolese in courses in fields that included public administration, police training and youth programs. Israel also hosted trainees at farming cooperatives and extended bilateral assistance in the form of an agricultural survey of the central Congo.[56] In 1962 only six Israelis worked in the Congo in the framework of the UN, but Adoula's government was interested in having UN responsibility for several civilian endeavors transferred to Israeli auspices.[57]

Yet, for the regime in Leopoldville, the greater promise in relations with Israel was what it could provide on the military level. Israel remained reticent to extend military assistance to the Congo, viewing as a necessary condition for such a defense connection the approval and encouragement of the US. But from late 1961 to early 1962 Hanan Bar-On, counselor at the Israeli embassy in Washington, discussed the Congo with State Department officials on an increasingly frequent basis and told them that were the US to express its support, Israel would be willing to extend such assistance to the Adoula government.[58] The failure of U Thant's August 1962 'Plan of National Conciliation' to end Katanga's de facto independence further undermined Congolese faith in the UN and brought the government in Leopoldville no closer to accepting UN training for the ANC.[59]

The US was concerned to create an effective Congolese army but unwilling to become directly involved in training it. Washington intended instead to help Adoula obtain, with UN approval, bilateral military assistance from other countries. The State Department assigned Colonel Michael J. L. Greene to head a military advisory team to Leopoldville and discussed with the governments of Belgium, Canada, Israel, Italy and Norway, all of which were interested in assisting the Congo, the possibility of participation in training the ANC.[60]

In late August 1962 the government of the Congo again turned to Israel for military assistance.[61] Meir impressed upon Ben Gurion the importance of cultivating relations with Mobutu and requested that he authorize a military mission to the Congo.[62] Ben Gurion gave his approval in principle, but the Israelis awaited further word from the US.[63] In early November 1962 an impatient Bomboko visited Washington, appealed for an operative American plan for the Congolese army, received concrete US promises of aid including military training and then turned to the Israelis to demand that they provide military assistance. On 6 November Bomboko met with Avriel and Aynor, reproaching them for Israel's failure to respond immediately to the Congo's request that it help organize the ANC. Avriel replied that the US had only the same day asked Israel to train the Congolese army.[64] On 11 November 1962 the State Department presented its formal request that Israel participate in the reorganization of the ANC and summoned Bar-On to a meeting with Colonel Greene in order to explain what the US expected of the Israeli government.[65] Thus, Israel had obtained US approval for a role in the Congo's defense affairs.

1963–65: DEEPENING INVOLVEMENT ON THE MILITARY LEVEL

The purpose of the US-backed Greene Plan was to modernize and train both the ANC and provincial gendarmerie through a series of bilateral assistance

programs. Israel was assigned the task of training the Congo's paratroopers. The UN was to coordinate these programs; they were to accord with UN resolutions and, initially, at least, U Thant privately approved them. But the Soviet Union opposed any such Western initiative, several African countries were concerned that it represented 'neocolonialism', and the Arab states strongly objected to Israeli participation.[66]

In fact, Israel maintained its highly cautious approach to defense ties with the Congo until early 1963, treating with circumspection Congolese requests on the military level. For example, in mid-November 1962 the IDF sent Colonel Dina Vart, commander of its women's army corps, on a tour of several countries in Africa that included the Congo. Vart met with Mobutu but replied in a noncommittal manner to his proposal that the IDF receive Congolese women for military training in Israel.[67] In December 1962 the UN Force's 'Operation Grandslam' finally ended Katanga's secession.[68] In that instance, too, Israel maintained its cautious stance, turning down the Adoula government's request that it supply ordnance for the ANC's part in the fighting.[69]

Yet, by February 1963 Israel was much more concerned to prevent its rivals in Africa (who had stepped up their anti-Israel activities) from undermining its ties to the Congolese defense establishment. For that reason, Israel changed its approach and wished to dispatch its military mission without delay, intending to familiarize the ANC with IDF methods even before the signing of a formal agreement with the Congolese government.[70] Golda Meir was determined to proceed with military training for the Congo and was by that time no longer worried about obtaining UN approval of Israeli activities there. According to Meir, resistance at the UN to the Greene Plan proved that when that organization dealt with a role for Israel, it 'functioned as a branch of the Arab League'.[71] In fact, the African Division of the Foreign Ministry sought to enlist the support of Robert A. K. Gardiner, the UN chief of operations in Leopoldville, for Israeli participation in the Greene Plan.[72]

But in March 1963 Gardiner informed the UN authorities of his opposition to Israeli involvement, elicited the agreement of UN Undersecretary for Special Political Affairs Ralph Bunche that Israel be replaced, and proposed that India and Tunisia serve as alternatives.[73] In Israeli eyes, the manner of Gardiner's response confirmed Meir's view. On 29 April 1963 the secretary-general, swayed by the censure of a growing number of member states, decided to withdraw all UN support for the Greene Plan. That meant that as a UN project the plan had met an early demise. But Adoula was resolved to negotiate bilateral agreements for military training,[74] and the State Department assured Israel of its intention that the Congo do so in order to assert its sovereignty regardless of UN decisions.[75]

