

# **War and Peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

*Herbert Weiss*

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# Introduction

The turmoil into which the Democratic Republic of the Congo—DRC—has been thrown over the last three years involves a mixture of internal and external causes some of recent vintage, some going back to the period of the independence struggle. Every corner of Africa is involved either militarily or diplomatically or both. These states include South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe in the south; Libya, Chad, Central African Republic and Sudan in the north; Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania in the east; and, Congo/Brazzaville and Angola in the west. This war has involved numerous African states in interlocking alliances which often appear to be motivated by only one principle: “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”. The result has been an explosion of massive violence—wars, invasions, insurgencies, militias, massacres—on Congolese soil. Until very recently, the DRC was an island of relative passivity. It was an “island” because for years, in some cases decades, it has been surrounded by states in the throes of civil wars. The oldest of these wars were in Sudan and Angola, but by the mid-1990s massive violence had occurred in Cabinda, Congo/Brazzaville, Central African Republic, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. The only neighboring states which were not engulfed in civil war were Tanzania and Zambia. Thus, at this crucial moment in the Congo’s history, it is a question whether not only the invading military forces but the invading, violent, political processes have become dominant. One can argue that the country is undergoing a tug of war between a political culture which avoided mass violence for more than thirty years and one, more akin to many of its neighbors, where conflicts have so often turned into war and its accompanying disasters.

To illustrate and explain the links with the past requires one first to summarize recent events and then to revisit a dense and complex period in the Congo’s history which occurred nearly forty years ago. The reader should, therefore, be forewarned that while the goal of this article is to explain the present, much space will be devoted to a distant past. Perhaps this is surprising since the upheavals which started in 1996 initially revolved around getting rid of

Mobutu. The Mobutu regime lasted from 1965 to 1997 and yet it is the period immediately before and immediately after this long dictatorship which is having the greatest impact on the DRC today.

## Africa’s First Continental War

First, we will begin with a description of the major events of the last three years which have transformed the DRC into an arena of international and internal violence and conflict involving so many participants that cumulatively it can legitimately be described as the first African Continental War. But, it is important to note that there are in fact two wars which have taken place in the DRC; the first started in September 1996 and ended in May 1997 with Mobutu’s exile and the establishment of the Kabila regime. The second started in August 1998 when Rwanda, Uganda and a series of Congolese army units took control of large segments of Eastern DRC. The international community and African governments have made more than two dozen attempts to end this war over the last year. Finally, an agreement was signed by almost all parties to this dispute in Lusaka in July 1999.

## The Lusaka Agreement

The Lusaka Agreement is a very complicated plan for peace resting on six essential elements: First, that the sovereignty of the DRC in its present frontiers and that of its neighbors is agreed upon. Second, that an all inclusive process will be undertaken by the Congolese in order to establish a new political order. This process is to have a neutral convener and is to include all parties to the internal dispute whether armed or not, and they are to meet as equals. Third, the parties agreed to cooperate in addressing the security concerns of each state. Fourth, the agreement specifically calls for the disarming of militia groups in the DRC. Fifth, it calls for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the DRC. Sixth, it calls for a Chapter VII UN peacekeeping force to ensure implementation of the Agreement. Whether peace has really begun remains to be seen.

# The War's Origins

What are the main ingredients of the Continental War which has so profoundly affected the DRC as well as the rest of the African continent? To answer, one must look at the following events:

- The Tutsi genocide in Rwanda and its immediate consequences.
- The motives and actions of internal and external anti-Mobutu forces which resulted in the end of that regime.
- What the main features are of the Kabila regime, which came into power in May 1997.
- Why the Second Congo War occurred and what its consequences are.

## The Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda and its Consequences

The genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994 which involved Hutu leaders mobilizing almost the entire Hutu population in mass murder is the first event in a series which has transformed a relatively peaceful society—the DRC—into an arena of conflict and war. This event was such a massive escalation of inter-communal conflict that it is unique in modern African history. Apart from the inherent catastrophe which this totalitarian killing of one people (and those Hutu who refused to go along) by another involved, it is also at the root of a new ideology—accepted by quite a few Africans—that the people of the continent are divided culturally and physically, i.e. biologically, between the “Bantu” and the “Hamites” (or “Nilotics”). The “Hamites” are accused of having designs on the land of the “Bantu” and wishing to oppress them. Rwandan Tutsi in particular, but also the Ugandans and Burundians are seen as expansionists wanting to create a so called “Hima” empire at the expense of the “Bantu” in the DRC. Of course, there have always been ethnic conflicts but if this ideology really takes hold it is likely to have massive, lethal consequences.

### Eastern Congo Destabilized

The genocide in Rwanda has profoundly destabilized Eastern Congo with the result that this area has been plunged into endless cycles of violence. Inter-ethnic relations in the Kivus (both

North and South) have, for many years, been more problematic than in most other parts of the DRC. This is probably due to three underlying factors; first, the coexistence of pastoralists and sedentary farmers, second, a higher than usual population density, and third, a cultural divide between the original sons of the land and Kinyarwanda speaking immigrants—both Hutu and Tutsi—migrating westward from Rwanda and Burundi. It should be noted some of these migrations occurred hundreds of years ago while others are of much more recent vintage.

The Tutsi genocide completely changed the balance of power in the Kivus. As has been recounted in numerous publications, when the Tutsi dominated Rwandese Patriotic Army—RPA—defeated the Hutu government of Rwanda (which had perpetrated the genocide), about a million Hutu—some with French army cover—moved into the Kivus. Close to the Rwanda border, UNHCR camps were established in which the political and military structures and personnel that were responsible for the genocide reestablished themselves. From these camps attacks were launched against the new government of Rwanda. But, more important, from the Congolese perspective, the ethnic balance in the Kivus was upset. The Hutu became a dominant force in some regions and proceeded to isolate and attack Congolese Tutsi and because there had been an alliance between the Habyarimana (i.e. Rwandan Hutu) and the Mobutu regimes, these attacks found moral and eventually military support from the Congolese (then Zairian) army and some Kivu politicians. The presence of the camps also resulted in a serious ecological degradation and the channeling of foreign aid away from Congolese villagers in favor of the camp residents. This constellation of circumstances resulted in attacks on the Tutsi in the Masisi area of North Kivu. Those who managed to escape took refuge in Rwanda where they were, in the main, placed in camps. Then, in early and mid-1996, growing pressure developed against the Tutsi in South Kivu. These were the Banyamulenge most of whom lived in homogeneous communities high on a plateau. They are probably the oldest of the Tutsi communities in the DRC.

### *The Banyamulenge's Preemptive Strike*

Faced with the danger of an ethnic cleansing campaign against them, the Banyamulenge undertook a preemptive strike against the National Zairian Army (ANZ) soldiers and the Hutu "refugee" camps in their neighborhood in September 1996. It is an, as yet, unanswered question at exactly what point the Banyamulenge attack was coordinated with Rwandan strategy, but as soon as the attacks against the camps began Rwandan forces entered the fray and the war against the Mobutu regime had begun. It will be recalled that the Rwandan Vice-President, General Paul Kagame had pleaded with the international community to separate the Hutu military and militia (the Interahamwe) from civilian refugees and to make it impossible for the camps to be used to launch attacks against Rwanda. When nothing was done, he warned that in the end Rwanda would act on its own. His words were not taken seriously. The attempt to expel the Banyamulenge from their homes in the DRC was, therefore, a gift from the heavens since Rwanda was able to defend its cross-border advances as preventing another genocidal attack against a Tutsi community.

### **Rwanda and Uganda Invade the DRC (at the time, Zaire)**

In rapid succession, the Rwandan army attacked the Hutu camps and the Zairian army with the result that the ex-FAR (i.e. the former Hutu army of Rwanda) and the Interahamwe tended to flee westward with many Hutu civilians while the vast majority had little choice but to walk back into Rwanda where they were channeled to their home communities. Parenthetically, it should be noted that no genocidal killings were perpetrated against them even though the Tutsi in Rwanda had the power to follow any policy they chose. The picture was somewhat different in the DRC where, in subsequent months, the retreating Hutu both fought for the Mobutu regime and were massacred—men, women, and children—by the advancing anti-Mobutu armies.

### **Looking for Congolese Allies**

It is obvious that it was very much in the interest of Rwanda and Uganda (which almost immediately joined the Rwandan invasion of the DRC) to portray their actions as something other than an attack against a sovereign state no matter

how corrupt and unpopular its leadership had become. Finding Congolese allies against Mobutu was, therefore, a priority. But, the problem with this scenario was that although a broad and substantial Congolese/Zairian opposition to Mobutu did exist, it had firmly opted for a non-violent strategy.

### **The Non-Violent Opposition**

The so called "non-violent" opposition to Mobutu was started by a small group of politicians who had, in fact, begun by cooperating with his regime. But, by 1980 his excesses inspired them—they were members of the Mobutu Parliament—to demand reforms and two years later to form a political party, *Union pour la démocratie et le Progrès Social*, UDPS. This initiative was, of course, met with harassment and jailings as well as defections in response to Mobutu's carrot and stick manipulations. This was the beginning of concerted, on going, internal pressure against the Mobutu regime. By 1990, the end of the Cold War resulted in his Western allies exerting growing pressure on Mobutu to reform and democratize. Ultimately, he was forced to make some concessions. They took the form of freedom to form political parties (over 200 were established, many by Mobutists), of promised elections (which never took place) of the installation of transitional governments (which were dismissed when they opposed the President's interests) and a National Sovereign Conference, CNS, (which did take place, but its decisions were never applied).

In a word, the "transition" to a democratic state dragged on for seven years and in the end was overtaken by the arrival of Kabila. One may ask why this process failed and what, if anything, it has left behind. First and foremost, the failure must be attributed to Mobutu's unwillingness to give up power. But, dictators rarely give up power out of the goodness of their hearts, so the question is really, why this opposition was unable to dislodge him despite his many manipulations to remain the dominant actor. There are many factors which led to this result: First, the opposition which grew ever stronger through the 1990's, was extremely legalistic in its approach to gaining power almost ignoring the fact that Mobutu still had complete control over the military and police forces. Second, it did a relatively poor job of mobilizing and organizing popular support.

This is somewhat surprising because some of its leaders had led the independence struggle and at that time excelled at mass mobilization. Third, the opposition was very divided and its leaders competed with one another to such a degree that real unity in the face of the dictatorship eluded them. Fourth, this was an opposition which not only rejected violence as a form of struggle but was also timid in its use of non-violent methods. For instance, when demonstrations were opposed with violent means by Mobutu's Presidential Division and Civil Guard they almost came to an end. The most important demonstration, in February 1992, was not even organized by the opposition parties but by Catholic priests. Thirty people were killed. The event largely discouraged further mass demonstrations.

The National Sovereign Conference, CNS, did finally begin in August 1991. The great hope that it engendered was at least partly due to the apparent success of National Conferences which had been held in Benin and Congo/Brazzaville earlier. The difference between those experiences and what was taking place in the Congo (then still Zaire) was that the presidents in those countries accepted—at least at the time the conferences were being held—the decisions and the consequent transfers of power. Mobutu had other plans, he used every opportunity to manipulate the CNS in his own interest and used force when that was not enough.

