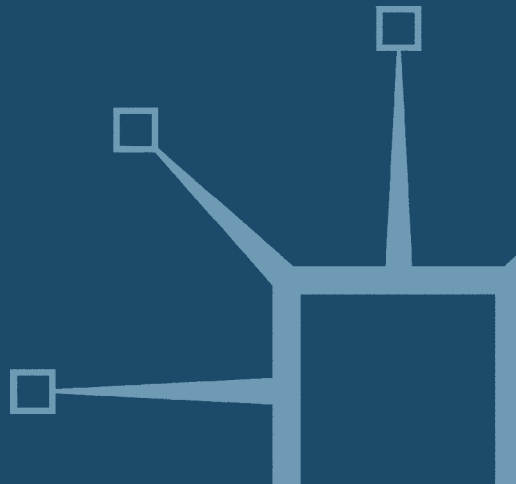


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The Congo–Zaire Experience, 1960–98

Edgar O'Ballance



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Preface

The independence of the Belgian African colony of the Congo came suddenly and unexpectedly in 1960 with no preliminary armed struggle, the peaceful handover of power being marred only by flashes of bad temper and recrimination. The new Republic of the Congo, with a population of about 40 million people and comprising an area of over 900 000 square miles, was the second largest country in Africa but few in the world knew much about it. It was hardly prepared for independence as 'Africanisation' had been tardy, deliberately so as the Belgian government, assuming that the independence process would be a lengthy one, had been in no hurry to depart. As a colony the Belgian Congo had paid its way, provided employment for several thousand Belgians, remained fairly orderly and had generally been regarded as a model colony. Successive Belgian governments had hoped that the Congolese would continue to see it that way, but events overtook both sides at great speed, and neither were grateful.

Belgium had come late to the 'scramble for Africa', and the Congo only legally became their colony in 1908. Prior to that it had been the private fiefdom of the Belgian king, its reputation being one of slave raiding, slave labour, slave trading and tribal wars. There were over 70 major tribal groups and confederations in the Congo, but colonial control over them was tightly centralised, all top and medium level appointments being held by Belgians, Congolese filling only the lower echelons in administration and government services. Political parties were banned, and Congolese political awareness did not awaken until the 1950s.

Patrice Lumumba, the first prime minister of the independent Congo, was a controversial and charismatic figure. His party, the Mouvement National Congolese (MNC), was the only pan-Congolese party in place at the time, its platform being the maintenance of national unity. The other emerging political parties were regionally based. Lumumba found favour with the USSR, which made him unpopular with Western statesmen, who branded him as a communist. The Cold War was in progress, and Cold War warriors on both sides showed an interest in the Congo.

In July 1960, just a few days after independence, the mineral-rich Katanga Province declared UDI: A United Nations military force (ONUC)

was despatched by UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld to put down the Katangan rebellion. The death of Hammarskjöld in a plane crash in Rhodesia in 1961 continues to intrigue researchers – what was the head of the UN doing in an aircraft packed full of arms and ammunition? ONUC stayed until December 1963 to battle for the unity of the Congo, after which the Congolese warlords fought each other until November 1965, when General Mobutu emerged victorious and remained in power until 1997.

The Mobutu years of the single-party state brought unsuccessful struggles for power by alternative unofficial governments and governments-in-exile, of secessionist attempts by breakaway factions, mini invasions, plots against Mobutu and general skulduggery. Mobutu's name became a byword for graft, corruption, misgovernment and lack of human rights. In 1971 Mobutu changed the name of his country to Zaire. The names of many of the main cities and towns were changed too, but not all, which tends to confuse researchers.

Eventually Mobutu was brought down by the Banyamulenge rebellion in eastern Zaire, which became the spearhead of the Tutsi-led ADLF, supporting Laurent Kabila in his bid for power. Kabila was also supported by certain neighbouring African states. In April 1997 Mobutu fled the country to die in exile in Algeria, while the triumphant Kabila returned the name of his country to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and became its executive president. The Tutsi tribe, emanating from Rwanda, had been the driving force of this campaign.

President Kabila disappointed the hopes of his supporters, especially the Tutsis, who had expected to play an influential role in the Congo, especially in the armed forces. In September 1998 the Tutsis established a breakaway state in eastern Congo, based in Goma and supported by Rwandan and Ugandan troops. Tutsis also initiated hostilities on the western front, extending south-westwards from Kinshasa, the capital, along the main road to the port of Matadi, the Inga power plant and the Boma naval base. They were countered by Angolan troops, who had joined Kabila, as later did some from Namibia, while UNITA, the Angolan antigovernment force, fought against him. The hostilities had died down by October, when the Tutsis were largely contained in the west, but the latter retained control of large expanses of terrain in the east. Intervention by adjacent states, fighting either for or against Kabila, led to the formation of two hostile alignments as certain Central African states began to quarrel amongst themselves. The Tutsi-Hutu massacres of 1994 and their sequels are covered in this book as they boiled over into the Congo.

Nearly four decades of turmoil and violence have left the Congo unsettled, uneasy and uncertain of its future prospects. As the millenium draws to a close the Congo is holding on to its sovereign unity with great difficulty. Some areas are already held by hostile Ugandan- and Rwandan-supported Tutsis, inspired by former glories of their ancient empire that once encompassed parts of present day Congo. If the Tutsi CMD successfully retains the eastern part of the Congo, surely UDI for Shaba province will be the next step, followed perhaps by other regional breakaways. National fragmentation by stages is a very real danger.

Unfortunately it seems as though the scene is being set for international war, certain Central African states having acquired a taste for armed intervention. In the east are armed contingents from the government's allies: Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Somewhere in the interior UNITA armed groups lurk, hostile to the Angolans; while just south of Shaba, inside Angola, are armed groups of would-be Katangan secessionists, waiting for a favourable opportunity to invade.

The best scenario for the DRC is for it to remain as a sovereign entity, perhaps on a federal basis; the worst scenario would be civil war, which could lead to fragmentation. What the DRC urgently needs are strong, loyal, dependable armed forces to defend it against enemies encroaching on its territory. At the moment it has to rely on military assistance from its African allies, any one of which may one day extract an unwelcome price for its assistance. Joseph Mobutu deliberately neglected and badly treated his armed forces, keeping them weak and internally divided in the fear that a more professional force might one day mount an effective coup against him. This resulted in a scarecrow body incapable of successfully combating local insurrections, let alone defending their own country.

The DRC needs time and external aid to stabilise and develop its economy, but political stability is also required to give investors confidence. African allies have changing agendas and a weak Congo could provide rich pickings for peripheral states, adventurers and mercenaries. Unfortunately the future is bleak as war clouds still hang heavily over the Congo, where tribalism is clashing with nationalism on the battlefield.

The presentation of personal and place names caused a problem when writing this book. Firstly, many Congolese initially retained the French forenames they had been given by the Christian organisations that

educated them, there being no formal state education, but during Mobutu's Africanisation period many reverted to their African names. Secondly, Mobutu changed the names of several cities and towns, but not all, and the regional structure was progressively changed from six provinces to 24, and then back down to eight.

The Congo is a fascinating country, which I first came to know a few days after its independence when as a journalist I covered the activities of ONUC until that UN force left the country. Since then I have returned a number of times to cover various events, compile up-to-date assessments and write reports, during the course of which I interviewed a number of leading personalities, including Lumumba, Hammarskjöld, Mobutu, Kasavubu, Kabila (the latter when a struggling politician) and of course hundreds of ordinary Congolese people.

My account of the Congo-Zaire experience may differ in detail from other reports, but the events and their consequences are related as I saw them unfold. My opinions and comments may also be at variance with the current perceived wisdom.

EDGAR O'BALLANCE

Acknowledgements

Most of the information contained in this book was gathered during a number of visits, some prolonged, to Congo/Zaire over a number of years. I attended numerous press conferences and conducted many interviews, both official and unofficial, as well as accumulating sheaves of handouts from many sources. Where material has been obtained from other sources due acknowledgement is provided in the text. All comments, deductions and opinions are my own, and at times may differ from current perceptions.

Map sources include the United Nations, NATO, Congo/Zaire government publications, *The Times Atlas of the World*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and the *Financial Times*.

Copy from the following television and radio broadcasters, periodicals and news agencies was consulted, sometimes in translation:

UK	TV and radio: BBC, Channel 4, ITN, ITV. Newspapers: <i>Daily Telegraph</i> , <i>Financial Times</i> , <i>Guardian</i> , <i>The Sunday Times</i> .
USA	TV: CBS, CNN. Newspapers and periodicals: <i>International Herald Tribune</i> , <i>New York Times</i> , <i>Time Magazine</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> , <i>Washington Post</i> , <i>USA Today</i> .
France News agency:	Agence France-Presse. Newspaper: <i>Le Monde</i> .
Congo/Zaire	Newspapers and periodicals: <i>Elima</i> (Kinshasa), <i>Jeune Afrique</i> , <i>Salongo</i> (Kinshasa). News agency: Congolese Press Agency. Radio: Radio Goma, Radio Katanga/Shaba, Radio Leopoldville, Radio Zaire, Star Radio.
African states	Radio: Radio Luanda (Angola), Radio Rwanda.

List of Abbreviations

Note: The initials do not always match the titles, owing to translation.

ABAKO	Alliance des Ba-Kongo
ABC	Katangan Alliance
ADLF	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Zaire–Congo
AFP	Agence France-Presse
APR	Rwandan Patriotic Army
APROSOMA	Allied Association for the Promotion of the Masses
ATCAR	Association des Tshokwe du Congo, de l'Angola et de la Rhodésie
AZAP	Zaire News Agency
BALUBAKAT	Association des Baluba du Katanga
CDA	Comité Démocratique Africain
CDF	Congolese Democratic Front
CEREA	Regroupement Africain
CFRD	Congolese Front for the Restoration of Democracy
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (USA)
CLC	Conseil pour le libération du Congo–Kinshasa
CMD	Congolese Movement for Democracy
CNA	Congolese National Army
CNRI	National Research and Investigation Centre
CONACO	National Congolese
CONAKAT	Confédération des Association Tribales du Katanga
CPA	Congolese Press Agency
DFCK	Democratic Forces of Congo–Kinshasa
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECP	Étudiants Congolaise Progressive
FAZ	Zairean Armed Forces
FCN	Front Commun National
FDD	Front for the Defence of Democracy
FEDEKA	Fédération des Association de Ressortissements du Kasai au Katanga
FLNA	Angolan National Liberation Front
FLNC	Congolese National Liberation Front
FONUS	Innovational Forces of the Sacred Union

FP	Force Publique
FPR	Rwandan Patriotic Front
FRODEBU	Front for Democracy in Burundi
HCR	High Council of the Republic
HCR-PT	High Council of the Republic – Parliament of Transition
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies (London)
MARC	Mouvement d'action pour le Résurrection du Congo
MLCL	Mouvement National Congolaise, Lumumba
MNC	Mouvement National Congolaise
MNUR	Mouvement Nationale pour l'Union et le Reconciliation au Zaïre
MPLA	People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MPR	Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NLC	National Liberation Committee
NRMD	National Republican Movement for Development (Rwanda)
NUP	National Unity Party
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OLC	Organisation for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire
ONUC	Organisation des Nations Unities au Congo
ORINFOR	National News Agency (Rwanda)
OTRAG	Orbital Transport and Rocket Company
PARMEHUTU	Party of Hutu Emancipation (Rwanda)
PCP	Progressive Congress Party
PNP	Party of National Progress
PRC	People's Republic of the Congo
PRP	Parti de la Révolution Populaire
PSA	Parti Solidaire Africaine
PSC	Parti Socialiste Congolaise
PSD	Social Democrat Party (Rwanda)
PUNA	Parti de l'Unité National
RADECO	Ressemblement des Démocrates Congolaise
SADC	South African Development Community
SNI	National Intelligence Service
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UDSP	Union for Democracy and Social Progress
UFIR	Union of Federalists and Independent Republicans
ULP	Unified Lumumbist Party
UMHT	Union Minière des Haut-Katanga

UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda
UNAR	Rwandan National Union
UNHCR	UN High Commission for Refugees
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UPRONA	Union for National Progress
URD	Union for the Republic and Democracy
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Chronology

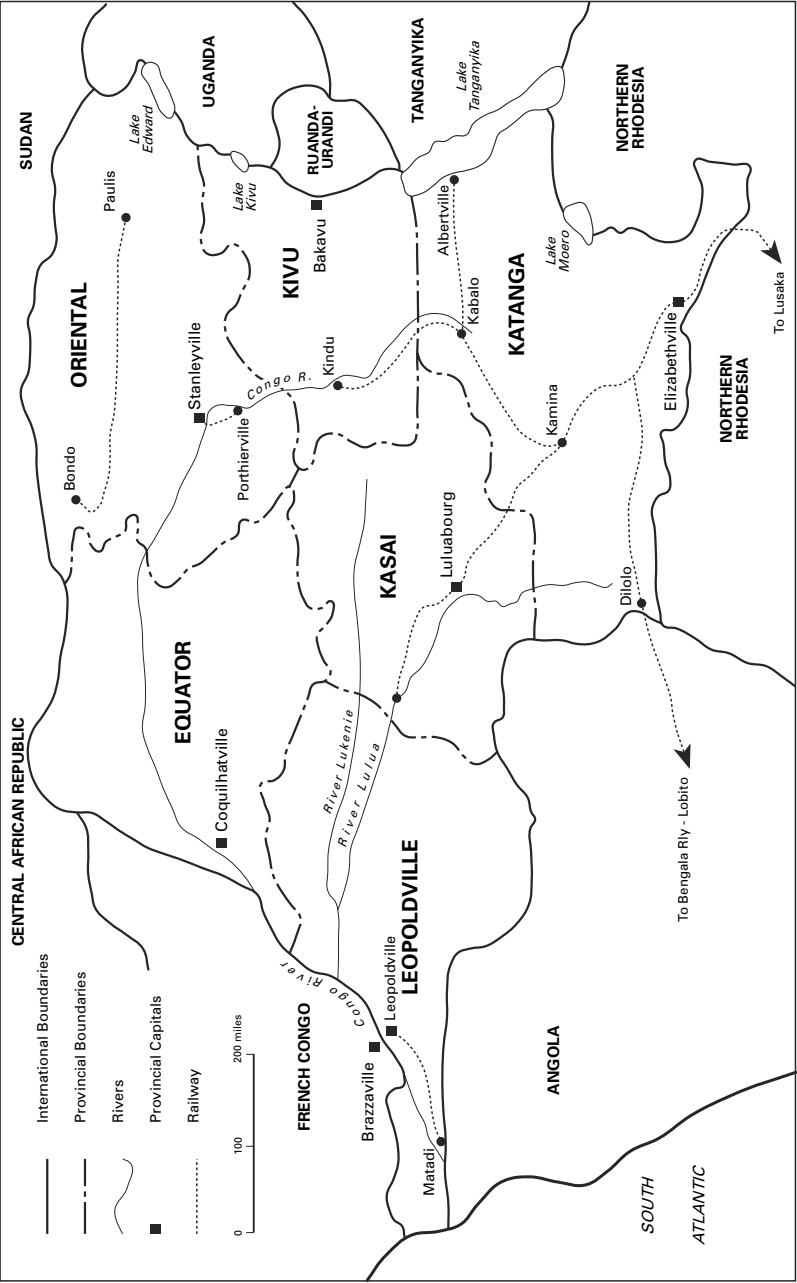
1872	International Association of the Congo
1884	Congo Free State
1886	Berlin conference
1888	Force Publique formed
1908	Congo becomes a Belgian colony
1950	ABAKO formed
1957	BALUBAKAT formed CONAKAT formed
1958	FEDEKA formed MNC formed
1959	
January	Leopoldville riots
April	Leopoldville conference
October	Belgian four-year plan. ATCAR formed. Disturbances in Leopoldville. Lumumba arrested
November	Ruanda: Hutus attack the Tutsis
December	Outbreaks of disorder in parts of the Congo. Tribal warfare in Ruanda–Urundi
1960	
January	Round table conference
May	Elections in Congo
June	Lumumba government
July	Congolese independence. Katanga province declares UDI. ONUC arrives in Congo
August	Kalonji declares independence for the Mining State
September	Mobutu seizes control of the government. Fighting in Manono, Bakwanga, Luluabourg and Kolwezi. Lumumba arrested again
November	Gizinga in power in Stanleyville. The Ghanaian incident. Lumumba escapes, but is recaptured. The Kamiyayu plot
December	Abortive invasion of Kivu Province
1961	
January	Murder of Lumumba. Ruanda declares UDI

February	New central government
March	The Matadi incident. Tananarive conference
April	Coquilhatville conference
June	Government of National Union
August	Operation Rum Punch
September	Operation Morthor. Death of Hammarskjöld
October	Truce Commission
December	Kitona ceasefire. Operation UNOKAT. Tshombe renounces Katangan secession
1962	
January	Overthrow of Gizenga in Stanleyville
July	Independence for Rwanda (NB new spelling) and Burundi
August	U Thant plan for the Congo
December	US military mission to the Congo. Operation Grand Slam
1963	
January	Tshombe announces end of Katangan secession
November	Soviet embassy staff deported from Leopoldville
1964	
March	Central Assembly suspended (dissolved in June)
April	Fighting in Kivu Province
May	Fighting in Katanga (until July)
June	Termination of ONUC
July	Tshombe becomes prime minister and forms Pacification Council
August	Rebels seize Stanleyville
September	People's Republic of Congo proclaimed in Stanleyville. Fighting in North Katanga
October	Fighting in Kivu Province
November	Belgian-US hostage rescue. Flight of NLC leaders
December	UN resolution condemning use of mercenaries
1965	
January	Adoula's African plan
February	Gbenye's six-point plan. Ugandan intervention
March-April	General elections: Tshombe remains in power. Government of National Unity
April	NLC dissolved. Supreme Revolutionary Council formed

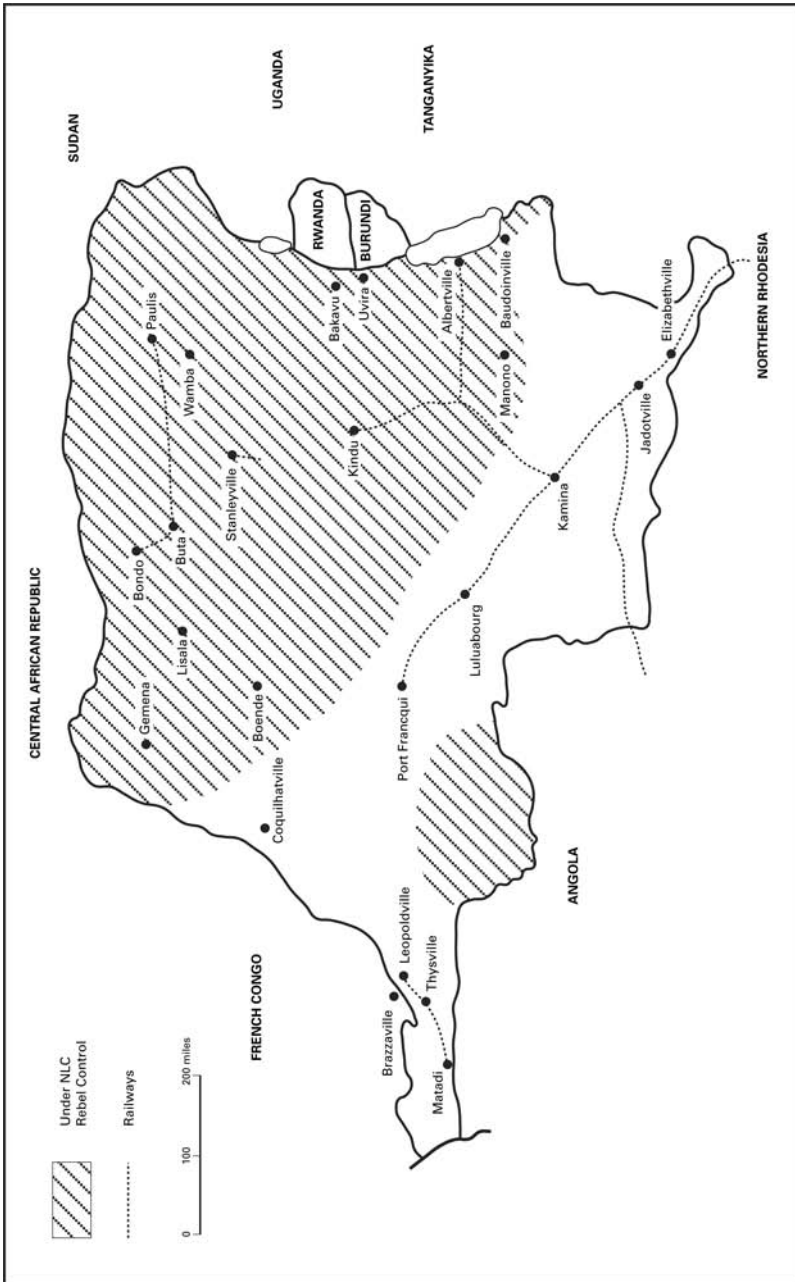
September	Government launches campaign against rebels
October	Prime Minister Tshombe dismissed. Fizi, the last rebel stronghold, falls
November	Mobutu takes over as president
1966	
May	Plot against Mobutu. Names of cities and provinces Africanised
June	Lumumba declared a national hero
July–September	The Kisangani mutiny
1967	
March	Tshombe condemned to death in his absence
April	Congo becomes a one-party state
June	Tshombe abducted to Algiers
July–November	Mercenary rising
1968	
January	Mobutu demands extradition of mercenaries from Rwanda
March	Mercenaries flown home
October	Execution of Mulele
1969	Death of Tshombe in June
1970	Mobutu reelected president in May for another seven-year period
1971	Name of Congo changed to Zaire in October
1972	Africanisation programme
1974	Advent of Mobutism
1975	
January	Campaign against Christian influence begins
June	Plot to assassinate Mobutu, CIA involvement suspected
August	French president visits Zaire
1977	
March–May	First invasion of Shaba
April	Moroccan troops arrive in Zaire
August	Treason trials
1978	
January	Insurrection in Kwilu
March	Military anti-Mobutu plot
May	Second invasion of Shaba
June	African security force arrives (leaves in August 1979)

1979	West German rocket project terminated in April
1980	Zaire becomes a one-party state
1983	Coup attempt against Mobutu in September
1984	
March	Explosions in Kinshasa
November	Attack on Moba (Shaba)
1985	Second attack on Moba (February)
1987	Zairean government-in-exile formed in Switzerland in September
1990	
April	Mobutu's Third Republic speech
November	US aid to be channelled through international organisations
1991	
April	The Mbuji-Mayi incident
September	Belgian and French military intervention
1992	
January	National conference begins
November	Three rival governments. Uprising in Burundi
1993	
February	Internationalisation of Mobutu. Siege of the People's Palace
August	Arusha agreement
October	Military coup in Burundi
December	Shaba declares autonomy. Tutsi versus Hutu conflict in Burundi and Rwanda
1994	
January	HCR-PT formed
April	Air crash – presidents of Burundi and Rwanda killed. Tutsi-Hutu massacres begin in Burundi and Rwanda
June	French military intervention in Rwanda
July	Tutsi FPR claims victory in Rwanda. Rwandan government flees to Zaire
December	Financial crisis in Zaire
1995	
April	Camp Kibeho massacre (Rwanda)
May	General election cancelled in Zaire

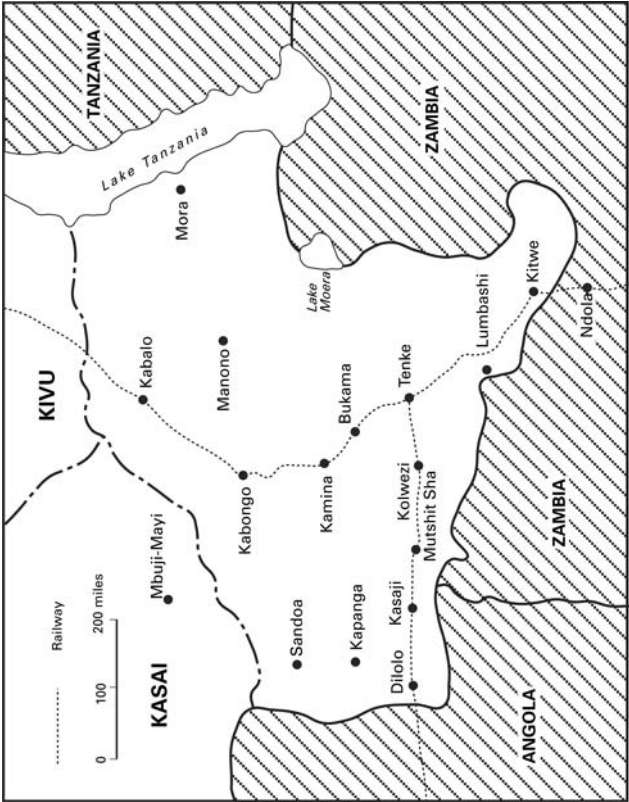
July	National conference cancelled
August	Forcible expulsion of refugees from camps
1996	
October	Banyamulenge (Tutsi) rebellion
November	ADLF campaign begins
1997	
March	Kisangani falls to the ADLF
April	Lubumbashi falls to the ADLF
May	Mobutu flees into exile. Kabila becomes president of the DRC
September	Mobutu dies in exile
1998	
May	Kabila's Government of Efficiency
August	Tutsi uprising against President Kabila. The Congolese Movement for Democracy formed. Rebel ceasefire offer. Uganda joins the rebels
September	Non-Aligned Nations Conference. SADC conference. Peace talks. Rebel CMD resumes the offensive
October	Fighting dies down



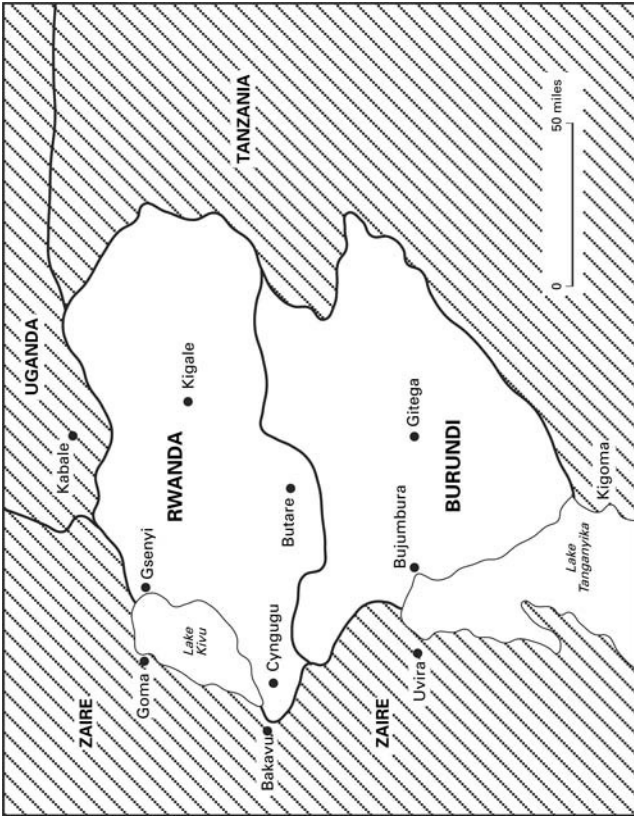
Map 1 Belgian Congo 1960



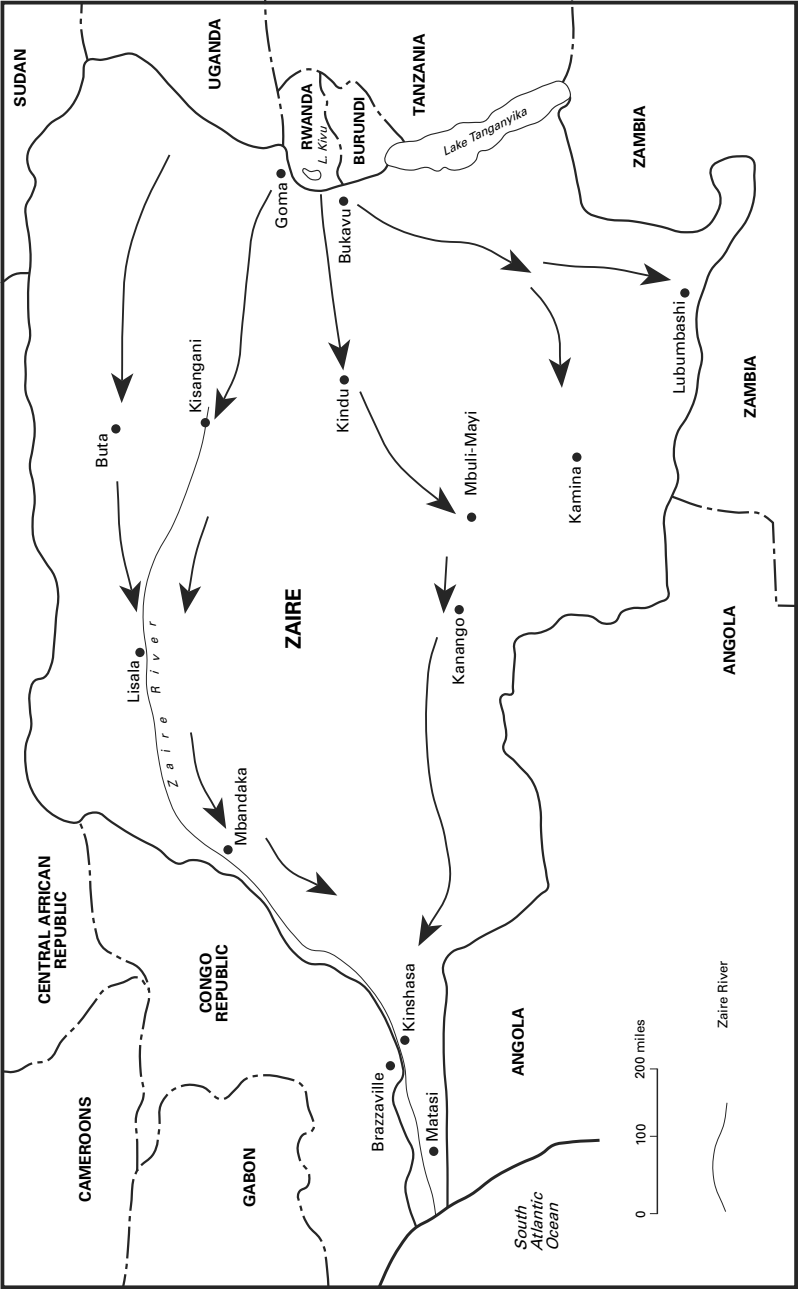
Map 2 The NLC Rebellion 1964-5



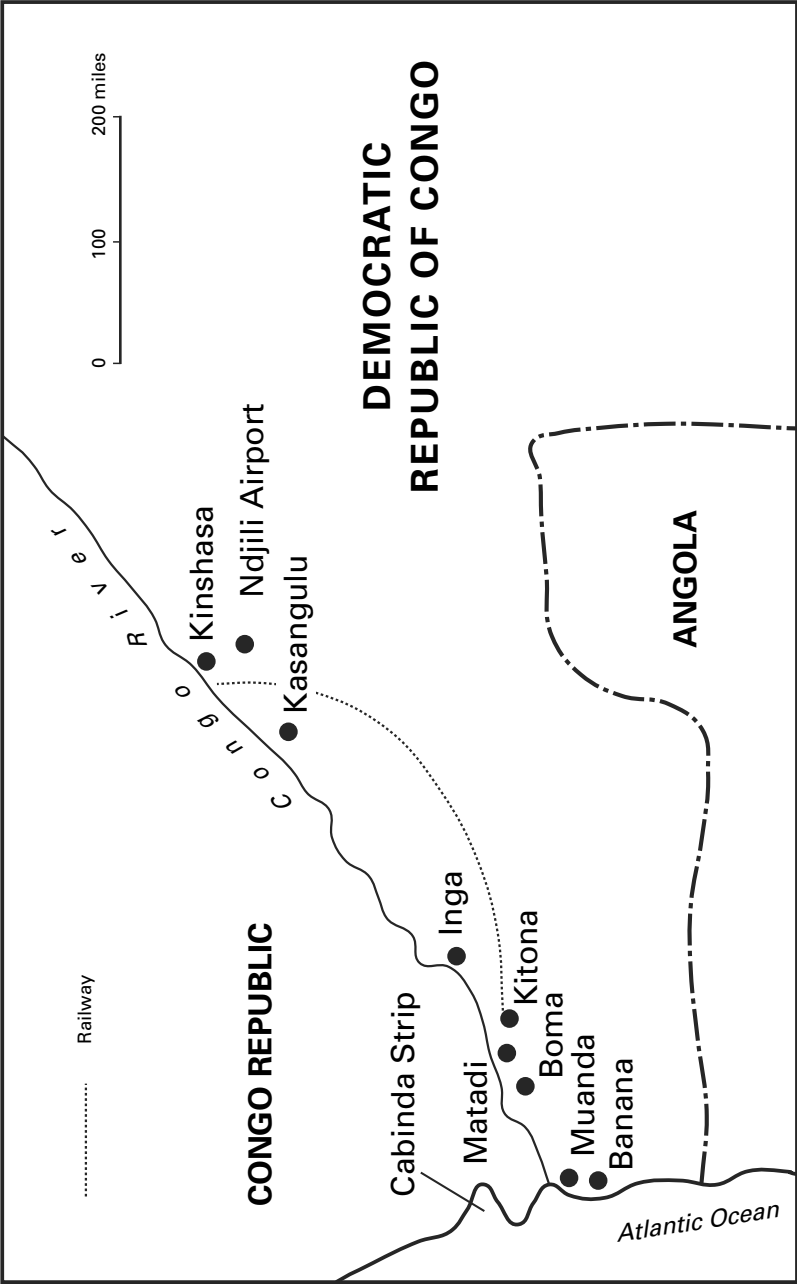
Map 3 Katanga (Shaba) 1977-78



Map 4 Burundi and Rwanda



Map 5 Kabila's Advances 1997



Map 6 Western Front 1998

1

The Belgian Congo

Belgium did not become a sovereign European nation until 1831, when Dutch-speaking Flanders and French-speaking Wallonia merged under King Leopold I, so it was a late comer to the nineteenth-century European colonial 'scramble for Africa'. Centuries earlier, adventurous mariners from certain European nations had discovered and charted the west coast of what came to be referred to as Black Africa, the unexplored interior being dubbed 'Darkest Africa'. Trading posts were established, as well as small forts and embarkation facilities. Trade flourished between Black Africa and Europe, and ivory, diamonds, gold, silver and other valuable items (to Europeans) were exchanged for manufactured goods. During the seventeenth century and on into the eighteenth the slave trade with certain European countries boomed as labour was required for plantations in the new American colonies. The main source of supply was Black Africa, about which much has recently been written as twentieth-century Western consciences struggle to accept this uncomfortable heritage.

A welter of tribes and tribal federations, seemingly perpetually hostile towards one another, inhabited the interior. An age-old custom was that captives taken in battle were either killed, kept as domestic slaves or sold in slave markets. As the Western demand for slaves increased, slave traders appeared as middlemen for the slave raiders who delivered slaves for sale at the European coastal trading posts. Estimates vary widely, but it is certain that several million were shipped to the Americas.

The Congo free state

European footholds on the West African coast increased in a frenzy of colonisation as European countries jostled with each other for territory.

It came to be assumed that Belgium, as a new European nation, should be allowed to operate in what is nowadays known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). (The Congo was named after the Bakongo tribal federation, which dominated the coastal area and the lower reaches of the Congo river.) The DRC covers more than 900 000 square miles but possesses only a short strip of South Atlantic coastline (some 20 miles), straddling the mouth of the massive River Congo. It was there that a few Belgian traders operated, few Europeans having yet ventured far upriver into the interior.

The Belgian government was initially hesitant about taking on such a venture, which would undoubtedly be controversial and would probably cause friction with other predatory colonial powers, including the French, also belatedly in search of Black African territory. In 1872 King Leopold II urged his government to colonise the Congo, and when it continued to prevaricate he stepped in and annexed it as his private kingdom. The project was said to have been arranged between Leopold and the famous explorer and journalist Henry Morton Stanley – who had ‘found’ the missing missionary–explorer, David Livingstone at Ujiji (in presentday Congo) in November 1871 – as neither the British nor the Belgian governments were interested in what was at first known as the International Association of the Congo and later, in 1884, as the Congo Free State.

The Berlin Conference of 1886 divided the continent of Africa into European spheres of influence in order to avoid friction that might lead to frontier wars between the colonisers, mainly Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain and now Belgium. The Congo was placed firmly in the Belgian sphere, even though it was still a private fiefdom of the king. Eventually, in 1908, under international pressure following reports of exploitation, continued slave trading and maladministration, the Belgian government assumed full responsibility and the Congo Free State formally became a Belgian colony.

A model colony

The Belgian government boasted that it had turned the Congo into a ‘model colony’, governed by a colonial charter and ruled directly from Brussels. A Belgian cabinet minister was directly responsible for the colony, and there was a governor general and a provincial governor for each of the six administrative provinces: Leopoldville, Equator, Oriental, Kasai, Kivu and Katanga. Administration was highly centralised, with all major decisions being taken in Brussels. In the colony

itself, Belgians monopolised the middle and upper administrative echelons, the lower levels being the domain of clerical Congolese, meaning Africans who formed the clerical class but were unable to progress beyond it. The official language was French. There was a sharp social division in the Congo between the native Congolese and the Europeans, mainly Belgians, who by 1960 numbered in excess of 100 000.

Universal state education was not available, but selected Congolese were able to obtain primary tuition at some 29 000 'educational establishments' (official figures for 1959). Most of these were Christian missions, and some were subsidised for the purpose. (There were over 70 000 missionaries in the Congo.) In 1959 there were about five million Christian Congolese, of whom some 4.2 million were Roman Catholic. A few private schools existed, mostly for Belgian children. In the early 1950s a Belgian minister in Brussels suggested that lay schools should be established to cater for the expanding Congolese clerical class, bound for government service or work in industry, but the Catholic missions protested, fearing that their subsidies would be reduced and eventually discontinued. Some missionary-educated Congolese gained a higher standard of education by entering seminaries or theological colleges, only to opt out when they considered themselves sufficiently advanced to pursue a secular career. Nonetheless, by 1959 over 600 Congolese had become priests.

The colony clearly lacked Congolese professional, middle-management and higher executive classes, and the Belgians employed there felt secure in the knowledge that they had a job for life, with a pension and no chance of being superseded one day by a Congolese. Until the mid 1950s no attempt was made to prepare the colony for eventual independence, unlike in most of the adjacent colonial territories, where Africanisation had already begun.

As there were hardly a score of African university graduates in the Congo in 1959, a misapprehension developed that the literacy rate among Africans was very low. On the contrary, it was very high in elementary and secondary terms for an African colony, especially in the cities and foreign concessions, where there was a demand for Africans of this educational standard. African periodicals circulated, there were African editors, journalists and accountants, and in the private sector there were countless African entrepreneurs and managers. The literacy rate was probably as high as 30 per cent in the cities and towns, but the opportunity for higher education was deliberately restricted by the Belgian authorities, and the establishment of universities at Leopoldville and Elizabethville had only just begun.

Land communications

Land communications across the Congo, the second largest country in Africa, are difficult, and in parts almost impossible owing to geographic barriers that cause it to fall naturally into regions, some divorced from each other. Much of the country is dominated by the River Congo, some 2700 miles in length, whose navigable stretches are interrupted by rapids and falls. However the river, with its great tributaries and lakes, provides some 8500 miles of navigable waterways. The Belgian authorities linked these together with some 3200 miles of railway and up to 2000 miles of all-weather roads, forming a trans-Congo land communication system.

The railway network was mainly constructed to facilitate the export trade, conducted by foreign concessionaires. A main line ran northwards from Elizabethville in south-eastern Katanga Province to Kamina, where it forked. One line headed north-west to Port Francqui on the Lulua river, from where goods were transported by river to Leopoldville; the other went northwards to Kindu in Kivu Province, where it terminated. Some two hundred kilometres to the south of Kindu a branch line ran eastwards from Kabalo to Albertville on Lake Tanganyika.

The Portuguese Benguela Railway, which ran across central Angola from Lobito on the South Atlantic coast, joined the Congo main line at Kolwezi, while the main line itself continued southwards from Elizabethville to Lusaka in Rhodesia and then connected up with the South African railway system. In the Congo there were just three other isolated stretches of railway: one in the north in Oriental Province, running westwards from Paulis to Bondo on the Uele River – just over 400 miles; a 60-mile stretch in the northern part of Oriental Province, running from Stanleyville, the provincial capital, southwards to Ponthierville; and a 120-mile length in the south west, running from Leopoldville southwards to Matadi at the mouth of the River Congo, where port facilities had been developed.

The economy

In the nineteenth century the Congo had few benefactors in Belgium, the government decreeing that the colony must impose no costs on Belgium itself, and the Congo Free State's only source of revenue was export taxes, there being no import duties. The appearance of the rubber-tired motor vehicle on the international scene was a godsend

for the Congo, which set up large rubber plantations. These depended upon slave labour, and the colony's bad human rights record was further blackened by the maltreatment of workers, as revealed by a British consul, Sir Roger Casement, among others.

The Congo was treated as a single economic unit, there being no internal trade or customs barriers, and goods, manufactured mainly in Leopoldville and Elizabethville, were distributed throughout the country. Water power had been harnessed, and over 30 hydroelectric power stations provided electricity for the major cities and industries.

Known as the Congo Portfolio, concessions to run huge plantations for the production of tropical fruits, cotton, pyrethrum, rubber, coffee, tea, cocoa and other exportable high-grade cash crops, or to mine minerals or mass produce goods were awarded to international groups, to the exclusion of Congolese but not necessarily Belgians. Concessionaires were required either to share their equity with the government of the colony or to contribute to its budget in some way, as well as to develop their own infrastructures and provide social services for their workers.

The valuable minerals were located mainly in the south, particularly in Katanga, where manganese, diamonds, cobalt and copper were extracted in great quantities, as well as uranium, gold and silver. Three mammoth commercial concerns grew up. One of these, the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga, formed in 1906, obtained exclusive mining rights until 1999 and came to encompass many other enterprises, ranging from factories to railways. The economy of the colony was concentrated in European hands and directed towards export. Elsewhere the Congo remained undeveloped, and a large majority of its 40 million or so inhabitants were supported by agriculture.

Tribal structure

There were about 70 main ethnic groups in the Congo, each subdivided into numerous tribes, which often formed coalitions for sheer survival. Although they took action to contain the traditional inter-tribal conflicts the Belgian authorities left the tribal structure untouched, governing through the chiefs as and when necessary and controlling the people by means of interlocking administrative measures.

The most powerful federation was that of the Bakongo, a collective name for a string of tribal groupings sharing a common language. The Bakongo dominated the saddle of land straddling the mouth of the River Congo, and it is estimated that in 1958 about 1.2 million Bakongo lived in the region – about 340 000 in French Congo north of

the river and another 350 000 in Angola to the south, all being contiguous. In addition, up to 50 per cent of the population of Leopoldville city were Bakongo (about 20 000). Another powerful tribal federation, the Baluba, was based in the northern part of Katanga Province but included a large isolated group in Kasai Province.

Political awakening

The Belgian colonialists strove to retain their model colony image and way of life by trying to isolate the Congolese from the events taking place in the rest of Black Africa. The Congo was surrounded by colonial territories that were all about to become independent or were involved in a struggle for independence: the French Congo to the west, the French Central African Republic to the north-west, British Sudan to the north-east, British Uganda and Tanganyika to the east, and British Northern Rhodesia and Portuguese Angola to the south. All political activity was banned in the Congo and the only Congolese groups that were permitted to function were those with social, cultural or study objectives, plus low-level advisory committees.

Political awakening began in the mid 1950s in the wake of three external events. The first was Britain's decision to grant independence to its West African Gold Coast colony, which later became the Republic of Ghana. The second was in January 1956, when Britain granted independence to Sudan. Both transitions were conducted peacefully.

The third event was the All-African People's Conference, held in Ghana in December 1958. Many leaders of Black African independence movements were invited to the conference, whose purpose was to forge contact between these leaders and assist them in their struggle for independence. Other factors included the World Exhibition in Brussels that year, which many literate Congolese were able to attend and many political eyes were opened – a small group of Congolese students living in Belgium became politically active. Collectively, these events did much to break down Congolese national isolation.

The authorities' gradual awareness of the awakening of Congolese nationalism led in December 1957 to limited municipal (commune) elections, and in July 1958 the Belgian government established a special study group on constitutional reform, which was to report its recommendations by January 1959. In August 1958 the Belgian Colonial Ministry was renamed the Ministry of the Congo, Ruanda and Urundi, and the following month a new minister, Maurice van Hemelrijck, was appointed. The Belgians were starting to swim with the tide, but were in no hurry.

Political groupings

Meanwhile unofficial Congolese political organisations were appearing. One of the first was the Alliance des Ba-Kongo (ABAKO), formed in 1950 as a social and cultural group to protect the Bakongo language and traditions, particularly against non-Bakongo immigrants flooding into Leopoldville in search of work. In 1954 the leadership of ABAKO was assumed by Joseph Kasavubu, who was initially attracted to the ideal of recreating the historical Bakongo empire. At the municipal election in December 1957 Bakongo candidates swept the board and Kasavubu became Mayor of Dendale, a shanty suburb of Leopoldville. During 1958 ABAKO began to demand self-government.

The next major political group to form, in 1957, was the Association des Baluba du Katanga (BALUBAKAT), led by Jason Sendwe and designed to encourage unity amongst the Balubas in Katanga Province. During the December elections in Elizabethville (the capital of Katanga Province) Congolese immigrants dominated the polls, which caused anxiety amongst Katangans and resulted in the formation of the Confédération des Association Tribales du Katanga (CONAKAT), which became dominant in southern Katanga, especially in the copper mining areas. Moïse Tshombe became leader of CONAKAT, which was a federation of tribal and professional groups with common interests in Katanga. Later, in July 1958, CONAKAT formed a political party, the Ressemblement Katangais, whose platform was federalism. In February 1959 BALUBAKAT liaised with CONAKAT, their aim being solidarity amongst Katangans and opposition to immigrants.

Also in Katanga Province, in September 1958 the Fédération des Association de Ressortissements du Kasai au Katanga (FEDEKA) was formed by Isaac Kalonji and certain other Baluba leaders, who were concerned about CONAKAT's anti-Baluba bias.

In October 1958 the Mouvement National Congolais (MNC) was formed in Leopoldville by Patrice Lumumba and several other literate Congolese. This was the first truly national movement, transcending tribalism. Its platform was independence by peaceful means. Lumumba was already a national personality, known across the Congo for his speeches and writings. Although he was thought to be an extremist, he was tolerated by the authorities and permitted to attend the Ghanaian All-African People's Conference, where he met and made friends with Kwame Nkrumah, the Ghanaian leader. The MNC avoided liaisons with other political movements, all of which were regionally based.

Simmering tribal antagonism began to surface, as evidenced on 7 December 1958, when an outbreak of fighting between Lulus and Balubas occurred in Luluabourg (Kasai Province), in which several people were killed. Although a state of military occupation was imposed, the fighting continued for some days.

Riots in Leopoldville

On 4 January 1959, a few days before the constitutional reform group was due to report its recommendations, serious rioting broke out in Leopoldville. Mobs looted, burned property and attacked Europeans, and law and order completely broke down. The Force Publique moved in and restored order with a heavy hand. The official casualty figures were later given as 49 dead and 241 injured, but many insisted they were much higher. This violent outburst had been completely unexpected, and a later commission reported that the cause had been a combination of political frustration, racial discrimination, external events and unemployment.

Blame was largely attributed to the leaders of ABAKO, it being assumed at the time that ABAKO was striving to detach its large Bakongo area in Bas (Lower) Congo from the Congo. Kasavubu (who had not been permitted to attend the All-African People's Conference in Ghana) and other ABAKO leaders were duly imprisoned. The MNC does not seem to have been directly involved in the riot, Lumumba having a pan-Congo policy. Throughout 1959 ABAKO rejected all the government's suggestions, and began a campaign of civil disobedience that included the non-payment of taxes. In June Kasavubu sent the Belgian minister a detailed map of the proposed Bas Congo, stating that ABAKO would declare unilateral independence on 1 January 1960.

On 13 January the Government study group submitted a constitutional reform programme, which recommended increased 'Africanisation', the establishment of provincial councils with wide-ranging powers, and the setting up of an elected central government.

BALUBAKAT–CONAKAT

In February 1960 in Katanga, BALUBAKAT and CONAKAT linked themselves more closely, their joint aim being solidarity amongst those opposed to non-Katangan immigrants. Conflict between CONAKAT supporters and members of the local branch of the MNC flared up in Elizabethville in March, when Lumumba visited to address

a local rally. Several people were killed and many more injured. A state of military occupation was declared and order was restored.

Leopoldville conference and the four-year plan

The Congo authorities organised a conference in Leopold in April 1959 to discuss the political situation and the 13 January recommendations. Various Congolese political leaders were invited to participate, although in theory their groups were still illegal (they were eventually legalised in August). All demanded self-government by 1961, but there were differences over how this should be interpreted. The MNC envisaged instant independence, while others favoured an interim period of autonomy. ABAKO had not been invited, being held largely responsible for the January riots, and Kasavubu, who was wanted by the police to answer charges related to them, was sheltering in Belgium. Kasavubu returned to the Congo on 13 May, all charges against him and his fellow ABAKO leaders having been dropped. He approved the proposed provincial councils but rejected other recommendations, insisting that ABAKO territory must become a federal state.

