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# THE CONGO: A CASE STUDY OF MERCENARY EMPLOYMENT

by

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(This is an excerpt from a research paper in which Colonel Dodenhoff quite exhaustively examines the employment of mercenaries. This final work is a follow-on of an article published in the March issue--"A Historical Perspective of Mercenaries." Ed.)

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During the winter of 1963-1964, a minor Communist-inspired rebellion broke out in Kwilu Province. Originating in historical tribal rivalries, the rebellion took an anti-Central Government turn under the leadership of Pierre Mulele, who was an early collaborator of Lumumba and had spent many months in Red China.<sup>1</sup> Central Government and the United Nations Forces were never able to extinguish the rebellion, but by mid-February 1964 it had been confined to a relatively small area.

**The Renegade Rebellion.** The Kwilu rebellion proved to be only a forerunner of more serious rebellions in the eastern Congo. Tribal discontent erupted into open rebellion in the Kivu in April 1964. The rebels were led by leftist followers of the late Lumumba, who had gone into self-imposed exile in Brazzaville in November 1963 and had

set up a Committee of National Liberation.<sup>2</sup>

The peacekeeping effort had run its course. This time, in the spring of 1964, no government urged the Security Council to undertake a new initiative to counter the threat to peace, or to guarantee the territorial integrity of the Congo opposed by the insurrections encouraged and partly led by Red China. The United Nations no longer had the *mind, muscle, or money* to engage in another Congo operation. As of 30 June 1964, the same day the United Nations Force went to zero, the rebels dominated areas totaling one-fifth of the Congo. Peking's Jenmin Jih-pao publicly hailed the "excellent revolutionary situation" in the Congo and expressed the hope that it would follow the pattern of the Communist war in South Vietnam. The insurgents were receiving some direction from the

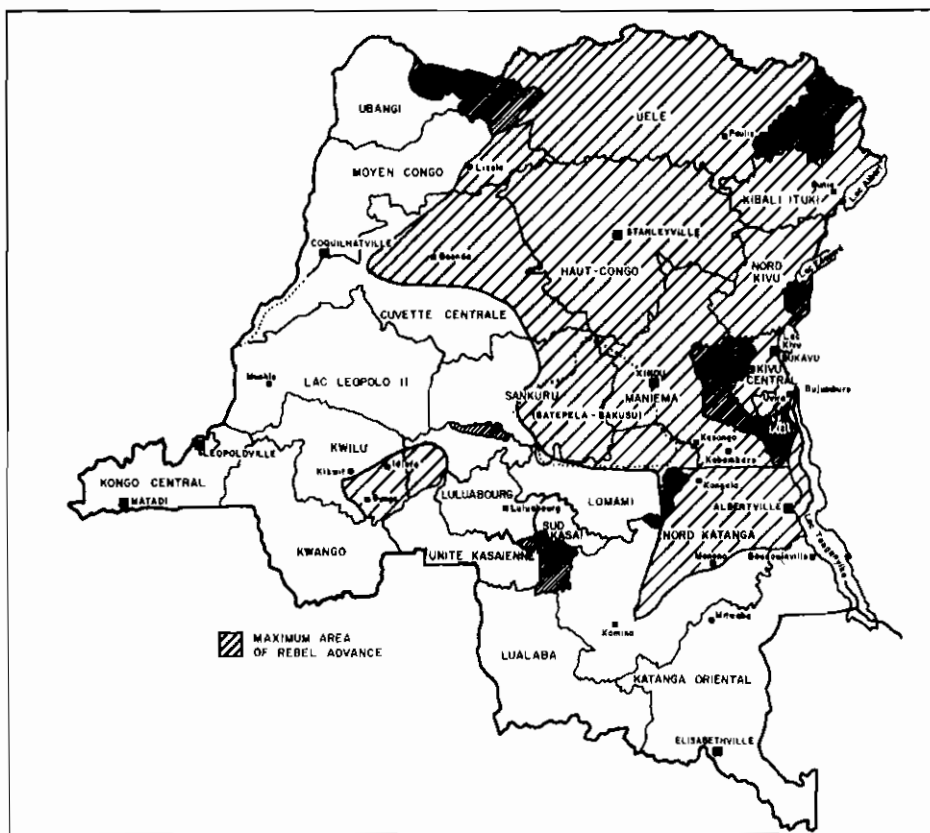


Fig. 3—Maximum Area of Rebel Advance.

Chinese Embassies in Congo Brazzaville and Burundi. The Central Government was incapable of dealing with the rebel challenge without external assistance.<sup>3</sup> With the condemnation of Tshombe and the mercenaries that existed during the 1960-1963 time period, the ironic surprise of the 1964 time period was the recall of Tshombe and the renewed recruitment of mercenaries to service; however, this time with the Central Government of the Republic of the Congo (Leopoldville).