Despite many obstacles, the CNS did accomplish a great deal. Perhaps the most important result has been the broad legitimacy which the Congolese people have given to its decisions. "*Les acquis de la Conférence Nationale*" is a phrase which has been heard repeatedly long after the end of the Mobutu regime. If the internal dialogue, which the Lusaka Agreement calls for, actually takes place, it can be safely predicted that the decisions of the CNS will, for many delegates, become the basis upon which national reconciliation and a "new political dispensation" should be built. The CNS undertook a serious and thorough examination of the Congo's past, i.e. how it was ruled by the Mobutu regime. This examination analyzed the economy, political structures, past assassinations, so called "ill gotten gains", minority rights, etc. The CNS opted for a federal, parliamentary system of government. Finally, the CNS held an election for interim Prime Minister and the long-time opposition leader, Etienne Tshisekedi who headed an alliance of anti-

Mobutu parties, won an overwhelming victory. But, the underlying problem was that Mobutu's opponents at the Conference acted as if they were legislating in a post-revolutionary situation when in fact no revolution had occurred, and when Mobutu's manipulative skills failed, he employed his control over raw force.<sup>1</sup>

### **Congolese Revolutionaries**

Since the non-violent opposition to Mobutu showed no inclination for joining the Ugandan/Rwandan/Banyamulenge attacks on the government positions other allies had to be found. These were the circumstances which produced the *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo*, AFDL, which was made up of four Congolese revolutionary parties in exile all of which had almost no following. One of the four initial leaders did, however, have a certain revolutionary legitimacy. He was Laurent Desire Kabila who had not only fought in the great revolutionary upheavals of the mid-1960's, but had for over 20 years been the leader of a small revolutionary redoubt in South Kivu. In addition, he gained some fame from the fact that Che Guevara and several hundred Cuban volunteers had joined the fight in 1964 precisely in the zone he commanded. The AFDL, therefore, became the main Congolese partner of an invasion by Rwanda and Uganda which was soon joined by Angola and given support by other African states which were determined to rid the DRC of the Mobutu regime.

### **The Return of the Katanga Tigers**

There was, another Congolese force which joined this alliance. It was made up of the so called "Katanga Tigers" composed mainly of Katangese soldiers who, under the leadership of Moise Tshombe, had been part of an attempted secession in 1960 and who, after their defeat by UN forces in 1962 had fled to Angola. Their story needs to be looked at in some detail, but suffice it to say here that they had remained as a cohesive military force and along with some Angolan army units joined the attack on the Mobutu regime.

<sup>1</sup> For a complete and excellent description of the CNS see, Nzongola-Ntalaja, George, "The Current Political and Social Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo", paper prepared for the Nordic Africa Institute, January 1998.



### **Mobutu's Limited Support**

The Mobutu regime desperately tried to convince the world that what was happening was simply an invasion, but to little avail. Neither the UN nor the OAU condemned the invaders and the notion that what was happening was largely a revolution against the Mobutu regime gained wide currency. More importantly, Mobutu failed to obtain any serious military support from abroad. His army retreated on all fronts and in so doing looted, raped and killed Congolese civilians. This was one reason why the Congolese soon welcomed the AFDL and allowed young men and boys to be recruited into its ranks. The only forces which did any serious fighting for the Mobutu regime were the Hutu ex-FAR/Interahamwe, the UNITA forces of Jonas Savimbi and some Serb mercenaries. Mobutu also received modest support from France. When Kinshasa fell, in May 1997, eight months after the war had started, a substantial number of the victorious forces were in fact Congolese, but, with the exception of the Katangans and a few ANZ units which had changed sides, they tended to be very young and untrained. In addition, Banyamulenge soldiers, some trained by Rwanda before the war broke out, some recently recruited, were among the victors, but, at that time, they tended to be viewed simply as Tutsi by the Congolese public.

### **The Motivations of the Anti-Mobutu Alliance**

Why did Rwanda, Uganda and Angola and other African states initiate and/or support this war against the Mobutu regime? The answer for Rwanda has already been given, the presence on its borders of UNHCR camps with close to a million Hutu who had been allowed to reestablish their political leadership and military structures. For Uganda, a similar but no doubt less pressing motive existed. The DRC had for some time been used as a rear base by anti-Museveni forces such as the Lord's Resistance Army, the West Nile Bank Front and the Allied Democratic Forces some of which were supported by the Sudan government. By occupying the frontier region in the DRC, Uganda hoped to end this threat. Angola had very much the same motive. UNITA had for years not only been supplied via the DRC but there were UNITA bases in the country. There were two other, perhaps more vague, reasons to support

an anti-Mobutu alliance. First, for some African leaders, an old leftist, even Marxist, sympathy and friendship circle played a role. Hence, the antagonism toward Mobutu—long allied to Western powers during the Cold War—and the support given Kabila by Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe and by Sam Nujoma, President of Namibia. Second, the notion that a new dawn with new leaders had begun in Africa which required change especially in a country as important as the DRC. This theme could be seen as applying to Ethiopia, Eritrea and, of course, Uganda, and Rwanda. The latter view had some resonance in the US and was one of the reasons why the US did not respond to appeals by Mobutu regarding the violation of the Congo's sovereignty.

### **Kabila Seeks a Cultural Revolution**

During the anti-Mobutu alliance's quick march to Kinshasa, Kabila transformed himself from spokesman of the AFDL to its president. Because the foreign allies (Rwanda, Uganda and a bit later Angola) preferred to keep their military presence and predominance as quiet as possible, Kabila was able to give a very personal imprint to the alliance. That imprint was profoundly affected by the period during the Cold War when he was a leftist—some thought Maoist—revolutionary. Thus, it soon became clear that he planned to lead a veritable cultural revolution in the Congo and not simply rid the country of Mobutu and the system he had created. Kabila initiated political lessons which were to be conducted on a very wide basis and which were virtual copies of the ones employed in Hewa Bora the small revolutionary redoubt he had led in South Kivu from the mid-60s to the mid-80s. These lessons had an arcane quality which had little relation to the society the DRC had become since independence. For instance, according to these lessons, Congolese society was divided into seven classes; the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, comprador bourgeoisie, national bourgeoisie, petite bourgeoisie, cultivators, workers, and proletarians! Ordinary citizens were to be watched by committees—"chembe-chembe"—organized on a street by street basis. Both established political parties and civil society organizations were disdainfully excluded from participation in the decision making processes. The party—the ADFL—and the state were to overlap. Kabila appears to have been so convinced that his revolutionary package would find great support

among the masses of Congolese, that he held elections in the towns which fell to the anti-Mobutu forces. Although organized in a rather crude fashion, people literally gathered in the "agora" and elected local officials by raising their hands, they turned out to be fair and honest. But, it is here that he began to come up against Congolese realities he seems not to have expected. The elections were won either by members of the largest party belonging to what is commonly referred to as the non-violent opposition, ("opposition" meaning to Mobutu but soon also opposition to Kabila) the UDPS or by members of one of the civil society NGO's which had in the previous approximately seven years achieved real strength and respect among the Congolese. Soon, no further elections were held. Without a real, strong and united national revolutionary party, and the cadres to go with it, he did not have the tools to overwhelm resistance from the public.

### **Rejecting Political Pluralism**

While liberation from Mobutu gave Kabila and the ADFL some credit and popularity, the ideology which they sought to impose on the Congolese public was very rapidly rejected.

The Congolese public wanted a symbiosis between the armed and the non-violent opposition to Mobutu. In a poll conducted in Kinshasa in August 1997, i.e. at the beginning of the Kabila regime, 86 percent of respondents favored a "meeting" between Kabila and the leaders of the non-violent opposition. In the first six months, Kabila always polled less than Etienne Tshisekedi the leader of the largest of the non-violent opposition parties, the UDPS. Moreover, the long, even if unsuccessful non-violent struggle which many political and NGO leaders had been involved with and which had genuine popular support with real roots and often real organizational structures led them to expect a role in a post-Mobutu regime. But, Kabila had no inclination to share power. His past did not suggest it and his ideology positively opposed it. So he did not respond to the desired "meeting" and his success at ousting Mobutu failed to give him broad popularity. The honeymoon was one of the shortest a successful revolutionary leader had ever been granted!

### **Kabila's Support**

What then was the power base of the early Kabila regime? There were three real sources of

power: first, there were the Tutsi soldiers (in the early days there was little distinction made between the Rwandan and Congolese Tutsi ), but they were rapidly resented as foreigners by the Congolese public. Second, there were the Katangans, but old intra-Katangan conflicts (to be discussed later) made their loyalty less than certain even though they were at least viewed as genuine Congolese. Third, there were the "kadogos", the young men and boys who had been recruited into the ADFL army as it marched from the east to Kinshasa, but their youth and brutal behavior caused great resentment. As Colette Braeckman put it, their violence "shocked a population which was used to negotiate ... with Mobutu's unpaid soldiers and who now encountered men who were unwilling to 'palaver' [negotiate, talk it over]". In Kinshasa and the western Congo it would indeed, have been difficult to "palaver" since few of these soldiers spoke the local languages. In that sense, they were all foreign.

While Kabila did not share power with political parties or NGOs, he did coopt individuals with diverse political and ethnic backgrounds. His closest allies and his Cabinet ministers were generally people without their own political base. Many of them were returned exiles. This made them totally dependent on Kabila. However, this approach did not sit well with the general public.

### **The Early Kabila Regime— May 1997 to August 1998**

#### **Changes the Public Appreciated**

If it is true that Kabila had one of the shortest post-revolution honeymoons on record, that does not mean that the change from Mobutu to Kabila was unappreciated. Kabila had disappointed the Congolese by not compromising with the non-violent opposition, by not respecting and working with civil society, by making party political activity illegal and by reducing rather than expanding human rights. But, his regime did accomplish changes which in the eyes of the general public were important and appreciated. Foremost among these was the vast improvement in personal and property security which resulted from the fact that ordinary citizens were no longer repeatedly held up by unpaid soldiers and policemen. Of course, this was less appreciated by the elites than by the

man in the street. Members of the old elite who did not succeed in making deals with the new rulers saw their property confiscated and their personal security in danger. Another major accomplishment which impacted on the ordinary citizen was the radical reduction in the rate of inflation. Based on public opinion polling results—unfortunately with one exception limited to Kinshasa—one can say that the public tended to define the new regime as a dictatorship, but also approved of some of the changes it had succeeded in putting in place. It did not particularly like the new leaders and it viewed them as dangerously close to being the pawns of the foreign troops which had brought them to power, but its general performance was given substantial approval.

The one public opinion poll which it was possible to conduct outside Kinshasa produced results which clearly indicate that regional identities were very important in the opinions expressed about the Kabila regime. In Lubumbashi, support for Kabila and his policies was very substantially higher than in the rest of the country. In Mbuji Mayi—the home base of Kasai Luba, of the UDPS and of Tshisekedi—the support was, not surprisingly, the lowest. The Lubumbashi results are interesting because Kabila is generally regarded as part of the greater northern Katanga Luba community and Lubumbashi is in the south where the traditional competitors—if not enemies—of the Luba, the Lunda, predominate. Thus a regional rather than a strictly ethnic sense of identity manifested itself.