Israel considered both closer ties with the Congo and support of US policy toward the Adoula government the means to achieve a strategic dialogue with Washington over Africa, and the Foreign Ministry termed military assistance to the Congo 'an extraordinary opportunity for cooperation with the United States'.[76] In early March 1963 Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's deputy chief-of-staff, visited Leopoldville both to consult with US officials 'on the ground' and meet Mobutu. The existing Congolese parachute battalion consisted of five companies but had in its ranks only 39 qualified paratroopers, and Rabin proposed training between 100 and 200 more men in Israeli-supervised courses. Mobutu was determined to have a large paratroop force, and in the view of the US, this put Israel in a position to play a central role in turning the ANC into a more effective military formation. The US military attaché told Rabin of his government's unhappiness with Mobutu, noting that he was eager to obtain equipment but little concerned with rigorous training. The US wanted Israel to heighten his interest in the latter.[77]

Yet, US policies created obstacles for Israel. Within a few weeks of Rabin's visit to Leopoldville, US support for an Israeli role changed from initial enthusiasm to a growing ambivalence. Thus, for example, in early April 1963 Shlomo Hillel, head of the African Division at the Foreign Ministry, cabled Meir that Mobutu had asked for Israeli help in preparing a parachute demonstration for the Congo's 30 June 1963 Independence Day celebrations.[78] The Israelis wanted to accommodate Mobutu's request and intended to expedite training by conducting it in Israel and not in the Congo. But the State Department refused the Israeli request that it fund the transport of 200 Congolese soldiers to Israel, noting that the US would provide equipment, pay for courses in the Congo, but not fund training in 'third countries'.[79]

In late May 1963 Bar-On cabled the Foreign Ministry that a 'friendly source' in the State Department had discreetly told him that some senior officials there regarded Israel's participation in any form a 'problem'. Secretary of State Dean Rusk took the issue of Israeli assistance to the Congo under personal consideration and decided that there was insufficient justification for removing Israel from the original arrangements.[80] Thus, the Israelis participated in the Greene Plan even though the US maintained its refusal to pay for training in Israel.

In late May 1963 Adoula assured the Israelis that no vacillation in the US approach would bring him to rescind his invitation to them to extend military assistance to the Congo.[81] That assertion notwithstanding, the Israelis encountered difficulty coordinating a timetable with the Congolese government. Mobutu pressed for courses that would make possible the Independence Day parachute display. But in mid-May 1963 two reasons brought Adoula to

ask Israel to postpone that training, and the sources of the delay were the policies of both Washington and Leopoldville.[82]

First, the Congo planned to participate in the Conference of Independent African States in Ethiopia in late May 1963[83] and did not want to have to deal at the Addis Ababa summit with criticism of its defense connection with Israel.

Second, the US put pressure on the Congo to postpone the advent of Israeli military assistance until after the 18th General Assembly of the UN in September 1963, in order to avoid Arab protest in that setting.[84] The Foreign Ministry feared that Washington's 'dithering' and the possibility of an American withdrawal of logistical support would put an end to Israeli participation.[85] Mobutu told Leshem that he was furious with Adoula for having agreed to a delay in training. The general's indignation notwithstanding, these circumstances obviated the possibility of carrying out the 30 June 1963 parachute display that the Congolese chief-of-staff had wanted.[86]

In late July 1963 Israel arranged to fly Congolese soldiers to the IDF's parachute school at its own expense. Coordination of that training better acquainted the Israelis with their Congolese clients in general and with Mobutu in particular, in whose view Israel's role included the enhancement of his personal military prowess. Mobutu told Leshem that he would not accept training from Congolese soldiers whose military skills surpassed his own, arguing that 'given the conditions that obtain in the Congo, only a paratrooper can rule'. The Congo's 'strongman' demanded that the Israelis open a separate parachute course for him and present him with the highly prized paratrooper's wings at a special ceremony.[87] Were Israel unwilling to meet his requirement, said the general, he would find a country that would do so. The Foreign Ministry was loath to assume responsibility for Mobutu's personal safety during his stay in Israel but acquiesced to his demand, noting that 'he does not want to be different from his men'.[88]

By the end of 1963 Israel had trained 256 Congolese soldiers, 220 of them paratroopers who passed courses at the IDF's parachute school.[89] Among the graduates was Mobutu, who made only two jumps (instead of the required five) but whom the Israelis nevertheless accorded the special treatment upon which he insisted.[90]

In January 1964 the State Department assigned Israel responsibility for training an additional 700 to 800 Congolese soldiers to defend government installations in Katanga.[91] The initial American approach stipulated that these troops comprise an additional two 'para commando' battalions, and the Israeli government accepted this additional assignment with alacrity. But by mid-February 1964 the State Department made clear that it considered parachute courses an unjustified expense and 'ground tactical operations training' a level

sufficient for the ANC's purposes.[92] The Israelis were disappointed at the 'downgrading' of the assistance that the US asked them to provide, but Abraham Harman, Israel's ambassador to the US, reminded the Foreign Ministry that even the more modest training that the Americans requested provided an important opening for cooperation with the US. US willingness to rely on Israel was, wrote Harman, 'an expression of tremendous confidence in Israel's role in the struggle for the souls of the new African states'.[93]