**Tshombe's Return.** Against this background and with alarm apparent in Leopoldville (10 July 1964), Moise Kapenda Tshombe, returning from exile in Spain, announced that he was the only man able to control this situation

and able to effect a compromise with the rebel hands. Since Adoula, then premier of the Congo, was clearly unable to cope with the situation, Congolese President Kasavubu agreed in July to appoint Tshombe as Prime Minister for a transition period, until elections could be held.

Eighteen months earlier, Tshombe had seen his Katanga secessionist movement suppressed by the United Nations and ANC with U.S. aid and encouragement. Now American officials (particularly Averell Harriman), were prompted to support an officially unpalatable personality. One of the most surprising and fascinating events of 1964 was the return of the exiled and defeated former President of Katanga to head the Central Government in Leo-

poldville. This *coup de theatre*, even by Congolese standards, resulted in the wildest speculation about "who was behind him?" Tshombe had convinced them in talks, since his exile, that "he alone might be able to stabilize the country."

Tshombe, ironically, could back up this claim. For what was generally not known outside the Congo was that M. Jean Schramme and *Les Forces Katanga Libres en Angola* of 1,000 to 2,000 gendarmes threatened a military operation in support of a new Katanga secession. Caught between Christopher Gbenye's *Armée Populaire de Liberation (APL)* in the northwest Congo and Tshombe's Katanga Liberation army in Angola, it became clear to Mobutu that his *Armée Nationale Congolaise (ANC)* would be no match, and the entire Congo would be engulfed in conflict with the Central Government in Leopoldville overthrown or dissolved. In the Katanga Liberation Army, Jean Schramme was to command the army, Gerry Puren was to command the Katangan Air Force (*l'Aviation Katanga-libre-AVIKAT*), Denard the military depots, and Andrieux the telecommunications for the Liberation forces. With Tshombe being accepted as Prime Minister, the forces of Schramme in Angola would not be used to fight against the ANC, but rather with them in combination against Gbenye's APL. Nevertheless, for a time things continued to deteriorate.<sup>5</sup>

**The Rebellion Spreads.** The fighting spread to Orientale and Kivu, and it was soon clear that the ANC could not hope to control the rebellion. An army of Congolese who called themselves Simbas—the Swahili word for lions—was advancing on Stanleyville. The Simba threat to Stanleyville had materialized rapidly. In early July a motley column of tribal dissidents, which probably numbered no more than a few hundred at the start, moved out of Albertville, a

town on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, and headed north and west, gathering recruits along the way. They seized town after town without opposition. In each case the troops of the Central Government (the ANC) fled without a fight.<sup>6</sup>

On 22 July the provincial capital of Kindu, 250 miles south of Stanleyville, fell to the rebels. Thousands of local tribesmen flocked to the cause. Setting out from Kindu in trucks, the Simbas moved toward Stanleyville, encountering little resistance from the demoralized ANC. On 2 August the Simbas reached a village only 24 miles from Stanleyville. On 5 August 1964 the Simbas had control of the city of Stanleyville. A large majority of Europeans had remained in Stanleyville hoping to be treated equitably. However, Simbas were violently anti-American and had declared that they could not give any "guarantee of safety" to the Americans. Several United Nations administrative personnel (while the military United Nations peacekeeping forces had departed the Congo at the end of June, the United Nations administrative personnel and the professionals had remained) were also leaving since they also had been warned by the rebels that the United Nations personnel could not be "guaranteed safety."

The Simba army was something that could only happen in the Congo. It was composed of primitive tribesmen who were led to battle by witch doctors. Each recruit was put through an elaborate ceremony which conferred *dawa*, or medicine, on him supposedly to make him immune to bullets. If the warrior took the precaution of waving palm branches and chanting "mai, mai" (water, water) as he went into battle, enemy bullets would simply turn into water. Inevitably some did get killed in battle, but the sorcerers quickly explained that the deceased had violated some taboo.

Anywhere else the Simbas would have been mowed down by the opposing troops, but in the Congo they proved to be more or less effective as a fighting force. For one thing, the ANC was, for the most part, little more than a mutinous rabble with no taste for a real fight. They seldom took aim for, as most of them knew, it was "the noise, not the bullet, which kills."<sup>7</sup> Time and again the ANC dropped their weapons and ran as the Simbas approached chanting "mai, mai." At first the Simbas were armed mostly with spears, arrows, and clubs but eventually captured considerable modern firearms from the ANC.

Several general causes for support of the antigovernment are clear. Above all, the decline since 1960 in the material well-being of most areas of the Congo, both urban and rural, combined with the gross inequities in distribution of the rewards of independence had produced a sharp polarization between "intellectuals" and the "mass." Sharp resentment was also focused upon those believed to be the hirelings of the new ruling class, the police, and, above all, the soldiers. As in the past, the *Force Publique* of colonial days had always been a brutal instrument for maintenance of order, and its methods had undergone no visible changes since it became the *Armée Nationale Congolaise*. The fact that the ANC was dispersed throughout the countryside, not just stationed in a few military bases, brought rural populations in all parts of the country into uncomfortable, intimate contact with an army whose troops were overpaid (a correction made since independence) and undisciplined. In the early phases of the rebellion, the unpopularity of the ANC swelled rebel ranks deprived the army of support or even cooperation from local populations.<sup>8</sup>