#### **The New Force Armées Congolaises—FAC**

Integrating and disciplining and assuring the loyalty of the different armed units would be an essential and indispensable task for any new ruler, especially for one who rejects pluralism. For Kabila this was an especially daunting exercise because there were so many different armed “soldiers” and because none of them, perhaps with the exception of the “kalogos”, had any reliable loyalty to him. In effect, the following potential participants in a new national army were available.

A. The Katanga Tigers: These were, in the main, the remainder or the sons of the Katanga Gendarmes who had fled to Angola after the Katanga attempted secession was defeated by a US backed UN military operation in 1962. At the time, they were mainly south

Katangan Lunda, but in subsequent years they were joined by other Congolese who fled the Mobutu regime into Angola. Among these newcomers were Katanga Luba from the north, as well as some former members of the Mulele led rebellion in Bandundu province (1963–67). The Katanga Tigers were first used by the Portuguese but later were allied with a variety of Angolan politico-military forces. They ended up as close supporters of the MPLA dominated Angolan government. From this base, they attacked the Congo in 1977 and 1978 by which time their ideological idiom had made a 180° turn; from pro-Western Tshombists they had become anti-Mobutu Marxists. When they joined the 1996–97 attack against the Mobutu regime, they did so in conjunction with the Angolan army. Their civilian leader at that time was Emile Ilunga, originally from north Katanga, who was promised the vice-presidency after victory. But, Kabila did not offer him such a position and he thereafter opposed the new regime arguing that it had turned into a dictatorship. Later, Emile Ilunga became the leader of the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie*, RCD/Goma, i.e. the Rwanda backed rebellion against Kabila. In the summer of 1997, it was for the above cited reasons not certain that Kabila could really count on the Katanga Tigers even though they both hailed from Katanga.

- B. Former members of the *Forces Armées Zairoises*, FAZ, Mobutu's army: Clearly former FAZ members were, from Kabila's point of view, the least trustworthy future members of the new army. Nonetheless, distinctions have to be made. There were ordinary army units and special units like the Presidential Guards, the DSP. There were units which had joined the Alliance during its march to Kinshasa and there were units which remained quasi-loyal to the Mobutu regime until the end. Kabila's response to this problem was to send them off to be “re-educated”. However, this was done under such humiliating and at times physically abusive conditions that for many, the exercise had the opposite effect to that which was desired. They came away angry and disaffected from the new government.
- C. The Banyamulenge and other Congolese Tutsi: For Congolese Tutsi the never chang-

ing, eternally challenged, goal was to have their Congolese citizenship recognized and no longer disputed. In this vein, they had supported Mobutu and joined his army until the regime changed sides and curried favor with the ethnic groups in the Kivus who considered them foreigners and enemies. The alliance between Mobutu and the Hutu regime in Rwanda, and the events which followed the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda, changed their situation radically and for the worse. At that time, roughly from 1993 to 1996, they drew close to the Rwandan Tutsi and then participated in the Kabila "led" march to Kinshasa. After the Alliance's victory, resentment against the Tutsi—now seen by people all over the Congo as foreigners—grew rapidly and the Congolese Tutsi saw that their goal of being recognized as Congolese was further from being reached than ever before because they were now identified with the Rwandans. Again as they sensed rejection by the Congolese public they drew closer to the Rwandans who increasingly seemed the only people willing and able to protect them. But, that did not mean that there was complete harmony between them and events in August 1998—to be discussed later—ultimately created a rift between many Bayamulenge and the Rwandan Tutsi.

Kabila, whose personal predilections in this matter can only be speculated about, found himself pulled in two directions. On the one hand the Congolese public quite widely resented the Rwandan/Tutsi presence and wanted Kabila to free himself from their control or influence. On the other hand, the Congolese Tutsi wanted Kabila to reward them for having played a large part in putting him in power, i.e. firm assurances that they would be recognized as Congolese citizens. It is doubtful that during much of the period under discussion Kabila had the power to rid himself of Rwandan/Tutsi influence, on the other hand, despite some soothing words, Kabila never acted decisively to assure the Congolese Tutsi of their citizenship rights. Thus, Kabila could not be certain of the Tutsi soldiers' loyalty, whether they were integrated in the new FAC or in Rwandan units.

- D. The "Kadogos": As indicated earlier, of all the armed units or more correctly simply soldiers, the young men Kabila had recruited

on the path to Kinshasa were perhaps the most reliable in terms of loyalty to him. They also constituted a problem since they were untrained and undisciplined and tended to lord it over the civilian population who resented these virtual children having the power of life or death over them. Indeed, the return of some sort of law and order—the single most appreciated change brought about by the new regime—depended on getting the "Kadogos" off the streets. Some of them were apparently employed in the "re-education" camps for former FAZ soldiers, but this too turned out to be costly in terms of resentment by mature soldiers at having to obey these young men. Kabila developed plans to mobilize youth in a National Youth Service and one may presume that many of the young Kadogos were intended to form part of this enterprise. The National Youth Service was supposed to encompass 140,000 young men who were to be trained in the Kamina military base. Were these youth loyal to Kabila? Probably yes. Were they reliable and a real asset? Probably not.

- E. The non-Congolese armed forces: In addition to these Congolese forces there were Rwandan Tutsi units as well as some Ugandan and Angolan forces and instructors invited to train the new army coming from a variety of African states. The Rwandans, especially, held important positions in the FAC and as Kabila purged some of his ADLF co-founders, their position, even if briefly, became more powerful. In the end, until a few days before the Second Congo War began, a Rwandan officer, James Kabarehe filled the position of interim Chief of Staff of the FAC. Kabila's son—in his twenties—was second in command.

#### **Violent Conflict in the Kivus**

During the period in question, the FAC was quite obviously preoccupied with making itself into a coherent, unified and capable military force. But, it also faced a military challenge. In the Kivus and along the Ugandan border two real threats coming from guerrilla organizations continued to exist. First, on the Kivu-Rwanda border there still were Hutu ex-FAR/Interahamwe bands and further north various Ugandan insurrectionist forces were again using the DRC as a base from which to attack Uganda. Second, a Congolese challenge to both the

Rwandan presence in the Kivu and to the Kabila regime—the Mai Mai—had gained importance and local support. Mai Mai was a term generically employed to describe different Kivu groups which had armed themselves and were essentially dedicated to expelling non-Kivu forces and people from what they considered to be their territory. They were now essentially dedicated to expelling the Rwandans and the FAC which was at this time closely allied to the Rwandans. Indeed, the FAC and the Rwandan army organized joint operations against the Mai Mai. This problem had two consequences which were to have a major impact in the period immediately following. First, the primary goal of both Rwanda and Uganda in organizing the 1996 invasion and support for the ADFL had not been met—the borders were not secure from incursions coming from the DRC. Second, not only did Rwandan and Ugandan military units operate on both sides of the border, but the best FAC units were sent to the east, this was the later famous 10th Brigade led by a former FAZ officer, Commander Ondekane. Indeed, it would appear that James Kabarehe, had overall responsibility for this operation both as Congolese Chief of Staff and as a Rwandan officer.

#### **Political and Civil Society Forces**

As has been indicated earlier, Kabila rejected the notion of sharing power in an institutional or formal fashion with political parties which had developed during the last years of the Mobutu regime. A few of the parties challenged the order forbidding party activities by organizing protests and continuing to hold meetings. However, this was met with stern governmental reactions. Leaders such as FONUS's Olenghankoy and UDPS's Tshisekedi were imprisoned or sent into internal exile. It is interesting to note that Mobutu's MPR was humbled by the defeat, exile and death of its leader and did not manifest itself in any dramatic way during this period.

The regime was also clearly disturbed by the size, diversity and influence which the large number of civil society NGO's had achieved. With some foreign financial support, they attempted in various ways to assert themselves and organized a conference in June 1997 at which delegates raised a large number of socially, but also politically, pertinent questions. The mood at this conference was not, by and large, supportive of the regime. As a result the participants were told that they had to subscribe

to the priorities established by the new government. Subsequently, the regime went to some lengths in order to coopt and control the NGO's. It established an elaborate plan to hold provincial civil society meetings at which, however, government officials would also participate. The resolutions from these meetings would form the basis for a grand national meeting. But, the resolutions emanating from the different provincial meetings did not meet the regime's expectations, indeed, they were once again critical of the authoritarian governance methods which had been adopted. As with the experiment in local elections which were not continued, the national meeting was canceled shortly before it was supposed to take place.

Given the background of Kabila and some of his closest collaborators, one would have expected a great effort at making the ADFL into an important instrument not only for control but also for mass mobilization. Indeed, in the early days of the regime the ADFL was defined as being above the state, but soon it became evident that Kabila did not intend to make the party—perhaps because even at the leadership level it was really more an alliance rather than a disciplined movement—an important ruling instrument. This became increasingly clear as highly placed ADFL leaders were purged, imprisoned and side-lined. And, to jump ahead chronologically, it should be noted that several of them became the leadership nucleus of the anti-Kabila rebellion in Goma in August 1998.

#### **The Kabila Regime and Foreign Affairs**

##### *Relations with African States*

The victory of the ADFL and its leader Kabila in May 1997 was politically and emotionally a watershed event for Africa. There were, by this time, a large number of Presidents who had old scores to settle with Mobutu and, therefore, welcomed the demise of his regime, but in addition others saw themselves as a new generation which would give a more genuinely African character to the continent's inter-state relations. From their perspective the old, Cold War linked, and corrupt, leaders had to go and Mobutu was not only the most important representative of this group, he was its symbol.

Two months after the capture of Kinshasa much of Africa came to celebrate and congratulate Kabila. The joint communiqué which was signed on July 20, 1997 is extraordinary both for the degree of support it gives the new, self-

appointed president of the re-named Democratic Republic of the Congo, but also for who signed it: Chiluba of Zambia; Nujoma of Namibia; Zenawi of Ethiopia; Afewerki of Eritrea; Museveni of Uganda; Patasse of CAR; Didangi of Gabon; Chissano of Mozambique; Bizimungu of Rwanda; and Mugabe of Zimbabwe also at the time President of the OAU. Surprisingly, no Angolan signatory was present; whether this was significant or not is an unanswered question.

But, this support soon weakened. Less than a year later, in May 1998 at the anniversary of the ADFL victory, Rwanda refused to participate. In the same month, Museveni was attacked by one of Kabila's ministers and most important, a DRC organized summit meeting had to be canceled because both Rwanda and Uganda and other invitees refused to participate. A month later, in June, Rwanda was charging the Kabila regime with something like a "capital" offense—it claimed that Interahamwe were being recruited by the Kabila regime and trained at the Kamina military base.

Given the support which Angola gave Kabila immediately after the new rebellion and invasion in August 1998, it is important to note that Angola also showed signs of being dissatisfied with the way Kabila was conducting the DRC's government and its policies. It was reported that the Angolan government had expected Kabila to develop a more pluralistic government (this was also the expectation of Uganda), it was dissatisfied with the role given some of its protégés among the Congolese exiles who had lived in Angola. Angola also wanted military control over the area in the Congo which bordered UNITA dominated areas in Angola. This was, of course, something which both Rwanda and Uganda, in effect, had attained. Kabila refused the Angolan request.