In fact, documents in the US National Archive reveal the increasing concern of both the Departments of Defense and State that identification with and 'apparent' sponsorship of Israeli efforts overseas would prejudice the ability of the US to deal effectively with the Arab – Israeli conflict and pursue other US objectives in the Middle East.[94] Rusk urged greater discretion, noting that 'mounting tension over the US role in Arab – Israeli matters increases the need to avoid the public appearance that the US is promoting the Israeli role in the Congo'.[95]

The Mossad (Israel's foreign intelligence agency) obtained 'back-channel' US support for an extension of Israel's Congo mission. On 18 June 1964 Bar-On met with William Brubeck, assistant to the US National Security Council, to arrange US funds for the transport of 80 Congolese officers for training in Israel.[96] This was a one-time grant that did not cover all of Israel's expenditures in the Congo. But the Israelis knew that paratoopers' wings were the most attractive component of their military assistance and were determined, the expense to their own government notwithstanding, to continue to conduct parachute courses for Mobutu's army.[97]

On 1 September 1964 Golda Meir convened a meeting of the senior staff of the Foreign Ministry to review Israeli – Congolese relations. Those officials (among whom was Avriel) decided upon the pursuit of four principal policy lines regarding the Congo.

First, the IDF would continue to train the ANC, including development of the Congolese paratroop force.

Second, the Foreign Ministry decided to launch an information (*hasbara*) campaign in Africa, the exigency of which it considered Israeli military involvement in the Congo to have created. This was necessary because by 1964 Israel had already extended military and paramilitary assistance to a large number of African states, principal among them Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanganyika (Tanzania) and Uganda.[98] Israel also supported the pro-Western regime in Leopoldville by helping it to resist rebel groups aided by Arab governments and backed by Ghana.[99] Yet, Israel's role in the Congo had exposed it to severe criticism, straining in particular relations with Ghana and its influential leader, Kwame Nkrumah. The Foreign Ministry wished to prevent the African states from adopting a resolution condemning Israel in

the framework of the OAU and vehemently denied rumors that Israelis had joined South African mercenaries in the Congo. At the same time, Meir made clear that Israel would continue to extend 'legitimate' military assistance to the Congolese government.

A third policy component was that of fostering even closer ties to the Congo's civilian leadership, and the Foreign Ministry instructed Leshem to demonstrate Israel's concern for the Congo by presenting its civilian leaders with ideas for additional Israeli aid projects.[100]

Yet, a fourth goal was that of reinforcing ties with the Congo on the military plane, and this meant drawing closer to Mobutu. On 30 June 1964 Adoula resigned and Tshombe ascended to the prime ministership. By that time the Israelis regarded Mobutu as the real power behind his ostensible civilian masters and heightened its efforts to cultivate closer relations with him.

In truth, Mobutu was a 'difficult client' who demanded Israeli training and advice but then accepted it on a highly selective basis. In late 1964 the governments of Israel and the Congo were still negotiating the terms of a bilateral defense agreement.[101] But even in the absence of such an agreement the IDF made preparations to receive all 710 soldiers of the second Congolese battalion at a parachute school that Mobutu intended to set up at the ANC base at Thysville (160 kilometers south of Leopoldville).[102] Thus, Israel was willing to expedite training, but the chief-of-staff insisted upon a course of military instruction that meant a delay of several months before placing additional troops in IDF hands. On 31 December 1964 an exasperated Leshem wrote Avriel to urge that Israel use the general's uncooperative approach as justification for retreating from what the ambassador considered a 'dubious commitment'.[103]

By the beginning of 1965 four principal considerations brought the Foreign Ministry to conclude that Israel should 'phase out' nearly all military involvement with the Congo and concentrate instead upon civilian aid and commercial ventures there.

First, the IDF's training program had ceased to constitute a basis for US-cooperation in Africa. After initial US support for an Israeli part in the Greene Plan, little credit accrued to Israel in Washington from military assistance to Leopoldville, thereby, in the view of the Foreign Ministry, removing a major incentive to continuing defense ties with the Congo.

Second, involvement with the ANC constituted a financial burden for Israel while at the same time (and this was a third factor) drawing it deeply into the Congo's problems. Yet, for the African states the fate of the Congo was an issue fraught with diplomatic and political complications. Leshem pointed out that both the prospects of survival of the Tshombe government and its relations with its neighbors were entirely uncertain,

and deeper involvement in the Congo's internal struggle and diplomatic problems had always the potential to damage Israel's relations with other governments.