**International Reaction.** During this period the United States felt strongly

that foreign troops were badly needed to take over from the Congolese Army. The Congolese Army had been unable to roll back or contain the rebels. It had, in fact, virtually collapsed and the United Nations Forces had left the Congo and were unlikely to return.<sup>9</sup> Tshombe sent a request to the Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant, for aid against the rebel infiltration. Thant refused this assistance with the United Nations Secretariat refusing to publicly disclose the actual request or the reply by the Secretary General.<sup>10</sup> One thing was certain, the United Nations, financially and morally bankrupt from their peacekeeping efforts in Katanga, was in no position to undertake any new adventure in the field.

The loss of interest in the peacekeeping mission after the end of the Katangan secession by the neutralist states suggests that their leaders were more concerned about threats to the authority of the newly independent Congo from the West than from the Communist bloc. To them, secessionist Katanga was regarded largely as a Brussels-directed effort designed to frustrate successful decolonization. They showed little interest in the threats to the Central Government posed by the Moscow-supported rebel regime of Lumumba and Gizenga in Stanleyville or the Peking-supported movements in 1964. Yet, both these movements gravely challenged the authority of Leopoldville, the stability of the Congo and jeopardized the prospects for peaceful change in central Africa. The United States was also concerned about the threats to a unified Congo. But this time the U.S. State Department did not recommend that the United Nations Forces undertake any action to throw back or contain the 1964 revolts or that the Security Council consider any new measures to meet this less visible and more subtle danger.<sup>11</sup>

To say that the United States and the other major financial contributors

during 1960-1964 did not exercise full control over the United Nations Force is not to say that they were without influence. The extent of the financial support provided by the Big Powers was a barometer of influence. The United States was the most influential government in the United Nations because it had borne a large share of the cost and because it was the strongest and most consistent political supporter of the U.N. Mission in the Congo. Of the total costs of the Congo operation (\$170.7 million), the United States will pay 41.52 percent if all members contribute. However, by the end of 1966 only 51 countries paid their full quota, 35 countries only about half their assessment, and 32 countries paid *none* of their assessment, notably the Soviet Union, France, the Soviet bloc, and Cuba. With this distribution, the United States has contributed approximately 80 percent of the total. This obvious inequality is also indicative of why the United States and the United Nations did not deem it appropriate to contribute forces in the 1964 time period.<sup>12</sup>

However, the United States did not reject other international approaches for providing foreign forces. The United States apparently hoped that Tshombe's appeal for African troops would help soften the reaction to his premiership throughout the rest of Africa. Ethiopia, Liberia, Senegal, Nigeria, and Malagasy were the countries to which Tshombe had appealed to put down the spreading revolt. G. Mennen Williams, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, indicated that "Africanization" of the struggle against the rebels was essential before the United States would provide additional aid. This point was clearly made to Tshombe.<sup>13</sup>

Tshombe was reluctant to ask for African troops since he was resentful of the attitude of those African leaders who regarded him as a pawn of European financial interests. Tshombe had boycotted the African summit meeting

in Cairo in July 1964 after several African leaders, including President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Premier Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria said they would not sit at a conference table with him. In reaction to this affront Tshombe declared on 8 August 1964 that he would not call for African troops. However, the pressure of the United States and the persuasiveness of G. Mennen Williams, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, changed Tshombe's attitude.<sup>14</sup>

With the arrival of the Ethiopian Minister of State, Manimo Tadesse, in Leopoldville, the possibility of African troops from the requested countries faded materially. Tadesse informed Tshombe that he should take his case directly to the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and that Ethiopia would provide troops, but only under the "umbrella" of the OAU. Such a role for the organization was extremely unlikely because many of the members expressed an anti-Tshombe attitude. Certain African countries were inclined to allow the Congolese Premier to find his own solution, while others were actively involved in helping his opponents. Tshombe in July 1964 found himself captain of a ship that leaked everywhere.<sup>15</sup> The *Courrier d'Afrique*, Leopoldville's leading newspaper, said it doubted whether the Congo would be represented at the OAU's meeting in September unless the organization "changed its position" on the Congo question.<sup>16</sup>

With a refusal from the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, and only a promise of material aid from the United States (specifically not troops), Tshombe was once again forced into the decision to turn to mercenaries. Certainly this was not a revolutionary concept for Tshombe, but an evolutionary process of having his alternatives eliminated by external forces. The past fortunes of Tshombe had been irrevocably interlinked with

the military support provided by mercenaries, and it was obvious that his political future would be integrally associated with their support in the 1964-1965 time period.