Maurice van Hemelrijck, the Belgian minister responsible for the colony, paid a three-week visit to the Congo in June. He met a hostile reception from the Europeans, but a much warmer one from expectant Congolese politicians. However he simply recommended the speeding up of the Africanisation of the administration as a first step. He seemed in no hurry to proceed further.

Broadly speaking, most Belgian citizens paid little attention to their massive African colony, which seemed to be paying its way, providing comfortable employment for a few thousand Belgians and causing little trouble. There was a lack of emotional attachment to their colony, in contrast with the sentiments felt in other European colonising countries. Groups of Congolese students demanding independence for the Congo and demonstrating in Brussels were simply an irritation, not a warning light of trouble ahead.

Indifference turned to alarm, however, as Belgians began to take note of bitter and violent independence struggles elsewhere, such as that in bloody progress since 1954 in Algeria against the French government, which was using military force to retain control over its colony. The unsuccessful and degrading spectacle of the French trying to regain their hold on Indo-China by military means from 1945–54 were suddenly remembered. Conversely, Belgians also noted how smoothly Britain had resolved its Sudan and Gold Coast problems, and perhaps

felt that the Congo could be disposed of in a similar manner. The Belgian cabinet seemed to favour this solution, but became bogged down in arguments over the pace of progress.

On 10 October 1959 Brussels announced a four-year plan for Congolese independence, starting with the establishment of the recommended provincial councils in March 1960, followed by a central assembly with power over internal affairs, and then a referendum for a new constitution. On the 16th, following a disagreement in the Belgian cabinet and some second thoughts, the four-year transition period was confirmed, which upset Congolese extremists touting for immediate independence, and serious disturbances broke out in some parts of the colony.

More political parties

Meanwhile Lumumba, leader of the pan-Congo MNC, was having trouble with some of the MNC's provincially orientated regional branches. This came to a head in July 1959 in Luluabourg, Kasai Province, when Albert Kalonji's faction broke away, thus splitting the party into two separate parts: the MNC(Lumumba) or the Lumumbaists, and the MNC(Kalonji). Albert Kalonji declared he would form a federal province, and later an independent state of 'Kasai Baluba'.

Lumumba ran into further trouble when, at an MNC congress in Stanleyville (Oriental Province) on 30 October, he declared that his branch of the MNC would boycott the forthcoming December municipal elections, causing a violent clash between his supporters and their opponents. The police, who attempted unsuccessfully to arrest Lumumba, fired into the protesting mob, killing over 20 people and injuring many others. A riot erupted and gangs of Congolese attacked Europeans and European property. A state of military occupation was imposed. Lumumba was arrested on 1 November and eventually sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

At about that time other political parties were forming. One, the Parti National du Progress (PNP), was set up in Coquilhatville (Equator Province) by Albert Delvaux, who had headed an MNC provincial branch but had rebelled against Lumumba as he wanted the focus to remain at the provincial level.

Another was the Parti Solidaire Africain (PSA), a grouping of Kwanga and Kwili federations in Leopoldville. Led by Antoine Gizanga, the PSA was opposed to the MNC. Yet another was the Parti de l'Unité National (PUNA), which sought a national mandate. PUNA was led by Jean

Bolikango, an opponent of Lumumba. In December ABAKO, the PSA and a number of smaller parties agreed to abandon the 'Bakongo secessionist' policy and pursue independence and federalism.

In Katanga, certain BALUBAKAT leaders, concerned about the anti-Baluba trend in CONAKAT, withdrew from the former to form the 'BALUBAKAT Cartel' which would fight CONAKAT in elections. Among the Cartel were FEDEKA and the Association des Tshokwe du Congo, de l'Angola et de la Rhodésie (ATCAR). The leader was Moïse Tshombe, who at that point wanted a federal system.

An example of the depth to which tribal influence was beginning to predominate in some provinces occurred in Kasai Province in January 1960, when some 90 000 Balubas, who had settled on land claimed by Lulus, were meekly displaced by the latter under threat. The authorities disapproved, but could do nothing to prevent this neat piece of ethnic cleansing from happening before their eyes.

The Force Publique

The multipurpose Force Publique (FP) struggled to maintain law and order and to remain impartially aloof from the fray that was besetting the Congo. Its original Belgian-officered Congolese colonial units had been formed in 1885 and became the Force Publique in 1888, to be responsible for the external defence of the Congo and the maintenance of internal law and order. Its early operations were concerned with eliminating slave raiders, quashing intertribal squabbles and preventing tribal incursions from adjacent European colonies.

During the First World War FP companies fought against German African colonial forces in Cameroon and the German East African campaign. After the war the German colonies of Ruanda and Urundi – contiguous countries adjacent to the Congo's eastern border – were awarded to Belgium as trust territories under a League of Nations mandate.

By the 1950s the FP had gained a reputation of harsh efficiency. Detachments were stationed in each of the provinces, with regional HQs in Leopoldville, Stanleyville and Elizabethville. The main depot was situated in Thysville, some 95 miles south of Leopoldville. In 1959 the FP's military and gendarme duties were separated.

The Congolese personnel in each FP unit were ethnically mixed and no tribe or confederation was in a majority. The military language was Lingala, a sort of Congolese lingua franca. All the officers were Belgian and all the lower ranks were Congolese, but a 'sergeant major' class of

junior officers (*sous officiers*), all Congolese, had been established. One source (IISS) quotes the strength of the FP in 1959 as 542 officers, 566 junior officers, and about 24 000 Congolese soldiers. The gendarmerie consisted of 272 Belgian officers, 310 junior officers and some 7000 armed policemen.

Morale in the FP was high and all ranks considered themselves part of a special force, with responsible tasks to perform. Their Belgian superior officers insisted that they should remain aloof from tribal influences and impartial in their dealings with the Congolese. Discussions with FP personnel revealed that they had a low opinion of both the government and politicians.

Belgium was a member of the NATO alliance, and the 2500 Belgian troops in the Congo, basically six units of paracommandos, were under the direct orders of the Belgian GHQ in Brussels, as were their two bases, one in Kitona (Leopoldville Province) and the other in Kamina (Katanga Province). The Belgian military also had about 40 combat, training and transport aircraft and two helicopters, plus a few small coastal craft at a tiny naval base in Banana at the mouth of the River Congo.

Round Table Conference, Brussels

What became known as the Round Table Conference opened on 20 January 1960 in Brussels, to which Congolese political leaders were invited. The purpose of the conference was to make plans for political reform. Chaired by Gaston Eyskens, the Belgian prime minister, the conference was attended by ten Belgian deputies from all parties and 44 Congolese delegates. The day before the conference started, fearing Belgian delaying tactics and the exploitation of varying agendas, most of the Congolese political leaders had gathered together and agreed to demand immediate independence. This group, which became known as the Common Front and was led by Kasavubu, put its demand to the conference on the 20th before the Belgian opening speeches could be made. This took the wind out of the Belgians' sails and it resulted in Belgium granting full independence as of 30 June 1960, much to the Congolese leaders' surprise.

Days of haggling over details followed and the conference eventually ended on 20 February. Kasavubu had dominated the first part of the proceedings, but Lumumba, who had been released from prison to attend, had addressed the gathering on 27 January. Elections were to be held prior to independence for a head of state, a senate and an

assembly, and for similar provincial bodies. The conference brought the Congo problem to international notice.

After preparatory work by an interim executive college, elections in the Congo began on 11 May 1960 and lasted until the 25th. The results for the provincial assemblies were announced on the 29th, and on 1 June the new provincial assemblies and governments were convened. Lumumba's MNC coalition gained a majority in both the senate and the central assembly, enabling Lumumba to form a government by 23 June. On the same day Kasavubu was elected head of state.

Trust territories

The trust territories of Ruanda and Urundi were not forgotten, and on 10 November 1959 the Belgian chamber of representatives announced their separation from the Congo by the end of 1960, when the respective monarchs would become constitutional sovereigns. Reforms recommended by an eight-member Belgian investigative commission who had visited the two trust territories in April–May that year would be implemented. The 'kings' of both Ruanda and Urundi (paramount chiefs in fact) had been invited to Brussels for negotiations, but the king of Urundi had refused the invitation. However the two were united in their desire for complete independence and the severance of all ties with both the Congo and Belgium.

The populations of Ruanda and Urundi comprised two main ethnic groups. The dominant minority were the Tutsi (Ba-Tutsi), mostly tall in stature, being of Hametic stock, while the majority were the Hutu (Ba-Hutu), of Bantu stock. There was also a small tribe of Batwa pygmies in Ruanda. The Hutu Popular Democratic Rally wanted independence for Ruanda by 1962; the Hutu Apposome Party also wanted independence, but had not yet set a date. The Tutsi Ruanda National Union demanded independence by 1962, but the Tutsis were afraid that democracy might erode their long-term dominant role. During the first week of November 1959, groups of Hutus attacked Tutsis, some of whom took shelter in Christian missions. The Tutsis fought back with the help of Batwa pygmies, and Belgian troops were called in to restore order. The Europeans in the missions had not been harmed.

2

Independence and Clashing Personalities

On 1 July 1960 the independent sovereign Republic of the Congo came into being, with Joseph Kasavubu as head of state and Patrice Lumumba as prime minister. It had survived the transition to national entity, narrowly avoiding secession pitfalls. Elections had been held and the central Senate and Chamber of Representatives were in place, as were most of the provincial governments, although not always without difficulty. To the Congolese a miracle had occurred, and so quickly.

The previous day (30 June) King Baudouin had flown in from Brussels to attend the freedom ceremonies in Leopoldville. Baudouin's speech had included the claim that Belgium had sent its best men to the Congo to liberate the Congo Basin from slave raiders and form the greatest independent state in Africa. Kasavubu had made a formal reply; Lumumba a less complimentary one. The king left that night.

The two key personalities at this stage were the head of state and the prime minister. Kasavubu, a Bakongo, aged 50 and founder of ABAKO, had been educated in Roman Catholic seminaries, becoming an *immatriculée* and gaining the rare accolade of full Belgian citizenship. He had been a teacher before becoming involved in politics. He had an insular Westernised outlook. Lumumba, aged 34 and founder of the MNC, had been born in Kasai Province and educated by Christian Protestant missionaries in Stanleyville. He had subsequently become a teacher, and then leader of the Postal Staff Union. He had been briefly imprisoned for embezzlement, after which he had gone into business and thence into politics. Lumumba held strong left-wing views and was more international in outlook than Kasavubu, but he was deeply suspicious of Western intentions.

As the two men vied with each other for position and power their rivalry deepened. Lumumba had wanted the presidency to be an

executive position occupied by himself, while Kasavubu, although elected head of state, was dissatisfied that his few executive powers were insufficient to curb the prime minister. Both men were discontent, and both sought the more paramount power.

Similar power-seeking was reflected throughout the embryonic government structure, as inexperienced but ambitious politicians jostled for positions of importance and the status that went with the new offices. Mini power struggles took place in the Senate, Lumumba's cabinet and the Chamber of Representatives, and especially in provincial councils, where tribal differences acted as a catalyst. There was also a status-based scramble amongst the newly appointed senators, ministers and deputies for personal assistants, clerical back-up, offices, government cars and other perks.

As independence dawned several disorders broke out in various parts of the Congo as rival politicians, political parties and tribes clashed with each other over old and new differences. On July there was fighting in Leopoldville between Bakongo and Bayaka tribal groups, and on the 3rd there was unrest in Luluabourg when Lumumba's central government ordered the arrest of the members of a 'rival' provincial government, established by Albert Kalonji, leader of the MNC (Kalonji) Party.

In Elizabethville, police had to disperse members of BALUBAKAT who had gathered at the railway station to protest against the rumoured arrival of the central government's new commissioner for Katanga Province. On the 4th, employees of the Office du Transport du Congo in Leopoldville and the lower reaches of the River Congo went on strike because their 'independence bonuses' had not been paid, while in Coquilhatville (the provincial capital of Equator) several people were killed in riots that flared up when workers demanded a pay rise.

Army mutiny

Despite this rash of riots and disorder, as yet there was no sign of discontent within the Force Publique or its gendarmerie, which had been renamed the Congolese National Army (CNA). Kasavubu and Lumumba were in disagreement over how to reorganise the CNA, of which Kasavubu would become commander-in-chief. Lumumba, meanwhile had taken on the defence portfolio in addition to the premiership.

Bad news came on the evening of 5 July: soldiers at Camp Hardy, a military garrison in Thysville, south of Leopoldville, had mutinied, turned on their Belgian officers and were attacking resident Europeans. The mutiny had begun after activists from Camp Leopoldville, near the

capital, had arrived in Thysville to foment rebellion. Belgian officers were held, the arsenal was seized, and Congolese ‘junior officers’ took charge.

As defence minister, Lumumba had already appointed a handful of senior Belgian officers to his new GHQ staff, including the former Belgian Commander-in-chief, General Emile Janssens. There was a degree of general dissatisfaction within the CNA, not only on the officer issue, but also over pay and conditions of service. Both Kasavubu and Lumumba tried to reason with the mutineers by telephone and in a radio broadcast. The CNA had its own radio broadcasting system, separate from the national civilian one.

The following day, accompanied by General Janssens, Lumumba went to Camp Hardy, where he promised that all soldiers would be promoted one rank, that racial discrimination would be made illegal and that conditions of service would be improved. There was a surly response. Lumumba’s mistake had been to take General Janssens with him, as this gave the impression that the latter had arrived to restore discipline and mete out punishment. Had he gone alone, Lumumba, with his charisma and mastery of oratory, the leading architect of independence, would most probably have won them over. Instead he failed, and the mutiny spread.

Groups of discontented unarmed soldiers followed Lumumba back to Leopoldville and besieged his residence, where he was protected by Belgian troops. The soldiers only dispersed when he promised to dismiss General Janssens and the other senior Belgian officers he had just appointed. In a broadcast, Lumumba again appealed to the Congolese troops to calm down and return to barracks. He confirmed his promise of wholesale promotion, adding that he intended to establish a commission to study ways of ‘Africanising’ the officer corps, that all Belgian officers found guilty of mismanagement would be dealt with, and that all Congolese soldiers under arrest would be freed. Belgian officers began to stand aside and allow the Congolese junior officers to take over.

Mutiny spread to the gendarmerie on 7 July and some Belgian officers were detained, while Belgian army patrols appeared in Leopoldville. Mutineers gradually took possession of the capital. The Belgian embassy was busy evacuating Belgians from Thysville and Leopoldville, some hurrying northwards across the wide River Congo to French Congo. Belgian residents and their families, who had felt reasonably secure during the first days of independence, now feared for their safety and many rushed to leave the country by any route possible. In the remote

provinces many quit the Congo by road, a few left by air from Leopoldville airport and provincial airfields, and others by ferry across the River Congo.

The following day mutineers closed Leopoldville airport as a rumour spread that Soviet planes were about to land troops to help the Belgians, while CNA soldiers began to search cars and harass resident Belgians. Two Belgian paratroop companies were flown from Germany to Leopoldville to secure the airport, and Belgian troops from the Kitona base moved to secure some of the river ferry points.

French Congo

The magnet for many Belgian refugees was French Congo on the northern side of the river, a territory of just over 350 000 square miles with a population of 2.6 million. There were regular ferry services between Brazzaville, the capital, and Leopoldville, both situated on the River Congo almost directly opposite each other. French Congo was in the throes of a struggle for complete independence, having in 1958 achieved three-government within the French community. Independence at last came in August 1960, when it called itself the Republic of the Congo, although this name was already being used by the former Belgian Congo. For a time there were two Republics of the Congo, each wanting the other to renounce the title, but neither would give way. Eventually the former French territory became known as Congo (Brazzaville).

Belgian military assistance

Justin Bomboko, the new Congolese foreign minister, reportedly in a moment of panic, asked Belgium for military assistance to help control the streets of Leopoldville, but this was later flatly denied by Lumumba, whose rigid policy during the mutiny period was not to use Belgian troops, despite pressure, offers and pleas. However, the Belgian government stated that another 1500 Belgian troops would be flown to the Congo to protect Belgian nationals and their property. A Belgian detachment was parachuted into Luluabourg to protect Belgian civilians as fighting had erupted between tribal enemies. Lumumba remained adamantly against the use of Belgian troops to maintain law and order.

Mutiny in the CNA broke out in Elizabethville on 9 July and then spread to other parts of Katanga, whereupon Belgian troops from the Kamina base moved to the centre of the city. Tshombe, who had been

elected leader of the Katangan provisional government, sent a request to Sir Roy Welensky, who was trying to stitch together a Rhodesian Federation, for military aid. Welensky hesitated, then invited Katanga to join his federation. This was not what Tshombe had had in mind.

Congolese military appointments

On 10 July 1960 it was announced that Victor Lundula had been appointed as commander of the new Congolese National Army, with the rank of general, and that Joseph Mobutu would be his chief of staff, with the rank of colonel. Both had served as junior officers in the FP, and Lundula had lately been mayor of a commune in Jadotville (Katanga province). This seemed to be the stabilising factor that allowed the Congolese junior officers to take over, and where this happened with the Belgian officers' consent there was little trouble. However, in places where the Belgian officers hesitated or Belgian troops were deployed, trouble was inevitable. The departing General Janssens and his senior officers said they had resigned, but Lumumba insisted they had been dismissed. Janssens, who seems to have harboured ambitions of forming, training and commanding the new Congolese National Army, did not conceal his disappointment.

Katangan independence

On the evening of 11 July Moïse Tshombe, prime minister of Katanga, on returning from a disappointing visit to neighbouring Rhodesia, made a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) and asked for military assistance from Britain and Rhodesia. He appointed a Belgian officer (Major Guy Weber) to command his 'army', formerly the Katangan gendarmerie.

In Leopoldville on the 12th, while both Kasavubu and Lumumba were away touring the trouble spots and persuading regionally minded groups to toe the centralist line of the new Congolese central government, some government ministers panicked and asked the United States, through its embassy, to send 3000 troops to restore order in Bas Congo. However President Eisenhower, reluctant to act unilaterally, indicated that it would be best for any peacekeeping troops to come from Black African countries.

That day Leopoldville airport was surrounded by CNA troops, and when an airliner, packed with civilian refugees and two wounded Belgian soldiers, arrived from Matadi they took over the control tower

and then the whole airport, arresting the two soldiers. This caused the central government to declare a state of war between the Congo and Belgium, despite the fact that a Congo–Belgian Friendship Treaty had just been signed. The government asked Ghana for military assistance.

Later that day a detachment of Belgian paratroops from the Kitona base arrived in Leopoldville, and after a short fight they repossessed the airport. In the meantime Belgian troops made a tactical withdrawal from some of their positions near Matadi. On the 13th the central government ordered all Belgian troops back to their bases, stating that the Congolese National Army would be responsible for the safety of Europeans and their families. This was rejected by the Belgian commander, and more Belgian troops were sent to the Congo from Europe.

UN intervention

When Lumumba surfaced again on 10 July he denied that his government had asked for the help of US troops, but admitted that he had appealed to the United Nations, through Ralph Bunche, for UN special troops, and also to Ghana for help. A Ghanaian mission, under General Alexander, the British Ghanaian chief of staff, arrived in Leopoldville within hours. Lumumba strongly suspected that Belgium was trying to reimpose its authority over the Congo. When he initially invited UN troops into the Congo he was of the opinion they would unquestioningly support his government in enforcing his version of law and order in the country, as was Head of State Kasavubu.

Ralph Bunche, a black American and a UN under-secretary, had been in Leopoldville as an official guest at the Congolese independence celebrations, but had stayed on for a while to conduct a fact-finding mission. He had been hustled by mutinous Congolese soldiers, and taken refuge in the US embassy.

On the 12th in New York, Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN secretary general, held a meeting of the UN representatives of nine African countries to discuss the Congo problem. Hammarskjöld was in his second five-year term as secretary general and was determined that the United Nations should not simply be a talking shop, but should take active steps to resolve international crises. Many regarded him as arrogant. In today's jargon he was a 'hands on person' and reluctant to delegate, but it seemed that throughout he lacked a positive plan of action, and accordingly had to be a responder rather than an innovator.

ONUC

On the 13 July 1960 the UN Security Council approved a resolution condemning armed aggression by Belgium against the Congo, calling for the withdrawal of all Belgian troops from the Congo and at authorising a UN intervention force, to be composed of troops from African member states. Prime Minister Tshombe declared he would forcefully resist the entry of UN troops into Katanga. Nonetheless the first UN troops, mainly Tunisians and Ghanaians, arrived in the Congo in a US military transport aircraft on the 15th. Bunche had difficulty persuading Lumumba not to ask for Soviet troops. General von Horn of Sweden, who was head of the UN emergency force in the Middle East, was drafted in to command the military side of the Organisations des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC, known generally by its French initials). More troops arrived from Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Morocco, Ireland and Sweden. On the 18th Hammarskjöld arrived in Leopoldville to coordinate his new ONUC project, and ONUC detachments were quickly deployed in the main cities and major trouble spots.

Opinions on policy clashed: General Alexander wanted to disarm the undisciplined Congolese soldiers, but Lumumba would not allow that; while Bunche wanted to ensure that ONUC troops did not collaborate with Belgian ones. Extra Belgian troops were flown into the Congo, some to Elizabethville, some to the Luluabourg airfield and others to the Kitona and Kamina bases. On 22 July a pitched battle occurred in the Kolwezi barracks between Belgian paratroops and CNA troops loyal to the central government. There were a number of casualties and several Congolese were 'captured'.

On the 24th Lumumba arrived in New York to address the UN, after which he visited African and Western capitals to drum up support for a united Congo, and to put himself prominently on the international map. In the Congo, General Lundula and Colonel Mobutu busied themselves with organising the new CNA.

Withdrawal of Belgian troops

On 29 July the Belgian government decided to withdraw the 1500 or so Belgian troops from the Congo. Both the UN and the Congolese central government had been calling for their evacuation for some days, but there were unresolved problems, mainly in respect of the status of the Belgian bases at Kitona and Kamina, whose occupation was in accordance with an international agreement that remained valid

until the end of the year. The Belgian defence minister claimed that it was essential for Belgian troops to remain in Kamina to maintain good order in the trust territories of Ruanda and Urundi. The rate of withdrawal of the Belgian troops came to depend upon their being replaced by ONUC ones. He also stated that the Belgian 'troops of intervention' in the Congo had so far suffered 50 dead and 88 wounded, a figure that included the 44 victims of an air crash in Goma, Kivu Province, near the Ruanda-Urundi border.

The Soviet Union again condemned Belgian aggression and expressed its willingness to provide considerable economic assistance, plus doctors and medical supplies. Western UN members were embraced by the use of Soviet aircraft to transport ONUC detachments to the Congo, together with food for the Congolese, and the fact that 100 Soviet trucks with repair facilities and technical staff were actually in the process of arriving. Cold War breezes were blowing into the Congo, and Hammarskjöld was anxious to keep Cold War warriors out of the Congo equation. Hence the appointment of Mikhail Yakovlev as the first Soviet ambassador to the Congo Republic did not please Western leaders.

Hammarskjöld addressed the Congolese cabinet, and it was agreed that ONUC troops would operate in accordance with a loosely defined 'Congo Commission', which was not exactly what Lumumba had in mind. It was announced on the 31st that Belgian troops had left Coquilhatville and other towns in Equator Province, and were about to leave Kasai Province, where renewed fighting between the Lulus and Balubas had again flared up around the mining town of Tshikapa.

The MNC (Kalonji), primarily the party of the Kasai Baluba, who had no representative in the Lumumba government, demanded immediate national referendum on the future structure of the Congo. Furthermore PUNA, a Bangala tribal party led by Jean Bolinkango, denounced the internal disorder in the country and openly blamed Lumumba, who seemed to be antagonising many leaders and factions at the time. It was rumoured that Albert Kalonji and Jean Bolinkango had earlier tried to kill Lumumba.

Katangan resistance

A Katangan emissary was sent to Brussels to ask for recognition of Katanga's UDI and to express opposition to the Belgian 'unitary formula', meaning federalism, but the Belgian government insisted that Katanga was a Congolese affair. On 5 August 1960 the Katangan

Assembly approved a new constitution, and on the 7th Tshombe was elected president by a joint session of the Grand Council and the Assembly. As his party was the largest in the Assembly it formed a government, which immediately established a Bank of Katanga with authority to issue currency.

Just over a week earlier (28 July 1960) a group of Europeans in Katanga had declared UDI, but this had failed almost immediately through lack of support from both the Belgian government and the Belgian-run authorities in Elizabethville.

Hammar skjöld announced that ONUC troops would enter Katanga on 6 August to take over from the Belgian troops, but Tshombe said he would welcome only observers, adding that the trial had begun of CNA soldiers accused of various offences. The Katangan government ordered general mobilisation, and declared that ONUC's entry would be resisted, while Tshombe, complained that he had not been formally informed of ONUC's involvement, but had only read of it in the newspapers. The Association des Entreprises du Katanga, which represented over 60 major business interests, strongly criticised the ONUC proposal. The Belgian government also disapproved, on the ground that ONUC was not strong enough to overcome Katangan resistance.

Hammar skjöld sent Bunche to Katanga to negotiate, but his aircraft, which also carried ONUC staff, was refused permission to land in Elizabethville. However the plane required fuel for its return journey so it was permitted to land for this purpose, but neither Bunche nor the ONUC personnel were allowed to disembark. Eventually Bunche made it to Elizabethville and received a low level welcome by the Katangan minister of the interior, Godefroid Munongo, who told him that Katanga was recruiting volunteers by the thousand, including non-Katangans. Munongo then ordered the closure of all airfields in Katanga. Later Bunche met the leaders of the four main Katangan tribes: the Baluba, Tshokwe, Bayaka and Lunda, who all supported Tshombe.

On 8 August Kalonji stated that the Baluba had decided to annex the southern half of Kasai Province, an area rich in minerals, especially diamonds, and turn it into an independent state, with a Baluban government. This resulted in a wave of emigration by supporting Balubas from northern Kasai.

Throughout August the final exodus of Belgian officials from the Congo was in progress, bringing the administration almost to a halt. Furthermore the central government was splitting into factions, while ONUC was becoming more far flung and empirical.

Hammar skjöld appeared to be more concerned with the international aspects of the Congo situation rather than the internal events themselves, his reputation as an international fixer being at stake. As a result General Von Horn and lesser ONUC commanders and officials had considerable autonomy in minor matters, but little cohesion. Lumumba's view was bifocal: first, and foremost he was a nationalist with a fear of Belgian sovereignty returning by the back door; but he also realised the value of external support in a world divided by Cold War loyalties. His mistake was to hope that friendship with the Soviets would allow him to play off East against West to his own benefit, overlooking the West's relentless single-mindedness in this Cold War equation.

The UN Security Council met in New York on 8–9 August to consider Hammar skjöld's report. This resulted in the adoption of a resolution calling on Belgian troops to withdraw immediately, and reiterating that ONUC must not intervene in Congolese problems. Despite this, ONUC troops entered Katanga on the 9th.

State of emergency in Congo

Meanwhile Lumumba had returned from an international tour to garner support for his antiseccessionist policy, only to find that all was far from well in the Congo. ABAKO had been mounting secessionist demonstrations in Bas Congo and Leopoldville, and there had been similar movements in Kasai and Equator Provinces. On 9 August Lumumba announced a state of emergency throughout the Congo. That day a number of incidents occurred in Leopoldville, and several people were killed when gendarmes opened fire during a riot that erupted when police tried to raid the ABAKO HQ in Dendale. Lumumba personally tried to calm the rioters and was slightly injured. A double guard of ONUC and Congolese soldiers was posted at Lumumba's residence.

The same day police entered the house of Joseph Ileo speaker of the central Assembly, to arrest the 'plotters' but left redfaced when they found that the gathering was actually a press conference. The Belgian News Agency was closed down, and the French Agence France-Presse temporarily suspended its activities. Ileo had stated there were two tendencies in the Congo, one favouring an increase in the number of provinces and the other supporting the confederate system, asserting that the 'Congo was not one people but was composed of several peoples'. He argued that the Congo was in danger of complete disintegration and stressed that confederation did not mean Balkanisation, adding

that he was ready to cooperate with Prime Minister Lumumba on this issue.

On the 11th ONUC announced that its first soldier had been killed in an ambush in Kasai, where a state of emergency had been put in place before Lumumba's formal announcement owing to a series of political murders. That day a Soviet Ilyushin aircraft arrived in Leopoldville, being a present for Lumumba for use on his personal journeys overseas. The Soviet Union was now a firm supporter of Lumumba, who began openly to criticise Hammarskjöld's handling of the Katangan situation, as did the Moscow media. Head of State Kasavubu made a nationwide radio broadcast appealing for national unity.

Lumumba clashes with ONUC

In a letter to the UN secretary general dated 16 August 1960, Lumumba demanded that Congolese troops replace ONUC ones at all airfields in the Congo, that all ONUC aircraft be placed at the disposal of his government, and that ONUC seize all weapons held by Belgians and the Katangan armed forces and hand them over to his staff. He also demanded that all non-African troops in ONUC be withdrawn, meaning the Irish and Swedish contingents. None of these demands were met.

Lumumba then made a dramatic nationwide broadcast to appeal to the people to 'seek out Belgian spies', after which Congolese troops and some vigilantes began to search hotels, houses and vehicles. Lumumba himself went with a CNA detachment, to Leopoldville airport to arrest a Belgian. His Congolese troops remained in possession of the airport, this being their first appearance there since their ejection on 12 July.

At a cabinet meeting Lumumba established what amounted to a military regime. He also threatened to seize Belgian property in the Congo if Congolese gold and other securities held by the Belgian government were not released. On the 18th, after a number of incidents at Leopoldville airport in which ONUC personnel and Belgian civilians were injured or ill-treated, ONUC took possession of the entire airport.

Katanga closes its frontiers

General von Horn established an ONUC 'Eastern Command' to embrace Katanga and Kiva Provinces, and his contingent soon numbered over 4000 troops. As the Belgian troops withdrew from Katanga, protest riots organised by the opposition BALUBAKAT flared up in Elizabethville, and for the first time gendarmes used tear gas to quell

them. At a press conference Tshombe indicated that he would be willing to accept a federal solution.

On the 20th Tshombe closed the Katangan frontier and blocked several roads and bridges, but despite this the ONUC build-up continued. He then met leaders of the youth arms of ABAKO, PUNA and the MNC(Kalonji), after which he proposed the establishment of a Confederation of Congo States and sent a delegation to Leopoldville. In Katanga, CNA attacks were expected daily, and Belgian residents were in the process of forming volunteer defence groups. It was reported that CNA troops had reached the town of Tshikapa, only 30 miles from the Katangan border.

The 'Mining State'

Meanwhile in Kasai Province, Albert Kalonji, leader of the MNC (Kalonji) Party, was busy establishing a breakaway 'Mining State' (*Etat Minière*), as it was provisionally known, based around the city of Bakwanga. On 20 August a three-day airlift of CNA troops from Thysville subdued this revolt. Kalonji boasted that he was still waiting for Lumumba's invasion, and that 250 police, 200 soldiers and most of the Baluba tribes were standing ready to repel it. However on the night of the 27th Congolese troops occupied the Bakwanga airfield without resistance.

Kalonji decamped to Elizabethville, from where his 'rebel government' declared war on the central government and called upon Britain, France, the United States and all Africans generally for help. The Europeans in Bakawanga assembled in the clubhouse of the diamond company for which they worked, protected by ONUC troops.

Fighting flared up in Bakwanga on the 29th between CNA troops and supporters of the Mining State. This continued for some days and it was reported that CNA soldiers had killed over 150 Balubas, some 100 of whom had been shot in a mission school. On 1 September it was claimed that the CNA was in complete control of Bakwanga and that the Baluba population had fled. Skirmishes continued on the outskirts between the CNA and Kalonji's forces, which were superior in number but poorly armed.

In the north, in Equator Province on 2 September, Jean Bolikango, leader of PUNA and a member of the Bangala tribe, which formed a high proportion of the CNA personnel, was arrested and taken to Leopoldville. There he and others were arraigned for attempting to set up an independent state and plotting to kill Lumumba.

Pan-African Conference

Meanwhile, on 25 August the opening ceremony of a pan-African conference in Leopoldville, which included members of ABAKO, PUNA and the MNC(Kalonji), was marred but not halted by a demonstration against Lumumba. Press cameras were confiscated by order of Colonel Mobutu. Resolutions were passed in support of Congolese unity and greater cooperation with ONUC forces, but otherwise there was little agreement.

On the 27th Lumumba left the conference (which did not end until the 29th) to fly north to Stanleyville, the main source of his regional strength. Just before he arrived CNA soldiers injured several ONUC troops and roughly treated other UN personnel, the incidents having been prompted further by rumours of Belgian spies. The fear in Leopoldville was that Lumumba was about to recall CNA units from the outer provinces in order to impose a military clampdown on the capital.

The first of a promised 15 Soviet Ilyushin transport aircraft arrived in Leopoldville on 2 September, the remainder going to Stanleyville to be painted in Congo livery. All came complete with Russian pilots, technical staff, ground crews and interpreters. Most of the Soviet and Czech technical staff were based in Stanleyville, which became the Soviet HQ in the Congo, and from where Soviet pro-Lumumba, anti-Western propaganda leaflets (in French) were despatched to government departments and military camps nationwide. That day the UN stated that the last Belgian soldiers had left the Congo, leaving only civilian technicians at the Kamina base. The following day Soviet planes began to transport CNA troops to Kasai Province, where fighting in the Mining State was still in progress. A large detachment of Kalonji's 'army' left Elizabethville by train for Bakwanga.

Kasavubu dismisses Lumumba

Speaking on national radio on 5 September 1960 as head of state, Kasavubu dismissed Lumumba from his post of prime minister, which he was entitled to do under the constitution, having obtained the necessary signature of two government ministers: Justin Bomboko and Albert Delvaux (and also of several other ministers). Joseph Ileo, the speaker of the Assembly was appointed in Lumumba's place. Kasavubu alleged that Lumumba had been put in place by the Belgians and had been leading the country into civil war, and he called upon the UN for support. An ONUC guard was sent to protect Kasavubu as his life had been threatened.

Lumumba, who thought his dismissal had been orchestrated by the US and Belgian governments because of his leftish leanings and Soviet contacts, forced his way into the national radio station. The station was guarded by ONUC soldiers, who were under orders not to allow Lumumba in, but did so because they had received no order to shoot him. In his radio speech Lumumba declared that his dismissal was illegal, that he was still prime minister and defence minister, and that Kasavubu was a traitor and no longer head of state. ONUC then stepped in and closed down the Leopoldville radio station and put all the airfields in the country under ONUC control. The fear in Leopoldville was that Lumumba would now fly in CNA detachments from Stanleyville and Kasai to take over the capital, which was generally anti-Lumumba in sentiment.

On the 6th Kasavubu made a recorded speech that was relayed from Radio Brazzaville across the River Congo. He insisted he was legally in the right to dismiss Lumumba, and claimed he had the support of Tshombe and Kalonji. Kalonji, still in Katanga said he would soon be leaving Elizabethville to take command of his 'army' in southern Kasai.

President Abne Fulbert Youlou, of Congo (Brazzaville), began to show his hostility towards Lumumba, and was happy to oblige Kasavubu by allowing anti-Lumumba broadcasts to continue from Brazzaville. Clandestine propaganda messages were already being broadcast from Brazzaville by Radio Makala by anti-Lumumba Belgians who had fled across the river.

In Leopoldville on the 7th, Lumumba made a long speech in the Chamber of Representatives alleging that Kasavubu was 'selling the Congo to the United Nations' and insisting that he himself was not a communist as the West was implying. As a sweetener he added that he was looking for new ambassadors, to be selected from among the deputies. Both Bomboko and Delvaux spoke in justification of their action. The chamber voted in favour of invalidating Lumumba's dismissal. A detachment of Bengala CNA soldiers was sent to Thysville to release their leader, Bolikango, who had been arrested on Lumumba's order. In Katanga the Tshombe government announced the arrival of the 'fourth' delivery of Belgian arms, alleged to be back-orders, while in Washington President Eisenhower expressed his grave concern about the USSR's intervention in Africa and urged the Soviets to desist.

A ceasefire declared

On 10 September 1960 an ONUC spokesman announced a general ceasefire, but there was some confusion about who had actually

ordered it and who would observe it, the suspicion falling on Colonel Mobutu. An ONUC truce supervisory team was to be formed to patrol the borders between Katanga, Kasai and Kivu Provinces. Lumumba, still insisting that he was prime minister, denied there was a ceasefire. It was also stated that the CNA soldiers had been paid for the first time in two months, and it was believed that ONUC had provided the cash. Tshombe greeted the ceasefire with satisfaction, and Albert Kalonji agreed to it in principle. Meanwhile the CNA troops that had entered Katanga withdrew to Kivu Province.

The next day an Ilebo delegation, led by Bomboko, flew to New York to present its case to the UN Security Council and obtain formal legality. However a rival pro-Lumumba delegation, led by Thomas Kanza, and bound for the same destination, after crossing the river by ferry was refused permission to land at Brazzaville and had to return to Leopoldville. The Kanza delegation eventually left the Congo in a US military aircraft, courtesy of ONUC.

Accompanied by a group of armed soldiers, Lumumba made another attempt to enter the radio station, but the Congolese soldiers were disarmed by ONUC (Ghanaian) troops. More Congolese troops arrived, as did General Lundula and Colonel Mobutu. After discussions the CNA troops withdrew. Lumumba returned to the prime minister's residence and ordered the CNA to occupy both the radio station and the airport. Troops mustered but the occupation did not take place.

The following day (the 12th) CNA troops surrounded Lumumba's private villa and the officer in command presented Lumumba with a warrant for his arrest. Saying he wanted no bloodshed, Lumumba offered no resistance and was driven to Camp Leopoldville, from where he was eventually released. Accounts of the release vary in detail, but it is probable that General Lundula and General Mpolo (a minister of youth in the Lumumba government and recently given the rank of general over Colonel Mobutu's head) had persuaded the soldiers at the camp that they had come to take Lumumba to a more secure prison.

Almost immediately Lumumba, in a vehicle with a loudspeaker, and protected by a bodyguard of soldiers from his own Batetela tribe, drove through the streets of Leopoldville shouting, 'Here I am – Victory, victory' to the cheering crowds. Lumumba boasted that when the soldiers in the camp had realised he had been arrested there had been a 'general uprising' and he had been freed. Some sources insist that the crowd thought he was a prisoner, and others that the crowds were cheering for Kasavubu, not Lumumba. Lumumba again tried unsuccessfully to

enter the radio station. In Katanga, an ONUC truce supervisory team began its work.

On the 13th ONUC relinquished control of the radio station. When Jean Bolikango went there to announce the new government, CNA soldiers tried to arrest him but were prevented by ONUC (Ghanaian) troops. Meanwhile a joint session of the Congolese Senate and the Chamber of Representatives met and approved the granting of 'special powers' to the Lumumba. The latter immediately asked the UN for 20 aircraft and crews, large quantities of arms and ammunition, and a powerful radio transmitter, hinting that if the UN would not provide them he would look elsewhere, meaning the USSR.

Ileo's press conference

Neither Head of State Kasavubu nor Prime Minister Ileo made any move to arrest Lumumba, who at last managed on 14 July to make a brief radio broadcast, appealing to the 'army to unite against the imperialists' and for the people to remain calm. In the afternoon Ileo held a press conference. Speaking on behalf of Kasavubu and himself, he stated that the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives would be suspended for one month, which nullified the two chambers' previous decision regarding Lumumba's reinstatement. He also said that Kasavubu had dismissed General Lundula and promoted Mobutu to army commander-in-chief, and that the army and the gendarmerie had pledged their loyalty to the head of state. Ileo declared that the solution to the Congo crisis lay in the hands of the army, and added that he had signed an agreement with a delegation from the Katangan government to open negotiations for a federal form of government for the whole of the Congo. A reconciliation commission of deputies visited Kasavubu in the hope of persuading him to come to an agreement with Lumumba, but it was too late as that evening Colonel Mobutu seized power in the name of the army.

3

Lumumba the Legend: 1960–61

On the evening of 14 September 1960 Colonel Mobutu held a press conference at which he announced that the army had decided to impose a 'truce' on the country's political leaders, including President Kasavubu and both 'prime ministers'. The truce would last until the end of the year. The army would not directly exercise power, but would delegate it to a 'College of Commissioners', to be composed of graduates and students, some of whom, if studying abroad, would be called home for the purpose. The College would take over the duties and responsibilities of the government and the Chamber of Representatives, and would be the only authority empowered to appoint a delegation to the UN.

The staff of all communist embassies were given 48 hours' notice to leave the country, while the 'seven Soviet officers disguised as technicians', who had been distributing communist pamphlets in Camp Leopoldville, including copies of Khrushchev's *Hands off the Congo*, were to be expelled immediately. Mobutu emphasised his support for the United Nations, and expressed a desire for American and British technicians and specialists to go to the Congo. With regard to Katanga, he said he would instruct the College of Commissioners to contact Tshombe. The Senate met on the 15th with the intention of negating Mobutu's reforms, but was persuaded to refrain.

Colonel Mobutu

Colonel Joseph-Desiré Mobutu, aged 30, had served for seven years in the Force Publique as a junior officer (*sous officer*). He had left in 1956 to study in Brussels, after which he had returned to Leopoldville to work as a journalist. He had become an active member of Lumumba's

MNC and had remained with the Lumumba section when it split. Mobutu had attended the round table conference, and on the formation of Lumumba's government had become a secretary of state, returning to the army as a colonel after the outbreak of the mutiny.

Lumumba

On the evening of 14 September Lumumba left the prime minister's residence and travelled to Camp Leopold to rally the support of the soldiers. However he met a hostile reception, especially from the Balubas and others who held him responsible for the massacres in Kasai earlier in the month. He took refuge in the ONUC (Ghanaian) officers' mess, which was immediately surrounded by hostile troops, some of whom tried to assassinate him but were prevented by the Ghanaians. Reinforcements were called, and gendarmes armed with a warrant for his arrest escorted him back to Leopoldville, where he remained under house arrest as ONUC refused to allow the gendarmerie to take him before an examining magistrate.

The following day a huge ABAKO demonstration was mounted in Leopoldville. The demonstrators marched through the streets until they were halted and dispersed by CNA troops, who the following day surrounded the Assembly buildings to prevent senators and deputies from entering. Telegraph offices were ordered not to accept messages for transmission abroad from politicians, and several members of Lumumba's secretariat were arrested. No restrictions were put on movement into or out of the airport or on ferries crossing the River Congo. There was an exodus of Soviet personnel from Stanleyville, and the loaned Ilyushin aircraft, together with a small fleet of trucks and other military equipment, were withdrawn. Lumumba disappeared from sight for several hours and rumours of his death began to spread, but he soon resurfaced in the official prime minister's residence, where he remained under ONUC protection. A spokesman stated, rather inaccurately, that ONUC was keeping strictly out of 'this constitutional crisis'.

During the latter part of September 1960 and throughout October the situation in the Congo was marked by increasingly strained relations between Colonel Mobutu and the College of Commissioners. Both Mobutu and President Kasavubu complained strongly about the support given by Ghana and Guinea to Lumumba, who still claimed to be the legal prime minister. Lumumba remained under ONUC protection, defying Colonel Mobutu's attempts to arrest him.

Meanwhile a number of Belgians were returning to Katanga and Leopoldville to work as administrators, technicians and advisers in the Congolese and Katangan administrations, and also in the business and economic sectors. Dag Hammarskjöld strongly disapproved of this, suspecting that the Belgian government was trying to influence the situation in the Congo. He protested to Brussels but received a non-committal response. Hammarskjöld did his best to discourage the Belgian influx, as did Mobutu and Lumumba. Hammarskjöld's special representative in the Congo, Rayeshwar Dayal, an Indian and suspected of being oversympathetic to Lumumba, was also against the return of Belgians to the Congo.

Fighting in Katanga

Growing hostility also developed between Tshombe and the ONUC authorities in Katanga, owing to the activities of the anti-Tshombe BALUBAKAT and Baluba tribes. On 14 September fighting broke out in the coal- and tin-mining town of Manono in northern Katanga (about 400 miles from Elizabethville) after a Katangan gendarmerie patrol had been ambushed by Balubas. Initial reports indicated that about 70 people had been killed, that Manono was in flames and that groups of Balubas were looting and burning. The ONUC ban on aircraft movement was lifted to allow the evacuation of European and Congolese refugees, but permission for the Katangan government to send gendarmes by air to Manono to restore order was refused. Dayal was no friend of Tshombe's. Instead ONUC flew in Swedish troops as reinforcements for the Irish ones already stationed in Manono. When the situation in Manono cooled down, refugees complained that ONUC troops had done nothing to curb the Baluba excesses.

About 300 CNA troops were sent to Lubanda, just inside the Katangan border with Kivu Province, and a CNA motorised column, loyal to Lumumba, entered Katanga from Kivu Province and advanced towards Kongolo. In central Katanga there was an outburst of violence in the town of Bukama (about 100 miles from Kamina) and at the coal- and tin-mining centre in Luena (20 miles from Bukama) when Balubas attacked a train bringing Katangan reinforcements from Kamina.

Albert Kalonji, leader of the self-declared South Kasai Mining State, claimed that his army had reentered Bakwanga to establish an HQ there, adding that he approved in principle of the general ceasefire declared in Leopoldville and that a strip of no man's land should be

established in Kasai under ONUC supervision. In early October fighting resumed in Manono.

Tshombe, quoting Manono, Luena and Bukama, complained to Hammar skjöld that the arrival of ONUC troops in several peaceful areas in Katanga had coincided with outbreaks of violence. He also alleged that ONUC protected only itself, and that in Albertville its inactivity had allowed rioters to rampage through the town. Furthermore the ONUC ban on flying had prevented his Katangan gendarmerie from dealing with trouble spots. Tshombe contrasted the ONUC policy in Katanga with that in Leopoldville, where ONUC was cooperating with the local police. Tshombe called the ONUC mission in Katanga a complete failure. Dayal continued to protest to Tshombe about brutal acts by Katangan gendarmes against Balubas in the Luena area.

An ONUC spokesman in Leopoldville gave further details of the ceasefire arrangements for the border between Katanga and Kivu Provinces, claiming that the CNA troops had been withdrawn from Katanga and that there would be a 19-mile neutral zone along the border, patrolled by ONUC troops. As the College of Commissioners swung into action it was criticised by Lumumba, who called it both ridiculous and illegal.

UN General Assembly

An emergency session of the UN General Assembly began on 17 September 1960. The proceedings dragged on indecisively for quite some time, but eventually a resolution was adopted approving Hammar skjöld's handling of the Congo crisis, which encouraged him to continue his empire-building project. Within a week 3500 peace-keeping troops had landed in the Congo. The number soon rose to about 16000, drawn from 28 nations, and was planned to exceed the 19000 mark. The expression 'mission creep' was just coming into usage in ONUC jargon, although a senior UN officer told me that 'mission gallop' would be more appropriate.

Mobutu asked Hammar skjöld to withdraw the Ghanaian and Guinean contingents from ONUC because they were interfering in political matters, meaning they were actively supporting Lumumba, but he was ignored for the time being. Next Mobutu demanded that the Ghanaian troops, including a large contingent of Ghanaian police in Camp Leopold, be withdrawn from the Congo by 30 September. Mobutu also clashed with ONUC, complaining that it was preventing

him from sending Congolese officer cadets to train in Britain, a batch being scheduled to depart at the end of September. Hammarskjöld ensured that UN Security Council instructions included a clause that all military aid for the Congo must be channelled through ONUC. Hammarskjöld wanted the Congo to have a weak government that would have to lean on ONUC for support. He viewed all Congolese armed forces as undesirable mercenaries who should be disarmed or brought under his control.

Kalonji attempts to capture Luluabourg

In mid-September 1960 a detachment of Kalonji's army, consisting of about 700 Balubas armed with modern infantry weapons, fewer than half a dozen European mercenary officers and about 5000 less well armed Balubas (ONUC figures), had entered southern Kasai from Katanga with the intention of marching to capture Luluabourg, supported by helicopters and aircraft operating from Katanga. ONUC claimed that its Liberian troops had stopped the advance on the 16th, inflicting heavy casualties. The ONUC military representative in Elizabethville claimed credit for this. The invasion force set up camp in a section of Bakwanga, while ONUC (Tunisian) troops held the airport, the European area and the diamond mines. The ONUC military commander in Katanga said that his priority was immediately to remove the European mercenaries from the Bakwanga area, and then to deal with the 700 armed Balubas.

The Lumumba cabinet

After consultations with Kasavubu and Lumumba, Mobutu announced he would summon a round table conference on the future of the Congo, but he was forestalled by Lumumba, who was still ensconced in the prime minister's official residence and behaving as though he was still in power. After a Chamber of Representatives session on 28 September, reportedly attended by 40 senators and 74 deputies, Lumumba stated he would not attend the proposed conference and asked the UN General Assembly to intervene.

Lumumba continued to hold meetings and conferences, and was visited by a steady stream of his former ministers, senators and deputies and other supporters, issuing statements and political propaganda. On a number of occasions Lumumba left the prime minister's residence to tour the cafes in Leopoldville, insisting he was still the legal prime minister and urging people to support him.

On 7 October Lumumba announced that he had formed a new cabinet that included Jean Bolikango and Albert Kalonji – both of whom vigorously denied they supported Lumumba – with General Maurice Mpolo as defence minister. This upset Mobutu, who sent soldiers to Mpolo's house where they arrested a number of his supporters, roughly treating some of them. Lumumba proposed a national referendum on the future of the Congo, under UN supervision. On the 22nd Mobutu broke off relations with ONUC, complaining that Dayal had treated him like a child. Certainly Dayal did have a caustic tongue.