Fourth, the Foreign Ministry was increasingly concerned with the expanding scope of Israeli military assistance in the Congo and other African countries. That office preferred an extension of civilian aid to the Congo to greater involvement with the Congolese army. Yet, by 1965 Israel's own growing economic problems severely limited its ability to extend loans, encourage investment and assist developing countries. In 1965 the US granted Israel $7 million, channeled through the CIA, for operations of Mashav (the Israeli Foreign Ministry's Division of International Cooperation) in Africa, providing the Israelis with a crucial source of funding for their activities there.[104] But that was a one-time subvention, and in early 1966 Zvi Brosh, director-general of Mashav, told a senior official of the British Commonwealth Relations Office that 'consolidation rather than expansion' was Israel's 'watchword' in Africa.[105]

In truth, the IDF officers assigned to work with Mobutu were increasingly discouraged with the general's approach to military matters. By the beginning of 1965 the Defense Ministry wished to reduce Israel's role in the Congo to an advisory capacity at the parachute school and forego training a second battalion. Leshem suggested ways in which the Israelis could present such cutbacks to Mobutu without creating the impression of a withdrawal from what the general considered obligations that Israel had already agreed to fulfill.[106] But by the end of January 1965 Mobutu made clear to the Israelis his determination to have them train at least a second battalion of paratroopers. The IDF mission to Leopoldville warned that a retreat from that undertaking would seriously undermine relations with Mobutu.[107] Israel wished not to lose its most important foothold in Central Africa, and plans for successive courses for Congolese paratroopers proceeded apace.

CIVILIAN ASSISTANCE AND THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Three principal components constituted Israel's civilian and economic ties on the African continent. These were aid and training programs, commercial relations and loans. Thus, first, by early 1964 Israel had sent 40 specialists to work on aid programs in the Congo (Leopoldville). That figure placed the Congo in seventh place among the 33 African countries to which Israel at that time extended such help. Israel's civilian assistance projects in the Congo (Leopoldville) included experts in civil aviation, medicine, agriculture and youth training. Moreover, by that time the government in Leopoldville had sent 340 trainees to Israel, where they participated in courses

in agriculture, police work, communications and civil administration. The number of Congolese trained in Israel exceeded that of any other African country.[108]

Yet, a chronic imbalance and inconsistency marked Israel's trade ties with the Congo, for which the chaotic state of the economy in Leopoldville was largely responsible.[109] In 1963 Israeli trade with the Congo was negligible. That year Israel exported $9,000-worth of goods to the Congo and imported commodities from there worth a mere $2,000.[110] In 1964 Israeli exports to the Congo still reached only $20,000, but in 1965 that level rose sharply to $264,000. In 1966 trade between the two countries increased further. That year Israel's imports from the Congo, mainly wood and coffee, increased to a volume of $429,000, while its exports to Leopoldville (renamed Kinshasa) dropped to $187,000, thus creating an imbalance in trade that favored the Congo.[111] The total volume of trade between Israel and the Congo rose steadily during the years that followed, but by the end of the 1960s the imbalance in trade had turned heavily in Israel's favor. Thus, in 1970 Israel exported $2.96 million-worth of goods to the Congo but imported only $304,000 in raw materials from Kinshasa.[112]

A comparison to several other African countries with which Israel had cultivated trade ties demonstrates the limited scope of this dimension in Israeli – Congolese relations. In 1962 Israeli exported $1.4 million in goods to Ghana, with which it had, at least until the early 1960s, a 'special relationship'. That volume rose to $3.3 million in 1964 and $5.3 million in 1965, dropping off only slightly in 1966 (to $4.9 million). In 1964 Israeli imports from Ghana totaled $1,006,000 – slightly more than the figure for the Ivory Coast ($960,000).[113]

By 1970 Israeli imports from Ghana had dropped to $594,000. But that year, Israel imported $2.3 million-worth of goods from Uganda, $2 million from Ethiopia, $1.6 million from Gabon and $1.2 million from Kenya. Moreover, the difference between Israel's trade with the Brazzaville Congo, with which Israel had rather chilly diplomatic relations, and its commercial ties with the Congo at Leopoldville, is particularly striking and points up the ragged state of the economy of the latter country. Thus, in 1970 Israel purchased from Brazzaville goods worth nearly six times ($1.7 million) that of its imports from Leopoldville (Kinshasa), despite the fact that the population of the Brazzaville Congo was less than one tenth that of the larger Congo state.[114] Moreover, Israel extended no loan to the Congo. From 1958 to 1966 Israel (despite its own financial constraints) loaned ten African states a total of $199 million.[115] Yet, neither willingness to provide civilian aid nor military involvement with the Congo induced Israel to extend credit to the financially unstable government in Leopoldville.