Despite the different paths which Angola, Rwanda and Uganda were about to follow, they did, in one respect, face a common dilemma: The goal of eliminating the bases of insurgency movements against their governments located in the DRC had not been met. At one time or another, they all seemed to have blamed Kabila for this. But, one may wonder whether, after being in power for one year, Kabila had the military and organizational strength to do much about these movements. Indeed, in the east, the Rwandans and the Ugandans were themselves active on both sides of the border attempting to

deal with this problem, but with limited success. If they could not succeed, how could Kabila? Thus, to explain their growing antagonism toward Kabila one must pose the question whether the suspicion—publicly expressed as an established fact—that Kabila was working *with* insurgency movements such as the Interahamwe was not the most important cause of the divorce. In this context, Kabila's friendly relations with the Sudan government were also a provocation for Uganda. The Sudan was known to be supplying anti-Museveni movements both in Uganda and those based in the DRC.

In sum, during the first year of Kabila's presidency, the foreign states which had been most instrumental in putting him in power were frustrated and antagonized by his actions. That does not, of course, mean that all of Africa became antagonistic. There was continuing support from Mugabe in Zimbabwe and Nujoma in Namibia and also from Libya and Sudan.

#### *Relations with the UN and the West*

The relations of the Kabila regime with the UN and with Western states was largely dominated by the issue of the UN investigation of the Hutu massacres during the anti Mobutu forces' march to Kinshasa. In a variety of ways, Kabila thwarted every attempt to successfully undertake such an investigation and this resulted in a rapid change of attitude—from one which placed great hope in and anticipated support for his regime to one of estrangement and virtual abandonment. On this issue there was a great divide between Congolese opinion and much of the rest of the world. The Congolese viewed the Hutu massacres as a foreign affair between Rwandans (Tutsi and Hutu) and they did not understand why they were being blamed for these events. Increasingly, it became clear that these massacres had been perpetrated, at least in large measure, by the Rwandan troops engaged in the march toward Kinshasa. Why then did Kabila thwart the investigation? The question becomes even more puzzling after Kagame as early as July 1997 in effect claimed that the victory over Mobutu was the result of Rwandan military action. In other words, the fiction that Mobutu's defeat was solely the result of a Congolese revolutionary war was laid to rest. One can suggest several reasons for Kabila's opposition to the investigation:

1. The fear that the Rwandans would act against him personally if he allowed the

investigation to go forward. This is the explanation suggested by people close to Kabila especially after the second Congo War started.

2. A distrust and antagonism toward the UN and apprehension that the UN's presence in the DRC would result in a loss of sovereignty.

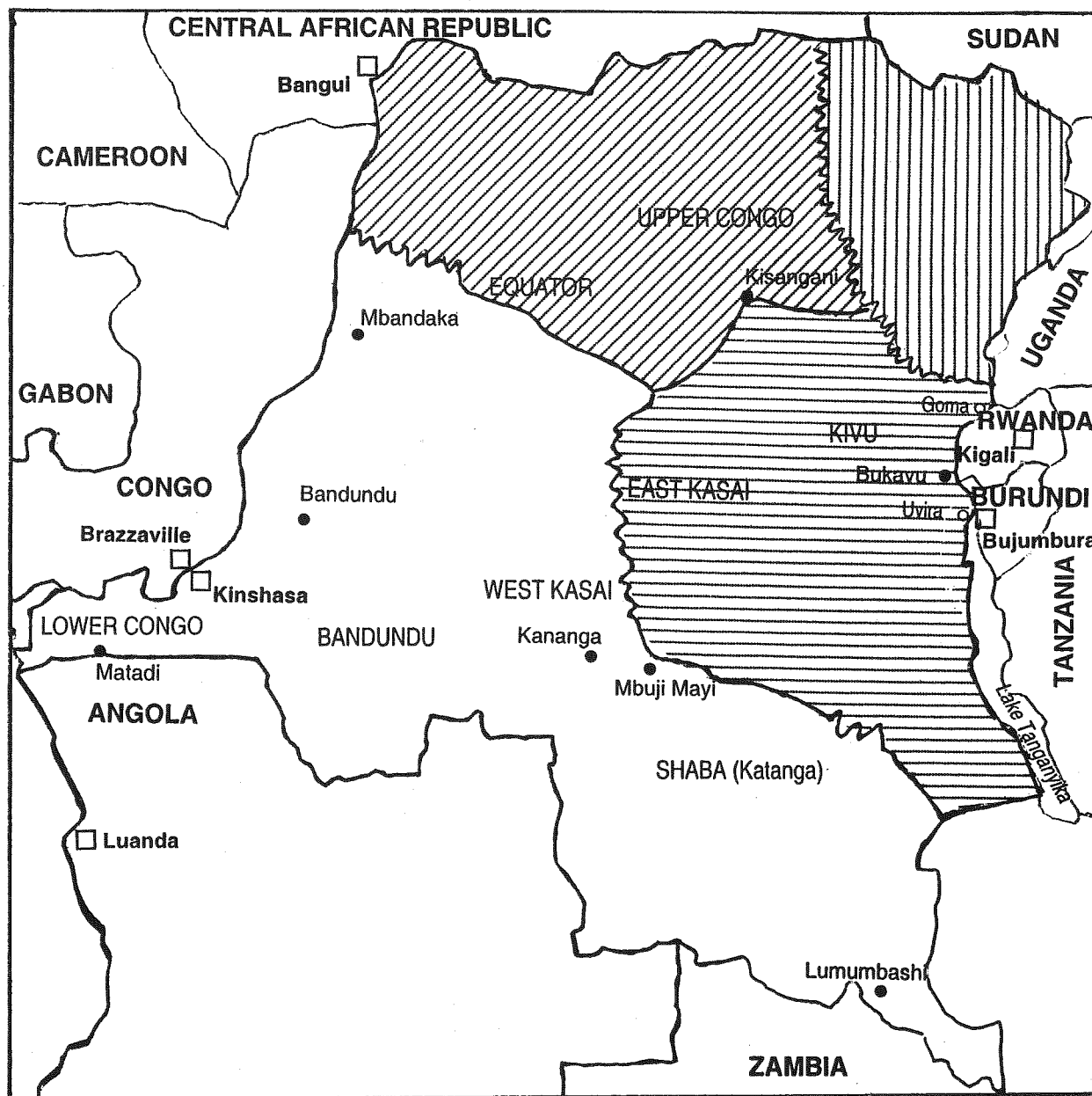
3. Having claimed the leadership of the anti-Mobutu campaign, it would have humiliated Kabila to admit that he had no control over "his" troops or that the victory had little to do with his revolutionary mobilization since it was essentially one achieved by foreign troops.




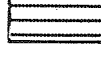


Whatever the reasons for the obstructionism, it was extremely costly for the DRC. Most projected foreign financial aid—and it was substantial—was linked to allowing the investigation into the massacres to go forward and, as a result of the repeated obstacles placed in the path of its successful execution, the DRC was denied much needed funds.

#### *Relations with the Rest of the World*

The above described arenas—African states, the UN, the West—are clearly those which have the power to influence any African country the most. Initially, the Kabila regime had the tacit support of all of them, but within a year that support had diminished dramatically. Probably because of this development, Kabila sought support from other sources and in this he was moderately successful. He established cordial relations with China, Cuba, and North Korea. There were two elements in these relationships, first, they constituted the re-establishment of ties with the countries and the political philosophies which had animated the Congolese mid-1960's revolutionaries of whom Kabila was a remaining, relatively unchanged, representative. Second, these states were not unwilling to support a leader who had become a thorn in the side of the West and especially the US. In addition, China was to become an important partner in barter arrangements which would supply the DRC with arms and money.

The Politico-Military Zones of the Democratic Republic of the Congo—January 2000



-  controlled by the Government
-  controlled by MLC (Bemba)
-  controlled by RCD/ML (Wamba)
-  controlled by RCD/Goma (Ilunga)
-  approx. boundaries
-  relatively firm boundaries



# The Second Congo War and Its Consequences

As has been shown, already during the spring of 1998 it became increasingly clear that the leaders who had been most responsible for putting Kabila into power were dissatisfied with his performance. In a sense, this was a failed condominium; Kabila acted too independently and is reported again and again to have ignored advice given him by his foreign sponsors. There are rumors which suggest that as early as January 1998, the intelligence chiefs of Angola, Rwanda and Uganda held discussions regarding the desirability of finding an alternative leader for the DRC. Perhaps, this conflict between Kabila and his sponsors was inevitable since any Congolese president would have sought to legitimize himself with the Congolese public and that would have necessitated distancing himself from foreign, especially militarily present, sponsors. But, it must also be said that Kabila provoked both internal and external opposition which was not inevitable: He could have strengthened his internal position both by applying a more pluralist policy and by acting to retain the support of ADFL founders and supporters. He could have taken care to treat the FAZ soldiers sent to re-education camps in a more humane and dignified fashion (some informants claimed that they were being starved). He could have avoided giving the impression that his intimates from Katanga were being favored over people from other regions. In his relations abroad, he could have avoided offending Uganda by establishing warm ties with Sudan. If it is true that before August 1998 he began to recruit Interahamwe and arm them (there is no doubt that that was done after that date) he could have refrained from provoking Rwanda to the point of an inevitable, total enmity. And, there was surely nothing to be gained by antagonizing Western leaders, sometimes in a very personal manner. Yet, all this having been said, it should be remembered that Kabila had for decades been a marginalized guerrilla leader with virtually no experience as a statesman. The role which history handed him was full of opportunity, but it would have been difficult to fill it under any circumstances.

## The Start of the Second Congo War

During June and July 1998 a number of events—some verifiable, some only rumored—indicated that relations between Kabila and the Rwandans had not only seriously deteriorated but had reached a boiling point. Some of Kabila's collaborators are reported to have concluded that a Rwandan officer was about to assassinate Kabila during the Independence Day festivities on June 30. James Kabarehe was personally suspected by Kabila and his now Katangan guards forced the Chief of Staff to enter the President's office only after having been bodily searched and disarmed. A few days later, Kabarehe was replaced by Kabila's brother in law, Celestin Kifwa. In this atmosphere, Tutsi families in Kinshasa began to feel insecure and started to leave. Kabila did a lot of traveling during these crucial days. He visited Namibia and Cuba presumably seeking support given the momentous divorce which was taking place. On July 27, the Rwandan mission of cooperation was ended by the DRC and the Rwandan military was asked to leave immediately. On July 29, they flew back to Kigali. A little over a year earlier they had been received as liberators, now public opinion in Kinshasa vehemently approved of their *de facto* expulsion.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the next twenty days profoundly changed the history of Africa and launched the continent on what some have called the First African World War. There are at least some similarities with Europe's, eurocentrically named, First World Wars. In both, a series of miscalculations by leaders resulted in untold pain for common people and an irrevocably changed future. The chronologically laid out events which follow briefly summarize these developments:

*2 August.* The Commander of the ANC's 10th Brigade—one of the best and largest units in the new army—stationed in Goma, declares the destitution of President Kabila. He is soon joined by the 12th Brigade in Bukavu. Rwandan army units are reported to be crossing the frontier in force. In Kinshasa, a fire fight begins between Congolese Tutsi soldiers who refuse to be disarmed and other FAC, largely Katangan,

soldiers. The Tutsi are routed and most are killed although some manage to escape into the bush west of Kinshasa. A pogrom, encouraged by the Kabila regime, is carried out, against all Tutsi in Kinshasa and other cities.