Katanga

More serious violence broke out in the Manono area in northern Katanga in early October when attacks were launched by anti-Tshombe Balubas. Albertville was looted and partly burnt to the ground by anti-Tshombe Balubas, who then withdrew to Manono, taking hostages with them, including four European mercenaries. On the 9th Tshombe threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Belgium unless its government recognised Katangan independence. ONUC reinforcements were dispatched to northern Katanga when Baluba tribesmen seized more Europeans, and there were rumours of torture.

ONUC and the CNA clash

On 10 October 1960 Justin Bomboko, president of the College of Commissioners, demanded that ONUC arrest Lumumba, stating that a legal arrest warrant had been issued but ONUC had prevented it from being executed earlier in the day. He said that the CNA would accept the task if ONUC could not do it. CNA troops did surround Lumumba's residence but said they had no order to arrest him. ONUC seemed to be of the same mind, as Lumumba continued to hold political meetings and issue political statements. It is probable that ONUC considered him to be a useful tool and did not want him to disappear into some inaccessible prison. After consulting Dayal, Mobutu said that as long as Lumumba stayed in the prime minister's residence he would not try to arrest him, but would do so immediately if he left the building.

Mobutu did not necessarily mean all that he said, as on 19 October, in a series of dawn raids in Leopoldville, about 40 prominent Lumumba supporters were arrested, but afterwards Dayal forced their release. Two days later, joint ONUC–CNA patrols began in Leopoldville under ONUC command, Dayal saying that he could not allow a disorderly

rabble such as the Congolese army to control the country (UN document). Mobutu was quick to protest that ONUC was doing all it could to topple him from power.

The following day groups of CNA soldiers, many of them drunk, rampaged through the African sectors of Leopoldville. ONUC patrols failed to intervene, which caused public opinion in the capital to turn against the peacekeepers. Many factions were already suspicious of ONUC by that time. Anticipating the arrival of angry Congolese soldiers from the Thysville garrison, probably in armoured vehicles, ONUC troops in Leopoldville began to block the approach roads with antitank weapons. The College of Commissioners openly accused ONUC of trying to disarm the CNA – a comment not without substance. After a meeting between Mobutu and ONUC representatives on the 26th, the CNA troops were withdrawn from Leopoldville and confined to barracks at Camp Leopold. Just a few remained to guard, jointly with ONUC troops, the prime minister's residence and the radio station.

Complaints about ONUC troops looting and misbehaving in Kabalo (northern Katanga) elicited caustic replies from Dayal, who was alleged to have said that the 'Ethiopian troops wanted to live like little princes' (UN records). The Belgian government was also at odds with ONUC, which demanded that all Belgian aid to the Congo should cease and all Belgians in the Congo should be recalled. At the UN the Soviet Union refused to pay its share of the cost of the ONUC operation, saying that a socialist country could not be expected to finance Western imperialist schemes in Africa. Hammar skjöld was finding it extremely difficult to raise funds for his ONUC project.

South Kasai Mining State

Meanwhile Kalonji's army of 700 armed Balubas, and the 5000 poorly armed Baluba supporters remained near Bakwanga in southern Kasai. A captured European mercenary leader, Meredith Roberts, had been identified as a former British officer, and with others he was been held in ONUC custody at Luluabourg. Paul Katanga, deputy to Kolanji, demanded their release. Eventually Roberts was quietly released and flown out of the country.

On 11 November Albert Kalonji, now the self-styled king of the South Kasai Mining State, threatened that his army would take action, alleging that ONUC had betrayed him by allowing the Lulus and other tribes to terrorise the Kasai Balubas. He declared that the so-called ceasefire was over and that his army would soon liberate the Balubas in the entire territory between the Mining State and Port Francqui.

The Kolwezi incident

On 31 October ONUC, having rejected Tshombe's demands, had sent Jason Sendwe, leader of anti-Tshombe BALUBAKAT, who had remained in Leopoldville since Tshombe's declaration of UDI, to the ONUC-held Kamina base on a peace mission to Tshombe. The so-called 'Kolwezi incident' occurred on 2 November, when Katangan gendarmes fired on Baluba looters in Kolwezi, killing at least 15 and injuring others.

On 7 November Tshombe addressed the UN General Assembly and asked it to recognise the independence of Katanga, but was unsuccessful. The Katangan Assembly met on the 9th to elect a new prime minister, but then asked Tshombe to remain in office for the time being. On the 21st in northern Katanga nine ONUC (Irish) soldiers were killed by Balubas, who were alleged to be 'high' on drugs.

Gizenga rises to power in Stanleyville

In Stanleyville, Lumumba's main region of support, it was announced on 13 November 1960 that a triumvirate was developing an anti-central-government power base, led by Antoine Gizenga, Lumumba's deputy prime minister, who had fled from Leopoldville to escape arrest. The other two members of the triumvirate were Louis Lumumba – Patrice's brother and a member of the Oriental provincial government – and Bernard Salumu. On 20 November there were clashes in Stanleyville between gendarmes loyal to Gizenga and CNA troops loyal to Mobutu.

The Kamitatu plot

On 8 November Mobutu announced that he had frustrated a plot by Cleophas Kamitatu, prime minister of Leopoldville Province and a suspected Lumumba sympathiser. During the night two CNA officers and 30 soldiers had attempted to take possession of certain central government buildings, but had been thwarted. All had been arrested except the two officers, who had disappeared. The soldiers claimed they had been tricked into believing they were obeying Mobutu's orders. Kamitatu, who controlled the police in the capital and also published a newspaper, *Solidire Adricaine*, amongst other things, was arrested on the 10th and his periodical was banned. However, after reaching an agreement with Mobutu over policing arrangements for the capital and promising to improve relations with the CNA, Kamitatu was released from detention.

Lulua province

On 9 November in Stanleyville, a group of Baluban refugees from Katanga – political leaders of BALUBAKAT and MNC(Lumumba) – proclaimed the new province of ‘Lulua’, to comprise about two thirds of Katanga Province with Manono as its capital, following a decision taken on 20 October. The 12-member provisional government of Lulua Province was set up in Stanleyville under Ilunga Mwamba, who had been acting leader of BALUBAKAT while Sendwe was away in Leopoldville. Lulua was to be part of the Congo, and was supported by the ‘Gizenga government’ in Stanleyville. In Manono on the 14th, some 30 tin miners who had returned to work after the Sendwe peace mission were murdered by Baluba tribesmen.

A Ghanaian incident in Leopoldville

There was fighting on 21 November between ONUC troops guarding the Ghanaian embassy in Leopoldville and CNA troops trying to force their way in. In the process Colonel Justin Kokolo, deputy chief of staff, who was trying to execute an extradition order by President Kasavubu against the Ghanaian chargé d'affaires, N.A. Welbeck, was killed, along with others on both sides. Upon hearing of the death of Colonel Kokolo, CNA soldiers went on the rampage in Leopoldville, threatening ONUC personnel and stealing cars. Extra guards had to be placed on ONUC buildings.

Kokolo had been a junior officer in the Force Publique, but upon independence he had been promoted colonel and put in charge of Camp Leopold, after which he had become deputy to Mobutu. Kokolo was accorded a grand military funeral, together with three Congolese soldiers killed in the same incident. More than 100 000 mourners lined the streets. There was no ONUC representation at the ceremony, and the Ghanaian police were withdrawn from the city. The Ghanaian chargé d'affaires had quietly left by air. Camp Leopold was renamed Camp Kokolo.

Previously (on the 17th), Colonel Mobutu had held a major military parade of some 9000 CNA soldiers from Camp Hardy and Camp Leopold, at which he took the salute. Relying on the army for support, Mobutu was anxious to demonstrate this support to the people of Leopoldville.

Lumumba's escape and recapture

On the evening of 27 November 1960 Lumumba 'escaped' from the prime minister's residence by car, or rather he simply left, the guards having no instructions to stop him. Mobutu promptly issued an order for his arrest. It was assumed that Lumumba was making for Stanleyville, but nothing was heard of him for a while and Moscow news reports that he had reached safety were premature.

Lumumba was recaptured on 1 December at Port Francqui by CNA troops, and together with several of his senior supporters he was taken back to Leopoldville. There he was paraded through the streets in the back of an open truck, with his hands tied behind his back and showing signs of having been beaten. The crowds jeered. Mobutu announced that Lumumba would be placed on trial, and on the 3rd he was transferred to Camp Hardy, Thysville, where again it seems he was mistreated.

In Stanleyville, Bernard Salumu announced that he had assumed the position of commissioner of Upper Congo, and that Oriental Province was about to sever all links with Leopoldville and become independent. There were still about 1000 Belgians in Stanleyville, of whom only a few had been detained.

In Katanga on 2 December about 3000 Balubas attacked Luena, but were repulsed by ONUC troops and a large number were taken prisoner.

Abortive invasion of Kivu

On 25 December a small detachment of pro-Lumumbaist CNA troops travelled in a convoy of trucks from Stanleyville to Bukavu in Kivu Province, on the border with Ruanda-Urundi. They seized control of the town without opposition (the local garrison had shown sympathy for Lumumba) and arrested the premier (Miruho), the local CNA army commander (Major Singa) and other officials. Miruho, three of his ministers and Singa were sent under guard to Stanleyville. The following week additional Lumumbaist reinforcements arrived from Stanleyville, followed by Anicet Kashamura, minister of information in the Lumumba government, who appointed new provincial ministers (Kashamura was a native of Kivu and leader of the local CERECA party, Regroupement Africain).

On 31 December a small detachment of Mobutu's CNA, under Major Pongo, flew from Luluabourg to Usumbura airfield in Ruanda, and the

following day arrived at the Kivu border under a flag of truce to establish contact with the Lumumbaist forces. However the latter opened fire on Pongo's men and routed them. A number of prisoners were taken, including Pongo. The remainder of the CNA detachment took refuge with ONUC (Nigerian) troops in the area.

Hammar skjöld discovered that the central government had asked for this 'transit landing' in Ruanda to relieve besieged CNA troops in Bukavu, and that the request had been granted by an underling when the CNA troops were already landing at Usumbura in Ruanda. Hammar skjöld, through the Belgian resident-general, ordered the CNA contingent to leave Usumbura immediately for the Kivu frontier by the shortest route. However they deviated some 90 miles northwards to reach the frontier bridge, opposite Bukavu. This incident was discussed inconclusively at the UN. The Soviet Union still recognised the Lumumba government and thus considered that the Stanleyville troops had acted legally, and that the CNA detachment under Major Pongo was an illegal force.

It was later alleged that Dayal had countermanded a plan by ONUC (Nigerian) troops in Bukavu to rescue the pro-Mobutu political leaders before they were taken off to Stanleyville. In Stanleyville at least one was said to have been tortured to death, and little else had been heard of the others. A plan to rescue Major Pongo and his men from Lumumbaist captivity had also been aborted.

Hammar skjöld announced that ONUC had been considerably reduced in strength by the withdrawal of certain national contingents. The number of ONUC troops had fallen from 19 000 to 14 000, and he appealed for more troops from African countries to rebuild the force to the 23 000 mark.

New central government

On 9 February 1961 President Kasavubu issued a decree abolishing the College of Commissioners and establishing a new central government under Joseph Ileo. Some ministerial appointments were left vacant for representatives of the 'separated provinces'; that is, presumably, Gizenga in Oriental, Kashamura in Kivu, Kalonji in South Kasai and Tshombe in Katanga. The position of vice president was reserved for a Katangan. No defence minister was named, and this department continued to be handled by Mobutu, who had promoted himself to the rank of general and become the army's commander-in-chief.

The death of Lumumba

On 17 January 1961 Patrice Lumumba, General Maurice Mpolo and Joseph Okito, former vice president of the Senate, were transferred by air from detention in Thysville to Elizabethville. The Katangan government announced the following day that this had been requested by President Kasavubu as he felt that Thysville could not guarantee their continued confinement, and that the three men should be detained in a safe place outside Elizabethville. It was alleged that the prisoners were ill-treated during the flight.

This decision seemed to happen quickly and quietly, and in a subsequent statement Justin Bomboko, president of the College of Commissioners, said that Lumumba would be put on trial when suitable judges were found, hinting that ONUC was promising to produce them. An ONUC spokesman said the prisoner transfer was a domestic Congolese affair. There was little doubt that both Hammarskjöld and Dayal had been taken by surprise, and were angry that prize prisoners had been snatched from their potential grasp. Kasavubu clearly wanted to be rid of them. He was a Bakongo, and would be blamed if they escaped or were murdered when under his nominal jurisdiction, which could only lead to further friction between the Bakongos and the Lumumbaists. Thinking of the future, Kasavubu wanted relations with ONUC to improve, not worsen. Tshombe, for devious reasons, was happy to get his hands on them.

On 10 February 1961 it was announced on Radio Elizabethville that Lumumba, Mpolo and Okito had escaped from an isolated farm near Kasavi, some 60 miles from the Rhodesian–Angolan border, where they had been detained. They were reported to have overpowered their guards, taken their weapons, tied them up and escaped in a stolen car. A large reward was offered for their recapture.

The next official Katangan announcement was made at a special press conference by Godefroid Munongo, Katangan minister of the interior. Munongo said that Lumumba and his two companions had been killed on the 12th by villagers near Kolwezi, that the bodies had been identified and secretly buried, and that the name of the tribe responsible would not be revealed for fear of Lumumbaist reprisals.

Munongo expressed no sympathy for Lumumba, mentioning the latter's responsibility for the death of thousands of Balubas, as well as the persecutions and exterminations he had instigated in Oriental and Kivu Provinces. Munongo also severely criticised the UN, sneeringly suggesting that it only interfered in the affairs of smaller nations while

ignoring crimes committed by large states. Monongo bluntly said that the death of Lumumba was no business of the United Nations, Hammarskjöld having condemned the murder. It was revealed that when the three prisoners had been moved to Katanga an ONUC delegation had been refused permission to see Lumumba.

Little sympathy was expressed by Western countries engaged in the Cold War as Lumumba was thought to have been a communist, and most were glad that he had been removed from the scene. East European and Asian countries viewed the situation entirely differently, and in Moscow, Cairo, Belgrade and other major cities there were pro-Lumumba and anti-Belgian demonstrations. The governments of Guinea, Morocco, the United Arab Republic (Egypt), Ceylon, Indonesia and Yugoslavia gave notice that they would withdraw their ONUC contingents from the Congo.

Hammarskjöld sent his senior military representative in Katanga (General Iyassu, an Ethiopian) to Elizabethville, but Tshombe refused to let him investigate, saying he would oppose any UN enquiry. Khrushchev criticised Hammarskjöld and ONUC, and said that he too was against an ONUC investigation. The death of Lumumba and his two companions remains one of the mysteries of modern times, over which there hover unanswered questions about motives, involvement and details.

Later the UN Security Council appointed an inquest commission on the death of Lumumba, which reported on 14 November 1961. The commission rejected the Katangan assertion that Lumumba and his two companions had been murdered by villagers nearly a month after escaping. It considered it most likely that they had been shot in a villa outside Elizabethville by a Belgian officer in the presence of Tshombe and other Katangan leaders. The commission stated its regret that it had obtained little help from either Leopoldville or Elizabethville, and suggested that both authorities should share the responsibility for the murders as the central government had handed the prisoners over in full knowledge that they would be killed. It also stated that a major part had been played by Godefroid Munongo, the Katangan minister of the interior.

Tshombe denied that he had refused to cooperate with the investigators and disagreed with the findings. A Belgian officer who had been chief of intelligence for ONUC supported the findings, but insisted that Tshombe had not been present when the three men were killed. Later, President Nkrumah of Ghana called for the arrest of Tshombe for the murder of Lumumba, but U Thant (Hammarskjöld's successor) stated that direct evidence seemed to be lacking.

UN Security Council resolution

A UN Security Council resolution on the situation in the Congo was approved on 21 February. The resolution gave sweeping powers to ONUC: to use military force if necessary to prevent civil war, to arrange ceasefires, to halt military operations, to prevent clashes, to make arrests, to detain or expel individuals and to reorganise the Congolese National Army. All Belgian and other foreign troops not under ONUC command were to leave the Congo, and all foreign military aid had to be channelled through ONUC. Dag Hammarskjöld was immensely pleased as he had obtained a comprehensive military charter enabling him to dominate the Congo. Needless to say there were protests from practically all sides in the Congo against the Security Council remit: from President Kasavubu, Prime Minister Ileo, Tshombe, the leaders of the 'separated provinces' and many others. Mission creep had indeed become a gallop.

The Matadi incident

A clash occurred on 3 March 1961 in Banana on the Congo estuary between ONUC (Sudanese) and CNA troops when the latter attempted to arrest an ONUC radio operator. A local ceasefire was arranged by ONUC and the small Sudanese unit was withdrawn. On the 5th about 1000 CNA troops attacked the ONUC (Sudanese) garrison (housing 135 men) north of Banana at Matadi, the Congo's principal port and a vital sea supply link for ONUC. The garrison was subjected to continuous small arms and mortar fire, in the course of which two ONUC troops were killed and 13 were wounded. Afterwards about 15 (Sudanese and Canadians) were reported missing. A ceasefire was arranged by ONUC and the Sudanese garrison was withdrawn to Leopoldville. Matadi continued to be occupied by CNA troops while prolonged negotiations took place during which tons of foodstuff either remained on ships or rotted on the dockside.

Dayal blamed the Congolese for opening fire first, which was denied, and the negotiations remained deadlocked for three months. In the meantime the Congolese mounted a propaganda campaign for the removal of Dayal, who resigned on 29 May. Agreement was reached on 13 June for 100 ONUC (Nigerian) police to be stationed in Matadi, and the port was reopened to ONUC on the 18th.

With the departure of Dayal the responsibilities of Hammarskjöld's special representative in the Congo changed somewhat, it being explained that ONUC's main task in the Congo would henceforth be

coordination rather than diplomatic representation, most of which would be undertaken in New York. However Conor Cruise O'Brien, an Irishman and Hammarskjöld's new chief representative in Katanga, viewed his appointment more in terms of command than diplomacy.

The Tananarive conference

While the conciliation commission was drawing up its final report, three anti-Lumumbaists leaders – Prime Minister Ileo, Albert Kalonji and President Tshombe – signed a military–political pact in Elizabethville on 28 February 1961. The pact involved cooperation between their armed forces, the resolution of Congolese problems without outside interference, and preventing communism from becoming established in the Congo.

On 8 March a conference was held in Tananarive, Madagascar, chaired by President Kasavubu and attended by Ileo, Kalonji, Tshombe, Cleophas Kamitatu and other delegates. Invitations had been sent to Gizenga in Stanleyville, Kashamura in Kivu and General Victor Lundula, commander of the Lumumba forces, but none had replied. Tshombe called for a 'common front' against the UN resolutions, the withdrawal of ONUC forces from the Congo and maintenance of the political *status quo* until the situation was normalised. It was agreed that the existing Congo Republic would be replaced by a Confederation of Congolese States under the presidency of Kasavubu. Using an ONUC aircraft, Kamitatu travelled to Stanleyville to speak to Gizenga, who would not agree to a confederation but was willing to negotiate.

Coquilhatville conference

A second conference followed in Coquilhatville (Equator Province). It opened on 24 April and was attended by over 200 delegates, including representatives of the central government, the Katangan government and the Mining State, but no Lumumbaists. On the second day Tshombe walked out, denouncing President Kasavubu for accepting the UN resolution of 21 February, which increased ONUC's power of command and refused to take any further part in the conference unless Kasavubu renounced the UN decision of 17 April to appoint a UN commission to investigate the death of Lumumba.

On the 28th Tshombe was arrested at the airport, together with Evariste Kimba, his foreign minister, as he was about to board a plane for Elizabethville. He was confined to a hotel, where he repeatedly

refused to return to the conference, and then in a villa for a month, guarded by soldiers from Mobutu's CNA. The Coquilhatville conference continued without Tshombe, and on 12 May it was agreed to form a 'United States of the Congo', consisting of Leopoldville as the federal capital, the 'Kingdom' (first mention) of the South Kasai Mining State and an undisclosed number of other states. This gave greater power to the central government than would have been the case with the proposed confederation.

The conference ended on 27 May, and was regarded as a setback for Tshombe and a victory for Kasavubu. Tshombe and Kimba were transferred from Coquilhatville to Leopoldville and remained in detention until 22 June, when Tshombe held a press conference at the house of Prime Minister Ileo. He announced that he had been freed, that Katanga was no longer in secession from the Congo, that the Katangan armed forces would be placed under Mobutu's command and that there would be full Katangan cooperation – political, military and economic – with the central government. It was reported on Radio Leopoldville that Tshombe and Ileo had signed an agreement to this effect on 23 May. On the 24th Tshombe and Kimba flew back to Elizabethville to a rapturous welcome. Tshombe immediately reneged on his promises, 'made while in captivity', and declared that he would keep Katanga independent at all costs.

Central government changes

In June 1961 President Kasavubu announced that he would reconvene the central Assembly, that secret talks had been held between central government delegates and the Lumumbaist administration in Stanleyville, and that an assembly would be held at Lovanium University (about eight miles from the capital), where the senators and deputies would live with no outside contact while in session to prevent pressure from external sources. This was welcomed by Hammarskjöld, who had helped with the arrangements. At first Tshombe declined to send representatives, but eventually did so in August.

The central Chamber of Representatives met on 25 July 1961 at Lovanium University for the first time in nearly a year. More than 200 deputies were present, guarded by ONUC troops. Although deputies from Oriental Province attended, Gizenga did not. The session was opened by Kasavubu, who announced his intention to have a broad-based 'government of national union'. On 1 August the Ileo government formally resigned and Cyrille Adoula formed a new one,

announcing his cabinet on 3 August. Adoula became prime minister and defence minister. Other ministers were chosen from among the major parties, including Lumumbaists but excluding those from Katanga. Jason Sendwe, an opponent of Tshombe, became first vice premier and the absent Gizenga the second vice premier. Hammarskjöld expressed his satisfaction with the Adoula government.

Ruanda and Urundi

In August 1960 the Belgian resident general (Harroy) announced that the trust territories of Ruanda and Urundi would become autonomous in 1961, and independent shortly thereafter. A national police force and a territorial army would be formed, but Belgian troops would remain until the independence processes had been completed. The UN and Belgium seemed to assume that the two territories would merge upon independence.

In Ruanda, communal elections had been held in July 1960, when the dominant Tutsis had been defeated by the Hutus, who for years had yearned to free themselves from Tutsi feudal rule. The Party of Hutu Emancipation (Parmehutu) won 70 per cent of the seats and the Allied Association for the Promotion of the Masses (Aprosoma) won 6 per cent. The main Tutsi party, the Ruanda National Union, obtained only 17 per cent of the votes, the remainder going to the Ruanda National Council. The Urundi communal elections, held at the same time, had produced similar results, the Hutus obtaining an overwhelming majority. A clear democratic victory for the underdogs in both cases.

National councils were established in October, and in Ruanda Joseph Gitera Habyarimana was elected provisional president, while Gregoire Kayibanda was made head of the provisional government. A UN mission visited Ruanda and Urundi in December, and in January 1961 the Ostend round table conference agreed to political union of the two territories, with full independence in 1962. However the Ruandan provisional government decided to go it alone. It deposed the king and proclaimed its complete independence, which was accepted by both the UN and Belgium. The two countries of Ruanda (now spelt Rwanda) and Urundi, now separate entities, remained UN trust territories.

4

ONUC versus Katanga and Others: 1961–62

During the first week of January 1961 a Lumumbaist force from Kivu, estimated to be about 500 strong, advanced into Katanga as far as Manono, the centre of the Katangan Baluba rebellion against Tshombe. Manono was occupied with little resistance. The invasion was led by Jason Sendwe, a former supporter of Tshombe who had joined forces with Ilunga Mwamba to establish political control over as much as they could of what was to become the new province of Lulua.

Tshomba criticised ONUC for allowing 'communist troops' to invade Katanga, assisted by foreign powers, thus violating the agreement of 17 October 1960, under which ONUC had been charged with responsibility for law and order in the northern part of Katanga. He protested to the ONUC representative in Elizabethville, but was told that the agreement provided only for the disarming of rebels operating inside the zone, and not preventing forces from entering it from outside.

The ONUC spokesman went further and said that it should be strongly emphasised to both Tshombe and Lumumbaists entering northern Katanga that it was vital to avoid any action that might further aggravate an already serious situation, explaining that ONUC was trying to prevent armed clashes and persuade the invading force to withdraw – but not to fight or disarm the invaders. The Katangan government announced that in view of ONUC's inability to disarm and intern Sendwe and his troops the October agreement was null and void.

On 30 January a Katangan aircraft dropped a small number of bombs on Manono as Tshombe announced the mobilisation of the entire population of Katanga, both African and European, in the face of what he saw as an ONUC declaration of war against Katanga. He avowed that he would respond militarily if the UN tried to enforce the Security

Council resolution clause that called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Congo.

The retaking of Manono

Tshombe then ordered his 'army', meaning the Katangan gendarmerie, to retake Manono. European mercenaries in the Katangan International Company (Compagnie Internationale) led the advance, and after several Lumumbaist defensive posts had been overcome a major attack was mounted on the town. After some fighting and the loss of more than 30 men the Lulua army withdrew into the countryside, and by 30 March Manono was once again in Tshombe's hands. Initially the Katangan government falsely claimed that Manono had been reoccupied without resistance, presumably so as not to alarm or incite the nervously watching ONUC.

As ONUC had been weakened by the withdrawal of certain national contingents, a detachment of 800 Indian troops was flown from Leopoldville to strengthen the Kamina base. This provoked violent anti-ONUC demonstrations in Elizabethville, causing ONUC (Swedish) troops to cordon off the airfield and halt all flights. During the night of 3-4 April a small detachment of Katangan gendarmes, under a Belgian officer, attempted unsuccessfully to seize the control tower.

On the 4th large crowds of Katangans, some armed with machetes, swarmed on to the airfield and caused considerable material damage. A number of ONUC (Swedish) soldiers were temporarily taken prisoner. Tshombe called on his people to isolate an ONUC contingent camped near Elizabethville and deprive them of water, electricity and supplies. He also called for joint ONUC-Katangan control of the airfield, but a compromise was reached and ONUC (Irish) troops were brought in to guard it.

A Katangan force that included European mercenaries clashed with ONUC (Ethiopian) troops near Kabalo, a rail junction town near Manono. Both sides suffered casualties and prisoners were taken. To prevent further fighting between pro-Lumumbaist Balubas and the Katangan reinforcement column advancing northwards Manono, the ONUC units in that area were also reinforced.

The international contingent

The fighting in northern Katanga, in which more than 30 European mercenaries were captured by Lumumbaist and ONUC forces, highlighted

the abilities of the Katangan International Company (Compagnie Internationale), which had become a significant part of the Katangan gendarmerie. It was a shadowy formation, but information about it was gained from the prisoners. It was about 200 strong and commanded by a young British ex-officer. Recruiting offices had been established in Johannesburg (South Africa) and Bulawayo (Rhodesia). It consisted of European volunteers, mainly from Britain, Belgium, Rhodesia, South Africa and other parts of Africa, who signed up for a six-month period. Almost all had military experience and their number soon rose above the 350 mark. The European mercenaries had provided the backbone and punch of the Katangan operation to recover Manono. Realising their value in battle, the CNA also began secretly to recruit European mercenary platoons to stiffen the CNA's undisciplined and often demoralised ranks, although their activities were seldom mentioned by ONUC, the CNA or the media.

While Tshombe was in detention in Leopoldville, on 7 April General Sean Mckeown, military commander of ONUC, announced in Elizabethville that an agreement had been reached for French-speaking officers in ONUC to replace the Belgian officers in the Katangan armed forces, which was seen as the first phase of the official reorganisation of the CNA under the UN resolution. It was also indirectly aimed at the European mercenaries as well.

The Mining State

By this time Albert Kalonji's Mining State, based on Bakwanga, embraced most of the southern part of Kasai Province, the remainder of which was controlled by pro-Lumumba government forces based in Luluabourg. The execution in Bakwanga of six leading Lumumbaist politicians had been announced on 20 February, being an apparent reprisal for the killing of a large number of Baluba tribesmen by Lumumbaist militias in the immediate post-independence period. The UN representative in the Congo, Rayeshwar Dayal, alleged that the executed men had been illegally arrested and deported to southern Kasai, although the precise circumstances are unknown. Dayal often acted as though he were the head of ONUC, the division of responsibilities between Dayal and the military commander of ONUC being decidedly vague. Hammarskjöld was reluctant to delegate responsibility, and so many ONUC commanders and officials often made their own impromptu decisions. Hammarskjöld's heart was not in domestic detail.

In February several hundred pro-Lumumba CNA troops from Oriental Province penetrated deep into Kasai and on 24 February occupied Luluabourg without resistance, but left that city two days later. Dayal overoptimistically stated that ONUC troops were in control of the military situation in the Luluabourg area, where the population was heavily pro-Lumumba but the CNA garrison was pro-central government.

The following day some 2000 demonstrations gathered outside the ONUC HQ in Luluabourg to demand the release of a CNA officer who had been arrested by his own men for pro-Lumumba sympathies. After the officer's release a rejoicing pro-Lumumba crowd attacked members of the CNA garrison, killing three and wounding others. On hearing of this, other CNA soldiers left their barracks and opened fire on the civilian demonstrators, of whom 44 were killed. An ONUC spokesman said that the CNA soldiers had opened fire without orders, and he made derogatory remarks about CNA officers.

The ONUC (Ghanaian) garrison at Port Francqui was attacked on 2 April by a strong force of CNA troops and armed civilians. Thirty eight ONUC soldiers were killed: 32 Ghanaians, four British and two Swedish. About 50 Ghanaians were taken prisoner, but were subsequently released. CNA soldiers in Port Francqui were already in a state of unrest, and were further upset by the arrival of a provincial minister from Luluabourg, where there had been fighting between Baluba and Lulua tribesmen. A Ghanaian spokesman later stated that the garrison had been overwhelmed because the Ghanaians had first tried to parley with the threatening CNA forces instead of opening fire. Hammarskjöld strongly protested to President Kasavubu, demanding that those responsible be punished.

During the first week in August fighting broke out around Lake Mukumba (50 miles from Luluabourg) between Luntu tribesman and an invading Baluba force from South Kasai. Guns, spears and poisoned arrows were used by both sides, and ONUC helicopters reported dozens of burnt-out huts. The number of casualties was not known, but Luntu refugees spoke of heavy losses in the fighting, and of men, women and children being indiscriminately massacred. This had occurred in an area that had only just been evacuated by ONUC forces.

A massive famine had prevailed in Kasai Province from December 1960 and April 1961. Although estimates vary, at its height it is probable that over 200 people perished daily. Considerable assistance was provided to the starving by ONUC and various UN and international agencies and bodies. In April there were still some 300 000

Baluba refugees in the Bakwanga area. They were completely reliant on international aid, having been driven back to their homeland by tribal warfare and political victimisation, largely by Lumumbaists from Kivu, Oriental and North Kasai Provinces.

The famine had involved some 2250000 people – the greater part of the Baluba tribe living in southern Kasai. At first the main Bakwanga–Luluabourg road was blocked, so US and Swedish aircraft flew in food and emergency supplies, but when it was opened ONUC trucks took in millions of tons of food and other aid to the devastated area. A good maize crop did much to help end the famine.

The situation in Kivu

The greatest devastation occurred in Kivu Province. Once the restraints of Belgian colonialism had been lifted some areas reverted to barbarism, which included indisciplined Lumumbaist armed militia attacks against ONUC troops, the murder of Belgian priests and nuns, robbing Europeans and the activities of the notorious ‘Leopardmen’, a fanatical sect that was dedicated to exterminating Europeans and indulged in witchcraft and probably human sacrifice. ONUC (Malay and Nigerian) troops strove to maintain order in the towns and to provide some protection to outlying areas.

An ONUC (Nigerian) unit was ambushed near Kindu on 2 February 1961 by Lumumbaist militia, six of whom were killed when ONUC soldiers opened fire. The following day ONUC (Nigerian) troops were attacked in their barracks in Kindu by 1500 Lumumbaists (UN figures). One ONUC soldier was killed and four others were reported missing, but the unit held out until a UN-arranged ceasefire came into effect.

In Bukavu on the 16th, members of a Lumumba youth movement broke into a Belgian mission house, murdered a priest, mutilated his body and set fire to the premises. Other priests and nuns escaped to seek ONUC protection. ONUC (Nigerian) troops imposed a curfew on Bukavu and, jointly with CNA soldiers, patrolled the streets. Dayal, in a report to the UN, drew attention to the complete breakdown of authority in the province, the absence of any effective government, and the fact that the local population had been exposed to unbridled violence, especially after the assassination of Lumumba. He also mentioned that a number of soldiers and politicians were being held by the Gizenga administration in Stanleyville and faced execution.

During the spring of 1961 in Kivu Province, which was nominally under Lumumbaist control, lawless groups roamed the countryside,

committing murders, beatings and robberies, especially against isolated Europeans, of whom about 300 still remained. Nearly all the mines and plantations had been abandoned, but the Lumumbaist administration such as it was, refused to allow the remaining Europeans to leave as this might result in the province's economy collapsing completely. Many rumours of acts of atrocity and the maltreatment of Europeans were later substantiated.

Also in the spring in Kivu Province, a joint ONUC–CNA force mounted an operation in the Kasongo area against bands of Leopardmen, some of which were several hundred strong. Armed with spears, bows and arrows, the Leopardmen roamed the bush with the intention of killing every European they encountered. The operation had some effect.

In northern and central Congo in the Summer of 1961, Leopoldville and Equator provinces were under the loose control of the central government, while much of Oriental Province was under the control of Gizenga's Lumumbaist administration in Stanleyville. Two administrations were functioning in Kasai Province: Kalonji's South Kasai Mining State, which was cooperating with President Kasavubu; and the anti-Lumumbaist administration in Luluabourg, which only exercised nominal authority in areas with predominantly Lumumbaist sympathies.

Most of Katanga Province was controlled by President Tshombe's regime in Elizabethville, although Lumumbaists had established themselves in northern Katanga and set up 'Lulua state', while Kivu Province completely lacked an effective administration, Lumumbaist control being less than nominal.

Operation Rum Punch

On 28 August 1961 President Kasavubu demanded, in accordance with the UN resolution of 21 February 1960, the immediate expulsion of all European soldiers and political advisers employed in Katanga. On the same day ONUC launched Operation Rum Punch. Some 11 000 of its troops occupied key points in Katanga, rounding up 512 officers, including Belgians and other Europeans in the command structure of the Katangan armed forces, which at the time had an estimated strength of 12–15 000 (ONUC figures). The following day Tshombe announced that he would comply with the demand.

On the 30th Prime Minister Adoula made a nationwide broadcast to announce that central government forces were advancing into Katanga to eliminate the Tshombe outlaws, alleging that European mercenaries had attacked the Luluabourg–Kamina railway line.

On the 31st the UN representative in Katanga, Conor Cruise O'Brien, who had succeeded Dayal and was suspected of masterminding the ONUC operation, asked Tshombe to suspend his minister of the interior, Godefroid Munongo, because he was suspected of organising a killing campaign against ONUC personnel and troops. Munongo denied the allegation, and Tshombe refused to suspend him. The Katangan foreign minister, Evariste Kimba, told a special session of the Katangan Assembly on 5 September that Katanga would make no further concessions to ONUC. There followed several days of rioting, and on the 7th the Indian commander of the ONUC troops in Katanga gave soldiers the orders to fire back if fired upon.

Operation Morthor

The central government invited Hammarskjöld to visit the Congo and he duly arrived on 12 September 1961. O'Brien asked Tshombe to go to Leopoldville to meet him, but Tshombe refused to do so, fearing that his safety would not be guaranteed as he had been tricked on a previous occasion and suffered detention. However, he offered to meet the UN secretary general in Katanga, and was also prepared to meet Prime Minister Adoula anywhere in the Congo other than Leopoldville. A senior UN official, Mahmoud Khiari, flew to Elizabethville in an unsuccessful bid to persuade Tshombe to go to Leopoldville, Tshombe trusted neither ONUC nor the central government.

On the 13th O'Brien launched Operation Morthor (Hindi for Smash), which in effect was a continuation of Operation Rum Punch, whereby ONUC took control of Katanga Province 'in order to prevent civil war'. O'Brien had not obtained permission to launch the operation, but as it succeeded little was said about this omission until later. O'Brien declared that the secession of Katanga had ended and that Katanga Province would henceforth be run by the central government. Tshombe, Munongo and other Katangan leaders went underground. Several days of fighting commenced between ONUC forces and the Katangan gendarmerie, still led by European officers, in Elizabethville, Jadotville and the Kamina air base. ONUC was outgunned and outnumbered, and an Irish contingent surrendered after being encircled at Jadotville. The death toll in this encounter was never clearly stated, but most agreed that it amounted to several hundred.

This drastic ONUC operation and heavy loss of life attracted widespread condemnation, especially from Western UN members, including Britain and France, which accused ONUC of exceeding its remit. The

United States expressed regret at the heavy loss of life, but insisted that the Congo must remain united. Hammarskjöld was criticised by South Africa, while Welensky (now the Rhodesian federal prime minister) demanded a ceasefire and a commission of enquiry.

Sture Linner, the chief UN representative in the Congo, perhaps in defence of Hammarskjöld, who had probably known little about O'Brien's intentions, later claimed that he had told the UN secretary general on 14 September that foreign officers in the Katangan forces constituted a dangerous threat to ONUC personnel and property, that arrangements to repatriate them through the Belgian consul in Elizabethville had not been properly observed, and that some had slipped back to fight as mercenaries (UN documents).

Death of Hammarskjöld

The violent upsurge of fighting in Katanga certainly worried Hammarskjöld, who was anxious to stop it as soon as possible. In the hope of bringing about a ceasefire, on the evening of 17 September 1961 he set off on a flight from Leopoldville to Ndola in Rhodesia, (making a detour to avoid flying over Katanga) to meet certain leaders, including Tshombe, two of his ministers (Jean Kibwe and Evariste Kimba). O'Brien and Lord Alport (the British high commissioner to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland).

Hammarskjöld's chartered Swedish aircraft was overdue by about two hours when a search was mounted. The wreckage of the plane was eventually discovered in the bush about eight miles from Ndola. Eighteen of the 19 passengers were dead including the UN secretary general, and the nineteenth, a US serviceman, only lived for a few hours.

A subsequent Rhodesian board of enquiry reported that there was no sign of the aircraft having been fired upon, nor of an explosion on board, but that the plane had had its undercarriage down and the landing gear had struck tree tops. A large consignment of arms and ammunition was on board, and some cartridges and percussion caps were embedded in the bodies. The serviceman who briefly survived said that just before the crash Hammarskjöld had changed his mind about landing at Ndola and ordered the pilot to change course, shortly after which there had been a large explosion, followed by a series of smaller ones.

Dag Hammarskjöld had been UN secretary general since April 1953 and during his term of office he had promoted an upfront UN presence in international areas of tension. In general, Western nations had supported him in his Congo venture, while African and Asian countries had often accused him of exceeding his remit. In Moscow, for example,

his death was reported without additional comment; in Cairo and Belgrade there was dancing in the streets.

Just prior to his death he had been engaged in a massive reorganisation of the UN Secretariat, involving the appointment of several extra assistant secretaries general, five of whom were to have political functions. Mission galloping to the last. In November U Thant, a Burmese permanent representative, was elected as acting secretary general. His tenure would end in April 1963, when Hammarskjöld's term of office would have expired.

Katangan ceasefire

In Ndola on 19 September, Tshombe met a UN delegation headed by Mahmoud Khiari. An agreement was reached for a ceasefire, to come into effect in Katanga on the 21st, and for a mixed commission to be appointed to settle relations between ONUC and the Katangan forces. The agreement provided for a complete halt to the movement of troops, arms and munitions, and for an exchange of prisoners. When Katangan troops reported the capture of the Kamina base from ONUC, the ceasefire became effective on both sides, but the situation was complicated by a body of CNA troops advancing into Katanga from Kasai and Oriental Provinces. This had been ordered by Prime Minister Adoula, who disapproved of the Katangan ceasefire and wanted the CNA to terminate the Katangan secession problem once and for all. He had not been consulted about the ceasefire.

It was announced on the 21st in New York that the UN had decided to create an ONUC air force in the Congo to support the 16000 ONUC troops in that country. Sweden supplied four jet fighters and four transport planes, Ethiopia four fighters, India six Canberra jet bombers, and the United States, Denmark and Norway several transport aircraft and two helicopters. This gave ONUC considerable additional military muscle.

Truce commission

Talks began on 26 September 1961 in Elizabethville between an ONUC truce commission, headed by Mahmoud Khiari, and the government of Katanga. On 13 October a ceasefire protocol was agreed, under which the situation prior to 13 September was virtually restored. ONUC agreed to hand back to the Katangan buildings and installations seized during the fighting and recognised the right of Katanga to defend itself against outside attack. The exchange of prisoners was delayed until the

16th, when 191 ONUC soldiers (including 184 Irish troops captured at Jadotville) were freed (ONUC figures).

This ceasefire agreement was meant to apply only to ONUC forces in Katanga, not outside that province, but differences in interpretation soon became apparent. In Leopoldville, Khiari said that ONUC would not consider an attack by the CNA as being an attack from outside, and that Katanga could not make war against the central government as its gendarmerie was only for internal policing.

Adoula's CNA forces crossed into Katanga, and on 18 October Katangan gendarmes attacked and repulsed them. On the 31st ONUC announced it would use jet fighters against Katangan aircraft, which had been bombing CNA targets in Kasai Province. Further clashes occurred in and around a camp near Elizabethville that housed some 30 000 Baluba refugees, causing O'Brien to protest that the Katangan government was in multiple violation of the ceasefire agreement.

Tshombe offered to send two ministers to Prime Minister Adoula in Leopoldville for discussions, but laid down three conditions: an end to anti-Katangan propaganda on Radio Leopoldville, an end to hostile speeches by central government ministers, and the withdrawal of CNA troops from Katanga. The central government rejected these and other terms put forward by Tshombe.

A UN Security Council resolution of 24 November 1961 gave full support to ONUC, which asked for more troops to eject European mercenaries, boasting that during the disturbances the population of Luluabourg had been protected by its troops and that it had restored law and order in Stanleyville. Furthermore, it was protecting the population of Abertville from acts of violence by indisciplined CNA soldiers. In Kindu in Kivu Province in October, 13 Italian crew members of an ONUC transport aircraft plane were killed and hacked to pieces by CNA soldiers from Stanleyville.

Prime Minister Adoula

In late November 1961 Prime Minister Adoula was facing criticism in the Congolese Assembly, with Lumumbaist (MNC) deputies accusing him of treason for not taking firm military action to end the Katangan secession, despite orders to do so. Lumumbaist deputies also accused him of giving too much publicity to the massacre of the 13 Italian airmen in Kindu, which they claimed should be set against the killing of thousands of Congolese in recent months. Victor Gbenya (minister of the interior) issued a report absolving Gizenga of all blame for the

murder of the Italian airmen, stating that they had been killed because the CNA troops had mistaken them for mercenaries.

O'Brien resigns

Conor Cruise O'Brien, the ONUC representative in Katanga, announced his resignation on 1 December 1961 in order, he claimed, to recover his freedom of speech and action. He said that he had gone to Katanga to ensure that UN resolutions were implemented, but nothing had been done. He stated that there were more than 500 foreigners serving in the Katangan gendarmerie, 200 of whom were Belgians on its regular establishment, and that all key positions in the force were held by Belgians. O'Brien also complained of mounting criticism from Britain and France, both of which were permanent members of the UN Security Council and had called for his removal. He also alleged that Britain was in favour of Katangan separation. In New York the UN Secretariat stated that if Tshombe regained control over the Katangan gendarmerie, ONUC would use force against him.

Operation UNOKAT

In Katanga during the following days there were several clashes between ONUC units and the Katangan gendarmerie, and on 4 December 1961 CNA troops occupied the town of Kongolo, just inside Katanga's northern border. Tshombe, who was visiting France at the time, blandly declared that there were no mercenary soldiers in Katanga. The following day Katangan armed forces, spearheaded by European mercenaries, mounted an attack on the ONUC HQ in Elizabethville.

U Thant ordered ONUC to take appropriate action and it duly launched Operation UNOKAT, whose main objective seemed to be the resumption of full freedom of movement on the roads. Fighting began when ONUC (Indian) troops stormed a roadblock that Evariste Kimba, the Katangan foreign minister, had promised the previous day would be removed. There were heavy losses on both sides.

During the next three days ONUC troops steadily advanced towards Elizabethville, meeting unexpectedly strong resistance at three points: a road tunnel between the city and the ONUC (Swedish) camp, a roundabout on the road to the airport, and the ONUC HQ and its adjoining (Indian) camp. A Katangan plane dropped several bombs on Elizabethville airport, whereupon ONUC aircraft attacked the Kolwezi

airfield, a main base for Katangan combat planes, thus demonstrating its complete air superiority.

The fighting continued. The road tunnel changed hands several times, and ONUC aircraft attacked a hotel occupied by Katangan forces, while ONUC ground troops slowly pushed forward, using mortars and small arms fire. During the fray the central post office and a hospital were hit by ONUC bombs. By the 15th the ONUC forces had taken about one third of the city environs.

By this time an additional 2000 ONUC troops had been flown into Elizabethville, bringing the total engaged in Operation UNOKAT up to the 4500 mark, backed up by another 5000 elsewhere in Katanga. Ranged against them were about 11 000 Katangan troops. Approximately 7000 European inhabitants had taken refuge in their houses – several were killed and a number wounded.

ONUC aircraft made rocket attacks on the HQ of the Union Minière in Elizabethville, which was housing snipers, and by the 17th ONUC ground forces had taken the road tunnel, the central post office, the hotel occupied by Katangan troops, and a Katangan camp area. Two days later an ONUC spokesman claimed that ONUC (Ethiopian) troops had occupied part of the Union Minière industrial complex in the face of heavy mortar and automatic fire, adding that ONUC was also in control of Radio Katanga. There had been twelve days of intense fighting and heavy casualties.

In Paris Tshombe declared that as the Union Minière had deserted him, his troops would blow up its installations in Elizabethville, Kolwezi and Jadotville. U Thant stated that the Union Minière had not only been manufacturing bombs and armoured vehicles for the Katangan forces, but had helped conceal the presence of European mercenaries by putting them on its payroll. It was also claimed that a Katangan master-plan had been drawn up by the European mercenaries, and as a last resort a scorched earth policy would be implemented, involving the destruction of mines and other industrial installations. Fighting in Katanga rumbled on, but at a much lower intensity, with ONUC forces steadily occupying more of the Union Minière industrial complex and Tshombe complaining that ONUC troops were shelling civilians.

The Kitona ceasefire

Eventually Tshombe appealed to US President Kennedy to intervene, and it was he who was instrumental in arranging for Tshombe to meet Prime Minister Adoula at Kitona military base in Leopoldville Province

on 19 December, after ONUC had announced it had occupied the HQ of the Union Minière and its industrial complex in Elizabethville.

A ceasefire agreement was reached on 21 December 1961. The essential part of the agreement was acceptance of a united Congo under the authority of Head of State Kasavubu and the central government. The Katangan gendarmerie was also to be placed under the head of state. After some argument this was eventually agreed by the Katangan government on 15 February 1962, and negotiations would begin with the central government for a peaceful solution.

Alleged ONUC atrocities

International governments and their media had become hardened to the stream of horror stories emanating from the Congo of massacres and atrocities by Congolese factions, and even the CNA, but was startled to discover that ONUC was not blameless in this respect. ONUC's Operation UNOKAT had attracted not only a large number of reporters but also many informed political commentators and researchers, some of whom had published their findings.

One such report, *The Tragedy of the Congo* by Lord Russell, a British human rights advocate, written after a fact-finding tour, contained allegations of ONUC atrocities. Examples included the indiscriminate mortar bombing of civilian centres in Elizabethville, including hospitals, and the killing of many civilians. He even asserted that one ONUC contingent (which he named) was completely out of control, and suggested an urgent enquiry into the behaviour of ONUC troops in Katanga.

Another report *Forty-six Angry Men*, published in Brussels by a group of doctors who had witnessed the events in Katanga during the last weeks of 1961, described widespread violation of the Geneva Convention of Human Rights in Elizabethville, particularly the killing of unarmed men, which was backed up by photographs. The authors accused three ONUC contingents, listing their nationalities.

Reconciliation talks fail

Reconciliation talks between the central and Katangan governments dragged on fruitlessly. In February 1962 fighting again erupted in Katanga and the Katangan gendarmerie retook Kongolo, which had been held by CNA troops. Tshombe met Adoula in Leopoldville on 18 March, but once again the talks ended without agreement. Tshombe's safety had been guaranteed by ONUC, and when CNA troops tried to

detain him at the airport ONUC troops had to intervene and escort him to his aircraft. There was mutual distrust between the central government and Tshombe.

Eventually Tshombe, under ONUC protection, was persuaded to return to Leopoldville in May to attend reconciliation talks in the presence of ONUC officials. An agreement was reached on the 30th to form a military commission to integrate the Katangan gendarmerie into the CNA. (At the time the Katangan gendarmerie was about 11 000 strong, while the CNA had between 30 000 and 40 000 soldiers.) The talks broke down on 26 June.