1965–68: MOBUTU AND ISRAEL

On 25 November 1965 Mobutu's second coup put an end to civilian rule in the Congo.[116] The Israelis soon realized that Mobutu was much less interested than were his predecessors in civilian aid from, and trade with, Israel. He was also little concerned with the diplomatic aspects of Israeli – Congolese ties and made no move to replace his government's temporary appointee in Israel with a full-time ambassador.[117] The new Congolese ruler instead placed an even heavier emphasis on the military aspects of relations between the two countries. By 1966 the activities of Israel's 15-man military mission in Kinshasa overshadowed the role of the smaller Israeli embassy staff.[118] Yet, the Foreign Ministry had become highly critical of stepped-up emphasis upon military assistance to African states. The January 1966 coups in the Central African Republic and Nigeria heightened the view of Foreign Ministry officials that the nature of Israel's relations on the continent was increasingly that of 'personal' defense contracts with African leaders.[119] In September 1966 Moshe Bitan, director-general of the Foreign Ministry, protested to Abba Eban (who had in February 1966 replaced Golda Meir as foreign minister) that the Defense Ministry was setting up a 'security empire' in Africa.[120] Nevertheless, by late 1966 Israel had begun to train a third battalion of Congolese paratroopers.[121]

In December 1965 all of the African states except Madagascar and Sierra Leone voted in favor of UN General Assembly Resolution 2052, reiterating the call for 'repatriation or compensation of the [Palestinian] refugees'.[122] The Congo's vote against Israel in the UN on this issue demonstrated the limits to the diplomatic benefits to Israel of that relationship. Moreover, after the 1967 (Six Day) War the Congo (like all of the Black African states) accepted the Arab view that the Israeli occupation of Egypt's Sinai peninsula constituted an encroachment upon African territory. Following that war Kinshasa did not sever diplomatic relations with Israel,[123] and during the first two years of Mobutu's rule Israel's defense ties with the Congo grew closer.

Nevertheless, Mobutu made clear to Israel that its military assistance, however valued, obligated his country to little in the way of diplomatic consideration. Thus, in September 1967 the Congolese leader demanded that the Israeli military mission absent itself from his country for the duration of the conference of the Organization of African Unity. The Congo's foreign minister informed the Israeli government that were the IDF officers not removed before the conference, Israel's ambassador to Kinshasa would be declared *persona non grata*.[124]

At the same time, Mobutu placed a very high premium upon Israeli military assistance. What was the scope of the Israeli contribution to the Congo

on the defense and security planes? Israel trained nearly all of the Congo's senior officers, three paratroop battalions, a (small) unit of women paratroopers and the Congo's police force.[125] In 1964, Israel transferred to the Congo ten M-4 Sherman tanks. These were old but operable, and their 75-mm guns made them far more effective than the 15 M-3A1 units, equipped with 37-mm guns, that Leopoldville had received from Belgium in 1960 and which were the Congo's only other tanks. In fact, the Congolese army acquired no armor heavier than this until the 1970s.[126] According to US sources, in 1968 Israel sold $1.7 million-worth of arms to the Congo, making that country one of its principal defense clients on the African continent.[127] In contrast, in 1965 Egypt's war in Yemen brought Cairo to cease both training of and arms shipments to Congolese rebels fighting against the pro-Western Leopoldville regime.[128]

Israel's defense ties with Zaire (so renamed in October 1971) continued until mid-1973, when Mobutu informed the Israelis that due to 'shifting political circumstances', his government would not renew its military assistance agreement with them. Zaire was one of 22 African states that severed diplomatic ties with Israel during and soon after the October 1973 Yom Kippur War.[129] Arab promises of lavish civilian aid far beyond what Israel could provide, Mobutu's desire for influence among the (mostly anti-Israel) Third World states, and his ambition to play a greater role in inter-African affairs were the principal motives for the decision.

CONCLUSION

During the first two years that followed the Congo's independence, the principal feature of Israel's operations in that country was civilian aid. The early period of Israel's presence in the Congo was consistent with the idealistic goal of providing assistance, however modest, to African countries wary of creating close ties with either bloc in the Cold War. Moreover, initially, at least, Israel wished neither to take sides in the developing civil war in the Congo nor to incur the opprobrium of other African states by appearing to play a deleterious and intrusive role on the continent.

Yet, by 1964 the military dimension became the dominant element of Israeli involvement in the Congo. Israel decided to play an active role in supporting the regime in Leopoldville, creating close ties to the civilian administrations of Kasavubu, Ileo and Adoula, and cultivating relations with Mobutu, both in his role as chief-of-staff and following his 1965 military coup, as head of state. By that time, Israel had openly abandoned its neutral position regarding the Congo and backed the pro-Western government. In 1964 Israel welcomed the Greene Plan as the opportunity both to cooperate with the US

and enhance its relations with the Congo. In fact, cooperation with the US in the framework of the Greene Plan was short-lived, but the State Department's coordination of military assistance to the Congo was a breakthrough for Israel's defense ties with Leopoldville.

Israel's assistance to the Congo did not bring with it the diplomatic support, principally at the UN, for which Israel had hoped. From the early 1960s even African states that had benefited from Israeli aid had, in response to increased Arab and Eastern Bloc pressure, demonstrated an ever-diminishing willingness to support Israel at the UN.[130] The Congo was no exception to this pattern, and Mobutu's larger African ambitions, especially after 1967, brought him to insist that Israel provide military assistance in the most unobtrusive and least visible manner possible.