*4 August.* In a spectacular cross-continent air lift, a plane full of Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers (according to some accounts also Congolese) led by James Kabarehe lands at Kitona army base located in the Lower Congo near Cabinda. The base holds some 10–15,000 former FAZ soldiers who are being “re-educated”. Kabarehe and his approximately 150 soldiers manage to mobilize these troops to join the uprising against Kabila. Later, more troops from the east join this enterprise. Within days, they capture a number of towns and most importantly the Inga hydro-electric dam where they are able to cut off electricity supplies to Kinshasa as well as Katanga. In an “off and on” manner, Kinshasa is without electricity and therefore without a flowing water supply. In effect, the capital is threatened both by starvation and militarily. Kabila calls on the city’s population to arm itself and to defend the capital. There is a real response to this call to arms, but it involves many mob killings of suspected infiltrators, Tutsi, mutinous soldiers and simply unfortunate individuals who find themselves at the wrong place at the wrong time.

*20 August.* A group of Congolese politicians—for a wide variety of reasons, and coming from very different political backgrounds—unite in Goma to form the political wing of the anti-Kabila movement, the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie (RCD). The range of their political backgrounds is very wide, it stretches from former ADFL members to former Mobutists. Militarily, the Kabila regime seems doomed. Its best military units have joined the “rebellion”, two well prepared former allies have not only invaded from the east but captured the far west of the country. Kinshasa is in dire straights and threatened by advancing troops coming from the lower Congo.

*23 August.* Angola attacks the Rwanda-Uganda-RCD positions in the Lower Congo from its bases in Cabinda. The anti-Kabila forces are surrounded. Some of their troops reach the outskirts of Kinshasa where they are attacked by the population and massacred. The cross continent maneuver has failed, but in the east there are virtually no pro-Kabila forces and the “rebellion” achieves military control.

*26 August.* Zimbabwe sends a military expedition to Kinshasa to support the Kabila regime. Later, Namibia and Chad also send troops which take up positions supporting Kabila. Some reports also speak of Sudanese involvement on his side. In sum, a war on Congolese soil has begun which involves, directly or indirectly, a large number of African states, military establishments, militia, and economic interests.

### **What Did the Rebels Plan and Expect?**

It is quite evident that the plan for the destitution of the Kabila regime largely emulated the successful destruction of the Mobutu regime. A military manoeuvre in the Kivus, in the name of a Congolese group intent on reforming an existing regime, would challenge an isolated and unpopular president. Indeed, those who started the Second Congo War must have felt that they were in a far better position than they had been in during the 1996-7 campaign. First, they now had a portion—the best according to several observers—of the DRC’s army on their side. Second, the officers planning this mission had intimate knowledge of the disposition of the rest of the army since only weeks earlier they held commanding positions in that army. Of course, there was the question of Angola, but it is hard to imagine that the Rwandan/Ugandan/RCD planners imagined that they would confront Angolan military power as an adversary. Again, they probably compared their position to 1996-7 when Angola, somewhat belatedly, joined them in attacking the then Kinshasa regime of President Mobutu. But, whatever the exact plans were, what happened did not fit into them and instead of a collapsed Kinshasa regime which was supposed to fall even more rapidly than its predecessor did in 1996–97, a long and costly war resulted.

### **Comparing the Two Congo Wars**

There are striking similarities between the wars:

1. In both wars Rwanda and Uganda, seeing insurgency movements against their governments using the DRC as a base of operations, helped launch Congolese rebels with the intention of overthrowing the Kinshasa regime.
2. In both cases, the Kinshasa authorities appealed to the international community, specifically to the Security Council of the UN,

and the OAU, to condemn this "aggression" but failed to obtain satisfaction.

3. In both wars, most of the fighting was done by foreign forces.
4. In both wars, massive violence was imported into a country which since the mid-1960s had generated relatively little violence.

The differences between the wars are, of course, more telling than the similarities:

1. In the first war, the Kinshasa government was singularly unsuccessful in gaining foreign support and since its army hardly fought at all, it was rapidly—in eight months—overwhelmed. In the second war, the Kinshasa government was very successful in obtaining foreign military and diplomatic support.
2. In the first war the effective foreign armies which really fought were Rwanda, Uganda and Angola. In the second war, these allies split, with Angola supporting Kabila while Uganda and Rwanda attempted to overthrow him. So, in addition to getting military support from Chad, Namibia and Zimbabwe, and probably Sudan, the forces which had been so successful in defeating Mobutu were now divided and a prolonged, unresolved, war ensued.
3. In the first war, the notion that the war was a "revolution" or a "war of liberation", coupled with generalized antagonism toward Mobutu, resulted in a considerable amount of Congolese and foreign support for the "rebel" forces. In the second war, much of the Congolese population was convinced that they were being invaded by the—much disliked—Rwandans, Ugandans and in some eyes, simply the Tutsi. This resulted in very little popular support for the new "rebels". There is a paradox here; there were more Congolese fighting on both sides in the second war than in the first! But, the first was seen in much of Africa and in the Congo as a "revolution" while, the second is generally viewed as an "invasion". Perceptions count for more than subtle distinctions.
4. In the first war, Mobutu's call to arms produced little response and indeed had a hollow, impotent ring. Whatever popular support he still had was lost with the declining fortunes of his regime as his opponents advanced toward Kinshasa. In the second war, Kabila's call to arms produced a

genuine response among the Congolese masses (especially in the cities) and his popularity soared. In this respect the results of public opinion polling in Kinshasa are quite telling. To the question, "What is your opinion of President Kabila as Chief of State?" the following progression is reported:

|         | 9/97 | 12/97 | 4/98 | 7/98 | 9/98 |
|---------|------|-------|------|------|------|
| Good    | 39%  | 59%   | 57%  | 72%  | 88%  |
| Bad     | 35%  | 21%   | 21%  | 9%   | 5%   |
| No View | 26%  | 20%   | 22%  | 19%  | 7%   |

|         | 10/98 | 11/98 | 1/99 | 2/99 | 4/99             |
|---------|-------|-------|------|------|------------------|
| Good    | 80%   | 72%   | 80%  | 74%  | 63%              |
| Bad     | 11%   | 14%   | 15%  | 16%  | 16% <sup>2</sup> |
| No View | 9%    | 14%   | 5%   | 10%  | 21%              |

It should be noted that during the period of conflict with Rwanda and especially after the beginning of the war, Kabila's approval rating reached 88% at the very moment when his regime was most vulnerable. From having been viewed as something close to a foreign pawn in the spring of 1997 he had become—at least in Kinshasa—a nationalist hero who was defending the nation's sovereignty. His subsequent decline in approval must be attributed to the sharp decline in the standard of living in Kinshasa during this period as well as his continuing—despite his popularity—refusal to share power with the forces which are still called the non-violent opposition.

But, the cutting edge of the difference between the two wars was not Kabila's popularity and Mobutu's lack of it. It was the decision of Angola to support Kabila. It is evident that had Angola repeated its actions during the first war, i.e. somewhat belatedly followed Rwanda and Uganda's lead, the fate of the Kabila regime would have been sealed even if Kabila's unambiguous ally, President Mugabe of Zimbabwe, had opted to support him militarily. The reason for this is that Kinshasa would, in all likelihood, have fallen before such aid could reach the DRC. Angola's decision to, as it were, switch sides has had a determining impact not only on the war, but on the entire political evolution of Central Africa. Thus, one must ask, why did Angola adopt the policy in question? A number of answers have been proposed by astute analysts of the situation. For instance, Colette Braeckman<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>BERCI, Sondage d'avril 1999, p.47.

<sup>3</sup>Braeckman, Colette, L'ENJEU CONGOLAIS, Fayard, Paris, 1999, p.395.

suggests that Angola was motivated first by a rejection of "the arrogance of Kigali and Kampala" at daring to capture an area of the DRC which abuts Angola and Angolan interests. She also states that the Angolan reaction was a response to information they had been given that Rwanda and Uganda had been in contact with UNITA. Others have suggested that the Kitona landing was seen as breaching an Angolan sphere of influence and therefore had to be opposed. Yet another argument suggests that old Marxist and revolutionary ties linked Kabila to Dos Santos, Mugabe and Njoma. There is also the obviously correct point put forward by Gerald J. Bender<sup>4</sup>, that all Angolan actions in the DRC must be seen as linked to the war against UNITA. What all of these no doubt pertinent arguments do not deal with is what Angola's position and role would have been had it joined the attack against the Kabila regime. To speculate about this one must recall that the Angolans were widely reported to have been very critical of Kabila during the period between the wars, that their request to place their soldiers on the DRC side of the border, in order to combat UNITA more effectively, had been rejected by Kabila. Finally, there are persistent rumors to the effect that at least some Angolan officials and officers were informed of the impending Kitona landing—thus the great shock on the part of the Ugandans and Rwandans when they were suddenly faced by the Angolan army not as an ally but as an opponent. Accepting the argument that Angolan action in the DRC was dominated by its interest in effectively fighting UNITA, would that goal have been helped or hindered if they had joined the anti-Kabila forces? Subsequent events, at a minimum, suggest that supporting Kabila did not seriously help the fight against UNITA. With some Angolan troops diverted to protect Kabila controlled areas in the DRC, the Luanda government launched a campaign against UNITA in the winter of 1998 which essentially failed and cost the Angolan army heavy losses. One can conclude that the events in the DRC, if they did have an impact on the balance of power in Angola, strengthened UNITA. Had the 1996-97 alliance been reestablished, the whole of DRC would have fallen under the alliance's control and Angola might well have been in a better position both to attack UNITA bases in the

Congo and to concentrate all its forces against UNITA in Angola. Then, why was the fateful decision to support the Kabila regime made in August 1998? Was it a miscalculation? Or, was there an overriding interest which necessitated the decision which was taken? Assuming the latter, the most plausible reason is the belief that an alliance had been struck between Rwanda and Uganda and UNITA and such a view was supported by both the reported presence of UNITA leaders in Kigali and Kampala and the recruitment of Mobutist generals—long allies of UNITA—and politicians into the anti-Kabila alliance. If that was seen to be true, indeed if it was true, then an alliance with the two former allies could easily be seen as a trap and very much against the Angolan government's self-interest. Indeed, a similar assumption seems to have been at the base of Rwanda's risky decision to intervene in August 1998. It was reported, and apparently believed, that Kabila had made an alliance with the ex-FAR/Interahamwe and was training them. In both cases, the ultimate provocation was cooperation with the insurgency movement trying to overthrow the government in question. In a world in which the notion "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" explains many events, nowhere is that rule more absolute than when it involves insurgency movements. As regards the Angolan government, it probably overcame its reservations about Kabila when it was convinced that its insurgency movement—UNITA—was in contact with Rwanda and Uganda. What those contacts amounted to at that time is an open question.