Previously, in May, a start was made to release all Katangan political prisoners, thought to number about 700, but this became confused with the larger issue as under international pressure the central government had to deal with the matter on a nationwide scale. Being in financial difficulties, the central government suggested that the Union Minière should pay its royalties directly to it instead of to the Katangan provincial government. However the Union Minière refused, saying that it 'would not pay a power out to break its power' (Guardian).

In July President Kasavubu created the new province of North Katanga, mainly inhabited by Balubas hostile to Tshombe, but this was not recognised by Tshombe. On the 17th there was a demonstration by several thousand women in Elizabethville and more than 20 ONUC personnel were injured.

U Thant's plan

After months of deadlock, in August 1962 U Thant produced a reconciliation plan for the Congo, which contained a considerable amount of American input. In essence it called for a federal constitution, shared revenues, reorganisation of the CNA and economic sanctions for non-compliance, to be implemented in four stages. It was accepted in principle by Prime Minister Adoula on 23 August and by Tshombe on 3 September. But there was hesitation over its implementation, especially in Katanga.

Continued Katangan opposition

On 9 October 1962 Robert Gardiner, now the UN representative in Katanga and hence virtually the civilian head of ONUC, reported that a military build-up was in progress in Katanga, that up to 500 European mercenaries were still operating in the province, that more military

aircraft had been received by way of South Africa, and that underground aircraft and fuel shelters were being constructed in Kolwezi.

However it was agreed in Elizabethville on the 16th that there should be a ceasefire in North Katanga, but this was not accepted by Prime Minister Adoula as it did not apply to the remainder of Katanga, and also because it was not part of the U Thant reconciliation plan. Adoula's political position was weakening, having been defeated in the Central Assembly over the freeing of imprisoned deputies and the ending of the 'military government', as well as losing a vote of confidence on 22 November 1962, when ABAKO moved into opposition.

During November ONUC continually accused the Katangans of offensive military action, claiming, for example, that on the 11th they had dropped 92 bombs (ONUC figure) on CNA positions in North Katanga, while the Katangans accused ONUC of preparing to end their secession by military means – ONUC had just received about ten bomber aircraft and some anti-aircraft units.

Prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 the United States had regarded the Congo and Black Africa as peripheral sideshows. Now they were taken more seriously – the Congo was given higher priority, and the United States began to give financial aid to the central government and to work for federal stability. The Katangan problem troubled the United States.

On 11 December ONUC demanded that Tshombe cease bombarding ONUC units in North Katanga (using mercenary-piloted aircraft), lift the blockade on ONUC units in Sakania and Dilolo, and remove all road barriers in the Elizabethville area. U Thant went further and demanded, among other things, that the Union Miniere stop paying revenues to the Katangan provincial government and that Britain, Portugal and South Africa take strong measures to prevent the shipment of Katangan copper through their territories. During 1961, for example, Katanga had exported over 293 000 metric tons of copper (*Financial Times*).

Operation Grand Slam

US influence was becoming paramount in Congo, and wanting to see a quick and satisfactory solution to the Katangan problem, on 20 December 1962 the United States announced the dispatch of a US military mission to Leopoldville. The mission's task would be to determine what additional forms of assistance could be provided by the United States to improve the ability of ONUC to maintain peace in the Congo.

On the 27th Tshombe alleged that ONUC was trying to arrest him and his provincial ministers, to paralyse his administration and plunge the province into chaos. ONUC denied this (although that was exactly what it was trying to do), claiming that the Katangan gendarmerie had opened fire on its (Indian and Ethiopian) troops, who had orders not to shoot back unless directly attacked. Shooting continued throughout the night.

According to ONUC, it then contacted Tshombe, who gave orders for a ceasefire to come into effect at 0800 hours. When this failed to happen ONUC, assuming that Tshombe was not in full control of his gendarmerie and because he would not commit his order to writing, swung into action with Operation Grand Slam on the 28th. In the course of that day ONUC civilian personnel were evacuated from the Elizabethville area.

ONUC claimed that it did not commence Operation Grand Slam until after 1600 hours, when it launched its major attacks and fierce fighting continued for some hours. By the end of the 29th Elizabethville was under the control of ONUC, which also occupied Kipushi and Kamina on the 30th. Gardiner announced that the 'defensive action' had been successfully concluded, and that only nine ONUC soldiers and 75 Africans (meaning mainly Katangans) had been killed. U Thant, while regretting that military force had been necessary, congratulated ONUC on a successful operation. A curfew was imposed on the Elizabethville area and ONUC troops occupied key positions.

At that time Tshombe was in Salisbury, Rhodesia, visiting Prime Minister Welensky, who advised him to resume negotiations with the central government and ONUC. Tshombe rejected this advice, and instead declared that his armed forces would employ scorched earth tactics. ONUC gave Tshombe a guarantee of personal safety, and he returned to Katanga late on the 30th. Landing at Kolwezi, he complained that ONUC troops had committed atrocities. U Thant gave Tshombe two weeks to come to an agreement with the central government, invited the Union Minière to share its revenue with that government, and ordered Katangans to hand over all their weapons and the Katangan air force to surrender within 24 hours. U Thant blamed the Katangan gendarmerie for practically everything. Nothing much happened for a few days.

On 3 January 1963 ONUC forces advanced towards Jadotville and blew up a key bridge near that town, which disrupted land communications considerably. There was some doubt about whether U Thant had actually authorised this operation, there being rumours that policy differences had arisen between U Thant and Gardiner. ONUC pressure

on Katanga continued, power supplies were disrupted to Union Minière installations and a cobalt factory was destroyed, as were more bridges. About 50 000 Katangans had fled their homes when the ONUC attacks began, many making for the Rhodesian border, although most returned after a few days. ONUC units remained in deployed positions.

Tshombe reappeared in Elizabethville on the 8th, still in an aggressive mood. The same day Prime Minister Adoula received a letter from the chiefs of the main Katangan tribes, pledging support for the central government and calling for the arrest of Tshombe and the formation of a new provincial government. The following day Tshombe was briefly detained by ONUC soldiers, but was released so that he could travel to Mokambo, near the Rhodesian border, to meet Godefroid Munongo and other provincial ministers. During his journey it was alleged that he was urging his supporters to resist ONUC. Power slipped away from him as ONUC troops occupied government offices in Elizabethville and the radio station, as well as Mokambo, Bakania and, on the 10th, Sinkolobwe, a large abandoned gendarmerie base. The central government expelled the British and Belgian consuls from Elizabethville, and on the 16th the British embassy in Leopoldville was sacked.

Katangan secession ends

On 15 January 1963 Tshombe stated that he was ready to end the secession of Katanga and to return to Elizabethville to supervise the implementation of the U Thant reconciliation plan, which included freedom of movement for ONUC. Tshombe asked Adoula for amnesty for himself, his government and his Katangan officials. At a press conference Adoula accepted Tshombe's offer, confirmed his amnesty and promised that the Katangan gendarmerie would be integrated into the CNA.

General Norbert Moke, commander of the gendarmerie, and a number of Katangan officers took an oath of allegiance to the head of state in Leopoldville on 8 February. Previously a number of Katangan mutineers had been awarded prison sentences. Many former Katangan gendarmes still lingered in the bush, clashing occasionally with CNA troops. Adoula visited Elizabethville, where he was cheered by the Balubas, but in other townships he was jeered at and stoned.

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Prime Minister Tshombe

Having accepted the principles of U Thant's August 1962 reconciliation plan for the Congo, with the support of the UN and the United States, Prime Minister Adoula and his central government set to work to reabsorb or bring under control the so-called 'separated provinces', meaning the several breakaway groups that either sought secession or were opposed to it. Most of those concerned saw themselves as disciples of Lumumba, carrying a torch for his ideals and often using the MNC as their political label.

The Gizenga regime

A start had already been made with the ending of the Gizenga regime, which had been established in southern Kasai in August 1960 and formally recognised by the Soviet Union. Although Antoine Gizenga had been appointed first vice president in Adoula's cabinet in August 1961 he had remained absent from Leopoldville thereafter. In January 1962 the Central Assembly demanded that he return within 48 hours to face charges relating to his secessionist activities. He replied that he would only return when the Katangan secession problem was resolved.

Gizenga then tried to arrest General Lundula of the CNA and a UN official, who were in Stanleyville to investigate the massacre of the 13 Italian airmen in Kindu, but this failed when his militiamen would not obey his orders. Clashes between Gizenga supporters and CNA soldiers ensued and a number of people were killed. U Thant ordered ONUC to restore order in Stanleyville, while Prime Minister Adoula ordered Gizenga's arrest. Gradually members of Gizenga's bodyguard surrendered to General Lundula and his CNA troops, and Gizenga was placed under house arrest, guarded by ONUC and CNA soldiers.

Adoula formally dismissed Gizenga from his cabinet and the latter was flown in an ONUC aircraft to Leopoldville, where he was detained in Camp Kokolo. Sture Linner offered Gizenga ONUC protection, which he refused. He was then moved to Moansa, an isolated island off the South Atlantic coast, and later to the island of Bula Bemba at the mouth of the River Congo.

Numerous protests were made to the central government by communist states as Gizenga represented Lumumbaism abroad, and in a Central Assembly debate in February 1962 Adoula promised that Gizenga would not be executed, even though Soviet weaponry had been found in his baggage. A Central Assembly commission was set up to investigate his activities, and in May he was found guilty of incitement to mutiny, maltreatment of prisoners and seeking foreign aid (from President Nasser of Egypt) to launch a rebellion. His Assembly immunity was lifted.

Foreign aid

Meanwhile Prime Minister Adoula tried to solicit foreign military aid to equip the CNA, which was to be reorganised, but in spite of the plug given by U Thant there was hesitation, as African UN members objected to NATO countries being involved in the process and Muslim members objected to Israeli participation. General Mobutu, the army commander, claimed that his country had the right to receive any military missions it chose but would prefer ones from Western nations, the UN promising to fund them.

Mobutu included Belgium in his comments, and in August 1963 a technical assistance agreement was signed in Leopoldville for the Belgian army to provide 140 officers to help train the CNA. The US mission found that French speakers were essential and that Belgians were more amicable than the French in this respect. The Americans could not do it all alone. Belgium also agreed to provide 2150 other personnel to work in the Congo, including doctors, medical and administrative staff and police – a reversal of Hammarskjöld's policy. Offers of civilian help with reconstruction in various forms now poured into the Congo from a wide variety of nations, despite its unsettled state.

In keeping with the spirit of U Thant's plan, in April 1963 Adoula had formed a Government of Reconciliation, which included a number of Lumumbaist, CONAKAT and BALUBAKAT leaders, such as Joseph Kasongo (MNC) as vice-premier, Justin Bomboko (UNIMO), Cleophas Kamitatu (PSA), Albert Delvaux (PNP) and others.

Internal disturbances

During the first half of 1963 there was considerable unrest in various parts of the Congo, notably in Katanga Province. In Elizabethville there was a spate of indiscriminate shooting of individuals. In Jadotville there were several tribal clashes, which according to Tshombe were instigated by Jason Sendwe, who was trying to gain control of the large towns in the province. In May ONUC blocked a raid on Union Miniere installations.

In April Tshombe reorganised his provincial cabinet, and in May the province of South Katanga (which had been created in July 1962) was again divided by the creation of a new province called Lualaba, embracing the western part of South Katanga and including Kolwezi.

The South Kasai Mining State

Meanwhile Albert Kalonji, the self-styled 'king' of the autonomous Mining State in southern Kasai – financed largely by revenue from the Forminiere Company, which produced some 80 per cent of the world's diamonds – gave less than nominal allegiance to the central government and continued to wield dictatorial powers. In December 1961 the Central Assembly had lifted Kalonji's immunity and he had immediately been arrested, the main charge against him being the maltreatment of political enemies. In April 1962 in Leopoldville he had been sentenced to five years in prison for arresting a political rival in Bakwanga in South Kasai, but this term had been reduced on appeal. Previously Cleophas Kamitatu, the central government minister of the interior, had requested that CNA troops be sent to South Kasai to help counter secessionists, but this had been blocked by ONUC, which had refused transportation facilities.

After pledging loyalty to the central government, Kalonji had been released from prison to return to Bakwanga to reassume leadership of the provincial government. He had sent a telegram of thanks to Kamitatu. A central government commissioner had been sent to South Kasai, and leaders of Kalonji's militia had pledged allegiance to the Leopoldville government.

In October 1962 a revolt by the South Kasai gendarmerie was quelled, after which Kalonji and his ministers were placed under house arrest and the central government took direct control of Bakwanga. Kalonji disappeared from view for a while, later surfacing in Britain, and Joseph Ngalula became president of South Kasai.

Tribal clashes occurred in several parts of the region, and work at the Forminiere Company was occasionally interrupted. In September it had been reported that some 1500 Lulua tribesmen were fleeing towards Luluabourg, pursued by pillaging members of the Tchokwe tribe. During January and February 1963 rebellious Mpuku tribesmen clashed with ONUC (Liberian) troops after Mpuku terrorist tactics had caused some 100 000 men, women and children to flee into the bush. Missionaries reported that the death rate could be as high as 3000 a week, and over 90 000 people in South Kasai were being fed by international relief organisations.

The internal situation

The internal situation in the Congo generally remained unsettled, and disturbances in various parts of the country required the intervention of the CNA and ONUC. In June 1963 in Stanleyville, provincial president Georges Grenfell, a Lumumbaist, was forced from office, having been accused of establishing a private militia and committing acts of violence against his opponents. He was replaced by a central government official. In August in East Katanga, about 2000 former Katangan gendarmerie rebels burned down several villages and were ousted from the town of Kasongo by CNA troops.

Also in August, an ONUC spokesman, after taking the town of Mitwaba, announced ONUC's intention to occupy all major population centres in Katanga in order to deny them to roaming bands of ex-gendarmes. In September ONUC troops moved against the Tshokwe tribe, which had been rioting and looting in Kolwezi and Dilolo, a railway centre near the Angolan border. The following month in Luluabourg a body of CNA cadets suppressed a revolt by the gendarmerie.

In Leopoldville the same month, Prime Minister Adoula announced that a strike by public servants, which had just been called off, had been intended as a lead-in to a Lumumbaist coup, organised from Brazzaville by Victor Gbenye, who was loudly calling for the release of Gizenga. A state of emergency was declared in the capital and CNA troops patrolled the streets. Kasavubu briefly dissolved the Central Assembly in September.

In November in Leopoldville, a small group of CNA soldiers attacked General Mobutu, the army commander, and General Victor Nendake, his chief of staff. The culprits were arrested, charged and tried, and were eventually executed in February 1964. In Leopoldville a state of

emergency was declared, which was continually extended as a spate of bomb explosions followed. Several arrests were made. The authorities claimed that the explosives had originated in Algeria, a country hostile to the Adoula government.

A congress of political parties and tribal associations was held in Jadotville (Katanga) in March 1964, at which it was decided to form an alliance of the three principal organisations – AFEKER, BALUBAKAT and CONAKAT – to be known as the ABC. It was to be headquartered in Elizabethville, and in July Remy Mwamba was elected its president.

Suspension of the Central Assembly

On 2 March 1964 President Kasavubu suspended the Central Assembly, which was falling apart, its nominal 137 deputies being unable to form a quorum due to the defection of at least 15 deputies to the new National Liberation Committee (NLC), operating in Brazzaville. Another 30–40 had left Leopoldville for the interior, while others, fearing arrest, had never taken seats. One of the latter was Pierre Mulele, who was leading a revolt in Kwilu Province.

A committee sitting in Luluabourg produced a new draft constitution and published its proposals, which included an executive president elected for a five-year period to form government policy and oversee its execution. The powers of the prime minister and the Central Assembly would be drastically curtailed. A referendum, monitored by international observers, was held in July on the new constitution for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was reported to have gained the approval of 92 per cent of the voters. The constitution was promulgated by President Kasavubu the following month.

During the run-up period there had been a realignment of political parties and three new coalitions had been formed. One was the Front Commun National (FCN), an alliance of 13 left-wing parties opposed to Cyrille Adoula. The alliance included the MNC, which in December 1963 had officially declared its opposition to the NLC. The second was RADECO (*Rassemblement des démocrates congolaise*), consisting of about 50 small political groups under Jacques Mass – Adoula was elected its president on 14 June 1964. The third was the Comité Démocratique Africain (CDA), formed on 14 June upon the merger of Kasavubu's ABAKO and several smaller parties. On 30 June Kasavubu formally dissolved the Central Assembly, announcing that he would take supreme command of the army in close cooperation with General Mobutu, the army commander.

National Liberation Committee

The opposition National Liberation Committee (NLC) – headed by Victor Gbenye, consisting mainly of Gizenga supporters and remaining in convenient exile and sanctuary across the River Congo in Congo (Brazzaville) – became a centre of Lumumbaist revolutionary activities. In January 1964 the central government exhibited a collection of Soviet arms, said to have been landed at night at Bolobo near Leopoldville from Congo (Brazzaville), while on 2 April it alleged that an NLC plot had been hatched to subvert CNA soldiers and assassinate certain political personalities, including President Kasavubu. Arrests were made.

The central government also accused the NLC of inciting rebellion in parts of the Congo, with a degree of success in Kwilu, central and southern Kivu and North Katanga. Several extra ‘provinces’ or ‘districts’ had been already created by the government on the ground that the huge territories of the original six were far too large for efficient administration; but this policy was also grounded in the relative strength of the revolutionary forces.

In early June it was reported that Chinese military experts had arrived in Congo (Brazzaville) and were working as instructors at the NLC training camp in Gambona, just north of Brazzaville. It was also claimed that NLC personnel were being sent to China to train. The central government complained to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) that the Brazzaville government was actively supporting these rebels, and the OAU agreed to conduct a commission of enquiry.

Back in November 1963 two Soviet diplomats, returning from a visit to Brazzaville, had been arrested in Leopoldville and documents they had with them indicated that they had been about to give the NLC a huge sum of money in counterfeit Congolese francs in order to disrupt the Congolese economy. Another Soviet diplomat had been arrested, more incriminating evidence had been found, and the entire Soviet embassy staff (over 100 people) and all Soviet journalists had been expelled. The United States had been very pleased, and became even more willing to provide financial and military aid to the central government.

Prime Minister Tshombe

During his exile in Paris and Madrid, Tshombe was reelected president of CONAKAT. He arrived back in the Congo in June 1964, reportedly at the invitation of the central government. He at once declared he would

work for reconciliation and the release of political prisoners, especially Gizenga.

President Kasavubu asked Tshombe to form a cabinet. This was sworn in on 10 July and included Godefroid Munongo, Albert Kalonji and several NLC members. This was a bold gesture on Kasavubu's part, but in his quest for unity he realised that Tshombe must be made part of the government, rather than be left outside to work against it. Nonetheless Tshombe's previously broken promises caused doubt and criticism.

Tshombe's first acts were to release about 600 political prisoners, and to lift a curfew on Leopoldville that had been in force for several weeks due to a series of bombing incidents. Antoine Gizenga was released, and Tshombe drove with him through the streets of Leopoldville to applause and acclaim. Tshombe ordered his former Katangan gendarmes, some of whom had fled to Angola in January 1963, to return and place themselves under the command of the CNA.

Despite Tshombe's beneficence, the following month Gizenga announced he was forming a new political organisation, the Unified Lumumbaist Party (ULP), and he began to attack the Tshombe government for using force against the rebels, alleging that the government was incapable of finding a practical solution. He also condemned Western aggression. His periodical, *Jeune Afrique*, was banned after it published the NLC manifesto. In September Gizenga was placed under house arrest.

August 1964: a panic month

With a major rebellion developing on the horizon, August 1964 was something of a 'panic month' for the Tshombe government. Tshombe asked certain African states to send combat soldiers, but there was little response. He then asked for an extraordinary session of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to consider his plight, which eventually produced a conciliation commission, chaired by Jomo Kenyatta, the prime minister of Kenya. The commission met in Nairobi in September, but soon became bogged down over African objections to the increasing amount of US aid pouring into the Congo. This caused Tshombe to withdraw his cooperation, and so the project was eased into abeyance.

However the United States, offered to increase its economic and military aid to the Congo, and in fact gave all that was requested except combat troops. Tshombe asked for bomber aircraft, long-range

troop-carrying transport planes and helicopters, and several were provided, including B-26-K bombers, piloted by Americans, which were used to seek out and bomb rebel positions. US Air Force maintenance personnel and US paratroops to guard them were part of the deal. Communist bloc countries condemned US interference in the Congo's internal affairs.

Although on 24 August Tshombe had declared he would not recruit European mercenary troops to fight the rebels, he had not meant what he said. The CNA already had a few small mercenary detachments and their capability contrasted strongly with that of the CNA, whose loyalty was sometimes questionable and morale was low. The first group of 30, mainly Belgian and French, arrived that day in the Congo, and at the same time recruitment officers, claiming to be acting for the central government, opened offices in Salisbury (Rhodesia) and Johannesburg (South Africa), offering contracts for a six-month period of service and a death payment to the next of kin. Almost 300 European volunteers had arrived at the Kamina base by the end of the month. Whilst all overt recruitment ceased on 2 September following objections from the South African government, it continued covertly as the central government had a dire need for mercenaries in this crossroad period.

In Kwilu

A quick scan of the main trouble spots in the first part of 1964 shows that from January in Kwilu Province (which had been carved out from the eastern part of Leopoldville Province) Pierre Mulele's Jeunesse Movement grew from a small group of armed bands into an army of over 2000 militiamen. Mulele, a former member of Gizenga's PSA, had been a minister in Lumumba's cabinet and later an ambassador in Cairo for the Gizenga government in Stanleyville. After Gizenga's fall he had lived in exile in Egypt and China and had probably attended a course at a Chinese guerrilla warfare training centre. He had returned to the Congo in the summer of 1963 to operate in Kwilu Province. Mulele began a campaign of murder, arson and destruction against missionaries and Europeans, and when the two major tribal groups, the Bambunda and the Bapende, joined him he controlled over a third of the province.

There were no ONUC troops in Kwilu Province and only about 300 CNA soldiers. In March a detachment of about 400 additional CNA troops was sent to the province to help counter the rebel Jeunesse Movement, but it became more involved in committing atrocities

against them so little constructive progress was made. When Mulele refused to stop fighting and surrender, the central government made almost the entire province a prohibited zone, closed to travellers. To make things worse, Kwilu Province was also facing a famine.

In Kivu

In Kivu Province the rebels were led by Gaston Soumialot, whose HQ was based in Usumbura in Burundi. Soumialot was said to be in close contact with Chinese diplomats. His first major offensive took place in April 1964 when he attacked Bukavu, having previously distributed leaflets announcing that an insurrection was imminent. Soumialot claimed that Victor Gbenye, the self-styled 'President of the Revolutionary Action of the MNC (Lumumba)', had ordered him to contact the NLC provincial committees in Kivu and establish a purely Lumumbaist government there. Returning to Kivu from Brazzaville, Soumialot and his armed bands roamed the province, recruiting by force and attacking missionaries and Europeans. Soumialot recruited many Pygmies, who with their poisoned arrows became feared opponents. Their primitive magic was used to sustain the rebel's determination.

In June CNA reinforcements were dispatched to Kivu Province by air. A company of 100 soldiers was wiped out the same day and the rebels continued their bloody advance. It was admitted that American civilians were now flying bomber and transport aircraft for the central government, having been recruited by the CIA.

After the disaster in Kivu, General Mobutu took personal command of the campaign. More than 150 rebels were killed in a clash on the 15th, followed by the defeat of a 1000-strong rebel group that included African volunteers from Tanganyika. Mobutu also captured the 'chief witch' responsible for maintaining rebel morale, which curbed the rebel's aggression for the time being. Some 30 Europeans were seized by Soumialot's men and taken to the rebel HQ in Uvira to be held as hostages.

In North Katanga

In January 1964 Jason Sendwe, provincial president of North Katanga, announced that the police in Manono had been disarmed after a mutiny, and warned the population against the activities of Gbenye and Gizenga supporters. On 15 March the Provincial Assembly overthrew Sendwe and elected Kabange Numbi in his stead – Numbi led the

Progressive Congress Party, which had just seceded from Sendwe's party. However the central government promptly reinstated Sendwe.

The first widespread insurrection in North Katanga began in late May, when Lumumbaist rebels took control of Albertville, the provincial capital, and then moved on to take Kongolo, on the railway, followed by Manono, the provincial capital, which had been held by CNA forces. The CNA troops in Manono had been on the verge of mutiny, and those at the main garrison had abandoned the town as the rebels approached.

Albertville was recaptured on 30 May by a small CNA force under the command of Colonel Luis Bobozo, who had been flown in from Elizabethville. In the process Bobozo rescued Jason Sendwe from captivity – the latter declared that he had been on the point of being buried alive by the rebels, but had been rescued just in time. Over 100 rebels were killed in the action and another 150 in later reprisals.

The situation in Albertville remained chaotic and a second uprising began on 19 June, said to have been partly a reaction to the army's brutality. The uprising succeeded and the town was reoccupied by rebels. Government officials and the CNA forces in Albertville fled. Sendwe, who had tried to escape with them but had been prevented from doing so by CNA troops, was captured and murdered by the rebels. It was later revealed that a group of CNA volunteers had made an attempt to retake the town, but had all been killed.

After occupying Albertville, a railhead and ferry point on Lake Tanganyika, the rebels set out to extend the territory under their control. By 13 July they had occupied Kabalo, a railway junction, and Kasongo, a railway town, and by the 22nd they had taken Baudouinville, a ferry point on Lake Tanganyika, and Kindu, a railhead.

New ensconced in Albertville, on 24 July Gaston Soumialot announced the formation of a provisional government of the National Liberation Committee (Eastern Section), with himself as president, claiming that his authority extended over all 'liberated territories' in eastern Congo. He also stated that a similar provisional government was being set up for the 'liberated territories' in western Congo by Pierre Mulele. However in the first week of August CNA troops claimed that they had halted further rebel advances in North Katanga and retaken Baudouinville and Kabongo, a railway town, but had withdrawn from Manono.

In Upper Congo

On 4–5 August 1964 a rebel force, commanded by Victor Olenga, captured Stanleyville town and airport. Of the some 800 CNA troops

garrisoned there, about 300 were hastily evacuated by air before the rebels completed their occupation of the city. The Provincial president was reported as missing. Gaston Soumialot, broadcasting from Stanleyville, repeated his claim that he was head of the revolutionary government of eastern Congo.

Previously, Lumumbaist attempts to seize power in Stanleyville had been effectively thwarted by the Adoula government, for example in January 1964 a curfew had been imposed, and two companies of local police had been disarmed after some of their members had taken part in pro-Lumumba demonstrations. There had been an attempt to overthrow the Stanleyville provincial government in June, when a group of youths had obtained a number of rifles with the intention of seizing power, but had been discovered in time and most had been arrested.

The rapid and almost unchecked advance of the rebels was attributed to their fanatical zeal – fanned by blind faith in the ‘bullet medicine’, meaning immunity from death by bullets, a myth perpetrated by the witch doctors – and their sheer strength of numbers compared with the comparatively small CNA detachments facing them. The rebels enjoyed the tactical advantage of holding the roads, which were few and far between, thus preventing the rapid deployment of CNA troops. Furthermore the superior firepower of the CNA was often rendered ineffective by huge numbers of warriors attacking in mass from close quarters, as often occurred in jungle terrain.

In some places there was widespread support for the rebels, for example in Stanleyville this became instantly apparent when it was known that rebel forces were approaching. In several instances the rebels persuaded CNA soldiers to sell them their weapons and ammunition, and as a result several CNA units surrendered without resistance. Apart from directly instigated NLC rebellions in certain provinces, there were varying degrees of unrest in the remainder of the country.

Tshombe prepares to counterattack

In Leopoldville on 15 July 1964, Tshombe announced the formation of a ‘pacification council’, promising that within three months he would produce a ‘New Congo’, having instigated talks with several NLC revolutionary leaders, including Pierre Mulele. Also, after the fall of Stanleyville Senator Antoine Kiwewa had offered the government the good offices of his party – the moderate wing of the MNC (Lumumba), now part of the Front Commun National – to mediate

with Soumialot, which he insisted was necessary if the situation in the Congo was to be prevented from being internationalised by the intervention of foreign troops.

Tshombe appealed to Belgium to send more officers to train his CNA under the recently signed Technical Aid Treaty, but Belgium hesitated as it did not wish Belgian officers to take part in operations against the rebels for fear of reprisals against Belgian civilians still in rebel-controlled areas. Belgium was also a little put out by snide remarks by ONUC officials about Belgian colonialism. Tshombe again asked the United States for military aid, stressing that he did not need foreign troops, only arms and equipment. In particular Tshombe asked for equipment for the 15 000-strong former Katangan gendarmerie, now nominally loyal to the central government, to prepare it for the fight for Congolese unity.

Tshombe also warned China and certain African states, particularly naming Congo (Brazzaville) and Burundi, to cease fomenting rebellion. He emphasised that there was no point in talking to the Congolese rebels, which he referred to as outlaws. On 10 August the Burundi embassy in Leopoldville was sacked by Tshombe supporters, who also demonstrated against the provision of Chinese aid to the rebels.

The withdrawal of ONUC

When the large Indonesian contingent left in December 1963 the strength of ONUC fell to less than 6000. It was further reduced in the first months of 1964 as other national contingents returned home, and complete ONUC withdrawal had been effected by 30 June 1964. General Mobutu had stated that the CNA was capable of maintaining order without the help of ONUC, although with rebellions raging in some of the provinces this seemed a doubtful proposition. Allegations that Prime Minister Adoula had asked ONUC to remain were officially denied, but it was agreed that 400 Nigerian policemen would remain in Leopoldville until the end of the year. All the Congolese political leaders seemed anxious for ONUC to depart. It should be emphasised that apart from the use of ONUC aircraft to evacuate missionaries and Europeans in peril, ONUC had played no part in suppressing the NLC-instigated rebellion.

U Thant's report on ONUC to the UN on 30 June 1964 was self-laudatory and self-satisfied, and he seemed surprised that there had been no firm request from the central government to extend its tour of duty. During ONUC's stay in the Congo 84 nations had contributed military personnel, 126 of whom had died in action, 75 in accidents

and 34 from natural causes. The total cost of the ONUC venture was estimated to be \$433 million, of which \$381 million had been spent on military operations. It was said that some \$83 million was still owed by 67 UN members, including the USSR, which owed \$54 million.

The People's Republic of the Congo

The 'People's Republic of the Congo' was proclaimed in Stanleyville on 7 September 1964 by Victor Gbenye, who became its prime minister. Gaston Soumialot was appointed as defence minister. It was announced that missionaries would no longer be attacked and the Catholic Church would be respected. U Thant's appeal to allow the evacuation of all non-Congolese from Stanleyville continued to be ignored, but a Swiss airliner, chartered by the Red Cross and carrying doctors and medical supplies for the many wounded, was allowed to land in Stanleyville.

Containing the rebellion

In Oriental Province in August, the 250 CNA troops garrisoned at Paulis, north of Stanleyville, went over to the rebels. The rebels captured Boende, a key town between Stanleyville and Coquilhatville in September, but they made little further progress towards Coquilhatville.

In Kivu Province in early August, the rebels made another attempt to take Bukavu, which had been surrounded since May, but after the intervention of central government combat aircraft, based in Rwanda and supposedly flown by Cuban exiles in CIA pay, the rebels withdrew again and halted their aggression momentarily.

The central government reinforced Bukavu, flying in about 200 former Katangan gendarmers, including a number of European mercenaries. Under the command of Colonel Leonard Mulamba the troops beat off a rebel attack in mid August, but casualties were reported to be heavy on both sides and parts of Bukavu were devastated. The rebels retreated westwards.

However they resumed their attack on Bukavu on 19–20 August. In fierce fighting the government troops, led by Mulamba and reinforced by another 150 former Katangan gendarmes, held the town and repulsed the rebels, who retreated westwards on the 21st. The casualty list exceeded 300, including a number of Belgians, and further damage was inflicted on the town. While visiting a refugee camp two ONUC (French) officials stationed in Bukavu were killed by Tutsi refugees from Rwanda who had joined the rebels.

Colonel Mulamba then went on to occupy Kabalo and advanced towards Albertville, which had been abandoned by Gaston Soumialot and his colleagues in mid August, leaving behind Jeunesse Movement militiamen to defend it. The latter repulsed an attack by European mercenary commandos on the 27th. However the same commandos launched a second attack three days later and successfully occupied Albertville, when European hostages were freed. In these two battles it was reported that many hundreds of rebels were killed.

CNA troops entered Manono on 2 September, and Kongolo, the last rebel stronghold in North Katanga, fell on the 17th. Several other major towns in North Katanga were occupied by CNA troops, spear-headed by European mercenary commandos, and a number of missionary hostages were freed.

In October in Uvira (central Kivu), still the rebel military HQ, the local leader appealed to the OAU to take measures to stop the bombardment of markets and factories in the area, which he alleged had been carried out since August by US aircraft flying from Rwandan territory. The Bishop of Uvira appealed to the government of Burundi to save the lives of European hostages, who were being maltreated. They were indeed rescued when Uvira fell to the CNA on 7 October.

Farther north, CNA troops entered Kindu in late October and other towns in the northern region in November. The retreating rebels often took European hostages with them, and despite instructions by the rebel leaders that Europeans should not be harmed, many were threatened or injured and some were killed.

It could be said that the Tshombe government succeeded in containing the NLC-instigated rebellion in most areas during the second half of 1964, as while the rebels gained a few more towns, government forces were able to reduce considerably the expanse of territory controlled by the NLC, especially in North Katanga, where the CNA recaptured almost all of the important towns and centres. Tshombe's success owed much to the US-manned combat and transport aircraft, and to the few hundred European mercenaries. The Red Cross, however, continued to express deep concern about the rebel's failure to observe the Geneva Convention, having engaged in hostage taking, summary executions, tortures and other atrocities.

Hostile Congo (Brazzaville)

It was obvious that the rebels were obtaining help from external sources, particularly from Congo (Brazzaville), and tension increased

between the two governments. The central government openly accused its Brazzaville counterpart of allowing Congolese rebels to operate from its territory. For instance in late July 1964 rebels working from Brazzaville operated by night at Bolobo, just north of Leopoldville. In turn the president of Congo (Brazzaville) accused the Tshombe government of interfering in its internal affairs. On 15 August Tshombe gave warning that he would take extreme measures if Congo (Brazzaville) continued to aid the Congolese rebels.

Congo (Brazzaville) was itself no stranger to turmoil. Back in August 1963, after three days of serious rioting in Brazzaville, Belgian troops (under a 1961 agreement) had been brought in to restore order and President Fulbert Youlou, who had been striving to form a one-party state, had been compelled to resign. He had been replaced by a new government, headed by Alphonse Maseba-Debat, who was supported by the army and trade unionists. An election and referendum in December had confirmed Maseba-Debat in power as leader of the National Movement for the Revolution. Having a distinct left-wing bias the new president had strengthened his country's contact with communist bloc states, and in February had opened diplomatic relations with communist China (previously they had been with nationalist China). Old prejudices remained and he was just as anti-Congo (Leopoldville) as his predecessor had been, giving encouragement and help to the newly formed National Liberation Committee, led by Victor Gbenye.

Rwanda and Burundi

The two Belgian trust territories of Ruanda and Urundi had both become independent on 1 July 1962 as the Republic of Rwanda (note the new spelling) and the Kingdom of Burundi. All efforts to forge them into a single unified country had failed, but they retained economic links with each other. Rwanda, with an area of just over 13000 square miles, had a population of about 2.3 million; Burundi was about the same size with a population of about 2.2 million. Both had overwhelming Hutu majorities.

In Ruanda, elections held in September 1961 had brought a decisive victory to PARMEHUTU (the Republican Democratic Movement), led by Gregoire Kayibanda and representing the bulk of the Hutu people (35 seats out of 44 in the Assembly). The main opposition Tutsi party was UNAR (the Ruandan National Union). A constitutional referendum had been held at the same time. The monarchy had been abolished in

October, and Kayibanda had become the executive president. Educated in a seminary in the capital, Kigale, and fluent in English, French and German, he had been a newspaper editor before entering politics and founding PARMEHUTU.

An outbreak of fighting between Tutsis and Hutus had occurred in Ruanda in August 1961, causing a second wave of refugees to flee into adjacent territories. Belgian troops had been flown in to deal with the situation. The previous wave of outgoing refugees had been in November 1959, when camps had been established for them in the Congo. Rwanda did not seem to be in a hurry to eject the Belgian troops, partly owing to the Hutu-Tutsi feud, and Belgian officers remained with the new National Guard until the end of 1964. Also, many Belgians remained to work in the administration.

Elections had also been held in Urundi in September 1961, which had been won by UPRONO (the National Union and Progressive Party). The monarchy had been retained, and Louis Rwagasore (a member of the royal family) had become prime minister. However there had been feuding between sections of the Tutsi tribe and the monarchy, and in October Rwagasore had been assassinated, to be succeeded by Andre Muhirwa.

The Tutsi-Hutu division was much sharper and more bitter in Rwanda than in Burundi. The government of Burundi tended to sympathise with the Congolese Lumumbaists, and tolerated the presence of their offices, factions and activities in Usumbura.

6

The NLC in Retreat

By October 1964 the rebels were beginning to feel the pressure from the central government forces, spearheaded by European mercenary commandos and supported by US combat and transport aircraft. On the 28th Victor Gbenye, prime minister of the NLC-declared People's Republic of the Congo, ensconced in Stanleyville, declared bitterly that as Belgians were now openly helping the central government, his regime could no longer guarantee the safety of Belgian nationals and their property. The same day Victor Olenga, the rebel army commander, announced that all Westerners in the Stanleyville area, estimated to be about 800 Belgians and 60 Americans, were to be placed under house arrest. The Belgian consul in Stanleyville appealed to the Belgian government to forbid the involvement of Belgian officers in Congolese military operations as the lives of '525 Belgians and 24 Americans' depended upon it.

A major success of the Tshombe regime had been to improve Congolese relations with Western countries, and especially with Belgium, once an embittered, non-cooperating nation. Despite protestations that Belgian officers were not in any way involved in Tshombe's fight against the NLC rebellion, it was strongly suspected that many members of the Belgian military mission were exceeding their official remit. The Belgians were certainly anxious to do everything they could to bring U Thant's plan to fruition.

Gbenye also appealed for help from certain African countries following aerial bombardments by the United States and Belgium. He particularly wanted anti-aircraft weaponry, threatening that if he did not receive it he would have to launch a scorched earth programme. On 7 November he declared that all Europeans were prisoners of war. In Stanleyville an American missionary was put under sentence of death, prompting the United States to state that it would participate in any

proposed rescue operation. Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya tried to broker a ceasefire, but Gbenye would not comply until the CNA military advance was halted, which Tshombe refused.

Stanleyville hostage rescue

Prime Minister Tshombe enlisted Belgian and American assistance, and on 21 November 1964 about 600 Belgian paratroops were flown to the Kamina base, from where they were transferred in US transport aircraft to Stanleyville airport, arriving there on the evening of the 23rd. They secured the airport with little resistance and then moved into the city, where the rebels were holding about 250 European hostages, including women and children, near the Patrice Lumumba memorial.

The hostages were made to sit on the ground, and as the paratroops approached the rebels opened fire on the hostages, killing over 30 and wounding another 40 or so. However the paratroops managed to disperse the armed rebels within minutes, thus saving the remaining hostages. About 1400 Europeans, some wounded, were flown to Leopoldville during the next few hours. After the foray into Stanleyville the paratroops withdrew to hold the airport perimeter.

The following day about half the Belgian paratroop unit flew northwards in US transport aircraft to Paulis, where a somewhat similar hostage situation was being enacted. They rescued about 200 European hostages, some 20 having already been killed when the Stanleyville operation began. Similar rescue operations were eagerly proposed for other northern cities and towns where European hostages were in dire danger, but nothing came of this. The official excuse was that such operations could not be undertaken owing to the small number of paratroops immediately available and the wide dispersal of the rebel-held hostages. The real reason, however, was that despite the favourable publicity that had been generated the Belgian government's thoughts turned more to the safety of hostages held elsewhere in rebel held territory and the retribution that might be heaped upon them. It ordered the immediate return of the paratroops.

During the operations two of the Belgian paratroops had been killed and six wounded, and 12 of the 14 US aircraft used in the rescue missions had been hit by automatic fire. While the Western media praised these two exploits, the communist world and certain African countries condemned them.

Jomo Kenyatta rearoused the dormant OAU Conciliation Commission, which met in Nairobi in an effort to bring about a ceasefire in

northern Congo. Kenyatta pointed out that as President Kasavubu had refused to withdraw his European mercenaries from the battlefield it had not been possible for the OAU meeting to be held in Leopoldville, as he would have wished. Kenyatta decided to ask for a new OAU remit, while condemning Britain, Belgium and the United States for intervening militarily in the Congo.

New CNA strategy

Tshombe and General Mobutu were in the process of perfecting a new strategy: using fast-moving motorised land columns, spearheaded by European mercenary commandos and supported by US bomber aircraft to attack rebel-held towns. Long-range transport aircraft enabled CNA troops selectively to reinforce garrisons in an emergency. There were many rebel-controlled cities and towns in central and northern Congo, but a shortage of reliable CNA soldiers and an insufficiency of European mercenaries meant that the rebel groups had to be dealt with one at a time.

The CNA had an estimated strength of only about 40 000 trained soldiers, with another 8000 or so in various stages of training, so they had to be used shrewdly and sparingly. The average number of European mercenaries serving with the CNA at that time was 500-600 (*Le Monde*), and the total number never exceeded the 1000 mark. The European mercenaries were divided into groups of four or five commandos, at least two being French-speaking and the others English-speaking. The new strategy was for CNA mobile columns to strike selectively at NLC-held towns.

For their part the NLC armed forces, although numbering tens of thousands, were little more than a collection of militias, each guarding local NLC administrations in cities and towns, supported by politically orientated (or press-ganged), primitively armed tribesmen. From the conventional military point of view they were virtually immobile. Mostly autonomous and isolated, they had little liaison with each other, and differences between NLC leaders prevented proper coordination and the development of a unified defence policy. The NLC armed forces' main advantage was their remoteness from CNA bases, especially where there was no integral air transport. Previously the CNA had had to rely upon the often perverse ONUC for air transport to send troops to trouble spots, which was often refused. This disadvantage was now removed.

The strategy had begun to be put into practice in October 1964, when a motorised column of CNA soldier and European commandos,

led by Major Mike Hoare, had advanced from Kindu to reoccupy the town of Punia, 150 miles to the north. They had then moved rapidly to Stanleyville to link up with and take over from the Belgian paratroops there.

At about the same time a similar column had succeeded in reaching Boanda, about 100 miles east of Coquilhatville, while others had driven rebel forces from a number of towns in northern Congo. Government communiques, issued almost daily, had named the recaptured towns, but this was often misleading as in many cases the rebel forces had simply withdrawn into the countryside, waited until the CNA column had moved on, and then returned, often to wreak vengeance on the unfortunate inhabitants. For example Paulis had been retaken and lost on more than one occasion.

Towards the end of December Tshombe announced that more than 800 Europeans had been rescued by these fast-moving mobile columns, but in many cases there was evidence that massacres had already been committed by the time they arrived on the scene. This caused Tshombe to issue a 'white book' documenting rebel atrocities. Considerable evidence of this was found during a search of Gbenye's HQ in Stanleyville after his hasty decampment.

Mike Hoare, who for a short time remained in Stanleyville to garrison his 800 CNA soldiers and 300 mercenaries, was in Tshombe's confidence and advised the prime minister to reach a political solution in eastern Congo if he could, claiming that as the rebels controlled over 150,000 square miles he would require an additional 30,000 troops to tackle the situation. However, Hoare's estimate of the number of government troops required to finish off the rebellion in northern Congo proved to be excessive as the tide of battle suddenly changed in favour of the central government. Immediately after the fall of Stanleyville most of the principal NLC leaders, including Victor Gbenye (formerly the prime minister and now the self-styled president of the People's Republic of the Congo, Gaston Soumialot (the defence minister) and General Olenga (the military commander) fled to Sudan.

Reprisals and counterreprisals

It was estimated (*The Times*) that after the two Belgian rescue operations the NLC rebels killed over 4,000 Congolese in the areas in question, eliminating all local political leaders, administrators, professional men and those with further education, virtually creating an 'educational and administrative desert'. A comparable number of the same

classes suffered a similar fate north of Stanleyville. Missionary survivors from Paulis stated that Simba terrorists were automatically shooting some people on sight, sometimes simply because they were better dressed or could read or write.

When the Belgian paratroops left Stanleyville and the CNA troops took over, counterreprisals began immediately and soldiers automatically killed anyone who looked like a Simba. General Victor Nendake was appointed national police chief for eastern Congo. He established his HQ at Stanleyville airport, from where summary justice was meted out. The *New York Times* reported in early January 1965 that more than 500 rebels, including women and children, had been executed there without trial and without publicity. All Africans in Stanleyville were screened, and those who passed muster were authorised to wear a white headband – those without this distinguishing adornment were liable to be shot on sight by the security forces.

During December it was revealed that Egypt and Algeria were still providing military aid to the rebels. Furthermore Soviet transport aircraft were still flying munitions from Algeria to Khartoum, where they were transferred to Ghanaian light aircraft and flown southwards to Juba, near the Congo border. However this flow of arms was minute in comparison with what the central government was receiving from Western nations in order to reorganise and reinvigorate the CNA.

President Nasser of Egypt admitted he had sent arms to the NLC rebels and was willing to send more, but President Ibrahim Abboud of Sudan flatly denied that any illicit arms for the NLC rebels had ever passed through his country. It should also be mentioned that Algerian and Egyptian guerrilla warfare experts were serving with the rebel forces in the field, and that many rebel junior and middle grade leaders had attended and were still attending courses of instruction in Algeria, while in Egypt a training centre had been established near Cairo, giving three-week training courses. It was estimated that over 2000 Congolese rebels had been trained there by the end of 1964.

UN Security Council

The Congo situation was discussed in the UN Security Council in December 1964, when complaints were made about the Belgian rescue operation and the employment of European mercenaries. Tshombe visited New York and took part in the debates. On the 28th a resolution was approved for the member states to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the Congo and for the withdrawal of all European

mercenaries. It was realised by many UN nations, not all hostile to the Congo, that Tshombe's military successes were almost entirely due to his shrewd employment of European mercenaries and US military aircraft. Tshombe then visited several Western European capitals to tout for moral support and practical aid, both military and economic.

President Kasavubu and Tshombe signed decrees ordering private commercial companies in the Congo to pay royalties direct the central government and depriving them of the power to make private concessions.

Adoula's African Plan

In Tshombe's 1965 New Year message to his people, he rejected national reconciliation and ruled out negotiations with the rebels. Both Kasavubu and Tshombe were hardliners in this respect. However not everyone agreed with this hard-line attitude towards the rebels. One prominent dissenter was Cyrille Adoula, who in early January 1965 published his 'African Plan' in the weekly *Jeune Afrique*. He insisted that any comprehensive solution for the Congo must include the rebel leaders since they could not be crushed without the aid of European mercenaries, which would involve even greater losses, suffering and misery, and would mean ever-increasing dependence on external forces. As certain countries were actually supporting the rebels and others were in sympathy with them, the suppression of any general military campaign launched by them could not be certain of success, and might be impossible.

Adoula suggested there should be consultations with political actors of all shades with a view to forming a transitional government without Tshombe, whom Adoula said had automatically placed himself outside any reconciliation process. Adoula blamed Tshombe for the adversarial attitude of the central government, which had strengthened over time. He suggested the removal of all foreign intervention forces from the Congo, especially those from the United States and Belgium, and their replacement with troops from OAU countries. He also demanded clarification of the death of Lumumba.

From exile in Egypt on 12, January Gaston Soumialot, in response to Adoula's African plan, announced that he could work with Adoula but not with Tshombe. Meanwhile Tshombe alleged that Adoula had forced the opposition rebel leaders to engage in armed rebellion, having Balkanised the country by subdividing its six provinces into 22, which had promoted tribalism and disrupted the central administration.

Rebels resume operations

By the end of January 1965 central government armed forces were in control of several principal towns in northern and eastern Congo, including Stanleyville, Paulis and Uvira, but the rebel forces driven from them had merely retreated into the bush. They continued to hover nearby, and despite the absence of proper leadership and the severing of supply lines, many rebel bands made impromptu raids on government-held towns. Several smaller towns had been evacuated by the CNA after the rebels had been driven from them, and these were either raided punitively or reoccupied, as opportunity offered.

One rebel raid, for example, was launched on 23 January by a small armed group from the NLC training camp in the Congo (Brazzaville) town of Gambona. They crossed the River Congo and attacked the town of Nkolo, some 200 miles north of Leopoldville. Several Europeans were killed, others were wounded and hostages were taken. Nkolo was reoccupied by CNA troops on the 25th and the hostages were rescued. Vengeance was exacted as the rebels, unable to make it back across the river, were ruthlessly hunted down. Tshombe protested to the government of Congo (Brazzaville), but the response was merely a caustic protest against 'foreign bombers' overflying Brazzaville by night and day.

Primitive propaganda emanated from both sides, involving pamphlets and threats of spells and curses. It was said that rebel General Victor Olenga's personal witch doctor (a woman) had been captured by the CNA in January and persuaded to foretell disaster for the rebels if they continued to fight against the central government as the rebellion had run out of magic.

Gbenye's six-point plan

In mid-February 1965 Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, still pursuing a cease-fire agreement for the Congo, again tried to resurrect the OAU conciliation plan. Both Victor Gbenye and Gaston Soumialot visited him in Nairobi, as did Tshombe, who blocked progress. The Belgian government, which approved of Adoula's Africa plan, said it would support Gbenye and Soumialot if they accepted the plan.