Yet, Mobutu was well aware of Israel's role in supporting his regime. The Congo considered Israeli paratroop courses the most effective of the various training programs that foreign powers had provided the ANC, and over a period of eight years, Israel trained several paratroop battalions and scores of high-ranking Congolese officers. In 1973 Mobutu forfeited his country's association with Israel on the defense plan without enthusiasm, and Aynor attributes to the absence of Israeli advisers the Zairean army's near-complete collapse in Shaba (formerly Katanga) in March 1977.[131]

NOTES

1. See Catherine Hoskyns, *The Congo Since Independence: January 1960–December 1961* (London: OUP 1965); Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa – From Eisenhower to Kennedy* (NY: Macmillan 1982); Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence* (Princeton UP 1965). 'The Congo' refers to Leopoldville (Kinshasa) unless otherwise noted.
2. See Samuel Decalo, *Israel and Africa: Forty Years, 1956–1996* (Gainesville: Florida Academic Press 1998); Mordechai E. Kreinin, *Israel and Africa: A Study in Technical Cooperation* (NY: Praeger 1964); Leopold Laufer, *Israel and the Developing Countries: New Approaches to Cooperation* (NY: Twentieth Century Fund 1967); Olusola Ojo, *Africa and Israel: Relations in Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1988); Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship* (London: The British Academic Press 1992).
3. Meeting at the Foreign Ministry, 14 Jan. 1958, Israel State Archive (ISA) 4488/7.
4. Report of the Asia–African Division, 16 July 1959, ISA 3094/30A; 'African Events 1960', Report of the Foreign Ministry, Jan. 1960, ISA 3301/5.
5. Hanan S. Aynor, *Africa in Crisis: Patrice Lumumba's Congo, Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire* (Jerusalem: Keren Hanan Aynor 1998, in Hebrew) p.19; Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960–1964* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 1974) p.19.
6. Eilon to Asia–African Division, 21 May 1960, ISA 3341/32.
7. Ibid.
8. Eilon to Asia–African Division, 3 May 1960, ISA 3341/32.

9. Eilon to Asia–African Division, 21 May 1960, ISA 3341/32.
10. Eilon to Foreign Ministry, 6 June 1960, ISA 3341/32. The Foreign Ministry regarded such an extravagant outlay as unjustified and declined to do so.
11. Eilon to Asia–African Division, 21 May 1960, ISA 3341/32.
12. Eilon to Asia–African Division, 22 June 1960, ISA 3341/32.
13. Weissman (note 5) pp.105–6.
14. Eilon to Asia–African Division, 22 May 1960, 3341/42.
15. J. B. Wright, 'Zaire Since Independence', *Conflict Studies* 153 (1983) p.4; Hoskyns (note 1) p.92.
16. Aynor (note 5) pp.32–3.
17. Comay to Foreign Ministry, 23 July 1960, ISA 3341/32.
18. African Division to Embassy in Paris, 30 Sept. 1960, ISA 3341/42.
19. Ernest W. Lafever, *Crisis in the Congo: A United Nations Force in Action* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution 1965) p.18.
20. Lorch to Yahil, 7 Aug. 1960, ISA 3341/32.
21. African Division to Yahil, 9 Sept. 1960 ISA 3341/32; African Division to Yahil, 26 Sept. 1960, ISA 3301/5.
22. Foreign Ministry to UN Delegation, 6 Nov. 1960, ISA 3341/26.
23. Hoskyns (note 1) p.329.
24. Kalb (note 1) pp.90–2.
25. See Carole J. L. Collins, 'The Cold War Comes to Africa: Cordier and the 1960 Congo Crisis', *Journal of International Affairs* 47/1 (Sept. 1993) pp.243–69.
26. Lafever (note 19) p.50.
27. Aynor (note 5) pp.43–5.
28. Weissman (note 5) pp.106–7.
29. 'Results of the Vote on the Credentials Committee Recommendation', 22 Nov. 1960, ISA 3341/28.
30. Aynor (note 5) p.78.
31. Comay to Foreign Ministry, 19 Nov. 1960, ISA 3341/28.
32. Yahil to Comay, 21 Nov. 1960, ISA 3341/28.
33. Aynor to Lorch, 24 Dec. 1960, ISA 3341/29.
34. Aynor to Foreign Ministry, 21 Dec. 1960, ISA 3341/29.
35. Leshem to Avriel, 28 Sept. 1961, ISA 3341/27.
36. Aynor (note 5) p.55.
37. Eilon to Lorch, 25 Dec. 1960, ISA 3341/29.
38. F. Scott Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of Zaire* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press 1988) p.93.
39. Conspicuously absent from the conference were Gizenga in Stanleyville and Tshombe at Elisabethville. Ian Scott, *Tumbled House: The Congo at Independence* (London: OUP 1969) p.118.
40. Circular memo of the African Division, 21 April 1961, ISA 3341/29.
41. Leshem to Lorch, 27 Dec. 1961, ISA 3341/30.
42. Leshem to Foreign Ministry, 28 Sept. 1961, ISA 3341/30.
43. Gbenye was a protegé of Gizenga. The ambassador considered him a 'Congolese version of an NKVD chief'. Leshem to African Division, 12 Oct. 1961, ISA 3341/30.
44. Leshem to Avriel, 11 July 1961, ISA 3341/42; Leshem to Avriel, 31 July 1961, ISA 3341/32; Leshem to Yahil, 25 Aug. 1961, ISA 3341/30.
45. Foreign Ministry to Leshem, 16 Oct. 1961, ISA 3341/30.
46. Rafael to Meir, 24 July 1961, ISA 3341/27.
47. Lorch to Leshem, 24 Sept. 1961, ISA 3341/30.
48. Leshem to Avriel, 28 Sept. 1961, ISA 3341/27.
49. African Division to Aynor, 8 Dec. 1961, ISA 3341/27.
50. Kalb (note 1) pp.159–60.
51. Lafever (note 19) p.126.