**The Mercenaries Return.** Conferring with Count Charles de Kerehove de Denterghem, Belgian Ambassador to the Congo, an advocate of African state assistance, Premier Tshombe declared, "We have no need for troops from the outside. We have plenty of our own soldiers who can handle the situation."<sup>17</sup> What was probably known all too well, however, by Tshombe and his close associates was that rejection by the international organizations was a foregone conclusion. With the National Army bewitched, demoralized, and deserting—lock, stock, and barrel—to the enemy, Tshombe's immediate decision was to hire white mercenary troops to put backbone into the Congolese Army and suppress the rebellion before the rebellion consumed the entire country. The fact that arrangements for the white mercenaries were being conducted at the same time that requests for assistance were going to U Thant and to the five African nations was of no material consequence since a negative response was expected. The immediate problem was essentially one of enlisting and organizing the force. Effective aid was paramount, and time was pressing.<sup>18</sup>

**Recruitment.** Soon a group of whites began checking into the Membling Hotel in Leopoldville. The Membling became the headquarters for the new mercenary force. The men were close-lipped, but soon the word was out. They were South Africans, Rhodesians, and others who had fought as mercenaries for Tshombe during the Katanga wars. Now Tshombe had another job for them.<sup>19</sup>

Tshombe was, if nothing else, a hardheaded realist. He knew that unless substantial military victories were forthcoming soon, he would be finished

politically. He needed help, and fortunately his previous mercenary friends were willing to supply it.

Tshombe was interested in seeing Stanleyville recaptured. Tshombe had staked his political career on early recapture of the city. It would be a risky gamble, but he had no choice. If Stanleyville remained in Simba hands, Tshombe's own regime would in all likelihood crumble.<sup>20</sup>

**White Africans.** As early as July 1964, Lt. Col. Gerry Puren,<sup>21</sup> a former mercenary in the Katangan Air Force, was recruiting new mercenaries for Premier Tshombe. Puren had been very close to Tshombe during the time Tshombe had been in exile in Spain. In fact, Puren had acted as a courier for him on a number of occasions and, as a result, felt he knew what the Premier was thinking. Anticipating Tshombe's requirement, Puren had taken it upon himself to alert over 200 men in Johannesburg who had declared themselves ready to fight. Michael Hoare, the Irish born, former British Army commando officer who was one of Tshombe's Katanga officers in 1961, was the commander designate of the new force, and Puren was to be the Commander, Air Operations.

Second in command to Michael Hoare was to be a former executive officer in the Rhodesian Air Services who had been in touch with Puren from the moment that mercenaries were being recalled. Alastair Wickes had also been with Tshombe in Katanga in 1961 and had formed a loose but lasting friendship with Hoare since those adventurous days.<sup>22</sup>

South African adventurers, many of whom fought in the mercenary force of Moise Tshombe in secessionist Katanga Province, were signing up for the Congolese Army. Several young men from the former Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland were among the mercenaries. Recruiting centers in northern and

southern Rhodesia were set up. Rhodesians, unemployed, some looking for adventure, were screened by Commandant Alastair Wickes for service in the 5th Commando.<sup>23</sup> This was the unit that was to fly the banner of the "Wild Geese," while commanded by Major "Mike" Hoare in 1964 and 1965.<sup>24</sup>

At the recruiting centers in Johannesburg, long queues formed responding to the *Johannesburg Star* advertisement in August 1964: "Any fit young man looking for employment with a difference at a salary well in excess of 100 pounds sterling per month should telephone 838-5202 during business hours. Employment initially offered for six months. Immediate start."<sup>25</sup>

Four years earlier, right after Tshombe pulled Katanga out of the Congo, the same type of advertisement appeared in the "Help Wanted" column of a dozen newspapers in London, Paris, Brussels, and Johannesburg. A rash of advertisements in the "Situations Vacant" column of the newspapers in Johannesburg and Salisbury carried the news that recruiting was about to begin. In Johannesburg, Alastair Wickes had appointed Patrick O'Malley as recruiting officer and flew up to Salisbury to open an office there himself. From the Congolese viewpoint with regard to recruitment, the keynote was to be speed with security. Publicity was to be shunned at all costs. Fundamental was to recruit the right man. In this category the type individual looked for in recruiting was to be young, fit, and with a sense of adventure. Training would be received in the Congo. O'Malley, one of the recruiters, was the son of a former British Ambassador to Portugal. He had fought against the Soviets in Finland in 1939 and had resigned his commission in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry to serve as a pilot in World War II. His leg, badly hurt from an auto accident, prevented him from taking up active service with the forces in the Congo, but he was aware of the

soldierly requirements necessary for service in the Congo and screened the recruits accordingly.<sup>26</sup>

The men recruited were British, German, French, Greek, Italian, and South African. Several could speak little English, and it was obvious that they had been in South Africa only a short time.<sup>27</sup>

Ian Gordon, who fought for Premier Tshombe when Tshombe was President of Katanga, advised the recruits that they would be trained by professionals and commanded by professionals. The initial contract would be for 6 months in which the earnings for a recruit were \$280, plus \$420 danger supplement, and also 37,000 Congolese francs as pocket money (180 francs to the dollar officially, 360-1,000 francs on the black market)--\$400 for noncommissioned officers, and \$1,100 for top officers, with half being deposited in pounds or dollars in any bank account in the world; a \$19,000 indemnity would be paid to relatives in the event of death in the Congo.