However Gbenye had adamantly rejected Adoula's plan on 29 January and put forward a six-point one of his own, which included the immediate release of all political prisoners by the central government; the removal of all European mercenaries; an OAU investigative commission

on Katanga to apply sanctions against the murderers of Lumumba; the enlargement of the Leopoldville government by representatives from the 'non-liberated regions'; and elections within six months under the auspices of the OAU.

The CNA began preparations in January to seal off the border with Sudan to prevent arms and supplies from reaching the rebels in the field. Tshombe began to recruit European mercenaries to replace those whose period of service had expired, and Major Mike Hoare was promoted lieutenant-colonel. In February a new batch of European mercenaries arrived and government troops began to move slowly towards the Sudanese frontier. The CNA did not always triumph, and on 8 February one of its columns, consisting of about 100 European mercenaries and 600 CNA soldiers, was ambushed at Hafwasende between Stanleyville and Paulis. At least ten CNA men were killed, more than 30 were wounded and about half of their vehicles were destroyed. A few days later a government aircraft, allegedly flown by Cuban exiles, was shot down by rebels near Paulis.

Ugandan intervention

Fearing that the influx of Western military aid and intervention in the Congo might presage a return to colonialism in this part of Africa by devious means, the Ugandan government remained suspicious of the Tshombe regime. It closed its frontier with the Congo and Rwanda and forbade all Belgian and Congolese aircraft to enter Ugandan air space. It also suspended all air traffic between Uganda and Rwanda and Burundi. There had been a number of frontier incidents, and on 15 February the Ugandan government complained that Congolese aircraft had bombed several Ugandan frontier villages.

The same day the central government protested that armed Ugandans had crossed into the Congo and joined the rebels in an unsuccessful attempt to seize the small town of Bunia, and that armed Ugandans had entered the small port of Mahagi on Lake Albert. Tshombe's allegations were denied by Uganda, but they were probably true. On the 24th, CNA forces recaptured the town of Kasindi near Lake Edward, which Congolese rebels, with Ugandan help, had seized a week earlier.

In the north in March, CNA forces occupied the Sudanese-Congolese frontier post of Aba, the main entry point for illegal rebel arms from Sudan, leading Tshombe to claim that he had sealed off the Sudanese border. Accordingly Egypt refused to send any more arms lest they fell into CNA hands. Meanwhile the Juba airstrip was blockaded by

Christian Sudanese factions rebelling against the Khartoum government, which brought road transported arms supplies to a halt in this region.

General elections

Between 18 March and 30 April 1965 elections were held in the Congo for a new Chamber of Deputies (166 seats), a new Senate and provincial assemblies. Isaac Kalonji, secretary general of CONAKAT, claimed that 19 of the provinces were now free from rebels, and that in the remaining three (in the north-east) the rebels were simply plunderers and their activities would not interfere with the elections.

Apart from ABAKO in Lower Congo and BALUBAKAT in Katanga, during February there was a general realignment of political parties, from which two alliances emerged. One was CONACO (National Congolese), which was formed on 3 February 1965 with Tshombe as its president. It held its first congress in Luluabourg on the 23rd, when about 50 political groups joined it for the purpose of the election.

The other group, the Congolese Democratic Front (CDF), formed on 10 February, was an alliance of Congolese national movements, or rather an amalgamation of Lumumbaist parties. They demanded a round table conference on the future of the Congo, the release of all political prisoners, a ceasefire with the rebels and elections under the auspices of the OAU.

Neither women nor Europeans were allowed to vote in the elections, which employed a system of proportional representation known as 'party slips': one slip for each candidate, the voter discarding all but one at the polling booth. Objections were raised, there were a few electoral incidents and two people were killed at the hustings. Adoula was not a candidate. Tshombe's CONACO alliance won 86 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, thus gaining a slim majority and returning to power, which gave Tshombe the confidence to continue his hard-line policy against reconciliation with the rebels.

Private armies

In March 1965 the *Izvestia* correspondent in Leopoldville was expelled, allegedly for organising a spy ring. There was a feeling of insecurity in the capital, so much so that on 4 March the CNA authorised a number of citizens to organise private armed security forces for their own self-protection. Similar civilian security forces already existed to protect Europeans in Bukavu and Elizabethville, and other applications were

being considered. In May in Leopoldville, ten people were killed and over 50 injured in a spate of bomb throwing, and the following month a plot against Tshombe and Munongo was discovered.

Dissension among the rebels

In February 1965 a dozen or so rebel leaders, including Gbenye, Soumialot, Olenga and Kanza, had sneaked back into northern Congo in the hope of resuming active command and unifying their former forces, now in small groups wandering aimlessly in the bush. This did not seem to work. Daunted by the successes of the CNA, and especially of the European mercenaries, they thought better of it and all were back in Khartoum by mid March. In adversity, differences were developing between them over power and strategy. Nevertheless it was announced on 24 March that Soumialot's National Revolutionary Council was to merge with Gbenye's Revolutionary Government, Soumialot remaining as defence minister.

A summit rebel leadership conference to establish a unified government and military command, and to hammer out a viable leadership framework and future strategy, began in Cairo on 7 April, lasting until the 21st. It was announced on the 27th that the National Liberation Committee would be dissolved and a Supreme Revolutionary Council set up in its place. The Revolutionary Government would be enlarged, with Gbenye remaining as its head.

A policy statement was issued by Soumialot and Casimir Mbagira on 27 May to the effect that the Congo would be divided into three military zones: Leopoldville and Kasai, to be led by Pierre Mulele; Kivu and Katanga, to be led by Laurent Kabila; and Eastern Province and Equator, to be led by Victor Olenga. There would also be a Supreme Revolutionary Council, which would have presidential executive powers and consist of 20 members, five from each military zone, plus Victor Gbenye, Gaston Soumialot, Gabriel Yumba and Casimir Mbagira. The Revolutionary Government would still be headed by Gbenye, but was to be reorganised to contain only six ministers, one each for the original six provinces.

The stumbling block was that neither Gbenye, Kanza nor Olenga attended the conference. The Sudanese tried to persuade Gbenye, Soumialot, Kanza and Olenga to resolve their differences, but failed. Gbenye relieved General Olenga of his military command, and in turn Olenga said that Gbenye would be dismissed as president. At about that time Gbenye was said to have been wounded by a dissident rebel

at Yei in southern Sudan. On the 27th Soumialot announced the establishment of a Revolutionary Command HQ in Cairo, but added that Kanza was no longer foreign minister, having been replaced by Casimir Mbagira.

However several leading rebels deserted their new leadership set-up and rallied to the Tshombe government, their theme being peace and unity. They warned that the aggressive attitude of the rebel leadership was threatening to turn the Congo into a proxy battleground for predatory foreign powers, as in Vietnam and Laos. Tshombe welcomed these defectors.

Fresh elections

In August 1965 fresh elections were held in three provinces – Kwilu, Kivu Central and Cuvette Central – as the earlier electoral results had been annulled by a court of appeal. This reduced Tshombe's majority in the Chamber of Deputies to three, and he now faced strong opposition from the CDF in the Central Assembly.

Tshombe dismissed as Prime Minister

The Congolese Democratic Front asked President Kasavubu to dismiss Prime Minister Tshombe, which he did on 12 October 1965. The reasons given were that the task with which Tshombe had been entrusted was now completed, that Tshombe held too many portfolios (eight out of 19) and that the composition of his government was not in accordance with the proposed constitutional reforms.

Kasavubu called upon Evariste Kimba, a former foreign minister in the Katangan provincial government under Tshombe, to form a government, which he did. Tshombe refused to serve in the Kimba cabinet, and instructed the members of CONACO to do likewise. Kimba presented his new government to the chamber, which was accepted but only by a tiny majority. Kimba restored diplomatic relations with neighbouring Congo (Brazzaville) and also reopened the Congo–Uganda frontier, which had been closed since February. Soumialot immediately denounced the Kimba government.

Action against the rebels

The rebel violence seemed to have a momentum of its own, with or without the active presence of the leaders, and the plain fact was that bands of armed rebels were in control of large areas of villages and

bushland. However in July most of the organised resistance in northern Congo ceased when the corridor between the towns of Aketi and Bumba was swamped by government troops, and four major local rebel commanders surrendered at the town of Ikela.

During July 1965 the rebels launched several attacks on government-held towns in the Stanleyville region, but in most cases were repulsed, the attackers suffering heavy losses. A few towns without government garrisons were reoccupied briefly by rebel forces, but most were quickly retaken, the rebels seldom putting up strong resistance. In Kivu and North Katanga the scene was much the same, with rebels suffering heavy losses when they attacked a town called Lulimba. However the rebels had occasional successes, for example on the 23rd a government column was ambushed near Albertville and a dozen or so government troops were killed.

The final offensive began on 29 September when CNA troops, under the command of Colonel Bobozo and European mercenaries led by Mike Hoare, with combat aircraft in close support, captured a rebel stronghold in Baraka, near Lake Tanganyika. This was followed by other actions that progressively drove the rebels from the towns they held. On 10 October the major town of Fizi fell to government troops when some 3000 armed rebels withdrew without a fight into the bush. Fizi was considered the last rebel foothold in the region.

In September the rebels had held a firm grip on a small number of remote and relatively inaccessible areas. One of these was the area around Fizi-Bares, where about 5000 armed rebels controlled about 400 000 villagers and tribesman, ruling by terror, administering justice and collecting taxes. Other hard-line rebel-held areas included one based in Lubutu–Obokote, south-east of Stanleyville; another along the left bank of the River Congo near Stanleyville; and another in the environs of Uvira, where only the commercial centre of the town was held by government troops. The rebels at the Uvira base, feeling abandoned by their divided leadership-in-exile, sent their own representatives to the Egyptian and Ghanaian embassies in Usumbura in Burundi to ask for aid and assistance.

In Kivu, rebels retook the town of Mulongwe, but hastily evacuated it when a government mobile column approached. In Kwilu, government forces unopposedly reoccupied the town of Mulassa, which had been in rebel hands for about two years. It seemed as though the rebels were avoiding pitched battle and concentrating entirely on survival.

The spearhead of the government armed forces remained the European mercenaries, still over 600 strong (*Le Monde*), to which were added elements of the Katangan gendarmerie, which had been reconstituted

in July 1964. Detachments of gendarmes fought uneasily side by side with the CNA at times, although they seemed reluctant to operate outside the original boundaries of Katanga province.

Many areas wrested from the rebels suffered famine to some degree as the villagers had not planted any crops since the previous year. Hundreds died of starvation, especially children, according to the international relief agencies that managed to penetrate into the stricken areas. There was also looting by both rebels and indisciplined CNA units, often accompanied by indiscriminate damage to facilities and property. In Bukavu there were said to be over 200 000 unemployed people and refugees without any income. Corruption, black market transactions and plain banditry flourished.

The general anarchy in rebel-held and remote areas was often compounded by differences between the central government and the provincial leaders, which handicapped the dispatch of essential aid, while the distribution of any aid that did arrive was hindered by local leaders quarrelling amongst themselves. In some areas debarred candidates refused to stand down. In other places Europeans, in the absence of civil administration, began to restart their mines, industries and plantations, and formed their own security forces.

Quarrelling rebel leaders

Meanwhile the top rebel leaders in exile continued to quarrel amongst themselves. On 5 August 1965 in Egypt, Gaston Soumialot announced the dissolution of the Revolutionary Government and the dismissal of President Gbenye on the ground that the latter had been preaching anarchy. Soumialot asked all countries supporting the rebellion to deal only with him, and a few days later he announced the formation of a new Executive Council, headed by Abdoulay Yerodia, who had been a teacher in France until 1963.

Thomas Kanza declared that Gbenye was the only leader qualified to represent the revolutionary cause in the Congo, and that Soumialot was really an agent for a foreign country. There were other protests, accusations, counteraccusations and some infighting. Suddenly tired of the squabbling rebel Congolese leaders, Egypt and Sudan took measures to bring them to heel. After two rebel leaders had been murdered in Cairo over the dissension, the 28 rebel leaders who had been given asylum there were ordered to leave Egypt immediately.

General Victor Olenga, who had remained in Sudan throughout, was put under house arrest and ordered to cease all political activity, it

being suspected by the Sudanese government that he had been in contact with the southern Sudanese rebels, and was trying to gain access to Congolese rebel funds deposited with the Sudan Commercial Bank. Later, however, Olenga was permitted to leave Sudan and was given asylum in Egypt. In September about 15 000 Congolese rebels, led by Colonel Leon Lukenyo, who had been given asylum in Sudan, were interned and their 'treasure' – reputed to consist of '1474 lbs of gold, 80 lbs of diamonds and 120 million Congolese francs' (*Le Monde*) – was impounded.

Mobutu takes over again

On 25 November 1965 General Mobutu deposed President Kasavubu, placed him under house arrest and assumed the presidency himself. He appointed General Luis Bobozo (the Katangan army commander) as commander of the Congo National Army, and Colonel Leonard Mulumba as prime minister. The coup and these new appointments had been agreed at a high-level military meeting the previous day.

Mobutu stated that he had assumed the presidency for a five-year period, and that the next general elections, scheduled for March 1966, were cancelled. He said that all politicians had failed and the army would take on the politicians' responsibilities. However there would not be a military dictatorship and all national institutions would function normally. All citizens' rights would be guaranteed and respected under the constitution of 1964. All political detainees would be released, except those who had taken part in the revolution, and press censorship was to be abolished. Both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies sanctioned the coup.

The members of the General Assembly were free either to remain as senators or deputies, or to leave as they wished. The exception was Kasavubu, who was detained in the Kokolo Camp until 5 December, when he was allowed to travel to his home village in Lower Congo, there to drop out of politics, having refused Mobutu's offer to become a senator for life. Aged about 34, Kasavubu had taken a prominent part in the fight against the NLC rebels, especially during the battle for Bukavu in 1964, and subsequently had been appointed administrator of the reoccupied areas in north-east Congo.

It seems that this military coup had been expected for some time, as since the dismissal of Tshombe the Kimba government had been unable to command a majority in the General Assembly, and accordingly the government of the country had ground to a halt. According

to *Le Monde*, its immediate cause was the refusal by Victor Nendake, minister for the interior, to agree to General Mobutu's request to appoint Belgian officers to positions of command in the CNA. Mobutu affirmed that neither Kasavubu nor Tshombe would be allowed to take office for five years, and that there had been no Belgian input into the coup, which had been an exclusively Congolese affair.

On the 27th Colonel Mulamba formed a Government of National Union with 21 ministers, one from each of the existing provinces. Mobutu retained the defence portfolio and took charge of the police and their functions. His foreign policy was to support the UN and the OAU, and the rapprochement with African countries would continue. His regime was recognised fairly quickly by the United States and some African countries, with other recognitions following more slowly; but it was condemned by Algeria, the USSR, China and a number of other African countries.

Mobutu also declared that the military fight against the rebellion would continue until it was crushed, insisting there would be no contact with the rebel leaders, whom he called murderers. There were spates of rebel activity during November and December, and a number of bridges were destroyed by rebels near Bukavu. Reports indicated that Pierre Mulele was firmly installed in Kwilu Province near the town of Idiofa. Mulele had remained in the Congo throughout.

The rebel leaders in exile generally condemned the Mobutu coup and declared they would fight on. Soumialot called Mobutu a traitor, and declared that Bobozo and Mulamba were accomplices in the murder of Lumumba. On the other hand Gbenye perversely welcomed the coup, criticising both Kasavubu and Tshombe.

As 1965 drew to a close Lieutenant-Colonel Mike Hoare retired from the CNA and returned home to South Africa. In his farewell message to his European mercenaries he praised their work, told them they had done a grand job, that they would be needed in Congo for another two years, and that they were feared by the enemy and respected by all who sought to stem the tide of communism. His contribution to the war against the NLC rebels was considerable. The battle would not have been won without Hoare and his colleagues, who deserve greater credit than Western statesmen, writers and journalists have been able to bring themselves to give.

7

Plots, Mutiny and Revolt

President Mobutu set about consolidating his power base and persuaded the MNCL (Mouvement National Congolaise, Lumumba), now led by Antoine Kiwewa, to cooperate with him. The MNCL became the country's sole legitimate political party. Prime Minister Leonard Mulamba was promoted to the rank of general, while Jean Bolikango was removed from his ministerial post for alleged lack of discipline. The jurisdiction of the military courts was extended to embrace corruption, embezzlement and squandering state property.

A national reconstruction programme was implemented to integrate the economy and social planning of the Congo with those of neighbouring countries. Provincial governors were to be controlled by central government offices in Leopoldville, Stanleyville and Elizabethville. Mobutu then turned his attention to the problem of urban unemployment, decreeing that each male person, no matter how high his status, must cultivate a plot of land of at least one hectare, and that all unemployed rural people living in cities and towns must return to their villages. It was estimated that over 500 000 had drifted into the capital since independence.

A teachers' strike in February 1966 prompted a national ban on all strikes. In March Mobutu issued a decree transferring legislative power to himself, and indicated that in future the head of state would be elected by universal suffrage rather than by an electoral college. In May he said he would renegotiate the agreements made by Tshombe with Belgium; and in June he moved against the practice of racial discrimination, ordering that no organisation should be based on race or tribe, that provision be made for teaching a national language, and that local traditions should be encouraged.

Tshombe vilified

Tshombe and his family had left the Congo for Belgium, obviously to put themselves beyond Mobutu's reach. This was taken as a slight by Mobutu, while the General Assembly, declaring that his activities had been treasonable, deprived him of his seat in the chamber on the ground that he had not attended the required number of meetings. In May 1966 Mobutu announced that Tshombe was to be arraigned for treason. By then Tshombe had been granted political asylum in Spain, which further annoyed Mobutu. Relations between the governments of the Congo and Belgium deteriorated over the Tshombe issue, and also over the attempt by the Congolese government to renegotiate the agreements reached with Tshombe.

Government successes against the rebels

During the first months of 1996, central government armed forces periodically announced the capture of remote rebel-held towns and claimed CNA successes against remnants of the former NLC rebel bands. Nonetheless unrest and violence continued in several parts of the country. In January it was reported that Gaston Soumialot was in hospital in Kigoma, having been seriously wounded by some of his militiamen. He had told them that they could return to their homes because the war was over, whereupon they had demanded their pay – when this was not forthcoming they had attacked him.

Antoine Gizenga, the former rebel leader in Stanleyville who had been nominated for a Senate seat in Kivu Province, quietly disappeared with his family from Leopoldville and on 11 March was reported as being in Moscow, from where he announced his intention to return to the Congo to defend the interests of the Congolese people.

In March the CNA took the northern town of Ponthierville, which had been in rebel hands for 20 months. At the same time General Bobozo refused to meet a rebel negotiating delegation led by Thomas Kanza, who together with Victor Gbenye was in exile in Kenya. Meanwhile at Bondo, north-west of Stanleyville, European hostages who had been in rebel hands for almost two years were rescued. Several hundred rebels surrendered in the Bokungo area and were imprisoned in Coquilhatville, and rebel General Gaston Ngalo surrendered to General Bobozo.

In May Pierre Mulele asked for army protection. He was offered safe conduct provided he came in from the bush, from where he had been

conducting his activities. There was no reply. That month a military tribunal was held in Conquihatville and a score of rebel officers were sentenced to death. All were executed a few days later and many other rebel soldiers were imprisoned.

President Mobutu appealed to all Congolese who had been led astray to rally to his government and take part in the national reconstruction. He claimed that the rebellion had been quashed, and warned there would be no pardon for those who had incited peaceful citizens to take up arms against the established order, nor for those who had committed crimes against humanity.

A Plot against Mobutu

It was announced on Radio Leopoldville on 30 May 1966 that a plot to overthrow President Mobutu and replace him by a provisional committee had been foiled the previous evening, and that the four prime instigators had been arrested. The latter included Evariste Kimba, the former prime minister, deposed by Mobutu in November 1965, and Jerome Anany, a minister in Adoula's last cabinet, who was to have chaired the provisional committee. The other two plotters were also former ministers.

It appears that Mobutu had been one step ahead of the plotters, having planted senior military officers amongst them. They had attended the preparatory meetings for the coup since April, and on the evening of 29 May they had dropped their pretence and arrested the plotters, taking them before Mobutu. Reports of the plotters' interrogation (Radio Leopoldville) indicate that they had intended to kill Mobutu and throw his body into the crocodile-infested River Congo. Furthermore they had anticipated that up to 10000 soldiers and civilians might be killed in the coup.

On the 31st the main conspirators were tried by a special military tribunal at Kokolo Camp in the presence of hundreds of specially chosen spectators, all pro-Mobutu. The four defendants, who showed signs of rough handling, claimed they had only acted at the instigation of the planted military officers, who had led them on, which was probably at least half the truth.

All four were found guilty and hanged in public on 2 June, in the presence of General Bobozo and thousands of spectators. The prisoners were executed separately at 20-minute intervals. Mobutu refused to spare their lives, his explanation being that the lives of Gizenga, Mulele and Gbenye had previously been spared by the central government but

later they had launched the NLC rebellion and caused the death of thousands. Cleophas Kamitatu, a minister in General Mulamba's government who was suspected of taking part in the plot, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

Lumumba enshrined

A grand ceremonial was held in Leopoldville on 20 June 1966, the fifth anniversary of Congolese independence. Among the VIP guests were President Nyerere of Tanzania and President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. Mobutu used the occasion to announce that Patrice Lumumba assassinated in 1961, would be awarded the status of 'national hero'. According to Mobutu, Lumumba had been killed because he planned economic, and not merely political, independence for the Congo. The posthumous award was rather surprising as at the time of Lumumba's arrest Mobutu had been commanding the CNA, and making Lumumba a martyred hero could serve as a shining example for Soumialot, Gbenye and Mulele, the three main rebel commanders of the NLC rebellion.

The Kisangani mutiny

On 26 July 1966 a mutiny broke out in Kisangani (formerly Stanleyville new African names for certain provinces, cities and towns having come into effect on 1 May), led by Colonel Tshipulsa, a Katangan, when former Katangan gendarmes attacked units of newly trained CNA soldiers, killing the local garrison commander, Colonel Joseph Tshatshi (who had gained military fame as the suppressor of the Mulele rebellion in Kwilu Province), and occupying the airport and the centre of the city.

The mutineers were joined by about 30 European mercenaries, mainly Belgian, but about 70 others, under Colonel Robert Denard, who was in charge of the European mercenaries, remained loyal to the central government and occupied the post office, banks and radio station, from where Denard reported the situation direct to Mobutu. The Katangan mutineers had been sent to the area in 1964 to suppress the NLC rebellion, and although they technically formed part of the CNA establishment they retained their own officers and identity. Their main complaint was that they had not been paid for three months.

On the 24th Mobutu assumed personal control of Kinshasa (formerly Leopoldville), and sent Prime Minister Mulamba to Kisangani to

investigate the situation and talk to the mutineers. Mulumba met Colonel Denard and Colonel Tshipulsa, but no agreement could be reached and fighting again broke out between the loyalists and the mutineers, lasting until 1 August.

It was announced in the Congo media on 28 July that the government had discovered that the Kisangani mutiny had been part of a much broader plan – sponsored by financial interests in Belgium – to restore Tshombe to power. It was alleged that European representatives had gone to South Africa and Rhodesia to ask Colonel Mike Hoare and Major Weeks (a former European mercenary leader) to recruit 150 European mercenaries to join up with the Katangan gendarmerie, which together with the Belgian mercenary unit that had mutinied would mount a general revolt against Mobutu's central government. The mutineers had hoped that other CNA detachments and units would join them, enabling them to take over major cities, which would eventually lead to Mobutu being removed from power in favour of Tshombe.

According to the Congolese Press Agency, Weeks had agreed to recruit European mercenaries but Hoare had not, and indeed had brought the plot to the attention of Mobutu. At that point the plan to restore Tshombe to power had been abandoned, but the Kisangani mutiny had gone ahead because the message had not reached the mutineers in time.

In early August General Malumba urged the mutineers to return to their posts and the civil population to remain calm, but the situation was not resolved until 25 September, when after two days' hand-to-hand fighting government troops regained full control. Some of the mutineers surrendered, while others – Belgian mercenaries and Katangans – withdrew into the bush. On 8 October President Mobutu ordered a general ceasefire and appealed to all mutineers to surrender unconditionally, which most of them did. Furthermore the remnants of Soumialot's militia in the Fizi-Baraka area took advantage of the ceasefire to lay down their arms.

During September, South Katanga and South Kivu had been placed under military administration, and a curfew had been imposed in Lubumbashi (formerly Elizabethville).

When President Mobutu opened the Central Assembly on 8 September 1966 he stated that the cabinet would again be made responsible to the Chamber of Deputies and its committees, but reserved the right to rule by decree during times of emergency. Some cabinet changes were made. Mobutu confirmed that Kasavubu had agreed to become a senator for Life, and that Gizenga (then in Cairo) would remain a provincial senator for Kwilu Province.

Tshombe arraigned

On 6 March 1967 Tshombe was charged *in absentia* before a special military tribunal at Kokolo Camp, Kinshasa, and on the 12th he was found guilty of treason and allied offences and sentenced to death. Also condemned to death was Colonel Tshipulsa, the Katangan accused of killing Colonel Tshatshi, the garrison commander, in the Kisangani mutiny in July 1966.

One-party state

On 17 April 1967 President Mobutu formed his own political party, the MPR (Mouvement populaire de la révolution), details of which emerged the following month. It was to be the only legitimate party and would have a Politburo, which would blindly support Mobutu. The MNCL, led by Antoine Kiwewa, had to be dissolved because, according to Mobutu, it had been the cause of division, anarchy and confusion, and its leaders had betrayed the ideals of Lumumba. The other surviving political organisations would also be dissolved. Mobutu announced that a referendum for a new constitution would be held in June 1967. This was duly proclaimed on 24 June, having been approved by 98 per cent of the voters registered, including women this time.

Tshombe kidnapped

On 30 June 1967 Tshombe, seemingly safe in Spanish exile, was on a Spanish internal flight when the aircraft was hijacked by Francis Bodenan, reported to be a European mercenary recruiter, and diverted to Algeria, where all on board were interned. The Congolese government immediately applied for the extradition of Tshombe, but there was hesitation in Algiers. Although diplomatic relations between the Congo and Algeria had been severed by Tshombe (when prime minister) in October 1964, it was assumed that all that was needed was an adjustment of protocol, after which Tshombe would be handed over. However the Algerian government, basking under the international media spotlight, chose to bide its time.

During the weeks preceding Tshombe's abduction there had been a number of acts of sabotage in the Congo, especially in Katanga. A particularly prominent one occurred on 17 June, when a railway bridge across the River Lubudi at Mutshatshasa was sabotaged, blocking the railway line between Lubumbashi (Elizabethville) and Lobito

(in Angola), which was used to transport copper from both Zambia and Katanga. Mercenaries were said to have been involved. The government in Kinshasa alleged that this and similar acts were part of a vast plan directed from abroad. The arrest of two Belgian and other suspects, and their subsequent ill-treatment, inflamed the Belgian government, which cancelled a scheduled visit by the Belgian prime minister to the Congo. Relations between the Congo and Belgium, which had been friendly when Tshombe was prime minister, were deteriorating markedly.

The mercenary uprising

On 5 July 1967 Mobutu suddenly declared a state of emergency throughout the country on the ground that the Congo had just fallen victim to imperialist aggression. He stated that early that morning two unidentified aircraft had landed at Kisangani, where commandos had disembarked and occupied the airport, and that in Bukavu (Kivu Province) mutineers had set up a militia, which had attacked CNA positions. He appealed to the UN Security Council and the OAU for assistance. The country's borders were closed, and communications between Kinshasa and Brazzaville were suspended. All foreigners were ordered to surrender their arms and were subjected to a night curfew.

The basic facts were verified, and on the 6th official Belgian sources confirmed that 200 adventurers had left by air from Brussels. The United States promptly arranged for the evacuation of US nationals, mainly missionaries, from Bukavu. In a later statement Mobutu asserted that the rebellious commandos were Belgian, Spanish and English adventurers who were out to make money and thought they would be able to prevent the extradition of Tshombe from Algeria. The two aircraft had apparently intended to fly to Kinshasa by way of Johannesburg, but finding they were behind schedule, had instead decided to land at Kisangani to speed up their mission. The Belgian authorities claimed that Mobutu had been warned by President Johnson of the United States and the Belgian government of a foreign plot to invade the Congo and restore Tshombe to power.

Also on the 6th President Mobutu ordered the general mobilisation of all men and women between the ages of 18 and 25, admitting there had been fighting in both Kisangani and Bukavu but claiming (falsely) that these two places were almost back in CNA hands.

On the 7th Congolese DC-3 aircraft carrying wounded mercenaries and Katangans, one of whom was Colonel Denard, flew from

Kisangani to Kariba in Rhodesia. The wounded were taken to hospital in Salisbury, to be repatriated to their own countries as soon as they were fit to travel. The plane returned to Kisangani carrying aid workers and a number of journalists, all of whom were taken hostage by the rebels at the airport.

In Kinshasa it was officially admitted that there had been two days of fighting in Kisangani, Bukavu and Kindu, but that the rebels had been defeated and the CNA was once again in full control, which was only partly true. However Mobutu admitted he had ordered the CNA not to attempt to retake Kisangani airport as the rebels encamped there were holding European hostages, including foreign journalists, university staff, women and children. The United States lent the central government three large Hercules military transport aircraft for long-range logistical support, and these were used to fly in reinforcements, including newly formed Congolese paratroop units. The rebels began to withdraw from Kisangani on the 12th and Mobutu declared that the national state of emergency was over, apart from in eastern Katanga and Kivu Province.

Two Red Cross chartered aircraft managed to land at Kisangani airport to evacuate the journalists and other foreign nationals. On the 26th a Red Cross spokesman stated that since the 13th it had evacuated 502 Europeans, plus more than 100 wounded CNA soldiers.

On the 13th the mutineering European mercenaries left Kisangani in a vehicle convoy and travelled towards Punia (180 miles to the south-east) with the assumed intention of reaching Katanga. Journeying with the convoy were 50 or more Europeans, some hostages, others who had voluntarily chosen to be evacuated by the column. On the 16th the convoy arrived at a plantation in Obokote owned by a Belgian major, Jean Schramme. Schramme had previously been in command of the European mercenaries in Bukavu, but after the early evacuation of the wounded Colonel Denard he had gone to command the mercenaries in Kisangani, loudly calling for the overthrow of Mobutu and his replacement by Godefroid Munongo and General Mulamba.

When the European mercenaries withdrew from Kisangani, leaving the CNA to dominate the scene, many serious acts of violence were committed against Europeans and a number of Congolese who had sided with them. More than 20 people were killed and others were injured. A new climate of distrust seemed to be developing against Europeans, and European premises were looted and sometimes destroyed. On 21 July Mobutu appealed to the mutineers to release their hostages and allow them to be evacuated by Red Cross planes from Obokote, but Schramme refused.

Meanwhile in Bukavu (South Kivu), on the 5th about 200 European mercenary troops and over 900 former gendarmes attacked the CNA military camp. After two days of fighting the 300-strong CNA force was driven from Bukavu, even though during the battle CNA reinforcements, guns and ammunition had arrived by plane. The town was abandoned as Africans disappeared into the bush and European civilians, along with members of the local government, fled to Rwanda, where President Kayibanda said he would accept European refugees but not mercenaries.

On the 10th Colonel Leonard Monga, a Katangan officer whom Tshombe had named as his chief of staff in the field, proclaimed a Government of Public Safety in Bukavu, calling on President Mobutu to step aside and allow Tshombe to return to power. The real intention seemed to be to march into Katanga and use it as a power base. Spasmodic fighting between government and rebel forces continued in the area, during which government combat aircraft made several raids on rebel positions. It was alleged that Ghanaian and Ethiopian aircraft provided similar support to Monga's men. A truce was declared on 22 August, but hostilities rumbled on through September and October without a change in the basic positions.

Government forces, amounting to more than 10000 well-armed and well-supported men, mustered in October and attacked Colonel Monga's rebel force on the 29th. The fighting lasted until 4 November, when the rebels abandoned the battlefield and some 150 European mercenaries and 900 Katangan gendarmes moved into Rwanda, against the wishes of the government. Schramme claimed that since 3 July 21 Europeans and 57 Katangans in his force had been killed, and about 100 wounded, clearly an underestimate. The number of casualties during the first week in November 1967 was generally assessed as hundreds of dead on both sides. Schramme took with him into Rwanda several mortars, flame-throwers and one combat aircraft. His attempt to make it into Katanga had failed, and Mobutu breathed more easily.

A rebel second front

While the battle for Bukavu was in progress, another small European mercenary force of about 200 men, advancing in two separate columns and also dedicated to returning Tshombe to power in the Congo, entered Katanga from Angola on 3 November. In command was the now recovered Colonel Denard. The following day one of the columns attacked the railway frontier town of Dilolo and forced the small CNA

garrison to withdraw. An aircraft brought in European mercenary reinforcements and ammunition, and the Kinshasa government accused Portugal of collaboration, which was denied. The other column moved to occupy the town of Mutshatsha, about 80 miles inside Katanga.

On the 4th the rebel force in Mutshatsha began to withdraw, taking with it a number of hostages, while the other column entered Kasaji. The CNA counteroffensive began on the 4th and it was claimed that Kasaji had been, retaken, but two days later the rebels launched other attacks, causing the CNA to withdraw some distance. However Kasaji was then retaken and by the 9th both rebel columns were in full retreat. The Portuguese later said that about 500 European rebels and civilians had entered Angola, most asking to be repatriated.

This 'second front' rebel invasion was unpopular with many Europeans working in Katanga as they did not want the province to be turned into a battle ground. Several actively opposed Denard's men, who reportedly responded with venom – several Europeans were killed in reprisal, others were injured and their property damaged.

The refugee problem

By this time many African refugees, predominantly civilians, had fled into adjacent countries, where they had been herded into refugee camps and were now being fed by the Red Cross and other international aid agencies. To the governments concerned they were more a nuisance than a danger. The real problem were the 200 or so European mercenaries and up to 10000 former Katangan gendarmes who had sought refuge in Rwanda. Although disarmed, they were regarded as posing a potential military threat to their host country, as well as to the Congo.

Mobutu wanted them to be extradited to the Congo to be tried and punished for their war crimes, his underlying fear being that they might burst out of their camps and regroup to fight against him again. The Rwandan authorities were prepared to let the European military refugees be repatriated if they so desired, and it was confirmed at an OAU summit in Kinshasa in September 1967 that the mercenaries would be sent back to their own countries.

However in January 1968 Mobutu (as president of the OAU) objected, demanded they be extradited to the Congo. Rwanda refused, and Kinshasa promptly broke off diplomatic relations with Rwanda. Mobutu urged countries adjacent to Rwanda not to allow planes carrying the mercenaries home to pass through air space. The problem was

not resolved until 15 March, when Mobutu backed down and gave his consent to the repatriation of the mercenaries. Led by Major Schramme, 113 European mercenaries were escorted from Shangugu camp to two Red Cross chartered aircraft, which landed in secrecy at a military airfield in Belgium. No explanation was given of why their number had shrunk to such an extent. The large Katangan contingent were not so fortunate, and officially most were repatriated 'to Katanga to be reintegrated into CNA units', although it was suspected that many were executed or imprisoned.

Meanwhile, on 2 December 1967 the state of emergency in Kivu Province had been lifted and the former Bukavu government had returned from asylum in Rwanda to find the town occupied by the CNA but otherwise deserted, as after the military reoccupation indisciplined CNA units had carried out reprisals on the townsfolk.

During the first months of 1968 there were several announcements of plots against Mobutu, but as nothing of significance materialised it seems that these announcements were made simply to justify arrests. A new currency was introduced, the 'Zaire', and relations with Belgium improved. During May there were clashes between the CNA in Katanga and West Kasai, where religious sects, whose ostensible aim was a return to the primitive life, were terrorising the population. In February 1968 the widow of Patrice Lumumba and her children, who had been living in Cairo, returned to Kinshasa. On 29 August 1968 President Mobutu released a number of political prisoners.

Execution of Mulele

After the August announcement of the release of political prisoners, Pierre Mulele – who had led the 1963 rebellion, reportedly at the cost of more than 9000 lives, and who since the collapse of the 1964 NLC rebellion had been hiding in the bush in Kwilu Province – was enticed to go to Congo (Brazzaville) to negotiate with representatives of the Congolese central government. Foreign Minister Justin Bomboko was there to meet him and took him back to Kinshasa, where a reception was given for him by General Luis Bobozo, the army commander. Mulele believed he was about to be rehabilitated, but was mistaken.

The next day (2 October 1968) he was arrested and brought to trial as a war criminal, Mobutu insisting that his amnesty applied only to political prisoners and not to war criminals. On the 8th a special military tribunal found Mulele guilty of various charges, including rebellion. His plea for clemency was rejected, it being alleged that he had

gone to Brazzaville to form a commando unit to invade the Congo. Mulele was executed by firing squad on 9 October. The Brazzaville government protested at the way Mulele had been tricked into captivity, as it had been led to believe that he would be treated as a political refugee and his life was not in danger. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were duly severed.

During January and April 1969, some time after Mulele's execution, a spate of further rebel executions took place in the Congo, including that of Colonel Leonard Monga, the Katangan officer who had led the secessionist Bukavu government in 1967, and other rebel leaders. A number of Katangan gendarmerie rebels were also executed, one source (*Le Monde*) mentioning a figure of over 200. The widow of Colonel Monga stated to the media that two thirds of the 970 Katangan soldiers who had been repatriated from Rwanda had been murdered. This was probably founded on fact, as Mobutu was notoriously heavy handed when it came to selective justice.

Death of Tshombe

To complete the Tshombe saga, since his abduction on 30 June 1967 the former Congolese prime minister had been detained in Algeria. In September 1968 the Congolese central government stated it would drop its demand for his extradition and would not object to his release provided he was expelled from Africa. Neither the Algerian government nor Tshombe trusted Mobutu, perhaps with good reason in this instance. Tshombe died a natural death from heart failure on 29 June 1969, a group of distinguished international doctors verifying this cause of death. Tshombe's body was flown to Belgium to lie in state in his house. There was no official Congolese representation, nor were the Congolese people informed of his death.

Mobutu consolidates

With his main enemies and rivals for supreme power removed from the scene, Mobutu proceeded to consolidate his personal power base. After achieving reconciliation with Belgium in November 1969 and coming to a compensation agreement with the Union Minière in May 1970, he was reelected president for another seven years (being the sole contender) at the first congress of his MPR, which declared itself to be the sole supreme institution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The MPR Politburo selected candidates for the election, held in

November 1970, for a new National Assembly of 420 members. When he was sworn in before the Supreme Court on 6 December, Mobutu granted an amnesty to all Congolese who had been guilty of acts against the security of the state between 1960 and 1970, and that those living abroad would be included if they returned by the end of January 1971.

Zaire

It was announced in Kinshasa on 27 October 1971 that the name of the country would be changed from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Zaire, that the River Congo would henceforth be known as the River Zaire, and that Upper Congo would be known as Upper Zaire and Lower Congo as Lower Zaire. It is generally believed that Mobutu changed the name of the country, which was more usually called Congo (Kinshasa), to avoid being confused abroad with Congo (Brazzaville), which had developed into a hard-line Marxist–Leninist state.

The choice of the name Zaire, surprised some, the official explanation being that when the Portuguese navigator Diogo Cao had reached the mouth of the River Congo in 1484, he had been told by the people living on its banks that the river was called ‘Zadi’ (Big Water), which in Portuguese became Zaire.

During 1972 Mobutu reorganised his cabinet and reduced the number of ministers and also the number of Politburo members. A number of former ministers and Politburo members were brought to trial for allegedly, plotting against him – obviously meant to have a complete clear-out of ‘subversives’. He also embarked upon an Africanisation programme. This return to ‘African authenticity’ involved the elimination of foreign-sounding place names and the deportation of foreigners, especially European missionaries, and he clashed with Cardinal Malula, archbishop of Kinshasa, over the closure of seminaries and schools. In November the minister of the interior announced that 4750 foreigners had been expelled since 1 September 1971, and that another 2248 had been classed as undesirables, liable at any moment to be deported.

The following year Mobutu sought to put Zaire on the international map as a significant player, making state visits to China and India, as well as official visits to Taiwan, Somalia and Ethiopia. In July, Lake Albert was renamed Lake Mobutu, and Zaire – in common with many African states – severed diplomatic relations with Israel, considering it to be at fault in the Arab–Israeli war.

8

The First Invasion of Shaba: 1977

During July 1974, at a meeting of the MPR Politburo (now the country's only political organisation), chaired by President Mobutu, it was decided to revise the 1967 constitution and replace Christianity with 'Mobutism' throughout the country. On the 14th it was officially announced that Zaire was to become a secular state, and that in future there would be no religious holidays, including Christmas Day. Mobutu unabashedly drew a parallel between 'Mobutism' and Christianity, saying that the role of the political commissioners of Mobutism could be compared to that of the theologians of the Church. On 1 January 1975 religious instruction in primary and secondary schools was abolished and replaced by courses in civics and politics, and MPR militants began to replace crucifixes with portraits of Mobutu in the well-known communist fashion.

A serious attempt was made to eliminate Christianity and all Christian influence from Zaire. All school leavers were to be conscripted to undertake one year of civic service, which would include military and political training and agricultural work. Higher education would be restricted and the theological faculty at the University of Zaire would be closed, as would the church schools, which provided education for about two thirds of all primary and almost one half of secondary pupils.

The army was to become an institution of the MPR and would be reorganised for three purposes: to assist with the agricultural programme, to provide political education, and to provide military training. In the economic sphere the state was to take control of all construction, production, distribution and transportation, while foreign banks and foreign commercial companies would have restrictions placed upon them. Under the agricultural programme the MPR Politburo

would create agricultural brigades and cooperatives to regulate production and market agricultural products. The Department of Youth was to be placed under direct presidential authority.

Mobutu's 'Historic Speech'

President Mobutu presented his new policies to his people on 4 January 1975 in what was officially described as his 'Historic Speech'. He asserted that he did not wish to be considered a god and that the abolition of religious instruction in schools would not lead to the development of a 'divine head of state' cult. He stated that Zaire was simply to become a secular state. Regarding the widespread distribution of his portrait, he said that his people should be able to look at the man who had sacrificed himself for the people of Zaire.

Denying that he was a Marxist, Mobutu explained that nationalisation of the means of production and distribution was simply a way of waging 'war on the bourgeoisie', and that the mobilisation of the people and the creation of agricultural communes was a new system of full employment that would eliminate all work stoppages. With regard to foreign affairs, Zaire would support all national liberation movements, and Mobutu declared that no expense would be spared in relation to the Angolan struggle for freedom, mentioning for the first time that more than one million Angolan refugees were now sheltering in Zaire.

Just previously, in December 1974, during a three-week visit to China and North Korea, Mobutu had met and conversed with Chairman Mao Tse-tung, and seemed to have been deeply impressed by him and his Chinese type of communism, with its mobilised population, work brigades and communes. After his return to Zaire the MPR Politburo had made a number of radical major decisions. For example all places connected with the life of Mobutu were declared 'places of meditation', and his birthday (14 October), henceforth to be known as Youth Day, was to be a day of national celebration.

A reorganisation took place on 7 January 1975, in which the holding of dual appointments in the government and the MPR Politburo would be banned, although Mobutu, as well as remaining president of Zaire, would retain the portfolios of defence, ex-servicemen and planning. Mobutu had been technically head of state from 1967 to November 1970, when he had been formally elected president of Zaire.

Policy towards the United States and Southern Africa

On 21 January 1975 Mobutu made a speech outlining his policy towards the United States and the liberation of Southern Africa from colonialism. Admitting he had received generous aid from the United States, without which the secession of Katanga could not have been prevented, he complained that the United States was doing nothing to help Black Africa to liberate itself, meaning that it was avoiding involvement with struggling liberation movements. Mobutu claimed he was not a racist, and wanted his experiment of grouping whites, mixed-race people and blacks together as one people to succeed so that this would influence South Africa, then in the depths of apartheid. There was widespread disbelief in his assertions because he had deported so many Europeans. Mobutu's rhetoric was often at variance with reality.

Plot against Mobutu

On 16 June 1975 it was reported in *Elima* (a Kinshasa daily) that a plot to assassinate President Mobutu had been uncovered and that all the conspirators, including some Americans, had been arrested. This was confirmed by Mobutu, who stated that an unnamed great power had coerced certain Zaireans to kill him at the end of September. The US Department of State denied (falsely) that the US government was in any way involved. In fact the CIA was very much involved.

The Cold War was at its height, and Mobutu's close and seemingly successful association with the governments of China, North Korea and India were both surprising and alarming to Americans. In particular the US government was concerned by Zaire's adoption of Mobutism, which closely resembled Maoism, even though little or nothing of any significance had yet been done to further the thoughts of Mao. Furthermore the spectre of world communism was the American nightmare at that time and it could not be denied that the Western democracies would be better served internationally if Mobutu could be eliminated, and perhaps some Tshombe-type, pro-Western ruler installed in his stead.

What covert US activities there had been in Black Africa had been spasmodic and not always successful. According to Marchetti and Marks (1974), the CIA 'became deeply involved in the Congo in the early 1960s. Clandestine Service operators regularly bought and sold Congolese politicians, and the agency supplied money and arms to the supporters of Cyr l Adoula and Joseph Mobutu. By 1964, the CIA

had imported its own mercenaries into the Congo, and the agency's B-26 bombers, flown by Cuban exile pilots, many of whom were Bay of Pigs veterans, were carrying out regular missions against insurgent groups.' It was easy for the Congolese, and others, to think that the CIA might be implicated.

On 17 June a list of those accused of involvement in the plot was published in *Salongo* (a semi-official daily newspaper). Included were several generals and senior military officers, one being General Fallu Sumbu, who had been military attaché in Washington and was described as being at the heart of the conspiracy; another was the chief of staff of the land forces. Others commanded military regions or held similarly sensitive posts. Only one was a member of the MPR Politburo. Most had been trained in the United States, and one, Major Mpika Bokembo, had received additional training in Israel. The latter was also alleged to have written a paper on 'How to prepare a successful coup d'état to overthrow the present regime in Zaire'. Several of the alleged culprits had American or European wives. The deception was at times farcical.

Henry Kissinger, then US Secretary of State, came in for considerable condemnation and criticism in the Kinshasa media. The US ambassador was expelled from Zaire and his Zairean counterpart was expelled from Washington. In Kinshasa an orchestrated crowd of some 20000 people demonstrated against the US government in front of the US cultural centre.

At a rally on 18 June Mobutu said that a young Congolese soldier had told him of the plot, having been bribed in US dollars to take part in it. The basic plan was for assassins to use rifles with silencers and telescopic sights. Mobutu eventually agreed to a request by Kissinger to receive a US mission to discuss the allegations. A few days later a dozen senior military officers were suspended from duty, and other top military commanders were posted to other commands and appointments.

The trial of 41 defendants was held in camera by a special military tribunal in Kinshasa in August. Seven army officers were condemned to death, one of whom was General Sumbu. Others were given prison sentences and seven were acquitted. There had been some high-level Zairean doubts about the trial, which had been opposed by the first president of the Supreme Court, Lihau Liban, but a media campaign was launched against him and he was dismissed from his post as a university professor.

The president of the tribunal, General Masialsa Kangala, who had passed the death sentences, disappeared on 2 September. His body was

found four days later, together with those of six other persons, in the wreck of a helicopter in a mountainous area in southern Zaire. This remains another mystery in the history of Zaire as there were conflicting explanations. In the meantime a decree was issued that Zairean citizens married to foreigners could not become military officers, it being alleged that the foreign wives of convicted plotters had acted as messengers between their husbands and foreign diplomats. Zairean military officers already married to foreign wives were given a stark choice between abandoning their wives or remaining in the army.

VIP visits

Despite the West's differences with Zaire over political matters, the largely untapped natural wealth of the country continued to act as a magnet. In August 1975 the president of France, Giscard d'Estaing, made a state visit to Zaire in search of lucrative commercial agreements. He was also pushing his 'New (French) International Economic Order' in Africa. While in Zaire d'Estaing visited the Inga hydroelectric project between Kinshasa and Matadi, in which the French had invested and was planned to become the largest in the world.

At a joint press conference by the two presidents d'Estaing condemned apartheid, and to please his host said he would cease to supply 'continental' (meaning ground or air) armaments to South Africa. The French president later added that this decision did not include the four Agosta submarines currently on order, or any other part of existing military contracts. He agreed to French participation in the construction of a satellite system for television and telephone communications, gaining in return a favourable agreement on Zairean copper.

The Zaire–Belgium Friendship Treaty had been abrogated in May 1974 following the disclosure of certain official Belgian documents containing unfriendly remarks about the Zairean government. However in September 1975 the Belgian prime minister, Leo Tindemans, accepted an invitation to visit Zaire with the aim of restarting talks on compensation for Belgian companies and individuals. Belgium was also interested in copper and other raw materials.

Invasion of Shaba

The next momentous event in Zaire occurred on 8 March 1977, when an armed force of about 2000 men, some of whom were former members of the old Katangan gendarmerie, invaded Shaba (formerly

Katanga) from Angola, led by General Nathanael Mbumba, a former Katangan police officer. His declared intention was to drive Mobutu from Zaire and establish a Government of National Unity, promising not to sabotage the production of copper and manganese, or to expel foreign workers. Mbumba denied (probably untruthfully) that there were any foreign troops in his contingent, insisting that all his troops were Congolese fighting for the liberation of the whole of their country.