52. Leshem to African Division, 10 Nov. 1961, ISA 3341/28.
53. Eliav to Western Europe, US Divisions, 26 March 1963, ISA 892/6.
54. Eilon to Aynor, 13 March 1961, ISA 3341/29; Lorch to Bar-On, 21 Dec. 1961, ISA 3341/30.
55. Yerushalmi's report on visit to Leopoldville, 28 May 1961, ISA 3341/29.
56. 'Israel–Congo Relations' (Foreign Ministry report), Oct. 1962, ISA 3439/15.
57. Leshem to Avriel, 28 Sept. 1961, ISA 3341/27.
58. Bar-On to Lorch, 19 Oct. 1961, ISA 3341/30; Bar-On to Lorch, 8 Nov. 1961, ISA 3341/28; Bar-On to Lorch, 14 Feb. 1962, ISA 3439/15.
59. Georges Abi-Saab, *The United Nations Operation in the Congo: 1960 – 1964* (Oxford: OUP 1978) pp.181–5.
60. Lafever (note 19) p.128.
61. Leshem to Avriel, 28 Aug. 1962, ISA
62. Meir to Ben Dor, 29 Aug. 1962, ISA 4320/24.
63. Arad to Gazit, 10 Sept. 1960, ISA 3439/15.
64. Avriel to Foreign Ministry, 2 Nov. 1962, ISA 1909/11.
65. Harman to Foreign Ministry, 11 Nov. 1962, ISA 1909/11.
66. Lafever (note 19) pp.128–9.
67. Leshem to Division of International Cooperation, 15 Nov. 1962, ISA 1909/11.
68. Abi-Saab (note 59) pp. 185–6.
69. Yahil to Meir, 3 Dec. 1962, ISA 3439/15.
70. Foreign Ministry to Leshem, 13 Feb. 1963, ISA 3439/15.
71. Avriel to Leshem, 13 Feb. 1963, ISA 3439/15.
72. African Division to Leshem, 8 Feb. 1963, ISA 3439/15.
73. Keinan to Hillel, 17 March 1963, ISA 3439/15.
74. Lafever (note 19) p.129.
75. Harman to Foreign Ministry, 22 April 1963, ISA 3439/15.
76. Comay to Foreign Ministry, 19 May 1963, ISA 3439/15.
77. 'Report of the Mission to the Congo', Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, 12 March 1963, ISA 3439/17.
78. Hillel to Meir, 2 April 1963, ISA 3439/15.
79. Bar-On to Foreign Ministry, 17 May 1963, ISA 3934/14.
80. Bar-On to Foreign Ministry, 21 May, 1963, ISA 3934/14.
81. Circular memo of the African Division, 28 May 1963, ISA 3934/14.
82. Hillel to embassy in Addis Ababa, 21 May 1963, ISA 3934/14.
83. See Gino J. Naldi, *The Organization of African Unity: An Analysis of its Role* (London: Mansell 1999) pp.1–5.
84. Hillel's circular memo, 2 June 1963, ISA 3934/14.
85. Comay to Foreign Ministry, 17 June 1963, ISA 3439/15.
86. Leshem to Foreign Ministry, 26 June 1963, ISA 3934/14.
87. Leshem to Foreign Ministry, 30 July 1963, ISA 3439/15.
88. Embassy in Leopoldville to Foreign Ministry, 14 Aug. 1963, ISA 3439/15.
89. Embassy in Leopoldville to Division of International Cooperation, 31 Dec. 1963, ISA 1937/13; Karni's report on IDF activities in Africa, 22 March 1964, Israeli Defense Force Archives (IDFA) 1665/92/480.
90. Aynor (note 5) p.79.
91. Bar-On to Karni, 28 Jan. 1964, ISA 3502/11.
92. Rusk to embassy in Leopoldville, 7 March 1964, US National Archives (USNA), Record Group (RG) 59, Subject Numeric File (SNF), DEF 19-2, Israel–Africa; Rusk to embassy in Leopoldville, 18 March 1964, USNA, RG59, SNF, DEF 19-2, Israel–The Congo.
93. Harman to Foreign Ministry, 13 Feb. 1964, ISA 1937/13.
94. Joint State/Defense telegram, 15 Jan. 1964, USNA, RG59, SNF, DEF 19-2, Israel–The Congo.
95. Rusk's telegram, 18 March 1964, USNA, RG59, SNF, DEF 19-2, Israel–The Congo.