Each volunteer was handed a form to complete. It asked information on previous military experience, weapons handled, and technical qualifications as well as usual personal details. O'Malley made it clear that he was not connected with the South African government or affiliates. Emphasis was placed upon proper papers, passport, and health certificates and that nothing would be illegal in their leaving the country.<sup>28</sup>

A conflict arose out of the recruiting in South Africa. On one hand the desire to Africanize the conflict; on the other the use of South African and Rhodesian mercenaries would merely confirm most Africans' view that Tshombe was a pawn of the white man. The news that white mercenary forces were being organized made it unlikely that black African nations would assist Tshombe since they considered the white mercenaries *l'ennemi du genre humain*. The



black Africans bitterly opposed the South African and Rhodesian regimes and their policy of white supremacy and racial segregation. Therefore, Tshombe's call for mercenaries from South Africa was condemned and precluded black African participation in the Congo. Periodic promises from Premier Tshombe were made at the OAU meeting to send the mercenaries home if he could get African soldiers to replace them, but no offer was forthcoming from any of the African countries.<sup>29</sup>

The countries of black Africa were not the only ones whose announced policies were in contradiction to their actual policies. Dr. Verwoerd, then Prime Minister of South Africa, had previously given warning that unlimited recruiting was undesirable because of the South African manpower shortage.<sup>30</sup> This was not likely to encourage help from other African nations. The question of removing mercenaries was periodically suggested by Tshombe in response to the African condemnations but was never actually implemented.<sup>31</sup>

**Purging the Force.** On 4 September Tshombe stated that South Africans who had come to the Congo and offered their services would be sent home, adding that some had "put out propaganda against the national interest" which could not be tolerated. Mercenaries returning to South Africa subsequently complained of bad food, inadequate weapons, scarcity of medical supplies, no contract, and little money.<sup>32</sup> What was not said was that these were the "rejects" from the first group to go to the Congo. The general standard was extremely low. There was too high a proportion of alcoholics, drunks, booze artists, bums, and layabouts who were finding it difficult to get a job anywhere else and thought that this was the heaven-sent opportunity to make easy money. There was a fair sprinkling of dagga-smokers and dope addicts. Perhaps the greatest sur-

prise of all, and it was to remain so throughout 1964 and 1965, was the incidence of homosexuals. Of all places to find these individuals, the last place one would have thought was a mercenary outfit.

Hoare began the cleansing operation to rid the unit of the deadwood and those who would never make soldiers. The door was left open for those that decided to unvolunteer when the mission was described. The bad were severed, and what remained was good material. Naturally, a man who had been found unfit to serve for some reason tried to save face with the usual excuses of lack of pay, frightful conditions, poor food, and no organization, most of which was reported by the yellow press. The image of the mercenary force projected by these stories was more than somewhat distorted and debauched.<sup>33</sup>

**Mobutu's Plan.** The basis for mercenary recruitment had its origin in Puren's forethought and in the historic document of then Major General Mobutu, the Commander in Chief of the Armée Nationale Congolaise (ANC), who wrote exactly what he wanted of Major Hoare. The priority of operations was first Albertville, then Stanleyville. The note read as follows:

1. A company of 200 men must arrive *immediately* at Kamina. MIS-  
SION: Retake Manono, Albertville,  
Fizi, Uvira.
2. 300 volunteers should be formed  
into six platoons for the six mobile  
groups now in creation.<sup>34</sup>
3. 500 volunteers in company with  
elements of the ANC must retake  
Stanleyville *immediately*.

Signed, Commander in Chief ANC  
J.D. Mobutu  
Major General

Maj. Gen. Joseph Desiré Mobutu was 33 years of age at this time. He had served in the Force Publique for 7 years and had left the army with the rank of sergeant—the highest rank available to

him. He was a member of the *Movement National Congolais* (Lumumba's party) and Secretary of State to the first Congolese Government after independence. Ten days later he was made Chief of Staff of the Army with the rank of colonel. On 14 September 1960 he arrested Lumumba, suspended President Kasavubu from office, and expelled the Russian and Czechoslovakian diplomats from the Congo with 24 hours notice. The world took cognizance of then Colonel Mohutu as the weak "strong man" of the Congo.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout the world, reaction to the call for mercenaries was hostile and unfavorable. As anticipated, when disclosed, the member nations of the OAU were indignant, angry, and insulted that the Congolese Prime Minister should have the temerity to call in white troops to put his house in order while engaged in discussions with them for black troops. They completely ignored the fact that their insignificant and inefficient armies were quite incapable of looking after themselves, let alone embarking on a foreign adventure. Hatred for Tshombe and his bold edict mounted throughout the length and breadth of Africa. Emanuel Sinda, Tshombe's official spokesman stated that: "We have no intention of recruiting mercenaries to fight against the rebels. With our own soldiers, we have enough."<sup>36</sup> By 30 August 1964 about 250 mercenaries had arrived by air in Kamina, the fabulous military air and ground base in the center of Kamina. Kamina Base, *Bas Kamina* or B.A.K.A., as it was generally known, was a military marvel set in the heart of Africa. It had been erected at a fantastic cost to the Belgians and NATO alliance infrastructure funds, for whom it was to provide a strategic base. Its paved runways were capable of taking the heaviest planes and long enough for jet aircraft. Its housing was built to maintain a garrison of roughly two divisions, approximately 30,000 soldiers, and included a complete air train-

ing school and the usual cinemas, post office, swimming pools, et cetera. In brief, it was a garrison town deep in the African hush.