Angola had undergone a change since the Portuguese revolution in 1974 as decolonisation had followed in its wake. Previously Zaire had covertly supported rebel movements fighting against the Portuguese colonial authorities.

The FLNC

After the collapse of the Katangan secessionist struggle under Tshombe in 1963, a number of Katangan gendarmes had fled to Angola, where they had formed the Congolese National Liberation Front (FLNC), which had been covertly supported by the Portuguese authorities. On 25 November 1974 Mobutu had announced an amnesty of political prisoners and exiles, and he had promised FLNC members – mostly from the Katangan gendarmerie and estimated to number about 4000 – sheltering in Angola that they would be included provided they returned to Zaire by the end of that year. Very few had done so. The FLNC had recruited more men, and its strength probably rose to about 6000 armed men.

Mobutu accused the government of Angola, led by Agostinho Neto, who was supported by Soviet and Cuban mercenaries, of conspiring to oust him from power. Diplomatic relations between Zaire and the Soviet Union had been resumed in 1968, but remained cool because Mobutu had become so very pro-Chinese; while diplomatic relations with Cuba only dated from 1974 and were still fragile and uncertain. There were about 21 000 Cuban soldiers in Angola in 1977 (IISS).

Operation Cobra 77

Presidents Mobutu and Neto had met in Brazzaville in February 1976 and agreed not to permit military activities against each other to be fostered in their respective territories. Furthermore Neto had undertaken to remove the exiled Katangan gendarmes, but it was not until 6 January 1977 that the Zairean government formally recognised the Neto regime. Relations between the two countries remained strained

and difficult, and were not improved by a speech made by Neto on 15 February 1977 accusing enemies of Angola of continuing to occupy military training camps near the Zairean border with Angola, notably at Kinkuzu, a former base of the anti-Neto FLNA led by Holden Roberto.

On the 24th Neto loudly denounced an alleged Congolese plan to invade northern Angola and the oil-rich Cabinda Strip. Known as 'Operation Cobra 77', the invasion would be launched from bases in Zaire by anti-Neto FLNA insurgent forces. This was denied by Mobutu, as was the Angolan complaint that armed men from Zaire had crossed the border into Angola and massacred more than 40 villagers (the joint Congo–Angola frontier was over 1600 miles in length). On 1 March Mobutu stated that all FLNA members in Zairean camps had been disarmed and were living in the country simply as refugees.

Initial advances

On 10 March 1977 Radio Zaire announced that during the past 48 hours several columns of mercenaries in the pay of the Angolan government had entered Shaba and occupied the town of Dilolo on the main railway line to Benguela. They had then advanced eastwards along the line to Kasaji, a copper mining centre, and Kapanga to the north of the railway line. In Paris on the 11th, the anti-Mobutu FLNC (the French tried to keep a foot in both camps) claimed in a statement that it was responsible for the attacks on the three towns, and that this marked the beginning of a national rising of the Congolese population to overthrow Mobutu. Mobutu replied that unnamed foreign powers were behind the invasion and Angola was just a pawn.

In Luanda, capital of Angola, Angolan Minister of Defence Iko Teles Carreira stated that his border units had no knowledge of any armed clashes between Zairean armed groups near the Angolan–Katangan border, but he did accuse the Zairean military forces of supporting counter-revolutionary groups inside Angola. He went on to say that although Angola was not responsible for what was happening in Zaire, he hoped the situation would soon return to normal.

Zairean armed forces

Despite Mobutu's rousing declaration of the birth of Mobutism and the role to be played by the army in his projected Mao-like revolution, little or nothing had been done to form the agricultural work brigades or delegate political and civic responsibilities to the army. In fact

the role and size of the armed forces had changed little in a decade. According to one authority (IISS) servicemen were still recruited on a voluntary basis and numbered about 43 000, which was insignificant in relation to more than 900 000 square miles of Zairean territory and its 25 million barely pacified inhabitants. The main role of the armed forces remained internal security, with little thought or energy going to national defence.

The Zairean air force, comprising about 3000 men, possessed 40 combat aircraft. One squadron had five French Mirages, and two counterinsurgency squadrons had a mixed bag of fighter-bombers. There was also a transport wing, with about 40 transport planes of different types and about 40 helicopters.

The army, about 40 000 strong, consisted of about 30 battalions, or major units, including an armoured division, a mechanised division, seven paratroop units, 14 infantry units and four ceremonial groups. The country was divided into military regions, and a European-type Defence Ministry and General Staff was taking shape. The armoury included over 100 Chinese light tanks, some 80 French light armoured vehicles and about 30 British scout cars. The field guns, anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery, and mortars were mainly Chinese, while the automatic weapons and small arms were mainly of Belgian origin. The ever-popular guerrilla weapon, the Kalashnikov, had appeared on the scene, and modern American weapons were not uncommon. The Zairean navy consisted of half a dozen river craft. The strength of the paramilitary forces was about 20 000, including eight national guard and six gendarmerie battalions.

International reaction

The government controlled Zaire news agency (AZAP) claimed on 15 March 1977 that the invaders from Angola were led by mercenaries from across the Atlantic and were supported by a third country in need of an ideological conquest. No names were mentioned, but AZAP was referring to Cuban soldiers and Soviet technicians, whose governments had been supplying arms to the FLNC as Mobutu favoured the Chinese form of communism over that espoused by Moscow. AZAP also alleged that the invaders were using Soviet 122mm rockets and long-range missiles.

As the small disorientated Zairean army seemed unable to stop the progress of General Mbumba's FLNC force, Mobutu called on a

number of African countries and the United States for assistance, but not the UN in the first instance. On the 15th a US aircraft carrying 'non-lethal military equipment' arrived in Zaire, together with a second one carrying spares for Zaire's small fleet of C-130 transport aircraft. This was criticised by the US Congress owing to Zaire's poor human rights record, especially with regard to the interrogation of prisoners. It called Zaire a military dictatorship.

US President Billy Carter had personally authorised the dispatch of the aircraft. A White House spokesman said they had gone to 'a friendly country subjected to an armed attack from elements not clearly identified', adding that the president had never even thought of sending troops to Zaire and that the US supplies had not included arms or ammunition. The White House spokesman also mentioned that Zaire was due to receive some \$32 million of military aid for the period 1977-78, consisting mainly of credit sales and training grants (Zaire had become the largest African recipient of such military aid). He added that the United States was providing Zaire with \$12 million in economic aid and \$15 million in food aid.

The US State Department admitted that the situation in Zaire was dangerous, and reiterated Zaire's allegations that there were Cuban troops in General Mbumba's army. US nationals had been evacuated from Shaba, although those working elsewhere in Zaire had remained at their posts. A few had been put under house arrest to protect them from combatant armies and roving armed groups.

Two planeloads of Belgian weaponry arrived in Zaire on the 16th, it being claimed that they had been on order for some time. This caused the Angolan government to urge nations not to send arms to Mobutu. On Radio Luanda President Neto again stated (falsely) that his government was not in any way involved in the fighting in Shaba, and stressed that the conflict should not be internationalised and that the two countries should be allowed to settle the matter between themselves. Neto did not want UN peacekeeping forces to descend on Angola in number to clog his machinations; neither did Mobutu want a recurrence of the ONUC experience, useful though it had been at times.

On 24 March Mobutu accepted Nigeria's offer to provide a negotiator. He continued to insist that there was active Soviet and Cuban involvement in Shaba, and a regular Moscow-Kinshasa air service, due to commence on the 31st, was cancelled that day. The United States, China and Egypt agreed that there was indeed Soviet involvement in the Shaba invasion, but Moscow spokesmen denied everything.

Mbumba continues to advance

During March and early April 1977 General Mbumba's forces advanced further into Shaba, although more by default than by skilful determination. International media reports from the battlefields spoke disparagingly of the Zairean army and its conduct in action, indicating it was ineffectual, poorly trained, poorly paid, poorly fed and disorganised. Discipline was reported to be wanting, and there were instances of troops avoiding battle or even going over to the enemy. It was the wet season and the parlous state of most of the roads hampered military movement. There was a shortage of fuel both for motor vehicles – which meant that food supplies were irregular, necessitating government soldiers to live off the land at times – and aircraft, which restricted aerial activity. One authority (IISS) reported that 70 per cent of government aircraft were grounded for want of spare parts, and that many army vehicles were immobilised for the same reason. Zaire's poor economic position had resulted in military stocks declining almost to zero.

The government troops were handicapped by the fact that western Shaba was inhabited by the Lunda, a major tribe that was out of sympathy with the central government – indeed many of Mbumba's troops were Lundas.

On 17 March a second FLNC column of about 600 men entered western Shaba, north of Dilolo, to occupy the mining town of Tshikapa, while the main body occupied Kasaji to threaten Kolwezi, farther to the east along the railway line. The Kolwezi area produced about 75 per cent of Shaba's copper exports and employed over 3000 Belgians. Mbumba's troops also occupied the town of Sandoa, a smaller mining centre north of Kasaji.

In Brussels on the 24th the FLNC claimed that its forces had taken the railway junction town of Mutshatsha, halfway between Kasaji and Kolwezi, and that General Mbumba had routed the 10th battalion of the Zaire army, seizing 370 automatic weapons in the process, plus other arms and ammunition. The fall of Mutshatsha, a key position, was not admitted by the Zairean Ministry of Defence until the 31st. The Colonel in command of the Kolwezi sector, which included the battle zone, was recalled.

The Zairean information services were still insisting that the FLNC forces comprised more than 5000 men, but 2400 was nearer to the mark. They described the force as being armed with Soviet weaponry, including mortars, surface-to-surface missiles and rocket launchers,

which was more or less correct, and insisted that European and Cuban mercenaries were fighting with it, which was extremely doubtful.

Mobutu appointed General Boyenga Singa, commander of the gendarmerie, to take command of the army in Shaba. At a press conference in Kinshasa, General Bumba Djogo, the army chief of staff, claimed that government forces had killed Soviet, Cuban and Portuguese soldiers in the fighting; but he was unable to produce their bodies, nor could any prisoners be produced. Djogi was reposted the following day.

At a rally in Kinshasa on 10 April Mobutu claimed that the anti-Mobutu FLNC had been helped by officers at the highest level in the Zairean army, and that one of the senior officers involved had been arrested. It was an open secret that the regular officer cadre heartily disliked Mobutu's suggestion of a Chinese-type peasant agricultural army, and probably indeed most other aspects of Mobutism. It also came to light that only about 100 former Katangan gendarmes had been involved in the initial attacks on Shaba, and that on the day of the invasion (8 March) Zairean paratroop and armoured formations had been withdrawn from the Angolan border, allegedly after the Angolan government had complained about a Zairean military build-up in the area. The indications were that the invasion force was not exactly unwelcome in some Zairean military circles.

One scenario was that the FLNC invasion had been planned by Russia and Cuba in order to prevent economic recovery in Zaire and to destabilise the country, both countries fearing that Mobutism might prove economically successful (*Newsweek*). In an interview Mobutu stated that he was disappointed by the United States' attitude and failure to rush US special forces to his aid, but he praised Belgium and France for speeding up their deliveries of weapons, ammunition and equipment, and thanked them for their offer of military advisers to help plan the defence of Kolwezi.

France airlifts Moroccan troops

On 2 April 1977 Mobutu again asked for military help from the OAU countries as there had been no positive response to his earlier request. On the 8th it was confirmed that the Moroccan government would send a military detachment to Zaire, and that Egypt would send air force technical staff, which were desperately needed by the Zairean air force. The United States complained that it had received no advance notice of these arrangements, and disapproved of both of them. However it was

not overly worried as Morocco did not possess the necessary long-range transport aircraft – at this stage of the Cold War the United States was keeping a close eye on the military-related activities of non-NATO countries.

To the United States' chagrin, France stepped in and offered eleven long-range transport aircraft to move 1500 Moroccan troops, together with their weapons and equipment. The airlift began on the 7th and was completed by the 10th. It was also discovered that France had sent at least 17 more than the original order of 25 Mirage fighter-bombers to Zaire, together with about 200 technicians. France was also in the process of delivering 290 light armoured vehicles and some helicopters, plus some other weapons and ammunition not previously mentioned. It seems that the French president's visit to Zaire in 1975 had been more successful than was generally realised.

France had no formal defence treaty with Zaire, and its official stance was that African countries should settle their own affairs. The French expressed the view that the FLNC invasion force could not be composed entirely of the Katangan gendarmerie detachment that had sought refuge in Angola 12 years previously as the men would now be too old to be retrained to use modern weaponry, but that the invaders were other troops, well trained in modern weaponry. The French seemed to favour the Russian–Cuban theory, an illusion shared with Mobutu. Belgium was unhappy about being upstaged by France's prestige operation.

Diplomatic tantrums

The intervention by France and Morocco was condemned in the UN by Angola, the Soviet Union and Cuba. China solidly supported Zaire, as did North Korea. On 4 April 1977 incriminating documents were found on a Cuban diplomat in Kinshasa, which resulted in the entire Cuban diplomatic mission being instantly expelled. On the 21st Mobutu severed diplomatic relations with the USSR for using the Patrice Lumumba wing of Moscow University to train African agents to carry out sabotage and surveillance on Zaire's postal and telecommunications networks, and he forbade Zairean students to visit Russia. On the 29th Zaire broke its diplomatic contact with East Germany, which was alleged to have supplied weapons to the FLNC. In general the Western nations tried to remain distant from the Zaire–Angola struggle.

Moroccan troops in action

The Moroccan troops brought discipline and determination to the Zairean battle front, which had been virtually crumbling away. They advanced westwards along the railway line, and on 25 April they occupied Mutshatsha. The invasion force had already withdrawn slowly, mining the railway and roads as they went, which had slowed down the government advance. The scene along the battle route was one of desolation and devastation. Entire villages were burnt to the ground as scorched earth tactics were used by both sides. The Zairean troops were settling accounts with Lundas who had collaborated with the invasion force, despite Mobutu's promise that there would be no reprisals against the enemy or the Lunda tribe. Government aircraft dropped leaflets urging those who had fled into the bush to return to their villages. Pygmy bowmen with poisoned arrows seem to have been involved on both sides. Artillery and mortar fire predominated, rather than close fighting. Accordingly the casualties were low, although the precise figures are unknown. Survival and caution seemed to be the watchwords of the warriors on both sides.

The early communiques from Kinshasa indicated that only 20 government troops had been killed so far, and that only three prisoners had been taken. Two of the prisoners had been brought before Mobutu at a rally in Kinshasa on the 20th, both Katangans, and they had admitted that they had been in the invasion force, that they had been trained first by the Portuguese and later by the Cubans, and that both Soviet and Cuban soldiers had taken part in the invasion. This was obviously what Mobutu wanted to hear, but General Mbumba denied that the two men had been part of his contingent.

The Zambian government complained that Zairean aircraft had bombed a hospital and villages inside its border in April, but Mobutu replied that it had been Soviets bent on causing difficulties between Zaire and friendly Zambia. (The territory of former Northern Rhodesia had become known as Zambia in October 1964, when it became an independent state within the British Commonwealth.)

Withdrawal of the invasion force

During May 1977 General Mbumba's invasion force began gradually to withdraw under pressure from the combined Zairean and Moroccan forces, and on the 11th it was announced in Kinshasa that Kasaji (about 80 miles from the Angolan border) had fallen – in fact it had been

entirely deserted when the Zairean troops walked in. Dilolo was reoccupied on 20 May, Sandoa on the 25th and Kapanga on the 26th, after which the remainder of the FLNC invaders began to withdraw in two main columns.

During these operations Mobutu had established a forward battle HQ in Kolwezi. The Moroccan troops took no further part in the fighting after the fall of Dilolo, but they had turned the tide of battle for Mobutu – something his own army had been unable to do – and had proved too much for General Mbumba to handle. Mbumba eventually chose retreat rather than valour. Moroccan Foreign Minister Ahmad Lataki visited Kolwezi on the 22nd, and as Mobutu had decided he could manage without the Moroccans it was agreed that they should return home the following month. Mobutu did not want to share the glory with foreign troops. Much later (17 August) the official report on the Shaba incursion was published, showing the Zairean battle losses as 219 officers and men killed or missing.

In a speech in Mbandaka (formerly Coquilhatville) on 5 June, Mobutu admitted that during the first few hours of the FLNC invasion the Zairean troops had suffered a moral defeat – in other words they had been caught napping. He assessed the cost of the whole operation at \$1.8 million, which had been covered by foreign aid, and he thanked King Hassan of Morocco for allowing him to keep the weapons and equipment of the Moroccan detachment, who had seemed glad to depart, owing to local harassment. The Cairo media reported that the 500 Egyptian pilots and technicians sent to Zaire in May wanted to return home for a similar reason, but as they were valuable and inconspicuous Mobutu was loath to let them go.

One version of the events leading up to the FLNC invasion (*Jeune Afrique*) was that President Neto had threatened to disarm general Mbumba's force, so the latter had hurriedly decided to carry out the invasion of Shaba, which had been in the planning stage for several months. This impromptu action had not allowed Mbumba sufficient time to obtain the cooperation of other exiled groups opposed to Mobutu, the principal one of which was the Parti de la Révolution populaire (PRP), led by Laurent Kabila. Hence the political arm of his invasion had been missing.

Mobutu also visited Paris to thank the French president for the military aid provided by France during the invasion. This he did in a speech to the French people on 9 June. However he struck a less than tactful note when he mentioned that he had not followed the French president's advice to use napalm against the invasion force, stating that

since then all the stocks of napalm given by France to Zaire had been destroyed.

Zairean reorganisation

On 1 July 1977 Mobutu in a speech to the nation, outlined the reforms he intended to introduce to remedy the weaknesses in the structure of the state that had become apparent during the Shaba crisis. In future he would be responsible for the Army General Staff, while the Legislative Council would be elected by the people, the only requirement being that candidates would be subject to party discipline. The members of the MPR Politburo and the Executive Council (government) were to be dismissed and replaced by people's commissioners (instead of deputies or representatives), to be elected in November. Mobutu appointed Professor Mpinge Kasenga as the first commissioner (prime minister). Kasenga would be responsible, under presidential guidance, for the coordination of the Executive Council. Each of the country's eight regions would each elect two commissioners to serve on the Politburo.

Treason trials

On 13 August 1977 Nguza Bond, deputy chairman of the Executive Committee and minister for foreign affairs, was dismissed from office and placed under arrest, as was Chief Mwant Yev of the Lunda tribe. Bond was accused of treason for failing to inform Mobutu of the imminent invasion of Shaba, of which he was alleged to have received warning when in Paris. The two men appeared before an operational war council in September, when they were described as the two chief instigators in the Shaba invasion. Both were condemned to death. There were international pleas to spare their lives as both the charges and the evidence were suspect. Eventually Mobutu relented.

9

The Second Invasion of Shaba

When some of the uncertainty, anxiety and excitement of the first invasion of Shaba had subsided somewhat, President Mobutu concentrated on further consolidating his power base in Zaire and proceeded with his proclaimed reforms. A principal political reform, introduced in October 1977, was that the regional commissioners of the eight regions were given control over the local army, police and government departments, while Mobutu retained control over the individual commissioners, with the power to appoint and dismiss them. This was clearly designed to weaken the central power of the army and other security services, and fragment and hinder ambitious plotters and schemers for central power.

The next consolidating step was to hold a series of general elections, as announced in his speech on 1 July, by secret ballot on the Western democratic pattern. The elections were held in October, first for urban councils, then for people's commissioners for the new Legislative Council and for 18 members of the (30-strong) MPR Politburo, the remaining 12 being nominated by the president. The presidential election was held in December. Mobutu, being the only candidate, was duly reelected for a further seven-year period by a claimed 98.18 per cent of the votes cast, and was reinvested as president of Zaire on 7 December 1977.

The National Executive Council resigned on that date to allow Mobutu to reorganise it. He reappointed Mpinge Kasenga as first state commissioner and included several new members, but reserved for himself the portfolios of national defence and territorial security.

There was a great deal of unrest and political discontent in several parts of Zaire, particularly Shaba, but this was largely glossed over and concealed from the prying international gaze by means of censorship

and repression, including detention and worse. In Shaba, European technicians were gradually returning to their jobs in the copper mines in the Kolwezi area, but the Lunda tribe, which lived on both sides of Zaire's borders with Angola and Zambia, remained at odds with the Zairean authorities. Even though General Mbumba and the main body of his troops had withdrawn to Angola, it became apparent that remnants had stayed on in Shaba, being either Lundas or former Katangan gendarmes, protected by local Lundas. The Belgian government continued to give covert shelter to the FLNC, allowing it and other Zairean opposition groups to issue communiques and make contact with the international media.

The members of one of the anti-Mobutu groups that had stayed in Shaba, in an attempt to escape the clutches of Zairean army units moved first into Kasai province, where they sheltered for some months in the bush, and then infiltrated the Kwilu area to attempt an insurrection in late December 1977. In January 1978 they seized a number of hostages, including government officials, Europeans and missionaries. Zairean paratroop units moved successfully against them and extracted a terrible vengeance. The news agency AZAP gave only sparse details, but admitted that 14 of the insurgent leaders had been executed.

In Brussels in January, the FLNC's 'Zaire Committee' issued a more explicit communique, claiming that the condemned leaders had been hanged in public, in the presence of school children dancing and singing in praise of Mobutu, and that government troops had massacred some 2000 people in the Kwilu area. A few tiny anti-Mobutu demonstrations and riots in Shaba Province were suppressed harshly and barely warranted a mention by AZAP. The impression that I gained during a visit to Zaire at that time was that everyone seemed to be expecting a revolutionary explosion, but they were very careful about what they said in public and who they confided in. Meanwhile official statements tried to persuade the people and the world at large that all was well under the progressive Mobutu regime.

Another plot discovered

On 7 March 1978 AZAP suddenly announced that 91 alleged plotters had been put on trial before a military court in Kinshasa, either for direct incitement of a military plot, for complicity in the plot or for theft of arms. The same day Mobutu confirmed that a military plot had been foiled, but somewhat vaguely denied that there had been an attempted *coup d'état*. He also confirmed that a sabotage campaign was

to have begun on 18 February, but action had been taken to thwart it and arrests had been made. Sabotage targets had included the oil pipeline from the port of Matadi to Kinshasa, the Inga hydroelectric plant near the mouth of the River Zaire, and numerous buildings. In addition the plotters had planned to assassinate several of his relatives. Mobutu claimed that the plot had been supported by three foreign countries, one of which was African – international commentators assumed he meant the Soviet Union, Cuba and Angola.

Sixty-seven of the defendants on trial were serving members of the Zairean armed forces, including 12 colonels and lieutenant-colonels, 18 majors, 13 captains and 11 lieutenants. Twenty-four were civilians, five of whom, leaders of the Mouvement d'action pour le Réurrection du Congo (MARC), an exile group based in Brussels, were tried *in absentia*.

At the trial it was revealed that the ringleader, Major Kalume Hamba, who had planned an attack on the presidential palace, had sought Libyan support to overthrow the Mobutu government. Another defendant, Major Panubule Mukengela, an internal security officer, admitted he had planned an operation to sever all communication links between Zaire and the outside world for several days while the plotters took control of the country.

On 16 March the court imposed the death penalty on 19 of the accused: ten army officers, including two colonels and three lieutenant-colonels, and the four MARC civilians *in absentia*. Others were sentenced to terms of imprisonment, and 15 were acquitted. The following day Mobutu announced that 13 of those condemned to death had just been executed, adding that he hoped these executions would not be used by foreign human rights advocates to prevent Zaire from punishing criminals who showed no respect for the lives of others. Mobutu certainly liked his vengeance to be spectacular, and this one served the additional purpose of shredding Zaire's middle officer echelon and savaging the General Staff. It does not appear to have been a top-level military plot as no generals seem to have been involved. Perhaps Mobutu was now having more success in selecting his very top brass.

Operation Dove

Fighting in what Zairean propaganda called the second invasion of Shaba began on 11 May 1978, but it was not so much an invasion as a steady infiltration of armed forces hostile to Mobutu that had been in progress for almost a fortnight, in contrast with the brazen incursion of

the previous year. It was suspected that the remnants of the first invasion of Shaba who had remained in Zaire under the protection of the discontented Lunda tribe were ready and waiting to fight.

The commander of the invasion force, together with his HQ and his heavier weaponry and a number of his 4000 armed soldiers, moved from Angola into Shaba in a fleet of vehicles. Once again the force was led by General Nathanael Mbumba and directed by the Congolese National Liberation Front, the primary objective being to gain control of the strategic copper mining area around Kolwezi, which provided Zaire with about two thirds of its total foreign earnings. The invasion force consisted of former members of the Katangan gendarmerie and many locally enlisted Lundas, who mustered on the 11th and were divided into three columns to attack Dilolo, Mutshatsha and Kolwezi, and also to occupy Kolwezi airport. Dilolo was seized on the 12th, and the following day Mutshatsha, Kolwezi and the airport were in rebel hands. However there was spasmodic resistance in some places and fighting for possession dragged on into the 14th. The Zairean authorities had again been taken completely by surprise.

The commander of the Zairean troops in the Kolwezi area, General Tshiveka, was arrested and relieved of command. He was subsequently brought before a military tribunal and sentenced to death for abandoning Kolwezi in the face of the enemy. According to an AZAP report his sentence was later commuted to imprisonment.

The first official notification the people of Zaire received of this FLNC-organised invasion was contained in a government communique published by AZAP on the 14th, the day that Mobutu asked Belgium, China, France and Morocco for military assistance. Heavy fighting was reported the following day in Mutshatsha and Kolwezi between the invaders and the Zairean army. It was claimed that government troops had halted the advance of General Mbumba's troops at Mutshatsha, and that the 'whites' in his ranks were Cuban mercenaries. From the very beginning of the hostilities FLNC troops set out to harass Europeans, over 2000 of whom were working in Kolwezi, and several were killed. The Zairean government claimed that the invasion, called Operation Dove by the insurgents, was being supported by the Soviet Union, Cuba, Libya and Algeria, and had been planned in Havana and Algiers.

A FLNC communique released in Brussels on 16 May claimed that Mutshatsha and Kolwezi were completely under General Mbumba's control, which was probably true, but denied that his troops were killing Europeans. The FLNC said that the only harassment suffered by Europeans was caused by Zairean military aircraft, which had been

bombarding Kolwezi since the 14th. This was not completely true, and reports of the harassment and death of Europeans, especially French, increased to such an extent that on the evening of the 17th the French president decided to send French paratroops to protect or rescue endangered compatriots in Shaba.

Meanwhile the Zairean Defence Ministry claimed that a major counterattack had been launched, and that hundreds of paratroops had been flown in and recovered control of Kolwezi airport.

The French were quick off the mark, and some 600 men from the 2nd Parachute Regiment of the French Foreign Legion were flown from Corsica to Zaire on the evening of 17 May. An advanced detachment was dropped on a disused airstrip outside Kolwezi early in the morning of the 19th; the remainder of the unit followed a few hours later and the troops moved quickly into Kolwezi. That evening President Giscard d'Estaing stated in a TV broadcast that the intervention of French troops in Zaire had been approved when it became clear that French nationals in Shaba were in grave danger. He emphasised that the rescue operation had had to be mounted secretly and quickly as prior notice of it might have provoked further violence against Europeans.

The Belgian government also agreed to send paratroops to protect or rescue Europeans in Shaba, but there was a degree of hesitation as the Mobutu government was unpopular in some Belgian quarters. Indeed the country was covertly sheltering and giving communication facilities to certain anti-Mobutu opposition groups, including the FLNC. Belgian intervention was also handicapped by the fact that the Belgian air force had no fuel-carrying aircraft at its disposal to enable it to operate its aircraft within Zaire. This difficulty was overcome when more European deaths were reported, prompting the United States to agree to supply fuel for Belgian aircraft, albeit reluctantly as it had not been directly invited by the Zairean government to intervene.

President Carter, who was in favour of providing both humanitarian aid and fuel, met with objections from the US Congress, which was against any help being given to Zaire because it was behind in its US debt repayments. However Carter found a way round the problem, and US military transport aircraft were used to convey French and Belgian troops and their equipment to Zaire.

Paratroops regain Kolwezi

French troops soon secured Kolwezi airport, from whence they cleared a safe route to Kolwezi, rescuing numerous Europeans in the process.

However they also discovered many dead and sometimes mutilated bodies, some having been killed just hours before the troops had landed. In a short, sharp battle in Kolwezi on the 20th, French paratroops drove the insurgents from that town, but not without suffering casualties as two were killed and a dozen wounded. The death toll for this struggle so far was officially 150 Europeans and 500 Africans (including 200 rebels). Witnesses later stated that insurgents, Lundas and government troops had been involved in the killings (Red Cross report).

Belgian troops arrive

In the meantime, on 18 May 1978 some 1750 Belgian paratroops, infantrymen and medical personnel were flown out from Belgium in US transport aircraft. They had to travel by way of Madeira and Ascension Island as Algeria had refused them permission to pass through its air space. They eventually landed at Kamina, a former Belgian military base 125 miles from Kolwezi. The Belgian foreign minister had stressed the 'non-offensive' nature of this mission, and so the troops concentrated on organising the evacuation of Europeans, while French paratroops carried out 'search and destroy' sweeps in the surrounding bush. By the 21st all those Europeans who wanted to leave Kolwezi had left, but a few remained voluntarily.

Refugees from the area had many horror stories to tell, and many alleged that much of the killing and mutilation of Europeans and Africans was being done by Zairean troops, sections of which were barely disciplined, often under the influence of drink or drugs, and bent on committing wanton damage and pillage. However witnesses later agreed that some of the worst atrocities had been committed by young teenagers who had attached themselves nominally to one side or the other. In the hours before the arrival of French paratroops there had been a frenzy of unrestrained violence, with Europeans being taken from their homes and shot in the street, being taken in for questioning only to be killed, or being massacred in their homes. Women and girls had been sexually assaulted.

A journalist from *The Times* said that during a visit by Mobutu to Kolwezi on the 21st the media had been shown the bodies of 32 Europeans, including women and children, piled up in the room in which they had been shot. Mobutu blamed the invasion force. Many other bodies lay on the streets, some mutilated. Kolwezi, largely deserted by its inhabitants, was loosely under government control again, thanks

in large part to the French troops, but the same could not be said of Mutshatsha, Dilolo and other towns along the railway line, which were still dominated by Mbumba's troops and atrocities were still being committed.

Partial withdrawal of the Belgian troops

After the evacuation of Europeans from Kolwezi, on 22 May some of the Belgian troops were returned home, a unit of about 600 men being retained for the time being at the Kamina base. Relations between Zaïre and Belgium remained uneasy and brittle. The Zaïrean government objected to a Belgian minister's statement that the FLNC should have been contacted before the Belgian troops were dispatched to Zaïre as this might have prevented the killing of Europeans. Mobutu responded sharply that it would have meant recognition of a rebel movement that did not hesitate to murder innocent people, and he alleged that the Belgian foreign minister had deliberately delayed responding to Zaïre's request for military aid. In justification of his decision to send troops to Zaïre, Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans, stated that they had successfully rescued 2155 Europeans from Kolwezi.

The Angolan ambassador in Brussels, Luis de Almeida announced that Angola would guarantee the safety of Europeans fleeing from Shaba to Angola. A number had already reached Luanda, the Angolan capital. However he insisted that any 'hot pursuit' by Zaïrean troops into Angola would be met with retaliation, adding that the governments of both France and Belgium had assured him that their detachments would not set foot in Angola. This was seen as a stark warning to Mobutu. Even before the second invasion there had been more than 220 000 Zaïrean refugees in Angola (UNHCR figures).

FLNC claims

A spokesman for the FLNC in Brussels explained that the so-called second invasion of Shaba had been a continuation of the struggle that had begun the previous year, and that in May 1978 a decision had simply been taken to intensify it. The timing of the operation had been governed by the opportunity to take advantage of the unpopularity of the Mobutu government and the patent weakness of the Zaïrean army – as shown by the treason trials in August 1977 and March 1978, and the purge of military officers – before Western powers could revive the Mobutu regime. The FLNC spokesman referred to Kolwezi as the

'lungs' of the Zairean economy, which had been attacked to 'hit where it hurts, and to hit hard'.

He denied that the FLNC had used Europeans in Kolwezi as pawns, as Mobutu had alleged, and drew attention to communiques that had been released in Brussels about their safety, as well as the FLNC's readiness to hold discussions with European representatives in Kolwezi on the evacuation of those who had wanted to leave, although this gesture had been ignored. He insisted that all this had been subsequently relayed to the Belgian foreign minister, but there had been no reply. He also insisted that there would have been far fewer casualties if there had been no foreign intervention, and warned that once the foreign troops had left the FLNC armed forces would resume their active military opposition.

French casualties

On 25 May 1978 French paratroops mounted a major operation to flush out all rebels within a 20-mile radius of Kolwezi, and to search for European survivors. Several minor clashes occurred, involving casualties on both sides, and a few rebel prisoners were taken. A group of French women and children were found in the bush, where they had fled after their menfolk had been shot in the town. By this time Africans were returning to Kolwezi, which was still without drinking water and electricity, and as bodies still remained on the streets there were fears of a bacteriological epidemic.

Thereafter the French troops were gradually withdrawn to Lubumbashi, from where they were flown back to Corsica. Their place in Kolwezi was taken by Moroccan troops, who reappeared in Shaba in a peacekeeping role in what became known as the African Security Force. Mobutu said he would have liked the French troops to remain, but was content with Moroccans as the situation was once again calm. Banks and business premises were reopened, and it was announced by the Kolwezi authorities that over 300 Europeans had remained in their jobs.

Mobutu continued to insist that Cuban nationals had played a major part in the second invasion, claiming (probably without truth) that a Cuban motorised company had remained in Kolwezi until almost the last moment before the French troops arrived. Although a sort of stability had been imposed on Kolwezi, to the west there was a huge strip of no man's land that stretched to the Angolan and Zambian frontiers. All civilian movement was forbidden in that area and government troops were ordered to shoot on sight. A large part of western Shaba

was dominated by General Mbumba's troops and Lundas friendly towards him. His withdrawal began on the 22nd, when vehicles packed with troops and loaded with weaponry and loot pulled out from Mutshatsha and Dilolo.

Zambia

It seemed that President Kaunda of Zambia was more than peripherally involved in the withdrawal of the second invasion, although he denied this. It was alleged that he allowed an FLNC column, about 1000 strong, to retreat from Shaba through part of north-west Zambia into Angola between 22 and 26 May. As the fortunes of this withdrawing column were recorded by a British TV crew, Kaunda had to change his story and admit to the truth of the matter. It may be that he had little option but to become involved in what was essentially a Zairean internal struggle with Angolan overtones.

On 3 June Kaunda visited President Neto in Luanda and promised that in future he would disarm any Zairean rebels found in his territory. Neto took this opportunity to deny (falsely) at a press conference that he had had any involvement in the invasions of Shaba, insisting that on the contrary it was Angola that had fallen victim to invasions by revolutionary guerrilla political movements, who squatted, plotted, killed and destroyed. It is true that some cuckoo-like revolutionaries were more welcome than others, but some were useful to him as countering tools.

At one point, when it had been realised that the Zairean troops were primarily concerned with the security of Kolwezi, the main copper centre, for the moment at least, General Mbumba had had second thoughts and stayed his withdrawal, sending a column to retake Mutshatsha, but as the African Security Force had begun to materialise the withdrawal had been resumed, or at least its solid military core, other elements remaining hidden in the bush with the help of sympathetic Lundas. Despite the retreat of the FLNC force, the Zairean government harboured a fear that further attacks would be launched against its troops in Kolwezi, and so it concentrated military units in that area in case the withdrawal had simply been a feint.

On a visit to Morocco Mobutu stated that Europeans held by retreating rebels had been massacred somewhere in the bush on 27 May, and that he had instructed his Foreign Office to investigate. Everyone was hurrying to blame everyone else for the killing of Europeans, the guilty fearing vengeance. Red Cross workers in Kolwezi stated that they had

disposed of 600 bodies, including 96 unidentified Europeans, and that they knew of another 49 who were missing, while the Belgian authorities said that 135 Europeans were still missing. Mobutu said that President Neto had told him that he had ordered the FLNC forces to pull out of Shaba completely, and that he was about to disarm them and move them at least 150 miles from the frontier. Later a US representative, Andrew Young, after a visit to Luanda, said that Neto had promised to do all he could to prevent a third invasion of Shaba. However Neto's utterances were probably all fabrications for the benefit of the Western media.

The Zairean government, an habitual spreader of rumours, let it be known to foreign diplomats in Kinshasa that at least 1000 armed rebels were massing behind the Angolan border across from Lasho (about 125 miles west of Kolwezi) waiting for the order to attack Kolwezi. In the opposite camp, the FLNC in Brussels issued a communique stating that the bulk of its armed forces had never left Shaba province, but had simply withdrawn into the bush to await orders to strike again.

Mobutu complained bitterly about Belgium's support for this revolutionary movement, accusing the Belgian media of publishing lies about the second invasion and affording publicity to dangerous revolutionaries. He also threatened to withdraw the Zairean ambassador from Brussels, having already recalled his ambassadors from Algeria and Libya. On 7 June the Belgian government did expel (to Paris) Paul Roger Mokande, leader of the MNCL (part of the FLNC), after he had expressed open hostility towards Mobutu at a press conference.

They were all at it, Presidents Mobutu, Neto and Kaunda, and other African leaders, selectively giving sanctuary and support to neighbouring revolutionary movements, seeing them as bargaining chips that were not to be lightly relinquished, and all cheerfully denying the fact. In Cuba Fidel Castro summoned Lyle Lane, the head of the US Interests Section in Havana, to give his personal assurance that no Cubans had been involved in the second invasion, and he repeated this in the UN General Assembly. The Cubans blamed the Soviets for spreading lies about them, while the Soviet news agency Tass alleged that both French and Belgian troops had murdered Europeans in order to put the blame on the rebels. Mobutu duly recalled his ambassador from Moscow.

Meanwhile the US government accused Cuba of training some of General Mbumba's troops in Angola. This was denied so President Carter asked the head of the CIA, Admiral Stansfield Turner, to produce some evidence. The weak CIA reply was that it was probably so, but it could not be positively proven (*Washington Post*).

During the latter part of June, hundreds of armed Zambian Lundas and thousands of Zairean rebels fled from Zaire into Zambia, causing President Kaunda to fear the implementation of a Zairean 'hot pursuit' policy and the inevitable combat that would cause. In Kolwezi the round-up of rebel suspects continued, many being detained in the Kamina base.

The African Security Force

With varying degrees of reluctance and after much prompting, several members of the OAU agreed to contribute military manpower to the African Security Force, to be stationed in Shaba as a deterrent to another invasion by the FLNC. The first to arrive were Moroccan troops, brought in by US military transport aircraft, which on their return flights took the remaining French troops back to their home base. The African Security Force was eventually to consist of almost 2700 men from the Central African Republic, Egypt, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Somalia and Togo. It proved to be a positive factor not only in deterring the FLNC from launching a further invasion, but also in the completion of its withdrawal – few FLNC stragglers remained behind this time. Under the African Security Force shield the Zaire government gradually resumed its writ over the no man's land areas adjacent to the Angolan and Zambian frontiers, as well as Mutshatsha, Dilolo and other towns along the railway line and in the interior of the province, such as Sandoa.

However Mobutu maintained his belligerent stance and stated that he was forming an elite strike force, which would be trained by Belgian and French military training teams to defend Shaba province and eventually replace the African Security Force. Later (in February 1979), when referring to his new model army, he mentioned that Belgium had promised to train 3000 infantry soldiers, France to train 3000 paratroops and China 3000 commandos. It was doubtful whether these quotas were entirely realised, but a sufficient number were trained to provide a substantial base upon which to rebuild his demoralised, ramshackle army. A high-level Chinese naval mission arrived in Kinshasa as part of Mobutu's reaction to an earlier Angolan threat to blockade Matadi, Zaire's only port of any size. He also mentioned from time to time that he was considering arming revolutionary opponents of the Neto regime in exile in Zaire, and deploying them in the event of any future attacks mounted from Angola.

The Five Nation Decision

During May 1978 the representatives of five Western nations – the United States, Belgium, Britain, France and West Germany – came together to discuss Zaire's problems and its future, and on 19 June they put economic pressure on Mobutu to improve his relations with the Lunda tribe, the FLNC and the Angolan government, and to seek reconciliation with them so they could work together. This became known as the Five Nation Decision. On the 24th Mobutu announced a general amnesty for all Zairean exiles and refugees, their return to be organised by the OAU and the UNHCR. A further measure was to reduce prison sentences for political offenders, one beneficiary of which was Nguza Bond, who had been condemned to death in September 1977.

Mobutu was humiliated by the West European media's reference to Zaire as the 'sick man of Africa', but there was no doubt that Zaire desperately needed foreign help as its economy had slumped badly, international aid and credit having been frozen. It was estimated that the production of copper and cobalt, a main export staple, was down to one fifth of normal, creaking along with just a handful of European technicians being flown out daily from Lubumbashi to work the mines. Lack of electricity had led to the breakdown of water pumps and several mines were flooded, but the main obstacle to improved output was the lack of foreign technicians (*Financial Times*). The Consultative Group for Zaire, comprising nine major industrial countries, met periodically to consider Zaire's situation and they gradually rescheduled some of its international debts.

The OLC

In November 1978 five Zairean opposition groups in exile in Brussels decided to unite to form the Organisation for the Liberation of Congo–Zaire (OLC), which was led by Mbeka Mbakosso, a former Zairean ambassador to Iran. The OLC included neither MARC, led by Monguya Mbenge (a former governor of Shaba Province), nor the FLNC, which had been responsible for the two invasions of Shaba. Despite the presence of the OLC in Belgium, Zairean relations with that country improved slightly, to the extent that the month after a visit by Mobutu to Brussels in January 1979, Belgian paratroop instructors arrived in Kitona to help train the Zairean army.

Reconciliation

In January 1979 Mobutu ended the military administration that had been imposed on Shaba in May. The same month he again reorganised the National Executive Council, merging several ministries to reduce its size. He also banned all non-recognised religious sects, thought to number in excess of 400, but this did not mollify the Catholic Church, which continued to criticise the one-party state policy.

West German rocket project

There was one other project in Zaire that worried the group of five Western nations: the West German rocket-launching programme, run by the Orbital Transport and Rocket Company of Stuttgart (OTRAG). In 1976 OTRAG had gained a lease for the effective sovereignty of a plateau of almost 40 000 square miles in Shaba Province until the year 2000, for which the West German company had paid the poverty-stricken Kinshasa government a huge sum of money, with promises of more. The ostensible object of OTRAG in this case (it had several other major commercial interests) was to develop a cheap rocket that would enable the Third World and industrial powers generally to improve satellite communications inexpensively and without dependence on or being closely monitored by the United States, the USSR or West European governments. OTRAG insisted that its programme had no military application.

OTRAG's first test rocket, weighing just over two tons, was launched to a height of about four miles in May 1977, and the second one, in May 1978, was said to have reached a height of about 18 miles. More were planned. OTRAG denied it was testing rockets to carry warheads, but would not allow NATO inspection or involvement. The government of Angola expressed concern that the rockets posed a military threat to Zaire's neighbours and the OAU watched with interest, while NATO countries worried about the Soviets worming their way into the project, and about other large, remote African countries with faltering economies and grandiose visions emulating Zaire in this respect.

It was not so much the successful production and testing of rockets by OTRAG as a commercial competitor that riled the group of five nations, but the lack of political control over their sale and use in the Cold War era. The rockets and the associated techniques could fall into enemy hands, giving Mobutu a major strategic advantage. Sheer poverty and the necessity of avoiding the total economic collapse of

his country eventually forced Mobutu to give in, and on 27 April 1979 it was officially announced in Kinshasa that the OTRAG contract had been cancelled and its rocket-launching activities in Zaire terminated. Powerful Western countries had ganged up on Mobutu, blatantly using economic blackmail to attain their objective.

A security council

The previous month Mobutu had yet again reorganised his National Executive Council, this time to give it a reconciliation flavour by including two former adversaries who had been sentenced to death for plotting against him but had benefited from the political amnesty of June 1978. This move was aimed partly at demonstrating to the world his conciliatory attitude and partly at mollifying potential Western donors. The two new members of the National Executive Council were Bond, who was given the foreign affairs portfolio, probably the second most important in the cabinet, and Mungul Diaka, who was given a minor ministry. Mobutu explained that Bond, a native of Shaba, would assist with the process of reconciliation with Angola, which had been formally initiated at his meeting with President Neto in October 1978. Mobutu also created a National Security Council under his direct authority, the members having to swear a personal oath of loyalty to him.

Newly trained Zairean troops began to replace the African Security Force units, which in the latter stages consisted mainly of Moroccan and Senegalese troops, the last of which were withdrawn in August 1979. To demonstrate to his enemies that he could still call on European troops in extreme emergencies, in September some 300 French paratroops were flown to Zaire to take part in joint exercises with Zairean units in Shaba. This was meant as a warning to any headstrong dissident Zairean leaders waiting restlessly in Angola or Zambia for a chance to act.

Message to the nation

Another National Executive Council reshuffle in January 1980 brought a cabinet seat to Masamba (Cleophas) Kamitatu, who had once plotted against Mobutu and then fled abroad. Upon the announcement of political amnesty he had returned to Zaire. A couple of ministers were dismissed for fraud and embezzlement, including the recently rehabilitated Mungul Diaka, who again fled the country. New regional commissioners were named for the eight regions, and other senior appointments were made. General Boyenge Mosambay became chief of

the defence staff, and Admiral Limponda Wa Botende was appointed as head of the newly formed Military Household of the Presidency.

On 4 February Mobutu delivered message to the nation outlining several major political and economic reforms. He abolished the MPR Executive Secretariat and the replacement of elected members when their terms of office expired, stating that 'As long as I live there will never be a multiparty system in Zaire'. False hopes had been raised in some camps by a visit to Zaire by Jean Tshombe (son of the former president), who had met with Mobutu and other senior political leaders, but nothing had come of it.

The security services were to be reorganised, including the armed forces, the police and other security bodies. A new National Intelligence Service (SNI), with responsibility for external security, and a National Research and Investigation Centre (CNRI), responsible for internal security, began to take shape during the following months.

In August the establishment was announced in the MPR of a Central Committee (of 114 members) to represent all factions in the country, and a new MPR Executive Secretariat was appointed, with Bo-Boliko Mihambo, formerly the first state commissioner (prime minister), as its secretary general. In a National Executive Council reshuffle, Nguze Bond became the first state commissioner. The latter also retained the foreign affairs portfolio, while Mobutu continued to be responsible for national defence, veterans affairs and territorial security.

Opposition groups in exile

Just previously (on 3 July) it had been announced in Brussels that a new Zairean dissident organisation had been formed – the Conseil pour le libération du Congo-Kinshasa (CLC) – with the declared aim of reestablishing democracy and human rights in Zaire. The CLC included the FLNC, the MNUR, the PSC (Parti Socialiste Congolaise), the ECP (Étudiants Congolaise Progressive) and other small opposition groups. Mungul Diaka – Mobutu's former adversary and then cabinet member who had fled Zaire in January after accusations of embezzlement – was president of the CLC.

Further dissent

Criticism of Mobutu was openly voiced in the National Legislative Council in January 1981 following an allegation that members of Mobutu's family were involved in substantial financial irregularities.

However a motion on the matter was defeated. Mobutu moved into the attack, and 13 people's commissioners were deprived of their immunity. Anti-Mobutu tracts circulated in Kinshasa and troops appeared on the streets of the capital for a while. In February he made substantial changes to the Executive Council.

First State Commissioner Nguza Bond turned against him and resigned in April, having first fled the country. Another prominent defector was Bomboko Lukumba (formerly known as Justin Bomboko), who also fled the country. From Brussels he stated he would stand against Mobutu for the presidency in the scheduled 1984 elections.

Mobutu again reshuffled his cabinet in October, and threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Belgium unless it silenced the exiled Zairean opposition. During the course of the year there were innumerable reports from Amnesty International about abuses of human rights in Zaire, including the routine administering of electric shocks to prisoners.

In May 1982 the National Executive Council was reduced to 19 ministers, the object being to strengthen regional decentralisation. That month an Israeli military delegation visited Zaire in a bid to reopen diplomatic relations (severed since 1967) and resume trade between the two countries. Mobutu showed an interest in Israeli arms and military expertise, wanting perhaps to diversify and reduce his dependence on Western nations for military support. Diplomatic relations with Israel were eventually resumed, which incurred the wrath of Muslim states.

In July the 13 people's commissioners were among a group of 38 people sentenced to imprisonment for allegedly attempting to form a second political party in Zaire. Mobutu was determined that his country would remain a one-party state. In September elections were held for the 310 commissioners of the National Legislative Council. The elections were followed by a major governmental reorganisation, in which Kengo Wa Dondo, a former Zairean ambassador to Belgium, became first state commissioner.

10

The Single Party State

In January 1983 the Zairean Congolese Front for the Restoration of Democracy (CFRD) was formally established in Brussels. Led by Nguza Bond, it was composed of several opposition parties, all dedicated to the overthrow of Mobutu. However its ranks were soon broken when the People's Revolutionary Party, led by Laurent Kabila, withdrew from the CFRD.