96. See a letter from the Mossad representative in the US to the Mossad, 15 June 1964, ISA 3502/1 (part of this document is still classified). See also Bar-On to Foreign Ministry, 18 June 1964, ISA 3502/1.
97. That program alone cost the Israeli government close to $200,000 annually. Israel had other projects in Africa and extended military assistance to a number of governments on the continent. Thus, Israel's involvement in the Congo entailed a considerable outlay in a single country but nevertheless proceeded apace. Meeting at the Foreign Ministry: 'Congo–Military Assistance', 1 March 1964, ISA 1937/13.
98. Karni's report on IDF activities in Africa, 22 March 1964, Israeli Defense Force Archives (IDFA) 1665/92/480.
99. Leshem to African Division, 25 March 1965, ISA 1361/3.
100. Avriel to Leshem, 1 Sept. 1964, ISA 1937/13.
101. Leshem to Division of International Cooperation, 4 Sept. 1964, ISA 1360/4; Division of International Cooperation to Ministry of Defense, 4 Nov. 1964, ISA 1937/13.
102. 'Military Assistance to the Army of the Congo', summary of the Ministry of Defense, 17 Dec. 1964, ISA 7230/16/A.
103. Leshem to Avriel, 31 Dec. 1964, ISA 1360/4.
104. Author's interview with Bar-On, 10 Oct. 2000, Jerusalem.
105. Hadow to Morris, 7 April 1966, PRO: FO/371 187697 J1075/1/A.
106. Leshem to Avriel, 31 Dec. 1964, ISA 1360/4; Foreign Ministry to embassy in Leopoldville, 24 January 1965, ISA 7230/16/A; Leshem to Foreign Ministry, 25 January 1965, ISA 7230/16/A.
107. Embassy in Leopoldville to Foreign Ministry, 29 January 1965, ISA 7230/16/A.
108. 'Mashav Operations in Africa: Survey Compiled for the Prime Minister', 22 March 1964, ISA 3501/18.
109. For a brief description of the economic situation in Leopoldville, see Hoskyns, pp.462–4.
110. 'Survey of Economic Activity in Africa', report of the Economic Division of the Foreign Ministry, March 1964, ISA 3501/18; 'Israeli Economic Activity in Africa', report of the Foreign Ministry, 3 Jan. 1966, ISA 3158/3.
111. 'Congo Leopoldville: Economic Survey and Trade Development Potential with Israel', (Tel Aviv: *Tahal* Consulting Engineers Ltd., 1968).
112. Olusola Ojo, *Africa and Israel: Relations in Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1988) p.37.
113. 'Israeli Economic Activity in Africa', report of the Foreign Ministry, 3 Jan. 1966, ISA 3158/3; Z.Y. Hershlag, *Israel–Africa Cooperation Research Project: Progress Report* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University 1970) pp.473–513.
114. Ojo (note 1) p.37.
115. Ojo (note 1) p.22.
116. See Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Studies in Military Style* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1976) pp.5–37.
117. African Division to embassy in Kinshasa, 16 Nov. 1966, ISA 6624/4.
118. Aynor (note 5) p.78.
119. Sofer to Shek, 11 Feb. 1966, ISA 3993/17.
120. Bitan to Eban, 27 Sept. 1966, ISA 3993/17.
121. Circular memo of the African Division, 9 Jan. 1967, ISA 1387/21.
122. Yearbook of the United Nations, 1965 (NY: UN Department of Public Information 1967), pp.224–6.
123. Ron Kochan, Susan A. Gitelson and Ephraim Dubek, 'Black African Voting Behavior in the United Nations on the Middle East Conflict: 1967 – 1972,' in Curtis and Gitelson (eds.), *Israel in the Third World* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1976). In the aftermath of the Six Day War, only Guinea of the Black African states broke off diplomatic ties with Israel.
124. African Division to embassy in Kinshasa, 4 Sept. 1967, ISA 1387/21.
125. Aynor, p.79.

126. 'The Arms Trade Registers', Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), (Cambridge, MA 1975) p.91.
127. Embassy in Tel Aviv to Department of State, 11 April 1970, USNA, RG59, SNF, DEF 19, Israel–Africa.
128. Tareq Ismael, *The U.A.R. in Africa: Egypt's Policy Under Nasser* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press 1971) p.225.
129. Kochan, Gitelson and Dubek, 'Black African Voting Behavior in the United Nations'.
130. Avner to Leshem, 21 Feb. 1967, ISA 3993/17.
131. Aynor (note 5) p.79.