**Organizing the Force.** If the men that gathered in those days at Kamina had any illusions, they were to be rudely shattered. The skeleton existed, but the flesh had been eaten away during the years since independence. Congolese troops and civilians, as well as the UNF, had scavenged every house and establishment and left the base in utter disrepair. There was no water, electricity, plumbing, et cetera. The whole place was a hideous monument to neglect and a sizable threat to the health of the men involved in establishing a viable military force in the Congo. It was in this environment that one of the most creditable of African military forces, the 5th Commando, had its genesis. Some preparation effort had been accomplished but nothing of what was necessary for the anticipated influx of men.<sup>37</sup>

Recruitment had continued unabated, and in less than 3 weeks O'Malley and Wieke between them had signed on over 1,000 men ready to fight as mercenary soldiers in the Congo. All recruiting stopped 2 September, allegedly upon the recruiting agents' decision; however, in reality both Hoare and Colonel Vanderwalle, the "Riehelieu of Katanga,"<sup>38</sup> sent messages to Wieke and the South African Government, respectively, to hold up any further drafts at Johannesburg, "until the dust settled."

While the recruiting and support problems were being ironed out, the diplomats set the stage for expanded United States and Belgian technical aid to the Congo. U.S. Under Secretary of State W. Averell Harriman conferred in Brussels on 7 August with Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Henri Spaak on the deteriorating situation in the Congo. Previously, Harriman had recommended

that more ground vehicles, aircraft, and communications equipment should be sent to the Congo. Responding to an urgent request from the Congo, Washington became directly involved in the Central Government's effort to contain the Kivu revolt. Two or three Americans recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) flew combat missions in Kivu Province until grounded by the State Department action. Under contract with the Congo Government, they had flown American built T-28 aircraft and attacked rebel positions near Bukavu.<sup>39</sup> Six T-28's were reported in the Congo at this time, which had been transported by C-133 and C-124 aircraft and then assembled by a special civilian crew at N'Jili Airport near Leopoldville. The Soviet Union referred to these individuals as colonialist "hirelings of the CIA engaged in punitive operations against Congolese patriots." It is interesting to note that no such note was addressed to the Secretary General when the 16 H-14 aircraft, manned by Russian crews, responded to Lumumba in 1960 and participated in the punitive campaign in Kasai.<sup>40</sup>

With the failure of the 5 African countries to send military aid to the Congo, and in response to another appeal from Tsbombe, the United States aid was increased with the arrival of additional T-28 aircraft (total 13), four to six H-21 helicopters, and six B-26K counterinsurgency (COIN) aircraft. The immediate question was who was to fly these aircraft. Rhodesians and South Africans, including "wild" Jimmy Hedges, infamous pilot from Katangan days in the 20th Squadron, were flying Harvard trainers (T-6/SNJ) aircraft equipped with rockets and machine guns against the rebels in Kasai; however, the numbers and availability precluded operation throughout the dissident areas of the Congo. The use of South Africans to fly the U.S. planes would certainly draw protests from those countries opposed to her policies

of racial separation. Originally, French pilots were thought to be the answer to flying the B-26's, but this was also rejected. The State Department indicated that these aircraft "would use contract pilots and maintenance personnel as needed." No U.S. citizens would be called on as contract pilots.<sup>41</sup>

**State's Displeasure.** The specific reference to "no United States citizens flying these aircraft" stemmed from the State Department's displeasure at finding out that U.S. contract pilots *had* conducted operations against the rebel Bafulero tribesmen in eastern Congo. By June 1964 the State Department had obtained assurances against further violations of the policy that U.S. citizens would not fly combat missions in the Congo.

State Department officials were resentful because they had been repeatedly assured that the U.S. pilots were on training missions themselves and not on combat missions. Robert J. McCloskey, a Department spokesman, indicated that there were 2 concerns regarding this participation. First, the legality of American participation: "The contractual arrangements between the American technicians and the Congolese government do not violate any law of the United States, nor do they entail any expatriation of the United States citizens under immigration and national laws."

By "technician," McCloskey indicated he included fliers. In responding to the second concern regarding the termination of combat operation by U.S. "contract" pilots, he added: "Our understanding is that these United States citizens will not be called upon by the Congolese government to engage in operational missions in the police action within the Congo."<sup>42</sup>

The State Department's displeasure mainly stemmed from the actions of other agencies of the Government which, apparently working under a

cloak of secrecy, "reportedly" failed to inform the State Department of their operations. The handful of pilots in the Congo were apparently recruited and supervised by the Central Intelligence Agency.<sup>43</sup>

When the Communists and Western World began to wrestle for control of the vast area in the Congo starting in 1960, a modest Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) organization in the Congo mushroomed into a large political and military complex. This was not to compete with the U.S. Embassy and military attachés, but this organization was formed to apply the discreet capacities of the CIA to the seething contest among many conflicting forces.