In May, President Mobutu restored diplomatic relations with Israel, after a five-year lapse, and entered into a military agreement whereby Israel would restructure the 12 000-strong Kamanyola Division in Shaba Province, establish a new artillery unit and send Israeli advisers to the Zairean navy. The Presidential Brigade, an elite paratroop unit already supervised by Israelis, was to be enlarged from 3000 to 7000 men. That month another partial amnesty for political prisoners and dissidents-in-exile was announced, but dissatisfaction remained as opposition political activity was still forbidden in Zaire. The Zaire Committee, a human rights group based in Belgium, complained about the execution of certain prisoners in Zaire and general inhumane treatment.

An unsuccessful coup against Mobutu took place in September, led by Kengo Wa Dondo, the first state commissioner, who subsequently fled the country. This was said to have involved mass demonstrations and large-scale disturbances in Kinshasa. A prolonged nationwide strike of teachers followed.

Explosions in Kinshasa in March 1984 – which killed two people and caused extensive damage to the radio station and postal HQ – were blamed on Libyan-backed dissidents operating from Brazzaville, although several groups claimed responsibility. Francis Lumumba Tolanga, leader of the MLCL, was expelled from Brussels and took sanctuary in Paris.

In August, Mobutu formed a Civil Guard, to be responsible for public order and security. The head of the Civil Guard would report directly to him. Tension grew between Zaire and Tanzania, and both began to expell each other's nationals from their territories.

Rebels attack Moba

In November 1984 the government announced that the town of Moba, situated on the shores of Lake Tanganyika in Shaba Province, had been captured by rebels who had entered Zaire from Tanganyika, but that after three days' fighting they had been ejected by the Zairean armed forces. Later it was said that over 100 people had been killed in the failed invasion. There were conflicting accounts of who the rebels were. The Zairean government claimed they had been orchestrated by the CFRD, based in Brussels, which denied the accusation, saying that it had been an army mutiny caused by Mobutu, who after a recent tour of military establishments had deprived many of his soldiers of their allowances. In fact it was a mixture of both. The CFRD alleged that a coup against Mobutu had been scheduled for October, but had been discovered when military and political arrests were made. Later the commander of the Moba garrison was sentenced to imprisonment for negligence.

Mobutu visited Angola in February 1985, when defence and other agreements were reached between the two countries. It was agreed that neither president would allow his territory to be used to launch attacks on the other, and that a joint commission would be formed to monitor the common border. The Angolan President, José Dos Santos, wanted Mobutu to take action against UNITA bases in Zaire, but this was fudged, as was the return of their respective refugees. There were some 54 000 Angolan refugees in Shaba Province and 20 000 Zairean refugees in Angola. In June 1985 Mobutu was sworn in for an other term as president of Zaire.

The same month there was a second invasion of Moba, again described by the Zairean government as being conducted by 'outlaws' from a neighbouring country, meaning CFRD elements from Tanzania. By this time, the local garrison was better disciplined and the rebels were ejected within hours with comparatively few Zairean army casualties.

The following year Mobutu abolished the Military Security Agency after an official enquiry found it responsible for the debacle in Moba battle. It was replaced by a Military Operations and Intelligence Service.

Nguza Bond, who had formed the CFRD in exile, was reconciled with Mobutu and returned to Zaire in June 1985, after which he was appointed ambassador to the United States. This indicated divisions within the CFRD.

In March 1986 Amnesty International condemned the Zairean government for the increase in the number of opponents of the regime being held in detention, many of whom were members or sympathisers of the CFRD and several of whom died in prison. It also condemned the torture of political opponents and criticised the behaviour of the armed forces towards civilians during counterinsurgency operations. Amnesty International cited the Moba incident of 1984, during which civilians had been summarily executed or tortured. Mobutu indirectly admitted to bad behaviour among his troops in Moba, and after an enquiry established the Department of Citizens' Rights. The same month a Cuban diplomat was discovered with subversive documents in his possession and was deported.

In February 1987 it was confirmed by the US State Department that for several years it had been making use of the Kamina air base in southern Shaba to carry out secret joint exercises with Zairean troops. The US Department of Defense was now seeking formal access to the base so that it could be upgraded for possible use by the US military. The base was also being used by the US CIA to transport military equipment to the Angolan UNITA rebel movement. Joint US-Zairean military exercises were carried out in Kamina in April with Mobutu's full permission.

In September 1987 various political opposition groups in exile held a symposium in Switzerland and formed a government-in-exile, their aim being to overthrow Mobutu. Paul Roger Mokede was named as president of the so-called Constituent Assembly, but he denied any involvement with that body and renounced the nomination, saying that Zaire could not afford the luxury of two parallel governments, and that both should cooperate in the gigantic task of reconstruction.

Political reforms

On 24 April 1990 President Mobutu gave his 'Third Republic' speech over the national radio, announcing the political reforms that had resulted from a recent nationwide popular consultation exercise. The constitution was to be revised in two phases, during a one-year transitional period ending in April 1991. The use of the word 'citizen' as a form of address and the wearing of traditional costume would no longer be obligatory.

Mobutu declared that the reforms included the separation of head of state and head of government functions, and after a transitional period the introduction of a multiparty political system. Lunda Bululu was named as the first state commissioner for the transitional period, and he went on to form a smaller cabinet consisting mainly of technocrats – few former members remained. A new constitution would be drawn up and a traditional government appointed. While remaining head of state, Mobutu resigned as leader of the MPR, declaring that henceforth he would be above politics and not subject to political or legislative control. He also announced the 'depoliticisation' of the police, the civil service, the army and the paramilitary forces. In addition free trade unions would be established.

Two political parties would be allowed to operate alongside the MPR. This was a complete turnabout as the 'Mobutu Doctrine' had embodied the single party state. The UDSP, led by Etienne Tshisekedi, who had just been released from house arrest, was expecting to be one of the two sanctioned parties, but was disappointed.

Just prior to Mobutu's Third Republic speech there had been rioting and rowdy demonstrations in Kinshasa by students demanding political reforms, the eradication of corruption from politics and improved student grants. On 7 April Mobutu had closed all colleges and schools, but on the 12th he had relented and announced large increases in student grants and civil service salaries.

Although the United States had been a long-standing friend of Mobutu, in November 1990 it ended its \$4 million military grant aid and directed that its \$40 million economic aid be channelled through humanitarian aid agencies. Questions were asked about how Mobutu had amassed his huge personal fortune.

In March 1991 Mobutu replaced Prime Minister Bululu with Mulumba Lukeji, who formed another transitional government. However none of the main opposition parties would serve in it, their objection being that the new prime minister should have been elected and not appointed by decree. Mobutu showed signs of reneging on his earlier promises by objecting to the holding of the scheduled National Conference on Constitutional Reform, which was to produce the timetable for multiparty elections. However, after confrontations between demonstrators and the security forces he agreed it could be held in April, only to cancel it after the so-called Mbuli-Mayi diamond mining incident in central Zaire, where over 40 demonstrators were killed and some 30 injured. Mobutu also reassumed the leadership of the MPR, from which he had resigned the previous year. The conference

eventually started on 7 August but was handicapped by a boycott by the Sacred Union, consisting of representatives of over 130 parties and groups. The boycott was not lifted until the 30th.

Foreign intervention

On 3 September 1991 soldiers of the Zairean Armed Forces (FAZ) occupied Kinshasa airport in protest against low pay. They were joined by angry political demonstrators complaining about delays in the constitutional reform process. Rioting developed that left more than 30 people dead. The following day approximately 450 French and 500 Belgian troops who had been standing by in Brazzaville moved into Kinshasa, ostensibly to protect their nationals in the city – some 4000 French and 10000 Belgians. Zairean demonstrators turned against the foreign troops, but the latter nevertheless managed to restore order within a couple of days, although in the process over 100 people were killed and up to 1500 were injured.

Mobutu again changed his prime minister, this time appointing Etienne Tshisekedi, who the previous July had refused the post. Tshisekedi had occupied the position for less than a month when he was dismissed by Mobutu for demanding a power-sharing arrangement with the president. Mobutu then nominated Mungul Diaka, a prominent member of the UDSP and the Sacred Union. Diaka was dismissed from the latter for accepting the appointment, although when he formed a cabinet on 30 October he claimed that almost half its members were from the Sacred Union.

Three rival governments

On 1 November 1991 a parallel government was established in Zaire under the leadership of Etienne Tshisekedi. The Sacred Union called on the people to support it, and urged the armed forces to abandon Mobutu and refuse to cooperate with the Diaka government. It also called for the return of the French and Belgian military detachments, which had been withdrawn. A third 'government' was formed the same month in Brussels by the leader of the National Unity Party, Antoine Balubu Bulonda, who was opposed both to Nguza Bond, who had become Mobutu's prime minister, and to the Sacred Union, as the latter was calling for a new generation to take control of Zairean politics. In December Mobutu declared he would stay in office beyond his present seven-year mandate, which immediately provoked hostile demonstrations in the capital.

Burundi

In adjacent Burundi there was an uprising in Bujumbura, the capital, on 23 November. Violence between the Tutsi and Hutu peoples continued until well into the following month, causing the first major wave of mainly Hutu refugees into Rwanda and Zaire. At the end of the year the Burundian government admitted that almost 600 deaths had occurred, and the number of refugees exceeded 10 000. However human rights organisations claimed that these figures were gross underestimates, and that at least 3000 people had been killed in reprisals by army and paramilitary units after the brief rebellion, and that the refugees numbered over 50 000. The presidents of Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire met in Mbandaka in Zaire on 4 January 1992 to discuss the problem of border controls and refugees, but little was agreed between them, except to reactivate an old Border Commission and quickly to repatriate all those refugees who were willing to return home.

The national conference

In January 1992 the National Conference on Constitutional Reform was again suspended until further notice, which was followed by protest demonstrations in Kinshasa. Prime Minister Nguza Bond said that its character could no longer be seen as national, owing to boycotts by the Sacred Union, and that it should be replaced by a national round table conference; but this did not find favour. On the 22nd dissident army elements took over the broadcasting station in Kinshasa, calling for the dismissal of the Nguza government and the resumption of the National Conference. Two loyal soldiers were killed in the process, while other discontented soldiers went on the rampage in the capital, damaging shops and property.

A general strike, called by the Sacred Union on 3 February, was supported throughout the country. It was rumoured that stocks of food were running low in Kinshasa, and troops were sent to Matadi, the southern port, to unload ships and transport goods, especially food items, to the capital.

The National Conference eventually resumed in August, and on the 4th the delegates voted for the country to revert to its former title – the Republic of the Congo – and for the readoption of its former flag and anthem. Mobutu rejected this and threatened to dissolve the Conference, but as a compromise it was agreed that the resolution should stand, but be postponed for the time being. Tshisekedi, who had

briefly headed the 'crisis government' in 1991, was elected prime minister by the National Conference delegates, a position he accepted. This upset Nguza Bond, his predecessor, and had repercussions in Shaba, the latter's native province, where demonstrations were staged in his support. This brought another old factor into the equation: on the 23rd the Katangan gendarmerie, now a secessionist movement based in Angola, declared its support for Nguza Bond and announced that it was waiting for his order to begin military operations in Zaire.

On 7 January 1993 Mobutu declared he would ignore the High Council of the Republic's (HCR) ultimatum that he be removed from power unless he reversed his decision to dissolve the transitional government. This was followed by the HCR authorising the government to call in friendly troops. On the 15th the HCR found the president guilty of high treason, declaring that he had blocked the functioning of the country's institutions at every level. Kinshasa came to a halt as an anti-Mobutu general strike began, and during one confrontation several demonstrators were killed when troops opened fire.

Mobutu then sent his presidential guard into action against disaffected soldiery, and serious fighting ensued. It was said that hundreds of people were killed, but precise figures are not available. French troops were also deployed to protect French nationals. After a lull the Zairean troops went on a violent rampage in the capital, their complaint being that shopkeepers would not accept the bank notes with which they had just been paid. The notes, issued by the Mobutu-controlled Treasury, had been declared invalid by Prime Minister Tshisekedi.

The isolation of Mobutu

On 3 February 1993 the US, Belgian and French governments issued a joint declaration warning Mobutu that he must cease to block reforms and hand over his executive powers to Prime Minister Tshisekedi, and that if he did not do so he would face total isolation. Mobutu rejected these demands on the 5th and announced the dismissal of Tshisekedi. However Tshisekedi refused to stand down and an impasse ensued. Mobutu agreed to meet opposition leaders, but suddenly left Zaire on the 22nd for medical treatment abroad.

On the 24th Zairean troops surrounded the people's palace, where the HCR held its meetings. The entrances to the building being blocked by tanks, a containing trench was dug around it and supplies of food, water and electricity were cut off. The chief of staff of the

armed forces (General Eluki Mongoa Aundu) demanded that the HCR reauthorise the disputed bank notes, and added that the army's loyalty was to President Mobutu. The US government stated that it would hold Mobutu personally responsible if any harm came to any of the besieged people in the HCR building. The following day the troops were withdrawn.

During February a Matadi ferry boat was taking on passengers at Brazzaville when a gangway collapsed and almost 150 passengers were drowned. All the passengers were Zairean nationals being expelled as part of a Brazzaville operation to deport 10 000 illegal immigrants, so this disaster increased the friction between the two states. Despite opposition from the HCR, in March Mobutu appointed Justin Birindwa as his prime minister. The following month Birindwa formed a government of 'broad national union and national salvation': thus there were two prime ministers in Zaire, Tshisekedi and Birindwa, each with their own following.

During the spring there was a rash of tribal clashes in the provinces of Kivu, Kasai and Shaba, mainly involving native Zaireans and the Banyarwanda Tutsi people from Rwanda. The clashes erupted when the Banyarwanda settlers demanded an improvement in their conditions and an end to the payment of tithes to local tribes.

In September Tshisekedi was elected leader of the new opposition movement, the Democratic Forces of Congo-Kinshasa (DFCK), which had replaced the Sacred Union. Although agreement had been reached by all Zairean parties by 30 September, to adopt new constitutional arrangements that would put an end to the competing claims to government authority, talks aimed at finalising the details of an interim constitution reached an impasse in October. The governor of Shaba Province, Gabriel Kungana Kumwanza, speaking at a political rally in Kolwezi on 14 December 1993, declared the total autonomy of the province from Zaire, and that Shaba would revert to its former name: Katanga.

The HCT-PT

In a supposed attempt to break the political stalemate, on 14 January 1994 Mobutu announced the dissolution of the HCR, the National Assembly and the Birindwa government, saying that the National Assembly and the HCR would be reconstituted as a single body, to be known as the High Council of the Republic-Parliament of Transition (HCR-PT). This immediately provoked a one-day strike that was designed to turn Kinshasa into a ghost town. On 8 April the HCR-PT

introduced a new Transitional Constitutional Act to regulate the transition to democracy. This was endorsed by Mobutu on the 9th, and at once the opposition became split over who should be prime minister, so a commission was quickly established to define the criteria for choosing one.

A ballot for the prime ministership was held on 14 June. It was conducted by the HCR-PT and won by Kengo Wa Dondo, leader of the Union for the Republic and Democracy (URD). Tshisekedi, of the Union for Democracy and Social progress (UDSP), was bitterly disappointed and claimed that as he had virtually been prime minister since August 1992 he should have been the victor. Kengo Wa Dondo formed his first government on 6 July, but by December he was facing a financial crisis, it being reported that his government had only US\$2000 and a 'few Swiss francs' in the state coffers (*Le Monde*). He gave details of an austerity budget for 1995, which sought to reduce the high inflation rate from a reported 8500 per cent to 20 per cent, and also to slash public expenditure. During March 1995 civil servants went on strike over pay arrears.

That month the Governor of Shaba Province, Gabriel Kungana Kumwanza, was arrested and removed to Kinshasa when an arms cache was discovered in his house. In Shaba the Union of Federalists and Independent Republicans (UFIR), rallied to his support.

Prime Minister Dondo stated that in view of the fact there were nearly 2.3 million refugees in the country, it would not be possible to have the electoral rolls ready in time for the scheduled July election, and so it was postponed indefinitely. On 30 June the 730-member HCT-PT voted to extend the transition period, due to end on 9 July, by two years. Dondo formed a new cabinet.

Forcible expulsion of refugees

In August the UN Security Council lifted the arms embargo against Rwanda, which caused the Zairean government to fear that it might be exposed to a direct military threat from that country. To clear the deck it began forcibly to expel Rwandans from its refugee camps, most of whom were unwilling to return home. The UNHCR stirred itself on the issue, and in September an agreement was signed in Paris whereby the refugees would be repatriated by the end of the year. In the meantime the Zairean government undertook to control the activities of extremists in its refugee camps. Both of these undertakings were unlikely and unrealistic.

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Genocide in Burundi and Rwanda

Burundi, 1993

The account now moves to two small former trust territories: the independent republics of Burundi and Rwanda, adjacent to Zaire. In Burundi, with a population of about 5.5 million (1993) and armed forces numbering about 7000 (IISS), Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza came to power in a coup in 1972, and in 1981 he introduced a civilian constitution based on a single political party, the Union of Progress (UPRONA—Union pour le Progress National). In 1987 Bagaza was overthrown in a bloodless coup, led by Major Pierre Buyoya. The constitution was suspended and a Military Council for National Salvation was established, only to be disbanded in December 1990.

In March 1992, a new constitution came into being, which recognised 'democracy, human rights and development'. The Tutsi-dominated UPRONA remained the party in power, but half a dozen other political parties appeared on the scene. Pierre Buyoya became president and Adrien Bibomania prime minister. The ratio of Hutus to Tutsis in both Burundi and Rwanda was about the same, that is, 85 per cent Hutus, 14 per cent Tutsis and 1 per cent others.

The presidential election in early June 1993 was won by Melchoir Ndadaye, a Hutu and the leader of an opposition party, FRODEBU. Ndadaye, a banker, had fled from early tribal massacres in Burundi but had returned in 1983 to establish FRODEBU as a covert organisation, being briefly imprisoned in 1988. FRODEBU had been legalised in July 1992.

A general election was held a few days later and the results were announced on 3 July. FRODEBU enjoyed an overwhelming victory, and no other political party gained even so much as a representative in the National Assembly. This was thought to mark the end of centuries of

domination by the minority Tutsi tribe. Nonetheless the new president appointed a Tutsi woman, Sylvie Kinigi, as prime minister.

President Ndadye announced a six-month action programme that included the release of some 5000 prisoners (mainly Hutu) and the repatriation of about 300 000 refugees, also mainly Hutu, from neighbouring states. On 9 September he declared a general amnesty for the 5000 prisoners, apart from those convicted of murder, organised crime or drug dealing.

Military coup

On 21 October 1993 a coup was launched by a group of army paratroops, and President Ndadye and six of his ministers were killed. One of the plotters was Interior Minister François Ngeze, a Hutu. On the 23rd waves of Tutsi violence erupted, and it was reported in the French press that the Tutsi-dominated army was eliminating prominent Hutu figures and intellectuals in Bujumbura and a number of provincial towns. One report indicated that over 400 people had died in tribal violence around the northern town of Kakuze, and that in some places women and children had been killed by marauding Hutus. On the 29th the UNHCR estimated that more than 500 000 Burundi refugees had fled since the coup began, 342 000 into Rwanda, 214 000 into Tanzania and 21 000 into Zaire.

That day, Prime Minister Sylvie Kinigi emerged from the sanctuary of a French convent and announced that she had regained control of the situation, and that the Tutsi-instigated coup had been crushed. It was unclear how much support the army establishment had given to the military plotters.

On the 23rd Chief of Staff General Jean Bikomagu belatedly disowned the National Committee of Salvation, which had been set up by the plotters of the coup, and other senior officers followed suit. It was believed that Bikomagu had been one of the plotters, but had lost his nerve at the last minute. A later international commission of enquiry found that most of the Burundi Tutsi-majority army had been either actively or passively involved in the subsequent massacre in which between 25 000 and 50 000 people had died, mainly Hutus.

African regional seminar

An African regional seminar – attended by the leaders of Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire, and a UN special envoy (James Johan) – was held in

Kigale (Rwanda) and endorsed a stabilisation plan to restore democracy in Burundi. On 8 November in a hotel outside Bujumbura, Sylvie Kinigi, attended by her ministers and protected by French soldiers, faced the press. She confirmed the death of the president, senior ministers and officials, and said she would carry on in office, calling for a detachment of OAU soldiers to protect her government. The UN sent a fact-finding mission, and the UNHCR warned that Burundi faced a food shortage for the first time in its modern history, asking for funds for the relief of 800 000 Burundian refugees, 100 of whom were dying daily in makeshift camps in Rwanda.

Funerals and refugees

On 6 December 1993, after lying in state in the Bujumbura football stadium, the funerals were held of President Ndadye and a dozen other ministers and prominent personalities, including the speaker of the National Assembly.

The government stated that at least 1.5 million Burundis had fled their homes. A number of international aid agencies, including the UNHCR, the Red Cross, Médecins sans Frontières and Oxfam, confirmed these figures, which seemed to be largely guesswork at this stage, the magnitude of the tragedy being too much and too sudden for accurate calculation. They all insisted that at least that up to 180 a day were dying in the refugee camps. It was noted that with the onset of the rainy season the people should be at home planting their crops, as failure to do so would inevitably result in famine. International aid agencies also confirmed that slaughter was continuing in the countryside, sometimes at the hands of the army.

Burundi, 1994

In February 1994 Cyprien Ntaryamira, a Hutu supported by the army, was installed as president of Burundi, and Anatole Kanyenkiko, a Tutsi, became prime minister. By this time thousands of Tutsis in Bujumbura were building barricades to protect themselves against Hutu attack, and a mass Tutsi protest was made against the presence of the 200 OAU troops guarding the government. The UN World Food Programme stated that 970 000 Burundis were now dependant on food aid.

Death of two Presidents

On 6 April 1994 President Ntaryamira of Burundi and President Habyarimana of Rwanda were killed in an air crash. A fortnight later the

clashes between Tutsis and Hutus recommenced. On the 25th a group of paratroops attempted to seize power in Bujumbura, but were foiled by the speaker, who was acting as president until an election could be held. In August the arrest of Mathias Hitimana, leader of the radical Tutsi-led Party for Reconciliation of the People, sparked off ten days of rioting, which was crushed by decisive action by the Tutsi-dominated army.

In September a power-sharing agreement was reached, and in October Sylvestre Ntibantungany was inaugurated as president and a coalition government, the National Security Council, was formed. The killings and instability continued, and a government crisis in December resulted in a curfew being imposed in Bujumbura.

Rwanda, 1993

The story of Rwanda is somewhat worse. With a population of some seven million and armed forces of 5200 (IISS), Rwanda had been ruled for several years by the National Republican Movement for Development (NRMD), the sole legal political party until June 1991, when a new constitution was introduced that provided for a president and a prime minister. General Juvenal Habyarimana, who had been in power since 1973, was confirmed as president.

Meanwhile a rebellion had begun against the government by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), led by Colonel Alex Kanyerengwe. In April 1992 Dismas Ndegiyaremye was appointed as prime minister to form a coalition government, his main task being to deal with the FPR insurgency. A government offensive was launched that reportedly killed more than 350 rebels in the first month, and throughout May and June the fighting intensified.

In July, peace negotiations were held in Arusha (Tanzania), and in August the Arusha Agreement was signed, indicating that President Habyarimana would share power with a new transitional government, in which all parties, including the FPR, would be represented. However the President and the NRMD had second thoughts and refused to cooperate, and by December the president and his prime minister were in bitter disagreement with each other, while in the background the FPR revolt rumbled on. Also in 1993, the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) made its appearance in the country.

Rwanda, 1994

Eventually, in January 1994 after months of ambiguity and hesitation, Habyarimana was sworn in as president of Rwanda for a 22-month

transitional period, and a multiparty election was scheduled for October the following year. In February a Rwandan minister, Felicien Gatabazi, leader of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), was murdered by a suspected Hutu assailant. A few hours later Martin Bucyna, leader of the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic, was killed by a mob of angry PSD supporters.

As previously noted, President Habyarimana was killed in an air crash on 6 April (together with President Ntaryamira of Burundi) as it was coming in to land at Kigale airport. It was initially rumoured that the plane had been brought down by anti-aircraft fire, and both the government and its security forces accused the Tutsi-dominated FPR of complicity, which was denied. In turn the FPR accused extreme Hutu elements in the army of shooting down the plane, a view that was supported by Faustin Twagiramungu, leader of the Republican Democratic Party and prime minister designate under the Arusha Agreement. This incident revived the FPR revolution, in which President Habyarimana had so far managed to maintain Hutu dominance.

Groups of militiamen went on a genocidal rampage, clubbing or hacking to death men, women and children across the country. This brought the fragile transitional peace process to an end, transforming what had formerly been a traditional tribal struggle between Tutsis and Hutus into a political one in which supporters of the military regime (Hutus) sought to hold on to power and eliminate all political opposition.

As news of the plane crash spread a massacre began in Kigale, the capital city, as members of the security forces and gangs of youths rampaged through the city, all seeking revenge. Targets included the 600 FPR combatants based in Kigale under the UN-supervised peace plan, opposition politicians and anyone thought to be sympathetic to the FPR rebels. Hundreds were killed in the first few hours, including Prime Minister Agatha Uwilingiyimana and members of her family (murdered by the Presidential Guard), a number of ministers, the chairman of the Constitutional Court and ten Belgian members of the 2500-strong UNAMIR.

On 9 April Speaker Theodore Sindikubago assumed the presidency in accordance with the constitution. He named a transitional government, but this was rejected by the FPR, which resumed its fight against the Presidential Guard within Kigale. On the 12th, as the FPR forces surged forward, there was a huge exodus of refugees from the capital. Aid agencies put the death toll at over 20 000.

The government fled to Gitarama, about 30 miles to the south-west, and the following day the FPR, joined by Hutu civilians opposed to the

military, claimed to be in control of four 'strategic areas' in Kigale, as well as larger areas of northern Rwanda. A pitched battle developed in the centre of Kigale, involving rockets, shells and mortar bombs. The entire expatriate community was evacuated with the help of UNAMIR and the FPR. UN officials repeatedly tried to bring about a ceasefire, but to no avail.

UN Security Council resolutions

Faced with the drastic alternative of either increasing the strength of UNAMIR or withdrawing it completely, the UN Security Council in a resolution of April 1994, simply reduced its size, starting with the withdrawal of the Belgian contingent (450 men). Others followed, to the objection of the OAU.

The UN estimate of the number of Rwandan refugees now exceeded 500 000, most of whom had fled towards Ngara in Tanzania, where aid workers reported that the River Kagara, the national boundary with Rwanda, was full of dead bodies, contaminating the water supply for the refugee camps. Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN secretary general, complained that Western governments were doing nothing about the Rwandan tragedy, that African governments had insufficient resources to intervene, that UNAMIR had lost credibility and that the FPR was refusing to cooperate.

A UN Security Council resolution of 17 May reversed the April decision and UNAMIR was to be expanded to the 5500 mark and become known as UNAMIR-2. Unarmed US observers and 500 Ghanaian troops were sent to secure Kigale airport, but its overall mandate and duration of stay remained vague. A UN embargo was placed on all arms to Rwanda.

The Rwandan government welcomed the new UN resolution, but the FRP did not and refused to abide by it unless the UN special representative, Jacques Roger Booh Booh, was withdrawn, as he was alleged to be biased. The FPR was already allowing UNAMIR-2 personnel to use the airport for humanitarian activities, but it was thought that an enlarged UNAMIR-2 would attract government artillery fire.

Massacres and civil war

Meanwhile the Tutsi FPR resumed its military campaign and made steady progress against the government forces. By the end of April 1994 it had taken possession of Kigale airport and was advancing

towards Gitarama. On 13 May the FPR boasted that it was in control of over half the country, including most of Kigale, which had seen the heaviest fighting. This was followed by an announcement that the FPR had blocked the road between Kigale and Gitarama, thus severing the links between government forces and the capital. On the 29th, FPR forces advanced towards Gitarama, while the government withdrew to Kibuye on Lake Kivu. By the end of May the population of Kigale had fallen from about 350 000 to about 60 000, of whom only 12 500 were in receipt of food and medical relief. Many escaped to the countryside and thousands more fled the country.

During May the massacre of the Tutsi minority reached genocidal proportions, the figure of half a million deaths not being disputed. In addition there were 1.5 million refugees and displaced persons, also mainly Tutsi. On the 30th the first direct talks between the FPR and UNAMIR-2 were held in Kigale, but nothing was resolved. However it was agreed that they would meet again at a later date.

The Interahamwe

By this time the blame for the most of the Tutsi deaths was beginning to fall on forces loyal to the government. Two of the most notorious of the killer groups were the Interahamwe (Those Who Stand Together), organised by the Habyarimana National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development, and the Impuga Mugambi (The Single Minded Ones), organised by the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic. Both groups were predominantly Hutu, trained by the National Army and/or government youth wings.

These two groups reputedly killed all the Tutsis they came across, as well as fellow Hutus thought to be sympathetic to FPR militias and those who refused to kill, all being branded as collaborators. A senior UN official described the killings as having been preplanned at the top and subsequently directed by the government (UN records). Another source (Human Rights Watch Africa) named several government officials as key instigators and organisers of the slaughter.

Dead bodies continued to choke the River Kagare and some were washed up on the shores of Lake Victoria, causing the Ugandan government to declare several of its lake-side districts disaster areas and to appeal for international funds. Aid workers reported that in excess of 40 000 bodies were still contaminating the water supplies. The Tanzanian government had closed its frontier on 1 May.

Refugee camps

The UNHCR appealed for funds to feed 850 000 refugees sheltering in neighbouring states. The largest refugee camp was at Benaco near Ngara in Tanzania. It had sprung up almost overnight at the beginning of May, and aid workers reported that 250 000 people had converged on it within 24 hours. In mid May the international media reported the existence of a government concentration camp in Gitarama. It was estimated that about 1000 Tutsis were being held there and that government troops were carrying out periodic executions. A Red Cross compound overlooked the camp, but as entry was barred the Red Cross was powerless to intervene.

The FPR captures Gitarama

On 13 June 1994, General Paul Kagame, leader of the FPR, announced that his forces had captured Gitarama, from where the Rwandan government had withdrawn, and reports were emanating that FPR fighters were bayoneting women (*Guardian*).

Attempts to arrange a ceasefire were still proving futile. A ceasefire pact was signed in Tunis, under OAU auspices, but it had no effect on the ground. The UN and the international aid agencies had been evacuated from Kigale as it had become too dangerous, and so food and medicines were no longer distributed. On 24 June a UN food convoy reached a group of Tutsis hiding in a church complex in Kigale in one of the sectors still controlled by the Rwandan army, the first food aid for three weeks.

Previously, on 9 June, the UN Security Council had approved a resolution extending the tenure of the UNAMIR-2 until December 1994. In a report the UN called for the establishment of an international tribunal to try those suspected of the genocide of the Tutsis (the FPR had admitted killing the archbishop of Kigale and other clergy at Kangaya). On 20 June the UN Security Council approved another resolution to extend the mandate of the UN observer mission in Uganda–Rwanda, which was to verify that no military assistance reached Rwanda from across the Ugandan border.

Operation Turquoise

On 22 June the UN Security Council approved resolution, to allow French intervention in Rwanda, which was opposed by the FPR as

France had supported the Habyarimana regime. The following day France launched Operation Turquoise and some 2500 French troops invaded Rwanda from the south-west. Their first mission was to protect the some 8000 Tutsis refugees who were surrounded by Interahamwe militiamen in Nyarushishi, about ten miles east of Cyangugu at the southern end of Lake Kivu. It was estimated that of the 55000 or so Tutsis who had lived in the Cyangugu area, only 11000 had survived the slaughter, of whom 8000 were in the Nyarushishi camp, the remainder having fled to Zaire. On the 27th French troops penetrated deeper into Rwanda towards Gikongoro, where over 200000 Tutsis were fleeing before the FPR advance.

FPR victory and the flight of the Habyarimana government

On 19 July 1994 the Tutsi FPR claimed victory in the civil war and announced the formation of a broad-based coalition government, led by Faustin Twagiramungu, a Hutu, who had been designated prime minister under the Arusha Agreement. The FPR force, which had resumed fighting against the government in April in the wake of the Hutu violence unleashed by President Habyarimana's death, had advanced rapidly and secured control of Kigale on 4 July, followed by the seizure of Butare, the southernmost town, and then Gitarama, to sweep on through to the south-west. At that point the FPR had halted rather than come into conflict with the French troops taking part in Operation Turquoise. The French had established a 'safe humanitarian zone' to protect refugees fleeing westwards from Gikongoro, with orders to prevent the FPR from capturing that town or advancing beyond it. Theonene Rudasingwa, the FPR secretary general, declared that the French were biased.

On 12 July the FPR had taken the northern garrison town of Ruhengeri and were on the point of taking the town Gisenyi at the northern end of Lake Kivu, which prompted the flight of the rump Hutu government, including President Sindikubago and Prime Minister Kambanda Wa Kambanda. The FPR walked into Gisengi as the government troops left for Goma in Zaire, taking their weapons with them, apparently with the consent of the Zairean army and frontier guards. The FPR now controlled all of Rwanda but the French sector, and a transitional government was formed to carry out the Arusha Agreement programme. The Zaire government closed its frontier post at Bukavu. By the end of July, the French troops had begun to withdraw, being replaced by OAU soldiers.

During August the FPR worked to obtain authority over the whole area, but the transitional government complained that it had no money, no transport and no hope of national recovery until the 'two million refugees' returned to help rebuild the economy – the ousted government had fled to Zaire with the country's exchange reserves. In July, Zaire claimed that about one million Rwandan refugees had passed through Goma.

In September there were disputes between the UN and the Rwandan interim president, Pasteur Bizimungu, over who had been responsible for the various massacres and atrocities. In a number of broadcasts on Radio Rwanda, Bizimungu either rejected the allegations or blamed them on the former government troops.

A few Rwandan refugees began timidly to return to their homeland, only to be massacred in Rwandan refugee camps in revenge killings by FPR militias. The UNHCR stopped encouraging Rwandan refugees in Zaire, Burundi and Uganda to return to their homes. The following month was one of confusion, argument and indecision.

On 8 November UN Security Council established an international criminal tribunal to prosecute those responsible for genocide and related crimes. Meanwhile, lawlessness in the Rwandan refugee camps both inside and outside Rwanda increased, as did struggles within them for dominance by the rival militias. In December, UN reports indicated that attempts were being made from within the refugee camps by members of the former armed forces, the Hutu militias and politicians to destabilise the new Rwandan government, and that Hutu extremists had seized control of food distribution. The Interahamwe militia also made raids on villages.

A UN report of 2 December stated that about 500 000 people had been killed in the Rwandan massacres, which had been meticulously planned by President Habyarimana, his government and its successors; and that the Rwandan figure of one million dead was exaggerated. On the 12th the new 70-member Transitional National Assembly, formed under the Arusha Agreement, held its first session.

Burundi, 1995

During 1995 the security situation continued to deteriorate in Burundi and the exodus of refugees increased. In January there was major strike in Bujumbura, and the unpopular prime minister (Antoine Kanyenkiko of UPRONA) was eased out of office. It was not until March that a new UPRONA coalition government was formed under

Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo, by which time clashes between the mainly Tutsi government army and Hutu extremists had become more frequent. The following month the opposition Hutu Front for the Defence of Democracy (FDD) announced that it would form an alternative army.

In May, after a senior charity official was killed, there was a temporary suspension of humanitarian relief as Burundi had become too dangerous for aid workers to operate in, the death toll for the month exceeding 100. The following month all relief agencies suspended their activities, while the government imposed a nationwide curfew, rigid censorship and restrictions on movement, but the National Assembly refused to give President Sylvestre Ntibantungany the power to rule by decree. A US proposal was put forward to try to solve the Tutsi-Hutu bloody impasse by creating two separate ethnically based countries based on Burundi and Rwanda, to be called Hutuland and Tutsiland. Both Burundi and Rwanda rejected the proposal.

The UN secretary general made his first visit to Burundi in July, which coincided with another outbreak of violence, deliberately provoked by Hutus. Nearly 100 people were killed in clashes between Hutu militias and the government army, and thousands more fled the capital.

In September there was a split in the coalition government, which had been formed with difficulty during February and March. The split was caused by comments made by the US ambassador to Burundi when expressing concern about the stability of the country. Eleven ministers left the government to form the Force for Democratic Change, and Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo reshuffled his cabinet. An army attack on 18 October destroyed the HQ of the opposition FDD, and large quantities of arms and ammunition were seized. The government described the FDD as an armed Hutu gang.

On 8 November Prime Minister Nduwayo declared that the end of the civil war was gradually approaching, but few believed him as the fighting was becoming even more intense. Hutu militias attacked government forces in Bujumbura and the battle spread into border towns, lasting almost a week. The government subsequently admitted that its troops had killed 250 Hutus during that week, but the real number was far greater. Several political personalities were assassinated during December, after which the conflict between the Tutsi-led army and Hutu militias intensified to genocidal proportions. Aid agencies reported that during 1995 almost 15 000 people had been killed in Burundi, and on the 15th the Red Cross suspended activities.

Rwanda, 1995

In January 1995 the UN secretary general gave up his attempt to raise a multinational peacekeeping force to protect the some 1.2 million Rwandan refugees in camps in Zaire (UN figures). He said that he had written to 60 governments, including that of the United States, to ask for troops and military equipment for such a mission, but without success. None wanted to become involved. He then had to devise a more limited plan, using 1500 Zairean troops under UN supervision to protect Rwandan refugees, and to try to break the grip on them by former Habyarimana government troops and the Interahamwe and Impuga Mugambi militias.

Also in January a mass grave containing 4500 bodies was found in the grounds of the main hospital in Kigale. The following month, after some argument, it was decided that Arusha (Tanzania) would be the venue for the international criminal tribunal. The first trials were due to begin in April, but had to be delayed as the tribunal was not ready. By March, unrest in the refugee camps in Zaire was becoming acute – there was a shortage of food and many were on half-rations, for which aid workers were often blamed unfairly and several were assaulted by inmates.

The Camp Kibeho massacre

There were eight Rwandan refugee camps in the French sector of the country, containing about 200 000 refugees. When the French troops departed the Rwandan Patriotic Army (APR), now the government army, was detailed to close them down, but the Hutu militias, which had gained control over most of them, refused to allow the refugees to leave. Nonetheless all were cleared but one: Camp Kibeho near the town of Gikongoro. The camp was surrounded by APR troops, and during exchanges of fire over 30 people were killed and many refugees fled into the hills. The main attack took place on 22 April and resulted in a massacre. The UN estimated that over 2000 people were killed, but other estimates rose to the 8000 mark; later the government admitted to just 350. A small group of about 540 Hutu militiamen held out in the medical centre, without food or water, until 9 May, when they surrendered as cholera and typhoid were sweeping through the camp. An international enquiry was held, and it was found that although the Kibeho massacre had not been planned by the Rwandan authorities, they could have prevented it.

The US-based Human Rights Watch Africa produced a damning report on the Rwandan refugee camps, mainly those in eastern Zaire (*Re-arming with Impunity* published in May). It alleged that the defeated Hutu government troops and militias were being rearmed and were preparing to return from exile, having already gained control of their camps and reconstructed a military infrastructure. The report accused the governments of Zaire, France and South Africa of flouting the UN arms embargo, and alleged that Zaire had been prominent in delivering weapons.

On 5 May in Rwanda, the Transitional National Assembly adopted a new constitution that sought to bring together elements of the Arusha Agreement, which had been based on reconciliation, and other pacts that had been made. The following month new identity cards were issued throughout the country. This time the cards excluded details of the holder's race or ethnic background, as during the 1964 massacres identity card details had helped Hutus select their victims.

The UNAMIR-2 mandate was extended for another six months, but with a reduction in strength. The Rwandan government stated that of the estimated two million Rwandans who had taken refuge in Burundi, Zaire and Tanzania, some 1 300 000 had returned. The accuracy of these figures was questioned, but others were even more questionable. Human Rights Watch Africa continued to allege that illegal arms were reaching Hutus in the camps, this time from Albania and Bulgaria.

Although it was, reputed that some 47 000 people were still being held in detention and there was a high prison death toll, in July the United States resumed aid to Rwanda (it had been suspended in April after the Kibeho massacre) owing to 'an improved human rights record'. The following month the UN suspended the arms embargo that had been imposed in May 1994.

Due to fears that Rwandan and Burundian troops were preparing to attack refugee camps in Zaire, which had become bases for opposition armies to arm and develop, the Zairean government began to expel reluctant refugees from their camps. During August they forcibly ejected more than 15 000, while 130 000 others fled into the Zairean bush (UN figures). UN officials protested and the practice stopped. The UNHCR then stepped in to negotiate an agreement on the repatriation of one million Rwandan and 130 000 Burundian refugees from Zaire by the end of the year. The Zairean government pledged to stop the activities of the Hutu extremists in the camps, who were dominating the refugees and preventing them from leaving.

In early September, in a large ceremonial parade in Kigale, about 1300 members of the former Habyarimana government army were integrated into the APR, having completed a one-year military-political training course. The reviewing officer, General Paul Kagame, vice president and defence minister, said that all those implicated in the 1964 massacres would be brought to book.

On the 11th there was yet another massacre, this time of about 100 people, all civilians, in Kanama near the Tanzanian border. At first it was passed off as a fight between Hutu militias and Tutsi soldiers, but it was later revealed that it had been a revenge killing as APR soldiers had gone on the rampage after being ambushed by Interahamwe militiamen. This incident caused a temporary halt in the UNHCR's repatriation plan.

On 5 November Rwandan government troops launched an attack on a rebel camp on Iwawa island in Lake Kivu. About 140 'rebels' were killed and 15 captured. The Hutu group, about 500 strong, had been recruited from refugee camps around Goma (Zaire), and had been on the island for two months preparing to launch an amphibious attack against the Rwandan mainland. The government death toll was admitted to be 25 (ORINFOR – the National news agency). This was part of the government's plan to dismantle all rebel bases inside Rwanda.

The international trials were due to begin on 1 December but there were delays and confusion, partly due to a lack of funds and the late recruitment of investigators. A year had passed since the main massacres and the momentum had been lost. It was also proving difficult to produce the kind of evidence required for convictions, and to find unbiased tribunal officials and staff who had not been involved in the massacres in any way. Several viewed the tribunal with suspicion, including President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya, who said that he could not support it because it showed partisanship and did not look at the problem in its entirety.

The year ended with the expulsion from Rwanda of *Médecins sans Frontières* and more than 40 other nongovernmental aid organisations, ostensibly because they were not properly registered but in reality because the government wanted to use all incoming foreign aid to rebuild its economy and infrastructure, instead of it being distributed privately for humanitarian purposes. Aid donors had considerable influence, not all of which was directed at supporting a government in power. *Médecins sans Frontières* was disliked by the government for reporting atrocities committed by the Rwandan authorities and accusing them of the theft of vehicles and equipment.

On 14 December President Bizimungu of Rwanda met President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, and an agreement was reached to repatriate some 500 000 Rwandan refugees in Camp Kagara, Tanzania. A few days later the Rally for Democracy and the Return of Refugees to Rwanda (RRD), the main Hutu organisation for this purpose, appealed for a more open general dialogue on the return of refugees to their homes.

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The End of the Mobutu Era

On 9 January 1996, minutes after take-off a Russian Antonov cargo aircraft crashed into a busy Kinshasa market and killed about 400 people. The plane was overloaded with illegal supplies, including weapons and ammunition, for UNITA, headed by Jonas Sivimbi, who was in active rebellion against the Angolan government, headed by President Agostinho Neto. This was clear evidence that President Mobutu was in covert contact with UNITA. The following month Mobutu reshuffled his government and dismissed the majority of his ministers.

New constitution

A draft constitution was adopted by the High Council of the Republic–Parliament of Transition (HCR–PT) in Kinshasa on 6 October 1996, which provided for a federal state with 26 provinces (instead of the existing eleven regions). There was to be a bicameral assembly, and the president would have executive authority. A referendum for its approval was scheduled for December 1996.

The Banyamulenge rebellion

During October 1996 the Zairean government was faced with a huge rebellion by the Banyamulenge tribe. The Banyamulenge, ethnic Tutsis living in eastern Zaire, had arrived there over two centuries previously and for long had complained that the European colonial boundary carve-up of Africa should have put their territory in Urundi (Rwanda) and not in the Congo. The tribe, about one million strong, had first established itself in the Mulenge Hills, north-east of Lake Kivu, and later migrated to the Uvira area. In 1981 Mobutu had stripped

the Banyamulenge of their Zairean nationality, thus rendering them stateless.

In the spring of 1996 the Hutu Interahamwe Militia, based in UN-administered refugee camps in eastern Zaire, cleared thousands of Banyamulenge from the Masisi area (north of Uriva) in order to use it as a base for cross-border raids into Rwanda. During the summer a series of skirmishes occurred between the Banyamulenge and the Interahamwe Militia, and these developed to such an intensity that on 8 October the acting Governor of South Kivu province gave the Banyamulenge six days to leave Zairean territory. Those who failed to leave would be treated as rebels and expelled or put to death.

His threat was taken seriously and hundreds of thousands of Banyamulenge fled into the hills. A group of armed Banyamulenge, said eventually to number about 4000, began to attack the Interahamwe Militia, and Hutus generally, with renewed vigour, and also turned their attention to the Zairean Armed Forces (FAZ). At about the same time panic-stricken Hutus and Tutsis swarmed out of refugee camps in South Kivu Province.

Zaire accused Rwanda of arming the Banyamulenge tribesmen, which was falsely denied. Furthermore the Rwandan defence minister, Paul Kagame, who had led the FPR (Rwandan Patriotic Front) army in the Rwandan civil war in 1994, stated that if Zaire wanted war, Rwanda was ready. He later admitted that Rwandan troops were in eastern Zaire, but only because Zairean artillery was shelling the Rwandan town of Cyangugu.

The Banyamulenge rebellion developed while Mobutu was on a prolonged visit to Europe for medical treatment, and so there was a political vacuum in Kinshasa at the top leadership level. Senior Zairean politicians were more interested in who Mobutu's successor might be than in sorting out the distant rebellion.

For few days a huge number of refugees wandered through countryside, and on 16 October their number rose even higher when serious fighting broke out between the Banyamulenge and the FAZ. On the 21st The UNHCR reported that all 12 of its camps in the Uriva area were empty, and that some 250 000 refugees were on the move or hiding in the hills. At the same time still more refugees were fleeing from Bukavu town. The Zairean government accused Burundi and Rwanda of provoking the conflict, and of arming and training the Banyamulenge militia. This was denied, both countries insisting they wanted good relations with Zaire.

The Rwandan government had persistently expressed frustration at the presence in Zairean refugee camps of the Interahamwe Militia, as well as soldiers of the defeated Rwandan army and members of the former Hutu government. Mobutu was accused not only of supporting them, but also preparing them for military action. On the 22nd the UNHCR reported that regular Rwandan troops were moving aggressively into North Kivu Province. Two days later the Rwanda government admitted to the invasion, stating that it was because of Mobutu's decision to accommodate, protect and arm the anti-Rwandan-government groups. UN observers feared that the Rwandan government was simply taking advantage of Zaire's instability to clear out these enemies from the Kivu Region. On 29 October the Zairean government belatedly declared a state of emergency in the Kivu region, imposing military rule on its two provinces in an attempt to 'eliminate all subversive networks'.

By the end of the month the Banyamulenge militia was in the process of occupying a swath of eastern Zaire, while FAZ soldiers were reported to be fleeing in disarray. In two weeks of fighting the Banyamulenge militia had captured Bukavu, and was advancing towards Goma, capital of North Kivu Province. It had already occupied the nearby airport, a key access point for the FAZ, and the centre of UN and other relief operations.

On the 31st the Banyamulenge leadership took a party of international journalists on a tour of the Zairean area between Lake Tanganyika and Lake Kivu, including Uriva and Kamanyola, which it claimed was under its control. Many were surprised by the rapid advance of the Banyamulenge militia, aided by Rwandan troops, and the successful coordination of a massive pincer movement to establish a buffer zone between Zaire, and Rwanda and Burundi. Zaireans were convinced that the planning had taken place in Kigale.

The rebel advance, according to the UNHCR, caused more than 115000 refugees to flee from the Goma area, further swelling the Mugongo refugee camp to the west of that city. More than 500000 mainly Hutu refugees were inhabiting what aid workers called the largest refugee camp in the world. While the Banyamulenge rebellion was gaining momentum the plight of the one million or so mainly Rwandan refugees in Zaire, part of a helpless milling mass, began to prick international consciences, but the UN and other international aid organisations could not decide exactly what to do about the anticipated mass starvation.

The ADFL

During November 1996, as the Banyamulenge rebellion gathered strength and momentum, what came to be called the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Zaire–Congo (ADFL) was taking shape, consisting of five main groupings, with Laurent Kabila emerging as the dominant leader. The groups were the Banyamulenge Militia, composed of ethnic Tutsis; the Marxist-oriented People's Revolutionary Party, which had been founded by Laurent Kabila in the mid 1960s and which had operated spasmodically in Eastern Zaire; the Kuba Group, a dissident group from the major Lulua tribe of south-east Kasai Province; the Shaba Group, drawn from the some 500 000 people who had fled from Shaba (formerly Katanga) to Kasai Province in August 1992; and the Kissasse Group, which included the youthful Mai Mai Warriors, led by Andre Kissasse, who became the military commander of the ADFL.

The main aim of Kabila, a long-time Katangan revolutionary, inspired by Lumumba principles, was to topple Mobutu from power and take it for himself.

Capture of Goma

By 2 November 1996 the ADFL forces, supported by Rwandan troops, had completed the capture of Goma, thus gaining effective control of both North and South Kivu Provinces. This caused a bloody backlash in Kinshasa, where thousands took to the streets to demand war against Burundi and Rwanda. Tutsis – usually easily distinguishable by their tall stature – were attacked, as was their property. The HCR–PT, which feared a coup by the disgraced FAZ, especially in the light of the continued absence of Mobutu and the rapid and unexpected successes of the ADFL militias called for the expulsion of all Tutsis from Zaire.