### **Evolution of the Second Congo War**

The Second Congo War has created an expensive balance of power in Central Africa. Up to now neither side has been able to defeat the other and both are expending huge percentages of their national resources—and that of the DRC—on military budgets. The war involves, to varying degrees of intensity, most of the African continent. This conflict can be analyzed on two levels; international and internal.

### **The International Effects of the Second Congo War**

1. Whereas the anti-Kabila alliance was restricted to Rwanda, Uganda and to a lesser extent Burundi, (Ethiopia and Eritrea, which had given some support during the first

<sup>4</sup> Cited in Willame, Jean-Claude, *L'ODYSSEE KABILA*, Karthala, Paris, 1999, p.225.

Congo War, were now preoccupied fighting each other), the support for the Kinshasa government was very wide. Not only did Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia send substantial military contingents, but Sudan and Chad, allegedly with Libyan financial support, also participated militarily.

2. SADC has been divided and to a considerable degree is in crisis because of events in the DRC. Under President Mugabe's leadership, the DRC's—recent—membership was invoked as a reason why other members should come to the defense of the Kinshasa government. However, President Mandela sought compromise and a diplomatic solution to the conflict and the South African government has given strong support to the process which produced the Lusaka Agreement.
3. On both sides of the conflict, the foreign countries involved, especially those with military forces in the DRC, have translated their politico-military power into economic advantages. Thus, Rwanda and Uganda exploit the diamond, gold and rare metal deposits in Eastern DRC, Angola created a joint venture for petroleum extraction in the Lower Congo and is involved in the massive diamond trade in Kasai, and Zimbabwe has gained considerable control over copper and cobalt extraction in Katanga.
4. While seeking to make the war "pay for itself" with varying degrees of success, all the foreign powers involved are, nonetheless, motivated to seek an advantageous end to the conflict. First, because it does not come anywhere near to fully "paying for itself", second, because the governments of these states all face internal oppositions which are, or potentially will be, strengthened by the war. For example, the ex-FAR/Interahamwe have been strengthened by the fact that Kabila has mobilized them to fight the Rwandan government and the RCD. The military losses and negative economic consequences of the war in Zimbabwe have strengthened Mugabe's internal opposition. Of course, wanting the war to end will not necessarily result in its ending since all the participants seek substantial, ongoing, advantages.
5. This is a very African war. There are no Cold War involvements. Even the much touted and much exaggerated conflict between the Francophones and the Anglo-Saxons (i.e.

their African "representatives") is not involved. If the DRC were to be considered the "French" side and the Rwandans/Ugandans the "English" side, the line-up of allies does not fit. Zimbabwe and Namibia, both anglophone countries would end up being French, and Rwanda and Burundi, both francophone, would end up being English! Yet, there are persistent perceptions among many Africans that the war is linked to secret strategic plans by non-African powers with nefarious goals. Such views focus especially on the US which is seen as the power behind Rwanda and Uganda, but there is in fact very little evidence for this. The strongest elements supporting this perception are the credits given to Rwanda and Uganda by the international financial institutions and the continuing concern with—and guilt over—the 1994 genocide in Rwanda in the US.

6. The essentially African nature of the conflict has, unfortunately, led to an expansion of the notion, first represented by the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Rwanda and Burundi, that this is a war between the "Bantu" and the "Hamites" or the "Nilotics". Whereas there is no logical or scientific basis for such a view, (the terms are linguistic and there are Bantu speaking people who are viewed as Hamites and vice versa), the almost racial attitudes which these terms have aroused is creating a deep ideological chasm among Africans.

#### **Internal Effects of the Second Congo War**

The most important impact of the Second Congo War on internal affairs has been the massive loss of independence by all the Congolese political forces and a sharp decline in the standard of living of ordinary people. The forces in question can be described in a very summary fashion as involving the following tendencies:

1. The official government of the DRC, i.e. Kabila and his immediate collaborators: Militarily and in many ways diplomatically, this force depends on the allies which have fought for its survival and triumph since August 1998. Kabila has also successfully mobilized the support of the Interahamwe/ex-FAR and has re-armed them. In addition, he has created an alliance with the Mai Mai rebels in the Kivus who are quite effective guerrilla fighters against the Rwandan/RCD forces in North and South Kivu.

2. The non-violent opposition: It is unclear how much support the non-violent opposition retains. It should be noted that Tshisekedi, who is its most prominent leader, called for the retreat of foreign forces (i.e. mainly the Rwandans) at a time when Kabila was still dependent on them. This theme, then as now, echoed public sentiment. But, today Kabila appears to have become the more dramatic symbol of the "get the foreign troops out of our country" sentiment. On the other hand, the non-violent opposition has succeeded in representing sentiments in favor of an all-Congolese, democratically arrived at compromise. The most important institution, among the opposition groups, the UDPS, has a structure which has national extension. Thus, in the context of a national dialogue, it could emerge as a serious challenger and competitor to Kabila. Finally, the ethnic factor involved should not be forgotten. The UDPS is linked to the Kasai Luba and Kabila is linked to the Katangans. The Kasai Luba have a score to settle with the Katangans who expelled them in a massive ethnic cleansing exercise in 1993 from Katanga. Some of the personalities involved in this expulsion are close to Kabila. Perhaps more than other Congolese political or military force, the non-violent opposition has most to gain from the "new political dispensation and national reconciliation arising from the inter-Congolese political negotiations" which the Lusaka Agreement calls for. For that process to be truly neutral and successful a substantial UN presence will probably be absolutely necessary. Thus, this group as well as many NGO's are the strongest supporters of a dynamic, well organized and led, UN mission.
3. The RCD: It is significant that the RCD was formed after the FAC units in the east and Rwanda and Uganda moved against Kabila. Clearly, what these forces needed—as in 1996—was a revolutionary movement with credibility among the Congolese and especially among those in the east who were under its control. As was noted earlier, the politicians and intellectuals who came together to form the RCD have extremely different, even opposed, backgrounds. They found it very difficult to gain acceptance by ordinary citizens in the areas they control and even less in the areas the Kabila regime controls. In the Kivus, local militia, the Mai Mai, almost immediately turned against them. In sum, the RCD was unable to shake off the appearance of being a front for the Rwandans and the Ugandans and given the rise of intense inter-communal hatreds, they were often seen as the stooges of the Tutsi. The RCD faced further difficulties; an internal division split the movement into RCD/Goma and RCD/ML (*Mouvement de Liberation* formerly identified as RCD/Kisangani) and much acrimony developed between the two wings. In the context of this internal conflict it became evident that Uganda supported the RCD/ML led by Professor Ernest Wamba dia Wamba and Rwanda supported the RCD/Goma led by Dr. Emile Ilunga. This further exposed the degree to which these movements were dependent on their foreign sponsors, even though many of the leaders very genuinely opposed Kabila because they believed he was establishing a dictatorship. Finally, when the Ugandan and Rwandan armies fought against each other in Kisangani—resulting in Congolese civilian casualties and much property destruction—for reasons linked both to economic interests and to the competition between the two wings of the RCD, the Congolese nationalist credentials of both wings were further compromised.
4. *Mouvement pour la Liberation du Congo*, MLC: Somewhat after the RCD was formed, a new anti-Kabila movement began which also received Ugandan support. However, the MLC had one serious advantage over the two RCD's, its leader originated from the northern area in which it was active and its support was largely regionally homogeneous. In effect, it is the only one of the three rebel movements which cannot be linked to any imagined or real Tutsi connection and it has been militarily successful in two ways; in the areas which it has conquered there do not appear to be any indigenous militia fighting it, and, this movement was responsible for the retreat of the Chadian troops which had operated out of Mobutu's old palace at Gbadolite. The MLC is headed by Jean-Pierre Bemba whose father is one of the richest members of what used to be Mobutu's inner circle. Today, the father, Bemba Saolona is one of Kabila's ministers.

All of the militarized, anti-Kabila movements mentioned above signed the Lusaka Agreement. However, both the non-violent opposition and the Mai-Mai, or indeed any of the militia movements, were not part of the Lusaka process or agreement.

#### **Political Elites and the National Dialogue**

One can wonder which, if any, of the leaders are likely to gain from the anticipated national dialogue which will presumably lead, at some time in the future, to elections. The two RCD's have failed to create broad grass roots organizations and, as mentioned earlier, they are tainted by their close collaboration with their foreign sponsors. The MLC operates in a sparsely populated area, can potentially be linked to Mobutism and has, up to now, no grass roots support outside the area it controls—with Ugandan help—militarily. Kabila's popularity as a nationalist leader who stood up to foreign invasion has certainly risen as previously noted but once peace is re-established his authoritarian methods, his favoring people of Katangan origin and the sharp decline in standards of living which has occurred in the last year, would all place his leadership in some jeopardy.

Today, all the leaders, (with the exception of those heading the non-violent opposition), do control the areas of the Congo which they and their foreign supporters have captured militarily and from which they draw substantial benefits. But, there is one difference between the areas controlled by Kabila and those controlled by the two RCD's which should be emphasized; they both have internal oppositions but Kabila's is non-violent, whereas the two RCD's face the growing guerrilla attacks and power of the Mai Mai who increasingly cooperate with the Interahamwe. Therefore, while one has to wonder how flexible any of the leaders will be regarding the national dialogue, the RCD's may have a more pressing need to end the status quo than the Kinshasa regime. This is especially so if the national dialogue is linked to the UN presence and the disarming of militia groups.

#### **Foreign Leaders and the Lusaka Agreement**

If the leadership of the internal parties to the Second Congo War may turn out to be less than adequately compromising during the planned for national dialogue, much the same can be expected from the foreign parties which, today, control different areas of the Congo. As is well

known, these areas have become economic resources for these countries which help pay for their military investment and promise, in the future, to become important sources of revenue. The joint ventures between the Kabila regime and commercial interests of Angola and Zimbabwe have, up to now, not covered their military costs nor resulted in repayment of debts incurred by the Kinshasa authorities. Much the same is true for the foreign allies of the anti-Kabila forces. Uganda and Rwanda are the economic beneficiaries of their control over the diamond, gold and precious metal exports which are mined in the zone they control. If the national dialogue and "new political dispensation" in the DRC which is called for in the Lusaka Agreement were to produce a new regime, it is a question whether the loans and special arrangements would continue to be honored or whether the mineral products of the eastern DRC would continue to flow through Kampala and Kigali.

#### **Lusaka: The Internal Dialogue and the Role of the UN**

The Lusaka Agreement places a great responsibility on the shoulders of two bodies; the "neutral facilitator" who will organize the internal dialogue which is supposed to produce a "new political dispensation" and the UN which in collaboration with the OAU is supposed to apply Chapter 7 of the UN Charter and deploy a peacekeeping force to "ensure implementation" of the Agreement. Both these trajectories have registered some initial success, but face tremendous obstacles.