**"Company" Employees.** Starting almost from scratch, because the Belgians had forbidden Americans to even meet with Congolese officials, the CIA dispersed its agents and recruited likely leaders and financed their power. Capable of quickly gathering information from all sources, buying informants, and distributing funds without bureaucratic restraints imposed on other Government agencies, the CIA could quickly rise to the occasion of providing "contract" pilots for the U.S.-provided aircraft. The Agency had maintained contact with Cuban exile pilots, such as René Garcia who had flown B-26's in the abortive attempt at the "Bay of Pigs," and could easily recruit them through a "private" company in Florida. The Agency had the tools. It knew the Cubans in Miami and their abilities as pilots. It had the front organization through which they could be recruited, paid, and serviced. Cuban pilots received pay in 3 categories: flying in the Congo, approximately \$1,500; in combat operations, \$1,800; with mission bonuses adding to a possible total of approximately \$2,600 a month. Death and wounded indemnities were additional, the amount being deposited to U.S. banks in their names.

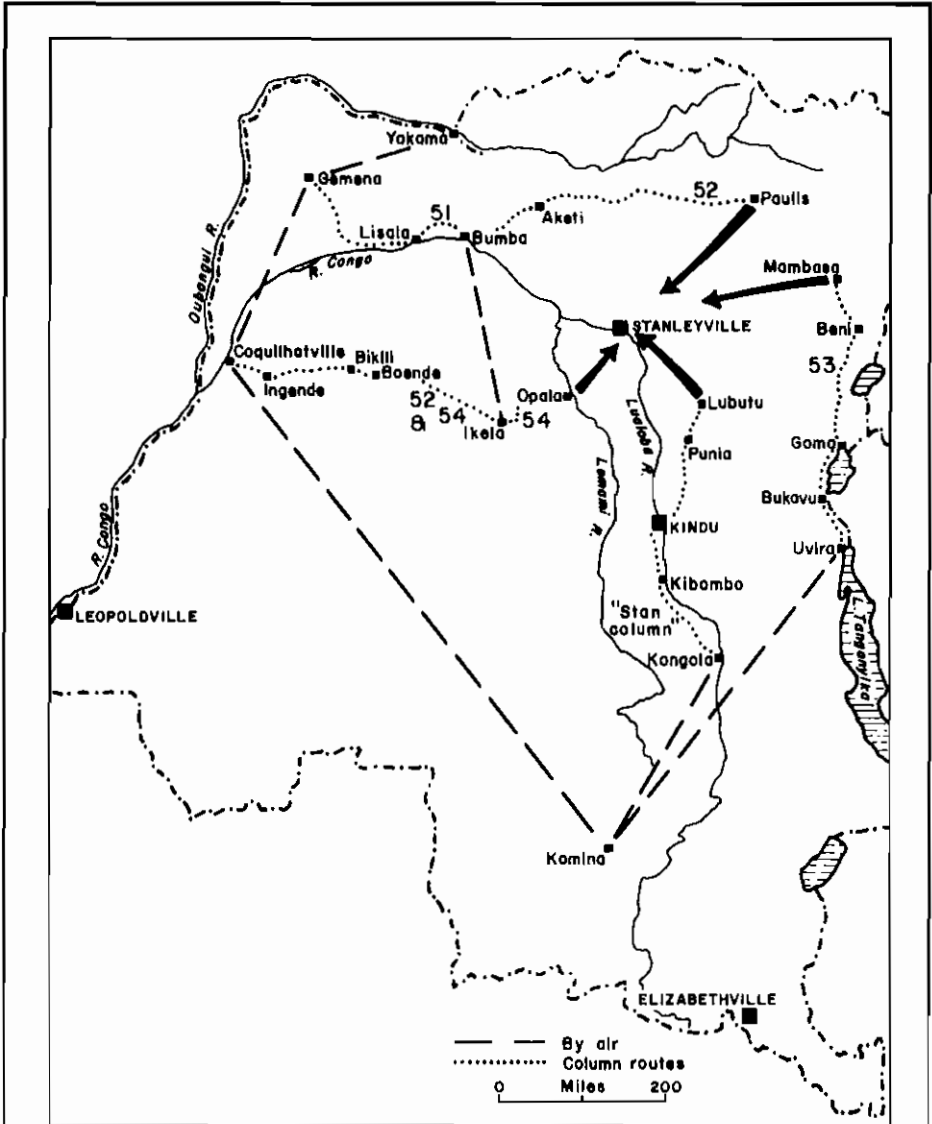
Moreover, the CIA could engage European mechanics, initially 20 Britishers, later aircraft maintenance specialists from all over Europe who responded to advertisements in London newspapers. These "technicians" who joined the cover maintenance organization *WIGMO* (Western International Ground Maintenance Organization) could be engaged without legal complication, and then the technical expertise could be furnished from CIA's own ranks of "noncombatant" Americans.<sup>44</sup>

All of these Cuban "volunteer mercenaries" were paid and controlled by the CIA. Interestingly, the Spanish abbreviation for *Compagnie* is CIA, therefore the Cubans considered that they were working for the "Company."