The Interahamwe Militia was still using force to persuade refugees not to return to their homes, and the UN now estimated that more than 700 000 refugees had gathered in the Mugongo camp near Goma, and that a further 300 000 were wandering in the hills. On 4 November the ADFL declared a unilateral ceasefire to enable refugees to return to their homes; and on the 11th it also agreed to open up a 'Humanitarian corridor' to Mugongo camp for this purpose, but few refugees responded to the offer. UN and other aid workers suspected that the Tutsi-led ADFL was about to attack Interahamwe Militia elements in Mugongo camp, which prompted some Western nations into timid activity.

Foreign intervention

Eventually, in mid November the UN Security Council made preparations for a 15 000-strong Canadian-led peacekeeping force to be sent to Zaire, the United States agreeing to provide 1000 troops. An advance fact-finding party arrived in Zaire to find the Mugungo camp almost empty. It had been attacked a few days previously by ADFL militias and seeing this refugees had fled in their thousands, some returning to their homes – as a marginally safer option – and others fleeing to the hills.

The UN calculated that over 400 000 refugees had returned to Rwanda, and that, rather unexpectedly, the Rwandan government was now encouraging them to return. To this end it had been decreed that any squatters living in the homes of refugees would be evicted, the only concession being that the squatters would be allowed to harvest any crops they had planted. This seemed partially to solve the humanitarian problem, and the UN Security Council lapsed back into a torpor. The United States pulled out from the mission and other nations followed suit. Only the French remained firm that a UN force was essential to restore stability, especially as up to 150 000 refugees were still somewhere at large in the hills. The precise figure had still not been established, the UNHCR insisting that around 700 000 Rwandan refugees were still unaccounted for, while the United States, judging by satellite observations, said that only 230 000 were in the hills.

At a meeting in Germany, representatives of 29 nations dismissed the need for a UN peacekeeping force for Eastern Zaire, but failed to agree on any alternative action. A Canadian plan to air-drop food for the refugees in the hills gained the support of some nations, but as the governments of Burundi and Rwanda refused to cooperate the project would have to be conducted from Entebbe in Uganda.

In the meantime the ADFL, under Laurent Kabila, began to consolidate its authority over the Kivu region. On the 22nd and 25th it announced that ADFL administrators had been appointed in North Kivu Province and South Kivu Province respectively. Kabila declared he was working to liberate all Zaire, and not only for the secession of that region.

Mobutu returns

On 17 December President Mobutu returned to Zaire after a four-month absence in Europe for medical treatment, announcing that

as the situation in the east was threatening the survival of Zaire as a sovereign independent state, he was taking personal charge. He immediately made a number of top-level military changes, and by the end of the year the FAZ, slightly reinvigorated, was preparing to mount a counteroffensive. Mobutu reformed his government, but retained Kengo Wa Dondo, who had been criticised for weakness in the face of the Banyamulenge rebellion, and slurs had been made on his part-Tutsi ancestry.

In the meantime the ADFL was extending its dominion, taking adjacent towns in what was seen as a threat to Kisangani (to the north-west), and soon Kabila was boasting that his fiefdom already exceeded 100 000 square kilometres. A new factor in the equation was Uganda, which had a 600-mile joint frontier with Zaire and was reported to be helping Kabila, who was said to be allowing Ugandan troops to pursue their own rebels across the border into Zaire. President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda had just made his peace with Sudan, and being hostile to Mobutu felt sufficiently secure to become involved in Zairean matters.

ADFL disunity

On 2 January 1997, after an all-day battle the ADFL militias seized the north-eastern town of Bunia and the nearby gold mines, which meant that Kabila now controlled a strip of eastern Zaire, over 400 miles in length with borders adjoining three countries – Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi – which he named ‘Democratic Congo’. He also appeared to be in control of Walikala, about 80 miles west of Goma. It was now clear that Kabila was making for Kisangani, which was strategically important as the farthest extent of Zairean river navigation, some 400 miles from Goma. The capture of the gold mines and expectations of revenue from them allowed Kabila to fund his part of the ADFL. But the momentum of the ADFL was slowing down and disunity was setting in as the militias, some with varying agendas and others drawn by the prospect of loot, vengeance or sheer violence, began to fight amongst themselves. A few fell away from the main body of the ADFL and others were pushed.

Early in the month Star Radio, the ADFL radio station, announced the arrest of leaders of the Mai Mai Warriors, nominally part of the Kissasse Group, which being anti-Tutsi had on several occasions attacked other ADFL militias. The group consisted of opportunist, undisciplined teenagers addicted to violence, and weeks ago Kabila had

ordered that they be disarmed. It was doubtful that this had been done, as on 21 January they murdered Andre Kissasse, their nominal leader, who was also commander of the ADFL armed forces. At first the ADFL had been a local arrangement, but it had rapidly become a national anti-Mobutu force the main fighting element being predominantly Tutsi. Tutsis were turning out to be good fighting soldiers, more warlike and determined than most of the Zairean tribes around them.

The White Legion

The generally poor state of the FAZ had caused Mobutu secretly to recruit European mercenaries, appreciating the vital part they had played in the civil wars of the 1960s. The European commando group, known as the White Legion, consisted of Belgian, French, South African and British volunteers, and later also Serbs and Croats. It was paid directly by Mobutu, had a secret base over the border in Angola and a strength of 400 or more. The French seemed to have taken responsibility for recruiting volunteers in France, and its leaders included a former head of the French Security Service and former senior gendarmes.

The first White Legion operation began on 25 January, when it attacked ADFL militias in Walikala. The fighting continued for some time, but on the 31st Kabila claimed that his militias had wiped out the mercenaries.

Fighting was reported near the town of Fizi, held by the ADFL, and the Zairean government accused Ugandan armed forces of invading Eastern Zaire and heading southwards towards Shaba Province. UN officials reported that the ADFL had taken Lulimba, about 40 miles from Fizi.

Three weeks after his return to Zaire, President Mobutu left for Europe to resume his convalescence, even though Laurent Kabila was clearly making for Kisangani, and also penetrating into Shaba Province. However on 3 February Mobutu flew from France to Morocco to try to persuade King Hassan to send Moroccan troops to Zaire to support the FAZ. The following day the Zairean government stated that aircraft had been chartered to bring in Moroccan, Togolese and Chadian troops, forerunners of what it was hoped would be several commando brigades, still to be recruited.

The ADFL advances to Kisangani

During the first half of February 1997 Kabila's ADFL militias pressed slowly towards Kisangani, successively taking the towns of Shabunda,

Isiro, Lulutu and Moba and approaching the upper reaches of the River Zaire, which was guarded by FAZ units and Serb mercenaries. One authority (*New York Times*) stated that the demoralised FAZ was distributing weapons to the Interahamwe Militia and other extremist anti-Tutsi groups. On the 16th and 17th Zairean combat aircraft, flown by foreign mercenaries and based at Kisangani, bombed the eastern towns of Shabunda, Bukavu and Walikala, all occupied by ADFL militias, causing many civilian casualties and a new wave of refugees. The Zaire government threatened further air raids, but had pilot and technical problems.

Previously, on the 10th, Kabila had promised that the estimated 127 000 refugees in a camp at Tingi Tingi, which lay between the ADFL advancing militias and Kisangani, would not be harmed, but warned UN officials to cleanse the camp of armed Interahamwe militiamen and other extremists by the 18th, or that task would be undertaken by his Tutsi militias. Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general, confirmed that arms had been delivered to Tingi Tingi. Sadako Ogata, the UN high commissioner for refugees, who had visited the camp a few days previously, reported that the refugees were dying of disease and hunger at the rate of 30 a day. The previous week, Emma Bonino, the EU commissioner for humanitarian affairs, after visiting Eastern Zaire, had accused the United States and other countries of turning a blind eye to the condition of the some 300 000 Rwandan Hutu refugees who had fled into the forests and hills, fearing retribution for the 1994 massacres if they returned home.

On the 22nd ADFL militias took the town of Kalima, causing an exodus of some 25 000 Hutu refugees. On the 28th Kabila took Kindu, defended by mercenaries, just 80 miles from Kisangani. This was an important strategic gain as it provided access to the diamond-rich town of Hasai.

Negotiations

As ever, negotiators were trying to bring about a ceasefire. On 17 February a UN special envoy visited Kinshasa, but failed to persuade the government to negotiate with the rebels. Two days later Nelson Mandela, president of South Africa, brokered peace talks in response to an initiative by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. Representatives of Kabila and the Zairean government attended. Mandela and Museveni called for a truce and face-to-face talks between Mobutu and Kabila as a prelude to elections in Zaire. A *Times* report stated that

Mandela's premature disclosure that elections would be held in Zaire was done to embarrass Mobutu, the other negotiators wanting to keep the issue secret for the time being so as not to disrupt the ceasefire discussions. On the 26th Kabila said that the ADFL was ready to negotiate.

Rapid ADFL advance

During March 1997 the ADFL militias continued their advance towards Kisangani. The next town to fall to them was Lubutu, from where the FAZ hastily fled in disarray, as did some 170 000 refugees who had been temporarily sheltering in and around the Tingi Tingi camp.

Kisangani falls

The exiled former commander of the defeated Rwandan army, General Bizimungu, and his remaining staff fled from Kisangani on 8 March, abandoning the remnants of the Rwandan troops who had fought alongside the FAZ to stem the Tutsi ADFL advance. It was alleged in the *Guardian* that the advancing Tutsi troops were killing Hutus in a 'second genocide'. The French government viewed the ADFL as an invading foreign army. By the 11th two main ADFL columns were advancing towards Kisangani, one from the north and the other from the south-east. Farther south, a third ADFL column was advancing westward towards Kasai Province, with Kinshasa on the far horizon, and a fourth was moving southwards into Shaba Province. Kabila had his GHQ at Goma in the centre. The FAZ troops were becoming demoralised, as were the White Legion mercenaries, who were rapidly withdrawing from battle areas and leaving the country.

Kabila's ADFL militias entered Kisangani on 15 March 1997, meeting little resistance. In fact many FAZ troops changed allegiance in order to be on the winning side. Kabila now had possession of the diamond town of Mbuli-Mayi and controlled almost one third of Zaire: the eastern sector down to the Shaba border, which included most of Zaire's natural resources.

On the 16th Kabila rejected a UN ceasefire plan that had just been accepted by the Zairean government. In Kinshasa there was uncertainty and panic as the National Assembly, in defiance of the absent Mobutu's wishes, passed a vote of no confidence in Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo, who was away in Nairobi attending a regional conference. The Mobutu family decamped from the capital and fled across the River Zaire to Brazzaville. Many feared a military coup, and many

were preparing to change their political allegiance. Mobutu suddenly returned to Kinshasa on the 21st, whereupon he nominally accepted Kengo's resignation but ordered him to remain in office.

The Lomé summit

Under US and French pressure and the auspices of the OAU, African heads of state and representatives of Zaire and the ADFL met in Lomé (Togo) on 26 March to discuss the Zairean situation. The previous day the vice chairman of Mobutu's MPR, Banza Mulakaya, had said that Mobutu was willing to share power with the ADFL until the elections in July, but there was no answer from the ADFL, whose southern column was closing in on Lubumbashi.

Mobutu's last days

In Kinshasa on 2 April 1997, Mobutu confirmed Etienne Tshisekedi as his new prime minister in the hope of dividing the opposition between him and Laurent Kabila of the ADFL. The following day a new 26-member cabinet was announced, composed entirely of opposition figures and leaving six key portfolios vacant for the ADFL. But there was still no response from the ADFL, whose columns, were moving steadily towards their targets.

Lawlessness and anxiety increased in Kinshasa, with crowds calling for the dissolution of the National Assembly and troops in armoured vehicles being called out to disperse them. When crowds prevented Prime Minister Tshisekedi from entering the National Assembly, the FAZ detained him for his own security. Mobutu then dismissed Tshisekedi and replaced him with General Likulia Bolongo, the defence minister, who formed what was virtually a military government.

The fall of Lubumbashi

In the south-east the capital of Shaba province, Lubumbashi, fell to the ADFL on 9 April. Many FAZ soldiers and officers, wearing white head bands, promptly defected to the ADFL, and many of the inhabitants turned out to welcome Kabila's men. The US government called on Mobutu to step down.

The following day Kabila held a press conference in Goma. He gave Mobutu three days to hand over the government to him or his Tutsi-ADFL units would march into Kinshasa. General Bolongo announced a new cabinet with senior generals in all key portfolios. On the 12th Mobutu asked for a meeting with Kabila.

Speaking from his main base in Goma, Kabila said that talks would take place, but his troops would nonetheless continue their advance towards Kinshasa. General Bolongo appealed for calm in the capital, and urged everyone to ignore the rumours that Kabila's troops were already penetrating the outskirts. Supporters of the rejected prime minister, Tshisekedi, organised a general strike and urged Mobutu to stand down, but Mobutu refused to do so.

Under US pressure President Mandela, regarded as the most respected statesman in Africa, continued his work as a negotiator on the Zaire issue. On the 16th he called a meeting in South Africa, which Kabila attended, as did representatives of the Zaire government. Mobutu made his excuses for non-attendance. France, Mobutu's last remaining international supporter, urged him to form a transitional government. Meanwhile one of Kabila's columns had entered Kasai Province and was heading towards Kinshasa, and some supplies to the city were being blockaded. In a last-ditch effort Mandela announced that he, Mobutu and Kabila would meet on a South African warship in neutral waters on 2 May.

Refugees

Meanwhile the problem of the Rwandan Hutu refugees continued. The UN produced a plan to airlift about 100 000 of them from the Kisangani area to Goma, from where they could be trucked home. This would cost some \$50 million and take several months to complete. The refugees themselves, though worn down by starvation and disease, were reluctant to be transported back to Rwanda, still fearing retribution for their part in the 1994 genocidal massacres. The UN stated that a further 65 000 refugees were heading north-westwards towards the Central African Republic, having fled from the Tingi Tingi camp area after Lubutu had fallen to the ADFL. A further 30 000 were trying to reach Angola, and 55 000 Hutus had disappeared from camps near Kisangani. Reports continued to come in of the massacre of refugees by both the ADFL and the FAZ. On 15 April Kabila gave the UN 60 days to evacuate all Hutu refugees from Eastern Zaire.

Mobutu departs

Mandela's planned meeting between Mobutu, Kabila and himself on a South African warship in neutral waters was scheduled for 2 May 1997, but it did not start until two days later as Kabila, fearing trickery and anxious for his own safety, was reluctant to attend. The two leaders

eventually met on the 4th. At first Mobutu offered to resign for 'health reasons' and hand over power to the HCR-PT, which would appoint an interim president. This was rejected by Kabila who insisted that Mobutu resign immediately. Kabila agreed to give Mobutu eight days to consider his demand, stating (falsely) that one of his ADFL columns was within 50 miles of Kinshasa and that a ceasefire was out of the question.

The United States advised its citizens to leave Zaire. Together with Britain and France, the United States had already positioned small military forces in Brazzaville, across the River Zaire, from where they would move in to evacuate their nationals from Kinshasa if necessary. In spite of the threat of being overrun, Kinshasa remained relatively calm, it being believed that the ADFL column was about 150 miles away rather than 50. In fact a battle was taking place in Kenge, 120 miles to the east of Kinshasa, where FAZ troops were being assisted by elements of the UNITA militia from Angola, which had come to Mobutu's aid. The battle in Kenge raged for several days, until Kabila's troops seized victory and resumed their march on the capital.

On the 6th Mobutu briefly left Zaire to attend a conference in Gabon, but returned on the 10th, thus scotching rampant rumours that he had already gone into exile. On the 14th the city was gripped by a general strike, a large section of the population heeding the call from Etienne Tshisekedi to make the place a 'dead city' until Mobutu left. More negotiations were scheduled for the 14th, but did not take place as Kabila refused to reboard the south African warship. Instead Kabila flew to Cape Town to meet President Mandela, but he would not compromise and gave Mobutu until the 19th to resign or be forcibly turned out.

General Likulia Bolungu and several other senior generals, who had apparently been in covert communication with Kabila and elements of the ADFL for some weeks, came to the conclusion that it would be stupid to continue to expose Kinshasa's some five million people to the ravages of war and defeat in order to save just one man. Accordingly they informed Mobutu that they could no longer guarantee his safety. Bolungu, anxious to avoid bloodshed, ordered the FAZ troops not to put up any resistance to the ADFL militias, but to keep order in the city until they arrived.

It was formally announced in Kinshasa on the 16th that President Mobutu had ceased to be concerned with affairs of state, and had decided to leave the capital and travel with his family to his home town of Gbadolite in northern Zaire. In fact he flew to Lomé in Togo, where he briefly stayed with the president, an old friend, before moving

on to Morocco, where he was granted political asylum. On the 17th the Swiss government announced that all the assets of Mobutu and his family had been frozen.

A valedictory spat

On the evening of the 16th General Nzimbi Ngale, commander of the Presidential Guard, and a number of his senior officers escaped across the river to Brazzaville, after which angry members of his command, including Mobutu's son, Captain Kongolo Mobutu, went on the rampage, targeting those whom they regarded as traitors. More than 100 people were killed. Captain Mobutu and his associates then fled across the river to Brazzaville. The prime minister, General Likulia Bolongo, who had been sheltering in the French embassy, also slipped safely across the river to Brazzaville that night.

Kabila enters Kinshasa

On 17 May 1997 an ADFL column, about 10000 strong and well armed with mortars, antitank missiles, rockets and automatic weapons, entered Kinshasa. The troops were welcomed as liberators by thousands of citizens, and made rapid progress in mopping up the few pockets of FAZ resistance. The ADFL was also formally welcomed by Tshisekedi's UDSP, and on the 19th it was recognised by several African countries, including Angola, Rwanda and Uganda. Certain Western countries, including Belgium, Britain and France gave cautious support, indicating that full diplomatic recognition would depend upon the actions of the new regime. On 20 May Kabila flew into Kinshasa, and on the 29th was sworn in as president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), assuming full executive, legislative and military powers.

The thousand mile march

Laurent Kabila's long march – well over 1000 miles across Zaire – had taken about eight months, starting with the Banyamulenge rebellion and thereafter gathering momentum as his four main ADFL columns probed westwards into the heart of Zaire and beyond. Kabila had been aided considerably by regular military elements from Rwanda and Burundi, especially in terms of organisation, administration and supplies and had latterly received considerable help from Ugandan regular forces, who had ensured that the flow of arms and ammunition was

constant. Another major influencing factor was that the ADFL's reputation for killings and atrocities had gone before it, tending to cower the opposition.

However, much of Kabila's success had been due to the universal hatred in Zaire of Mobutu, which had caused many factions to join, assist or sympathise with the ADFL, whose purpose from the beginning had been to remove Mobutu. On the military front determined opposition had been only spasmodic. The FAZ had occasionally put up stiff resistance, but more often had either changed allegiance or rapidly withdrawn in the face of the enemy. FAZ morale had been low to start with, and had flagged further as the campaign developed. The FAZ had been deliberately neglected, poorly paid and poorly led – Mobutu had not wanted a united, efficient army that might turn on him, and the FAZ officer corps, sustained by nepotism, had suffered periodic purges.

The White Legion mercenaries had been too few to be effective. They had fought well on several occasions, but had seldom been in the right place at the right time and had soon begun to pull out. The greatest military surprise had been the conduct of Kabila's Tutsi soldiers, who had formed the keen edge of his forward troops and shown great determination in battle.

Death of Mobutu

The saga of Mobutu Sese Koko Ngbende wa za Banga, as he latterly liked to style himself, ended on 7 September 1997, when at the age of 66 years he died of cancer in Morocco, where he had been granted political asylum by King Hassan. Despite the various conspiracy theories that appeared from time to time, death from cancer seems to be solid fact.

Born Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, the son of a mission cook, he had entered the Belgian Force Publique, dabbled in journalism and come to the attention of Patrice Lumumba. His seizure of power in 1965 had been widely credited to the US CIA, and with US, Belgian and French support he had remained in power for 32 years. His name had become an international byword for dictatorial corruption as he had accumulated an estimated personal fortune of \$9.7 billion while his people remained, on a per capita basis, amongst the poorest in Africa. His one positive achievement had been to protect his country from fragmentation.

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The Democratic Republic of the Congo

In January 1998 President Laurent Kabila enlarged his cabinet. Most of those who had served in previous emergency cabinets were reassigned to ministerial posts, which he hoped would make for stability. Several were Tutsis. He continued to crack down on political parties and their activities, arresting Joseph Olenghankoy, the outspoken leader of the Innovational Forces of the Sacred Union (FONUS), and imprisoning two spokesmen of the opposition Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDSP) for spreading malicious rumours. Kabila also declared that he would officially pardon those responsible for the murder of Patrice Lumumba, but no one came forward.

Fighting broke out between rival groups of soldiers at Matadi garrison on the 21st, the official reason being the forced integration of FAZ soldiers with those of the ADFL. A more probable reason for the discontent was that the troops had not been paid for some time. The mutineers entered the Matadi dock area and briefly prevented it from functioning, but order was restored by the military police.

In February Etienne Tshisekedi, leader of the UDSP, was arrested and banished to his home village for subversive political activity in defiance of a government ban imposed in May 1997. He was given a crop of seedlings and a combine harvester, and told to engage himself in productive and liberating work.

Meanwhile, on the 2nd the citizens of Kivu Province complained of the arrest of their traditional chiefs, who were supporting the right of the Mai Mai militiamen to fight to prevent their land from being seized by Banyamulenge Tutsis. Early in the month army troops drove out the rebels from the town of Bania, restoring government authority over the town and region, and repulsed an attack on Uvira. More armed clashes occurred on the 24th between detachments of the

National Army and Banyamulenge militia units, in which over 300 people were killed (AFP).

During the first days of March several hundred Banyamulenge Tutsi soldiers, who had been incorporated into the National Army, deserted from the Uriva garrison and fled into the hills to avoid being transferred to another region, believing their presence was necessary in the Uriva area to protect the Banyamulenge from other hostile groups. By the 13th most had returned to their barracks, their reposting having been postponed as a special concession.

Human rights

The Association for the Defence of Human Rights, which was tolerated by Kabila, reported that 60 convicted criminals had been executed in public in Lubumbashi so far during his regime. It complained of limited access to appeals against capital sentences in the special military courts.

A UN investigation team examining allegations of large-scale human rights abuses and massacres, was forced to abandon its work near Mbandaka (formerly Cocquilhatville) when threatened by hostile crowds of armed civilians. A government spokesman described the UN activities as a desecration. On 6 April Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general, ordered the work to be suspended, and on the 17th withdrew the team from the country. From the time the UN investigation team had arrived in the DRC in August 1997 it had faced continuous obstruction, the most recent incident occurring when a member was arrested in Goma and his confidential list of witnesses was confiscated and copied.

Kabila, complaining that international organisations were giving aid to rebels in the region, visited Goma in order to restore stability, having dissolved the Association for the Defence of Human Rights on the ground that it was an illegal body. Amnesty International released a report on 15 May alleging that Kabila was implementing a policy of widespread and deliberate human rights abuses, which he dismissed as a 'mound of fabrication'.

Meanwhile, it had been announced in Brussels on 4 February that an alternative government had been established under the leadership of Kengo Wa Dongo, who had been prime minister during the Mobutu regime.

A Constituent Assembly

In May 1988 Kabila established a 300-member Constituent and Legislative Assembly and submitted a draft constitution for approval by

referendum. The Assembly would exercise legislative power until the next general election, scheduled for mid 1999, and generally govern the country.

Minister of Information Raphael Ghanda, who was responsible for the national television and radio services, was arrested with two other ministers for mismanagement and corruption. Also arrested were General Anselme Massu, a former acting chief of staff, for maintaining a private militia; and Joseph Olenghankoy, leader of FONUS. Both subsequently escaped from a high-security prison in Lubumbashi, but were recaptured.

On 1 June Kabila formed a 'Government of Efficiency'. Deogratias Bugera, a prominent Tutsi and a founding member of the ADFL, became a minister of state in the president's office. This was assumed to be an attempt to placate the Banyamulenge Tutsi population in the east of the country, where regional dissatisfaction was becoming very evident.

The Tutsi uprising

A sudden uprising against President Kabila began on 2 August in the eastern part of the country. The uprising was spearheaded by the 10th Battalion of Banyamulenge, which began attacking National Army troops in Goma, Bukavu and Uriva, using artillery and mortars. Goma airport was closed. Tension had been rising for some weeks between the Banyamulenge Tutsis, still viewed by most Congolese as foreigners, as they were essentially a Rwandan tribe, and the government, the Tutsis complaining that Kabila was doing nothing to prevent armed Hutus from attacking them, and even raiding across the border into Rwanda.

After the Kabila's victory over Mobutu the new National Army had been trained by Tutsis, with the support of the governments of Rwanda and Uganda, and many Tutsis had entered into short-term military contracts to serve in the army, several occupying senior military positions. Factional discontent had festered between these hired Tutsi soldiers and Congolese ones, especially in the two main military bases near Kinshasa: Camp Kokolo and Camp Tshati. On 30 July Kabila had ordered all Rwandans serving in the National Army to leave the country. Meanwhile declarations had been made on Radio Goma and Radio Bukavu to the effect that the 'rebels' had decided to form an autonomous region in eastern Congo, and to oust Kabila from power.

On the morning of 4 August Congolese troops in Camp Kokolo launched an attack on the 1000 or so Tutsi soldiers accommodated there. A ministerial order was promptly issued to Congolese troops to shoot on sight any 'foreign troops in the capital', it being feared the Tutsi soldiers might regroup in the adjacent forests to attack Kinshasa,

where a curfew was imposed. Similar incidents occurred in Kisangani, Matadi and Kitani.

The same day the Voice of the People radio station in Goma announced that Arthur Zahidi Ngoma had been elected coordinator of the Tutsi rebellion. Ngoma accused Kabila of alienating opposition groups, breaking his promise to hold an election and ruling by decree since he came to power in April 1997. Ngoma confirmed that the Tutsis believed that much of North Kivu Province belonged to Rwanda. Kabila said this was a Tutsi plot to seize full control of the eastern area, but the Tutsis insisted that it was rightfully part of the ancient Kingdom of Rwanda, as did Pasteur Bizimungu, the current president of Rwanda. Bizima Karaha, Kabila's once trusted Tutsi foreign secretary, had already decamped to Goma in order to attend a gathering that was to elect someone to head the rebellion and to chart its course. On the 7th several other Tutsi ministers quietly deserted Kabila. In the east, Goma airport was completely in rebel hands, as was Uriva, while the government garrison in Bukavu was besieged.

There were several Tutsi detachments in garrisons to the south-west of Kinshasa – including Matadi, Kitani, Bomo and Maunda, the latter being the base for off-shore oil production – and they now tried to take control of their local areas. Aircraft were seized from the Kitani military base, and within days the rebels were flying in reinforcements from eastern Congo, the rumour being that Tutsi troops were advancing north-eastwards towards the capital. However a police 'rapid reaction force' regained a foothold in Kitani.

In Kinshasa, groups of government troops continued to hunt down and kill Tutsis. Westerners in the capital began to prepare to evacuate as lawlessness and anarchy spread. In the face of seeming Tutsi successes in the south-west, cabinet loyalty began to crumble. Kabila disappeared from public view for over a week, spending much of his time in Shaba, his main power base. Furthermore Kabila's refusal to cooperate with the UN investigation team meant that much of his international aid had ceased, with dire economic consequences, while both Rwanda and Uganda were almost openly backing the rebels.

On the other hand Angola remained friendly towards Kabila. About 1000 Angolan commandos had been based in Kinshasa army camps for about a year, and were now taking some part in the fighting against the rebellious Tutsis. A further 2000 or so Angolan commandos were positioned in a camp near Brazzaville, across the River Congo, ready to intervene if required. Foreign diplomatic missions speeded up the evacuation of their nationals as racial hatred was being incited, with government broadcasts urging people to seek out and kill foreigners.

On the 10th the Tutsi rebels claimed to have taken the Boma naval base and were advancing on Matadi, where the morale and ability of government troops was causing Kabila considerably anxiety. Administrative and economic chaos was enveloping the Congo, neither the armed forces nor civil servants having been paid for weeks. Kabila tried to raise a citizens' militia with the use of rabble rousing tactics, hoping to enrol up to 20 000 volunteers. However the response was disappointing, as those who did enlist were mostly discharged Congolese soldiers, unemployed people eager for food and attracted by the prospect of some pay, and undisciplined youths, some very young indeed. By the 12th the Tutsi army had seized Matadi, and was therefore in a position to block supplies coming in by sea and prevent off-shore oil from reaching Kinshasa. It continued to use captured government aircraft to bring in more troops from the east. On the 14th Tutsi soldiers took the Inga power station and the electricity supply to the capital was cut off for the first time, causing a blackout during hours of darkness and a lack of drinking water, as the latter required electrically driven pumps for distribution.

Foreign attitudes

As the rebel Tutsi army advanced north-eastwards towards Kinshasa, Kabila looked around for friendly international faces. France and the United States wanted to see how the insurrection developed before becoming too involved. Britain had gone off Kabila, but it was concerned about the safety of its nationals in the Congo and had already sent a detachment of commandos to Brazzaville to be on hand to evacuate its nationals if necessary. Kabila turned to President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, but he was slow to respond as Kabila had once referred to him as a 'coffee and gold smuggler'. During 1997 the leaders of Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda and Uganda, in a mood of African renaissance and having agreed to work together to reduce instability, had ganged up against President Mobutu and helped the ADLF to remove him, but that mood had since changed, owing to Kabila's poor record in office.

The Congolese movement for democracy

On 16 August 1988, at a rally in Goma, the Tutsi rebels announced that their organisation would be called the Congolese Movement for Democracy (CMD), with Bizima Karaha as its leader. Karaha claimed that his army consisted of some 15 000 armed men, and boasted that

their ranks would soon be swelled by defectors from the National Army. He claimed that the CMD controlled almost one third of the country, which would probably soon be true as the insurrection was spreading quickly and widely. Having literally put Kabila into power in the Congo, the Tutsi leaders had expected to have a major say in governing the country, which would include harsh measures against the Hutus. Instead Kabila was ignoring his Tutsi advisers and officials and breaking his political promises, enlisting Hutus into the armed forces and generally expelling Tutsis. Karaha stated that the objective of the CMD was to topple Kabila from power, and named several towns that he claimed had just fallen to the CMD, including Bania, Bukavu and Matadi. Dieudonne Karengele, the CMD commander in the south-west, announced that he was closing in on Kinshasa.

Kabila replies

Kabila's response was to declare in a nationwide broadcast that 'I am here to stay, and I will never surrender'. He accused the West of plotting against him, and promptly went to Zimbabwe to solicit assistance. (Media photographs during this tense period always showed him arriving at Kinshasa airport, never leaving it.) He visited Angola for a similar purpose, as well as spending time in Lubumbashi. Kabila was seeking assistance primarily from countries with populations of Bantu extraction, but this ploy failed as all refused to make race an issue in the confrontation, insisting that it be kept within a national framework. Periodic rumours swept through the country and abroad that Kabila had gone into exile as he was hardly ever seen in Kinshasa, which had an adverse effect on morale.

As the threat of rebel Tutsi troops advancing towards Kinshasa increased, the people of Kinshasa began to fear that government troops and the rag-tag citizens militia would rampage through the city, looting and killing, while the government's concern was that at the first sign of the approaching Tutsi army many of its National Army soldiers would switch sides. At night the streets were empty, and the city was still without drinking water and electricity, as well as short of food.

Crisis in Kasangulu

The government decided to send a small military contingent southwards to Kasangulu, on the main north–south road a few miles south of Kinshasa, to halt the Tutsi advance. About 6000 National Army

troops were mustered for the purpose and sent off in trucks, accompanied by a few armoured vehicles. A small detachment of citizens militia was sent southwards for the same purpose, but met a hostile reception from regular soldiers and police in Kasangulu, who regarded them as completely unsuitable for battle. Shots were exchanged, seven militia-men were killed and the remainder were sent back to the capital. By this time government aircraft were bombing the advancing Tutsi columns, which were trying to bypass Kasangulu.

Rebel ceasefire offer

On 20 August 1998 the CMD offered a ceasefire, the first sign of a slackening in intensity on the part of the rebels after almost three weeks of fighting, but this was ignored by the Kabila government. The offer had been made after government combat aircraft had started to make bombing attacks on rebel Tutsi positions in the south-west, striking at Mbanza, about 100 miles south-west of Kinshasa on the main road from the oil-rich areas. Before Mbanza had been occupied by the Tutsis there had been heavy fighting between Tutsi mutineers and Katangan government troops, aided by members of the Tanzanian-trained Congolese Presidential Guard. This had involved tank and artillery actions, and the Tutsis had suffered their first setback, which had caused them to pause for thought.

The foreign minister of Kenya stated that if the Tutsi rebels attempted to take Kinshasa he would send troops to help Kabila, and would also bomb Goma, home to the CMD HQ. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) met to consider the situation, and President Mugabe of Zimbabwe agreed to send military assistance to Kabila.

The African response

Kabila's shuttle around Africa began to bear fruit. The 14-member SADC decided to send arms and troops to help him, but it was not a unanimous decision. President Mandela of South Africa, for example, was against such a move. Kabila desperately needed African troops to fight for him, as his own National Army was still in a poor state, many of its soldiers being unpaid, ill-disciplined, unreliable and prone to looting. Many of its best soldiers had deserted to join the CMD forces, which at the time were thought to be the likely winners.

Kenya's 40 000-strong defence forces were thought to be the best trained in Central Africa. Zimbabwe's 46 000-strong defence forces were

also well trained and experienced in guerrilla warfare, but were less well equipped. President Mugabe accepted the theory that all Tutsis were part of a plot to obtain dominance over a vast area of Africa, and did not like it. A French helicopter was shot down over government-held territory, and it was subsequently alleged that it had not been a mistake as anti-French feeling was sweeping through Kinshasa at the time.

The Angolan situation

The civil war in adjacent Angola was continuing and the Angolan government's main concern was that the rebel UNITA forces would reestablish bases in the Congo to launch cross-border attacks. A private arrangement seems to have been made between the Presidents of Angola and the Congo, as on 20 August Angolan armoured troops crossed the Congolese border and went into action against Tutsi columns during the following days. The Tutsis, who had not bargained for such a well-armed attack, fell back for the first time in the campaign. General Dieudonne Karengeli, commanding the CMD troops in this region, was now fighting on two fronts.

On the 21st some 600 Zimbabwean paratroops were flown into Kinshasa military camps, which served to raise the morale of the population. Robert Mugabe had ignored Mandela's cautionary warning. By this time Tutsi troops were advancing towards Kitani, despite intensified bombing sorties against them. The Tutsis claimed to have brought down two Zimbabwean planes, but this was denied by a government spokesman. Angolans in Russian-supplied fighter-bombers attacked rebel positions in Kasangani, which had fallen on the 23rd.

Ugandans join the rebels

Uganda now joined in the rapidly enlarging civil war in the Congo, and soon Ugandan troops were entering North Kivu in armoured personnel carriers, purchased with US loan, the intention being to establish a buffer zone to protect the Tutsi-held area around Goma. On the other side, Hutu Mai Mai groups began killing Tutsis, militiamen and civilians alike, while grenades exploded on several buses travelling between Goma and Kigali (Rwanda), killing over 20 people and injuring others. Not everyone in the region was on the side of the Tutsis.

Tutsis reach Kinshasa airport

Despite suffering losses from Angolan aircraft action, the Tutsi army, under its own slight air cover, continued its advance towards Kinshasa, and some elements reached the edge of the outer suburbs and the perimeter of Ndjili international airport, about 15 miles from the capital. On the 26th they launched an attack on the airport, but were beaten back to the perimeter. This was later depicted as having been a hopeless suicide mission by the Tutsis. By this time the tide was beginning to turn against the Tutsis, and in the Western region General Karengeli was losing out to the larger and better equipped Angolan forces, which were steadily recovering a string of towns along the main road leading south-west from the capital that Karengeli's men had briefly occupied.

Kinshasa besieged

When forward elements of the Tutsi army reached the outer edges of the Kinshasa suburbs, the situation was confused for about three days, but there was some fighting, some witch-hunting and some atrocities were committed. Rumours were rife of Tutsis infiltrating into the city, having abandoned their uniforms for sabotage purposes. Government troops patrolled the city streets, vehicles were searched, roadblocks were established at key points and foreigners were arrested. Making a rare public appearance, Kabila encouraged his people to arm themselves with primitive weapons and resist what he insisted was an 'invasion, and not a rebellion'. The situation calmed somewhat when bombardments by government and Angolan bomber-aircraft caused the Tutsi troops to fall back.

The government made much of the ending of the 'Siege of Kinshasa' and the running down of the western Tutsi campaign, which had lasted about three weeks. Boastful claims were made by all governments involved in the fighting of the number of enemies killed, casualties inflicted and prisoners taken.

Separate battle zones

There seemed to be three main battle zones. The first was the western front, where Angolan guns, tanks and aircraft were harrying Tutsi columns south-west of the capital, and recapturing towns and positions that had been briefly held by the Tutsis. Angolans were negotiating

with the Tutsis at the Inga power station, who were threatening to blow it up unless the advancing columns were halted. On the eastern front, based on Goma, CMD militiamen controlled much of North Kivu and the adjacent regions. Their stand against the Mai Mai was being supported by Rwandan troops, and its new ally, Uganda, was pouring troops into the area. The northern front, was based on the river-head town of Kisangani, which the rebels had held until 23rd. Most of the fighting occurred around the airport. A probable fourth zone would appear should Shaba again proclaim its independence. It seemed likely that if the fighting continued the Congo would fragment, and the fragments could harden into separate states.

By the end of August the Tutsi army on the western front had been halted. It had suffered many casualties, and this had negatively affected morale and dented the formidable military reputation it had gained the previous year. On the eastern front there were frequent reports of killings of both Tutsis and Hutus, and a number of atrocities were reported.

UNITA

Clearly, intervention by Angolan troops on the western front had saved the day for Kabila. Originally President Dos Santos had no intention of becoming involved in the fighting, but then UNITA – the armed Angolan opposition organisation, which had several secret camps in the Congo, with Kabila's covert permission – had noted that Kabila's armed forces were reeling back and had thrown in its lot with the CMD. Seizing the opportunity, Kabila had persuaded Dos Santos to provide military assistance in exchange for the elimination of UNITA bases in the Congo. Angolan assistance was duly provided in good measure on the western front.

Conference confusions

A summit of the Non-Aligned Nations organisation commenced in Durban, South Africa, on 2 September 1998, chaired by President Mandela. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan attended, as did President Kabila, which raised hopes that concrete decisions might emerge. The Ugandan and Rwandan leaders accused Kabila of fomenting rebellion and blocking all previous attempts to bring about a ceasefire. Mandela said that the intervention by Angola and Zimbabwe had not been helpful, which caused Robert Mugabe to snub Mandela by refusing to shake

hands with him. Mandela then did a sudden U-turn and decided to support Kabila. There was also underlying friction between Kofi Annan and US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright for the leadership of a prestige diplomatic team to broker a peace agreement to settle the Congo situation. However everybody was unanimous that Kabila was the legal head of the DRC.

A follow-on meeting of the SADC agreed that Kabila's request for military assistance from Angola and Zimbabwe was reasonable. Kabila accused Rwanda and Uganda of taking part in the fighting. This was denied by Rwanda, which said it might intervene if Tutsis were in danger, while Uganda admitted that Ugandan troops were inside the Congo, but insisted they were only there to stop infiltration into its territory. The tenor of both meetings was that Kabila's allies were not keen on continuing the fight. Angola was already asking for a ceasefire, and Kofi Annan's U-turn seemed to calm the situation.

Peace talks

Peace talks commenced on 7 September at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, chaired by President Chiluba of Zambia and attended by a CMD delegation, led by Bizima Karaha. Karaha insisted there would be no ceasefire until all Angolan and Namibian troops were completely withdrawn. The attitude of Rwanda and Uganda hardened, while the President of Zimbabwe stated that he understood the purpose of the conference was to discuss the terms of the CMD's surrender and how reparations should be monitored. The following day the conference broke up in disorder.

Karaha and his delegation were treated badly: they were kept waiting for a couple of hours at the airport for transport, were not allowed into the conference meeting, were confined to their hotel rooms and were prevented from meeting the press. Eventually they were hurried away by the police through a side door and taken to the airport for departure. Kofi Annan's peace mission had failed. On the 14th the Mai Mai group launched an attack on the barracks in Goma. This caught the rebels by surprise, but they eventually beat them off. Casualties were high on both sides.

Kabila gained another recruit for his cause when President Omar al Bashir of Sudan agreed to support him. The Sudanese government alleged that Uganda was sheltering and aiding the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army. It seemed that two mutually hostile African alliances were forming, with the Congo acting as a catalyst.

Rebels resume the attack

After a pause for reorganisation, on 27 September 1998 the rebel forces launched sudden and vicious attacks on three fronts. On the eastern front, where they already held the key towns of Bania (adjacent to the Ugandan border), Goma, Bukavu and Uvira (adjacent to Rwanda and Burundi), they attacked and took Kalemei, which lay to the south on Lake Tanzania, opposite Zambian territory. Ugandan combat aircraft and Rwandan troops were alleged to be heavily involved. On the northern front there was fighting in and around Kisangani, especially in the airport area, the town itself coming under heavy aerial bombardment. On the western front there was heavy fighting around Ndjili international airport near Kinshasa, and also in Kasangulu on the main road running south from the capital. To the south-west, Angolan armed forces claimed to have retaken Matadi, part of which had once again been lost by government troops. The rebels completed their occupation of the Inga dam, but fighting continued around the strategically important Kitani airport. Reports indicated that once again UNITA elements were fighting on the side of the CMD, which caused the Angolan armed forces on the western front to renew their activities against Tutsi positions.

Rwanda

In Rwanda, the strong man was undoubtedly Paul Kagame, vice president in the Tutsi-dominated government, who as minister of defence had mobilised his country for war against Kabila. A Ugandan-born Tutsi, he had served in the Ugandan army until 1994, when with other Tutsi soldiers he had broken away to form the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Recognised generally as a capable and shrewd strategist, he had played a key role in the anti-Mobutu rebellion in Zaire, which had brought Kabila to power and Tutsi soldiers to the fore as a military force to be reckoned with. Remaining close to President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, he had gained Ugandan military support. After the curt rejection of the CMD delegation by the SADC, Kagame again became involved in its battle plans. The surprise Hutu raid on Goma gave him the excuse to obtain further military resources, both to counter any major Hutu raids into his country, and to tackle the next stage in the struggle against Kabila.

Meanwhile the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was hard at work. In October Jean Paul Akayesu, a Hutu and former mayor of the village of Taba, was found guilty of several counts of genocide

and other crimes against humanity. He was sentenced to three concurrent terms of life imprisonment, plus 80 years. In his village some 2000 Tutsis had been killed in April 1994 by Hutu extremists. This incident showed how the genocide had been made up to countless small massacres, led by Hutu officials. Jean-Kambanda, the prime minister, had urged Hutu leaders to forget their own internal differences and take on the common Tutsi enemy.

About 30 other genocide suspects were being held in the special UN jail in Arusha (Tanzania), and eight more names were on the wanted list. In addition about 130000 Rwandans were being held in overcrowded prisons and death sentences had been passed on over 100 people. The previous April, 22 condemned people had been publicly executed by firing squad.

14

Bleak Prospects

After the Tutsi offensive in eastern Congo in the autumn of 1998 the future prospects of the DRC as a settled and united sovereign state looked bleak. Part of its eastern territory had been occupied by the Tutsi invading army, said to be over 15 000 strong and supported by Rwandan and Ugandan military elements. The Tutsis, bent on carving out a large independent state in eastern Congo, were already besieging the town of Kindu, the government's forward military base some 700 miles from Kinshasa, the capital, and about 300 miles from Goma, the main Tutsi invasion base. The Tutsis boasted that when Kindu fell, their next target would be Lubumbashi.

The Tutsi rebellion was coming into full swing and it seemed unlikely that the debilitated DRC armed forces, whose numbers had been thinned by defeats and defections, and whose morale and reliability were questionable, would be able to contain a westward Tutsi advance, let alone crush it completely. Some considered that a Tutsi victory was a foregone conclusion and that the government forces would collapse. In the meantime the Tutsi army pushed slowly forward to take the entire area that they claimed comprised their traditional territory.

On 10 October Tutsis brought down an airliner with a ground-to-air missile, killing all 40 people on board. The government claimed that all the passengers had been civilians, and that the aircraft had crashed near Lodja, some 200 miles west of Kindu. However the Tutsis insisted that the plane had been carrying military personnel, and had been shot down when approaching the Kindu airfield. This was another example of the contrary communiqués that were routinely issued by both sides in the conflict.

Kindu fell to the Tutsis on 16 October after a week-long siege. This was a considerable strategic blow to the DRC forces. There are few

all-weather roads across the huge expanses of rain forest in eastern Congo, and both government and invasion forces were compelled to hire civil aircraft to transport troops and supplies between bases and major towns. Both sides had limited means of massing troops quickly in order to attack or defend towns and bases. The DRC troops were continually faced with the problem of retaining control of vulnerable roads in the forward areas. The jump from tribal warfare with arrows, spears and knives, to nationalism and modern weaponry had been too sudden for the Congolese soldiery to adjust to.

Mission creep and consolidation

The Tutsi Congolese Movement for Democracy, determined on its course, saw the possibility of achieving its objectives while the DRC had a weak central government and inadequate security forces. After the fall of Kindu the Tutsi plan was to creep forward, besiege and then take government-held towns one by one. The government troops' lack of mobility during the rainy season would enable the Tutsis to consolidate the territory they had gained, while at the same time settling the Hutu Banyamulenge problem by ethnic cleansing, and perhaps also engaging in genocide as the opportunity arose. The central government forces' main disadvantage was that they could not put up a strong front everywhere at the same time, there being a limit to the proportion of military resources that could be allocated to defend individual towns.

The Tutsis' tactical success dismayed the central government as it might encourage other restless DRC provinces and areas to try to break away from its control. Shaba, Kasangani and Mbandaka were a particular worry in this respect. The use of such tactics by others could develop into creeping civil war, enveloping much of the country and turning outlying provinces against the central government, and even against each other. It was a recipe for fragmentation.

International involvement

Although at the ceasefire and peace conferences the African states that had intervened in the struggle professed to have experienced more than enough fighting in the Congo, they soon had second thoughts. On 21 October 1998 the Zimbabwean government announced, in response to renewed fighting in Mbuli-Mayi, the Congolese diamond centre, that the contingent of some 2800 Zimbabwean troops already

in the Congo would be reinforced, and would continue to be supported by Zimbabwean Hawk combat aircraft and helicopters. The Zimbabwean government admitted that 16 of its paratroops had been captured by Tutsi militiamen in Kabalo, having been dropped in the wrong place. This was the first indication that Zimbabwean forces were actually fighting in eastern Congo. Some military experts doubted whether the reinforcement declaration meant very much, owing to the extremely lengthy and tenuous line of supply, but it worried the Kinshasa government and its allies.

Zimbabwe's motive for this declaration of support for President Kabila was partly to divert domestic attention from the country's acute economic situation, and partly to gain Congolese commercial concessions. Since President Kabila had come to power in the Congo over 500 Zimbabwean companies had set up business in the DRC. Members of President Mugabe's family and other Zimbabwean notables had warm and close relations with Kabila, and promises had been made of mineral and other concessions. A massive quantity of exports were flowing from Zimbabwe to the Congo, valued at many millions of dollars and it occurred to Robert Mugabe that if Kabila fell from power, the exporters would be unlikely to be paid.

At the first hint of one Central African state becoming further involved in the Congo conflict, others rushed in like lemmings, and at a summit meeting on 22 October 1998 Robert Mugabe, President dos Santos of Angola and President Nujoma of Namibia agreed to support Kabila, who was absent due to illness. President Mandela of South Africa, the peacemaker, had been pushed aside. This coalition had been prompted by the fall of Kindu, and all the heads of state agreed to send military aid to Kabila to help him put down the Tutsi rebellion, and that they would open a new front in eastern Congo.

There was an immediate response from the Tutsis and their allies – Rwanda and Uganda – and so the two mutually antagonistic military alliances hardened. If they clashed, the civil war would turn into an international one. Such a war, fought over such large expanses of terrain with inadequate road and rail communications, would be ponderous and could drag on for a considerable time. Eventually it would probably bog down in stalemate, at least in some sectors. Intervention in the Congo could turn that country into a proxy battle ground, when the main purpose of the fighting – to preserve, or destroy the entity of the country – might become confused, diverted or submerged by other national agendas, with powerful third parties – Western, Asian or African – fuelling the flames for their own devious purposes.

What the Congo needed was a strong leader with the ability to unite all factions in the interests of national unity – a leader who could persuade the Congolese to rise above tribalism and regionalism, and who could develop a loyal and efficient civil service, as well as loyal and effective defence forces.

The post-colonial states of Central Africa, now confident in their own sovereignty, are looking outwards from their borders, which in places rub uneasily together and generate friction. Some, after a taste of intervention in the DRC, are developing a superiority complex that tempts them to meddle in the internal affairs of other states on the excuse of power brokering. One fears there may be too much of this in the region, arousing old fears and prejudices that are inconducive to peace and tranquillity. Unfortunately war clouds still hover over the Congo, where tribalism is clashing with nationalism on the battlefield.

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