The success regarding the internal dialogue is the apparent agreement by all the parties to appoint the ex-President of Botswana, Quett Masire, as the neutral facilitator. The major problem facing any further steps is the provision that the "participants in the inter-Congolese political negotiations shall enjoy equal status". It is very doubtful that the Kabila regime will in practical terms really accept this provision and conversely it is, at present, difficult to imagine that the rebel movements will accept to participate in this process if it, in effect, confirms the legitimacy of the Kinshasa authorities. It is, of course, a positive element that the Agreement explicitly calls for the inclusion of the political opposition (presumably meaning the political parties making up the non-violent opposition)



and civil society. But, the Mai Mai were neither represented at Lusaka nor are they mentioned as participants in the internal dialogue. This may well cause a serious problem in the Kivus.

The early success of the UN's involvement is the fact that the Joint Military Commission called for in the Agreement has been created and has started its work. Beyond that, there loom very serious problems both at the Secretariat headquarters in New York and in the DRC. In New York, the problems can be summarized as follows: First, financial—after Bosnia, Kosovo, Timor and Sierra Leone can the personnel and funds be found to mount what promises to be quite a huge operation in the DRC? Second, while the Secretary General has selected a Special Representative for the DRC, the Security Council has only approved very limited terms of reference for the United Nations Organizations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUC. Third, both of these factors are linked to the fear that the Congo Mission will turn out to be a failure and therefore further undermine the UN. All of these considerations are of course rendered more difficult by the attitude and declarations of the Kabila regime. The DRC Foreign Minister, Yerodia Ndombasi has not only charged the UN with wanting to overthrow Kabila but also with having an assassin among its observers who is supposed to kill him! Moreover, the Kinshasa authorities have placed many obstacles in the path of the first UN observer mission to have arrived in the DRC. While these decisions will probably be ironed out, they reveal an attitude in Kinshasa which is not likely to disappear.

### **Background to Anti-UN Sentiments**

If the UN is to play a major role in resolving the war which has pitted almost ten African states and innumerable militia groups against each other in Central Africa, that participation must be based on a realistic assessment of the willingness of the conflicting parties to make peace and an understanding on how a UN peacekeeping mission will be perceived in the area. The Lusaka Agreement is a framework which allows the parties to establish peace if that is what they want. But, to understand the role the UN can play one must look back at its institutional history in the Central African area. If one does not do that, then the distrust expressed by the above cited declarations will not be understood or put into context and then the relationships the UN will develop will be doomed from the start.

There is an extraordinary—and unfortunate—coincidence in the negative experience which three of the major players in the Central African drama have had with the UN. The most recent and most easily explained is that of the Rwandan Tutsi and their sense of having been abandoned to their genocidal fate by the UN and the major powers. The other two players are the Lumumbists and the Katangans—the two most prominent forces in the Kabila regime—and to explain their antagonism and distrust, one has to return to the 1960's.



## Belgian Colonial Rule and the Independence Struggle: A Bit of History

The Belgian Congo had one of the shortest independence struggles in African colonial history, it started late in 1958 and achieved its goal in June 1960. It was a colony in which traditional leadership had been systematically weakened and in which no university trained modern elites had replaced it—because no university training was made available. Advanced education was only available to would be priests. By the end of colonial rule there were about 3,000 theologically trained Congolese of whom about 500 had actually become priests, but there were only about 20 secular university graduates. Typically for the time, the colony was to be handed over to an elected government and thus one month before independence the first national election was held. This forced the young leaders of young political parties to go to the urban and rural masses and mobilize them. Surprisingly, they very often found an angry, radically inclined population which anticipated that independence would dismantle the whole colonial system. Because of this mood, the more radical political parties won and the most prominent leader of this tendency, Patrice Lumumba, became the first Prime Minister. Unlike most of the independence movements, there was no time for the parties to coalesce into one or two massive movements. At the national level, 16 political parties were represented in the first parliament with none having a majority.

The first cabinet was made up of leaders from many different parties and it had little cohesion or loyalty to its leader. A few days after independence the army mutinied and a massive exodus of Belgians began and a few days later, Katanga, the mineral rich province declared itself to be independent. Katangan secession was given protection by the Belgian army and support by a variety of European, South African and American right wing forces. Lumumba first sought US help, but was told to request it from the UN. Within weeks, a massive UN operation—ONUC—began with at its peak about 30,000 foreign troops. Stopping Katangan secession became Lumumba's highest priority and he felt that the Security Council resolutions supporting

ONUC promised use of its forces to accomplish this goal. But, the then Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld regarded military action against Katanga as undesirable. He thought that the Security Council resolutions calling for the maintenance of the Congo's sovereignty could be accomplished diplomatically. This difference of view created a deep rift between the Lumumba government and the UN and was partly responsible for Lumumba's appeal for help from the Soviet Union. That only confirmed, for the US, that Lumumba was leaning toward the communist world and resulted in an attempt by the CIA to assassinate him in September 1960 (this particular incident came to nothing).

Another plot against Lumumba was organized by getting the President, Joseph Kasavubu, to dismiss him. In the political struggle which ensued, ONUC intervened in a manner which helped Kasavubu and resulted in Lumumba's isolation in the Prime Minister's residence. The head of ONUC at the time was Special Representative Andrew Cordier, an American citizen. When a few months later Lumumba attempted to escape from his Kinshasa residence and make a run for it to his Kisangani home base, he was caught by Mobutu's men, shipped to Katanga and there murdered. This, brutally summarized, story is all but forgotten at the UN, but it is remembered as if it were yesterday by the Lumumbists who are among the most important government leaders in Kinshasa today.

There is a tragic irony in this story; Hammarskjöld also lost his life as a result of the first Congo crisis. His plane crashed on the way to yet another attempt to bring about the end of Katanga secession. But, in the end, Lumumba was right and Hammarskjöld wrong—it was impossible to end Katanga secession diplomatically and it took a military campaign by ONUC with strong backing from the Kennedy administration to end this chapter in the Congo's history. But, by that time (1962) Lumumba was gone, his closest allies were in exile, and Kinshasa was controlled by Mobutu

who became for decades the West's favorite dictator in Africa.

### **The Katangans**

Apart from Lumumbists, Kabila's closest allies are people from his home province, Katanga. It was the Katangans in Angola who became the most important Congolese military force which helped Kabila reach Kinshasa in 1997. The Katangans gave him the protection with which he was able to divorce himself from the Rwandans in the summer of 1998. When the Congolese see ethnic favoritism in Kabila's entourage, it is the Katangans who they point to. Today, the Katangan identity is essentially regional, but in the 1960s it was divided, more or less, on the basis of ethnicity. The north Katangan Luba were allied to Lumumba while the south Katangan Lunda supported the provincial President, Moise Tshombe who organized, with much help from Western right wing circles, the Katangan secession. In fact in 1960-62 there was a war between the Lunda dominated Katanga Gendarmerie and the Luba in the north. As indicated earlier, when ONUC put an end to the secession many of the Gendarmerie fled to Angola. They were the ones who attempted to overthrow Mobutu in 1977 and 1978 by invading Katanga from their Angolan bases only to find that Mobutu was rescued by the military intervention of some of his African and European and American supporters. These forces finally returned to the Congo during the campaign to oust Mobutu and have since become a vital part of the FAC. But, despite the fact that they were Lumumba's worst enemies at the time, their memory of the UN is quite as negative as that of the Lumumbists. After all, it was ONUC which ended their attempted independence movement and drove them into exile.

### **The Congo Rebellions-Revolution**

Between 1960 and 1963 the Congo was essentially under a UN protectorate which in turn was under strong US influence. As noted earlier, this allowed the elimination of Lumumba and resulted in the exclusion of many of his collaborators from the political arena. Some compromised and joined one of the several pro-Western governments which were established in Kinshasa, some attempted to create a competing central government in Kisangani (but that soon

failed) and others went into exile in Third World or communist countries. By 1963, ONUC had almost bankrupted the UN and it took the opportunity of a parliamentary compromise which gave the semblance of restored legitimacy in order to withdraw. In the meantime, living conditions for ordinary Congolese had plummeted. In many rural areas, the purchasing power of workers dropped to 25 percent of what it had been three years earlier. Many politicians, having been elected, failed to return to their home bases since power and money now flowed from embassies rather than from their constituents. A population which had been mobilized in 1960 and which often displayed quite radical predilections was abandoned by its leaders and its living standard was sharply reduced.

It was at this moment, that some of the exiled Lumumbist leaders returned and began to organize a revolutionary movement with vaguely Marxist ideology and some support from sympathetic states. These elites found very fertile ground and in a matter of weeks "liberated" large areas of the country. The Congolese army was clearly destined to be defeated by this upheaval, but it and the Kinshasa regime of the day were saved by massive Western aid. White mercenaries were hired, a small airforce was organized piloted by Miami recruited anti-Castro exiles, and much military hardware was sent to the forces fighting this revolutionary movement. In the end, the movement was defeated and shortly thereafter, Mobutu officially took over the presidency. The cost of this episode in lives and destruction was enormous. Many villagers escaped into the forests where then—as now—they often starved and died of diseases. Some observers have estimated that over one million Congolese died.

This terrible legacy has left two results: First, the impact of the Rebellions-Revolution is the return of some of its leaders. Kabila himself is the best example of this group some of whom have been in exile since the mid 1960's. They are not many, but they are very important in Kinshasa today. If it is considered diplomatically maladroit for Kabila to visit Cuba, Sudan, Libya and Iraq (the latter only rumored) the reason can at least in part be linked to the deep distrust he appears to have inherited from the 1960s for everything which is Western and that includes the UN since in those days it was Western dominated.

The second impact of the Rebellions-Revolution of the mid 1960s was that the Congolese people thereafter adopted a passive political culture. Someone has called this the Spanish syndrome, drawing a parallel with post Civil War Spain when despite a tradition of political engagement and activism, people accepted Franco's rule with little active protest. If one asks why the Congolese people tolerated Mobutu's rule for so long, the answer can be found in this post-revolutionary reaction. If today one can say that most of the fighting in the First and Second Congo Wars was done by foreign troops on both sides of the struggle, this can also be linked to this pacifist culture. Perhaps the best illustration of this phenomenon occurred in Katanga in 1993 when an anti Kasai pogrom encouraged by the Mobutu regime resulted in the brutal expulsion of close to a million Kasaians. This ethnic cleansing exercise forced these destitute people to "return" to a province in which most of them had never lived. But, East Kasai was not without means. It possesses the greatest source of diamonds in the DRC, at the time it had direct commercial relations with Angola and South Africa. These people could have bought arms and sought to avenge themselves against the Katangans. No such action was organized. The expelled people

were, with great difficulty, integrated into a small province.

However, today this culture of rejecting violence, born out of an excess of violence, may be evaporating. Certainly, in the Kivus the mobilization of the Mai Mai and the support which they are receiving from the general population is indicative of a change. Is this because the memory of the bloodletting which took place in 1963-65 is no longer alive? Is this because the violence in the neighboring states—Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi—has "infected" the Congolese? Is this because of the heightened hatred between Rwandaphone peoples and the Kivu populations? Is this because of an age old struggle between pastoralists and sedentary farmers? Is it because this is one of the most densely populated areas of Africa? Or, finally, is it because the wars have destroyed the opportunities for education and work for a whole generation of young men who are therefore easily mobilized by militias and armies? Whatever the reason, it is possible that a sea change has occurred and that henceforth the DRC will behave more like so many of its neighbors—Congo/Brazzaville, Uganda, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and Angola—where political conflict has repeatedly been transformed into armed, violent struggle.

## Conclusion

Central Africa, and particularly the DRC, stands at a crossroads facing three alternative paths: peace, status quo or renewed conflict and expanded war.

### Peace

A complex road map for peace has been charted by the Lusaka Agreement. It will be very difficult to fulfill for the following principal reasons:

1. It calls for an Article 7 UN Peacekeeping Mission, but there is a big question whether a force large enough to accomplish the assigned tasks can be mustered especially if casualties are to be expected. And, it is difficult to see how such a Mission can be expected to reach the Agreement's goals, without at least some violent encounters.
2. It calls on all parties to disarm and dismantle militias who may very well resist such a prospect. Some of these militias are well armed and powerful. It is, for instance, difficult to imagine the DRC Government disarming and dismantling the ex-FAR/Interahamwe fighters it has only recently armed and reorganized. Will the Peacekeeping Mission undertake this task? And, at what cost?
3. It calls for an inter-Congolese national dialogue which is to include the Government of the DRC, the RCD, the MLC, the non-violent opposition and Civil Society. They are to negotiate while enjoying "equal status". It is hard to imagine Kabila negotiating on that basis. Would that mean that he would (temporarily at least) abandon the prerogatives of Head of State?
4. It calls on all foreign armies to withdraw from the DRC. That will mean that the substantial benefits which states, officers and political leaders from the countries with armies in the DRC have been able to obtain, will have to be abandoned. Will the achievement of peace be a sufficient incentive to accept such losses?

### Status Quo

The Lusaka Agreement established a cease-fire which has, more or less, held. Putting it that way

may be placing the cart before the horse. A stalemate had developed and all the major players in this war appear to have realized that victory was not—at least in the near future—likely. Therefore, the great amount of international pressure for an agreement to stop the war finally reached receptive ears and as a result the Lusaka Agreement came about. As has been indicated earlier in this article, for some parties the current status quo is not necessarily a bad condition. The Congolese leaders in question, control territory and wealth and all have foreign supporters. An end to the status quo may well end the political careers of some of them. Much the same can be said about the foreign powers with armies in the DRC. At present, they are able to benefit from the DRC's riches even as the occupation—because of the cease-fire—costs less than before. For them, too there are dangers in a real settlement. For instance, can Rwanda and Uganda be certain that respect for their borders and sovereignty—which is called for in the Lusaka Agreement for all states—would last if a reunited DRC is, in the future, led by leaders who remember the Congolese humiliation at being occupied by their "small" neighbors?

Thus, if the difficulties and dangers of the Lusaka Agreement should result in its abandonment or fulfillment but at a snail's pace, the status quo may well continue for some time. This would prevent almost all rebuilding and development. It would profoundly offend the ordinary Congolese who desperately seek the reunification of their country and the departure of foreign troops. Yet, it is not an entirely unlikely scenario in the coming months or even years.

### War

A renewal of war on a serious scale is dependent on one or the other party deciding that they have a reasonable chance to win. The military conditions which produced the stalemate which in turn produced Lusaka may either objectively, or subjectively as viewed by some of the leaders, change. The conditions which could produce such a change are, unfortunately, broadly present. First, there is the question of military

hardware. Numerous news items and rumors indicate that substantial arms deliveries have been negotiated on all sides. Second, there is the question of military training. In this respect, the Kinshasa authorities were at a real disadvantage. The FAC was a new army which had barely started to function when the Second Congo War began. Moreover, its best units had been sent to the east to fight the Mai Mai and the Interahamwe and it was those units which sided with Rwanda and Uganda in the attempt to unseat Kabila. However, since then, Kabila has apparently put a great deal of effort into recruiting and training his army. The result may have an impact on the balance of power. Or, he and his officers may think it will have an impact and on the basis of that view attempt to reconquer lost territory. Furthermore, there is always the possibility that the rebel side, seeing the development of the FAC, decide that their best defense would be a renewed attack. In short, renewed fighting on an expanded basis is not to be excluded.

### **The Regional Elements**

Yet another obstacle to peace in the DRC must be raised. The question is whether it is possible to achieve the goals set by the Lusaka Agreement without, at the same time or even preliminarily, solving the conflicts in some of the neighboring states. How, for instance, is real peace to be achieved in the Kivus if Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian insurgency movements continue to use Congolese territory as rear bases? How can the Lusaka process go forward if UNITA and the Angolan Army fight each other on Congo soil? Of course, if all these movements are designated as "militias" to be disarmed, then this particular problem would be solved, but what military force is going to disarm them all? The suggestion has been made, by France among others, that a regional conference presumably going beyond the regional

implications of the Lusaka Agreement, could come to a global resolution. Unless the international community is willing to invest the type of force, money and interest in Central Africa that it has been able to commit to Timor, Bosnia and Kosovo, it is doubtful that such a conference would succeed. One need only look at the time and effort which has been invested in the Arusha process to deal with Burundi in order to conclude that joining all the problems of all the states in the region is unlikely to magically produce peace.

### **The Future**

This analysis does not conclude on a very optimistic note. The current problems should not distort one's view of what is ultimately likely to develop. The Congolese people have gained a real sense of their national identity from the trials and tribulations through which they have been forced to live. No significant body of opinion wants anything else than a single Congolese state. Despite the virtual collapse of education and employment opportunities in many if not most parts of the country, public opinion has again and again been seen to support a compromise and inclusion, in short, a democratic solution. The disaffection of the public from most of the visible political leaders is due to the fact that in one way or another they have closed the door to open participation. This picture of a politically aware people seeking basic freedoms and an opportunity to rebuild—modest goals which have been denied for decades—has its blemishes. The expulsion of the Luba from Katanga though manipulated by a Mobutist governor, found a receptive audience among the Lubumbashi population. The hatred expressed against Congolese Tutsi and their very unresolved future fate in the DRC is another example of intolerance. But, given half a chance the Congolese public would respond positively to a pluralistic social agenda.

## Postscript January 2000

Recent events have been marked by more intense attention given to the war in the DRC and the connected Central African conflicts. This is partly the result of the commitment which Ambassador Holbrooke, the US Delegate to the United Nations, has made to place Africa at the head of the priorities to be handled by the Security Council in January when he presides over the Council. This increased US interest in the war, which has been relatively limited up to the present, has resulted in pressure to move the Lusaka process forward—since it had almost stalled. The first concrete result has been agreement by all parties to naming former President of Botswana, Quett Masire, as the “neutral facilitator” who will organize the internal dialogue called for in the Lusaka Agreement. Ambassador Holbrooke has also invited the Presidents of the conflicting states to come to the UN for a full debate on how peace can be achieved.

Other developments which may lower the level of conflict can be pointed to:

1. Negotiations between Sudan and Uganda aimed at re-establishing diplomatic relations and seeking peace in the region. If this leads to concrete results, one may expect Sudanese support for Ugandan insurgency movements—some with bases in the DRC—to decline.

2. Some negotiations between Rwanda and Zimbabwe have been reported. They may only concern some Zimbabwean soldiers who are surrounded by Congolese rebels at Ikela, but they could possibly signify bi-lateral talks aimed at reducing confrontations.

3. The three rebel movements—RCD/Goma, RCD-ML and MLC—have met twice in order to coordinate their political and military positions and to define common policies in anticipation of the internal dialogue. This move will in all probability strengthen their position vis-à-vis the international community and Kabila. Only time will tell whether this furthers the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the Second Congo War. But, given the fact that these movements had in the past months confronted each other—along with their external supporters, Rwanda and Uganda—not only with words but also with

arms, their cooperating now, with the blessing of both Rwanda and Uganda, can be seen as a positive development.

4. Finally, while the time schedule foreseen in the Lusaka Agreement has not been even remotely respected, none of the signatories have formally rejected it. The Agreement has become the road map toward peace.

The other side of this balance sheet must, however, also be looked at and there are several developments in recent weeks which have extended the principle “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” and have reduced the prospects for peace.

1. The UN peacekeeping force which is called for in the Lusaka Agreement is far from being deployed. In this respect, the war in the DRC is being treated very differently than those in former Yugoslavia or Timor.

2. In the Kivus conditions continue to deteriorate badly. The Mai Mai, who were not invited to Lusaka and have rejected the Agreement, appear to grow in strength. There are credible reports that they are being supported by the Kinshasa authorities. Further, they appear to be cooperating with the ex-FAR and Interahamwe as well as the Burundian *Conseil National pour la Defense de la Democratie*, CNDD, the Hutu militia who have rejected the Arusha negotiations and have continued to fight.

3. Zimbabwe, is reported to have undertaken talks with CNDD representatives and to have promised support. Since the CNDD is cooperating with anti-RCD movements, and the RCD is the enemy of the Kabila regime which is supported by Zimbabwe, there is a logic to this new extension of the principle “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”, but the impact of this development certainly undermines the prospects of both Lusaka for the DRC and Arusha for Burundi. Moreover, strengthening the CNDD will make President Mandela’s role as mediator in Burundi more difficult.

4. The balance of power in Angola appears to have swung in the Government’s favor with the result that its forces have pursued UNITA both inside the DRC and Namibia. These border

crossings were accomplished with the agreement of the respective governments but at considerable cost to the local populations. However, Angolan forces also appear to be massed on the Zambian border with the possible prospect of clashes with Zambian forces.

5. There continues to be little indication that the Kabila regime is willing to participate in the internal dialogue on the basis of equality with other elements of Congolese society or to accept political pluralism. Both the armed and non-violent oppositions are placing a great deal of hope in the Lusaka process, but it is still unclear to what degree Kinshasa is willing to play by those rules.

6. Kinshasa's concern and emphasis has been on the departure of "aggressor" forces, i.e. Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Rwandan withdrawal is probably dependent on it being satisfied that the Interahamwe have been disarmed and disbanded and for the moment it is difficult to envision how, when, and by whom this will be accomplished.

In a word, war is still very much present, and peace is still only a hope and in the meantime hundreds of thousands internally displaced civilian Congolese suffer endless afflictions from hunger to rape to massacres.

## Acronyms

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| AFDL  | Alliance de forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo                     |
| ANC   | Armée nationale congolaise   |
| ANZ   | National Zairian Army  |
| CNS   | Conférence nationale souveraine — National Sovereign Conference                  |
| DRC   | Democratic Republic of the Congo   |
| DSP   | Division spéciale présidentielle   |
| FAC   | Forces armées congolaises  |
| FAR   | Forces armées rwandaises (former Rwandan government army)                        |
| FAZ   | Forces armées zaïroises (former Zairean government army)                         |
| FONUS | Forces novatrices pour l'union et la solidarité                                  |
| ML    | Mouvement de libération  |
| MLC   | Mouvement pour la libération du Congo — Movement for the Liberation of the Congo |
| MPLA  | Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola  |
| OAU   | Organization of African Unity  |
| ONUC  | Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo  |
| RCD   | Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie                                       |
| RPA   | Rwanda Patriotic Army  |
| SADC  | Southern Africa Development Conference   |
| UDPS  | Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social                                    |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees                                    |
| UNITA | União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola                              |



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