Some complications and embarrassments were experienced by the United States in this effort to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the era of fierce nationalism this covert support was extremely sensitive and required minimizing the American presence. The CIA as sponsor, paymaster, and director of the operations involving the rapid and effective provision of an instant air force in the Congo was at all times responsible to and reportedly welcomed by the policymakers of the United States.

It was these policymakers who chose to make the Agency the instrument of political and military intervention in another nation's affairs. For, in 5 years, the Agency had been the only one to find the peculiar combination to block the creation of a pro-Communist regime, recruit the leaders for a pro-American government, and supply the advice, support, military equipment, and "technicians" to enable the government to survive.<sup>45</sup> The "displeasure" of the State Department appears to lack a credible genuineness when reviewed in retrospect.

Was the United States involved with mercenary operation? The answer is



**I THE CONGO: the advance of units of 5 Commando on Stanleyville.**

5 Commando assembled at the Kamina base and then moved as follows:

- 51 *Commando*--by air to Gemena via Coquilhatville; then to Bumba. By air rejoined *Stan Column* at Kindu.
  - 52 *Commando*--by air to Coquilhatville; then to Ikela. By air to Bumba; relieved 51 *Commando* and continued to Paulis.
  - 53 *Commando*--by air to Uvira; then to Mambasa.
  - 54 *Commando*--by air to Coquilhatville; then with 52 *Commando* to Ikela; on their own to Opala.
- Stan Column* (55, 56 and 57 *Commandos* and H.Q.)--by air to Kongola; then to Stanleyville (joined by 51 *Commando* at Kindu).

Fig. 5--The Columns of the Fifth Commando.

obviously, yes! Was it a covert operation--yes! Was the American presence diminished--apparently yes. But the United States was heavily involved in her own brand of mercenary operations during 1964 and 1965. No more naive policy existed at that time than the castigating of other mercenary forces fighting in the Congo and refusing to transport them, while providing the source of men and material for U.S. controlled mercenaries. While the signing of contracts between the Congolese Government and the Cuban pilots, who were to fly the T-28's and B-26K's in the 21st Squadron, was formalized, the financial and material support by the United States continued. As will be seen later, the Soviet Union Air Forces were to actively support the pro-Communist Congolese rebel movement through Uganda and the Sudan. This support was in addition to the Chinese agent support provided through Tanzania and Burundi.

**Task Force Leo.** During the period that mercenaries were being recruited in the Congo, an appeal was made by the U.S. Ambassador to the Congo, G. McMurtrie Godley, for air transports to be used in the evacuation of American and European civilians from the Congo. The natives resorted to tribal methods, and wild men had attacked, raped, slaughtered, and tortured the Congolese "intellectuals," the elite, the Europeans, and the white population. With the rebel capture of Stanleyville, the consulate staff, including Michael Hoyt, had been taken prisoners and subjected to all manner of indignities. It was in this environment that the U.S. Strike Command was directed to send a joint task force to the Congo--Mission: humanitarian. The joint task force, designated JTF Leo, was commanded by Col. Robert Teller, USMC, with the author as Deputy. Four U.S. Air Force C-130E aircraft, a platoon of Army airborne troops, and a headquarters staff de-

ployed from the United States on 11 August 1964 and arrived at N'Jili Airport, Leopoldville, the night of 13 August. An Army helicopter detachment of three H-34 aircraft arrived by C-124 on 14 August 1964.<sup>46</sup> The initial mission of the JTF was to evacuate personnel from outlying areas to Leopoldville. Women and children, primarily families of American officials, United Nations employees, local government personnel, residents (Congolese and foreign), and missionaries were evacuated from outlying areas to Leopoldville. Areas that were close to attack by rebel forces were evacuated by having the personnel that were scattered over a considerable area gather at the closest airfield which could accommodate a C-130 and then be evacuated to Leopoldville. It appeared that after the arrival of JTF Leo at N'Jili Airport, Leopoldville, on 13 August 1964, that the panic that had been prevalent previously had dissipated. The government under Premier Tshombe, became solidified, the atmosphere reverted to a Central African ealm, and the rebel movement was not considered with such apprehension following the arrival of JTF Leo and the appearance of the mercenary soldiers. With the threat to human life reduced, JTF Leo's mission changed from pure rescue to the addition of logistically supporting the ANC.<sup>47</sup> The solution, although not the objective, for law and order was in view. The separatist attitude between the American personnel from the Embassy and JTF Leo and the mercenaries, however, was strictly directed by the Ambassador and the State Department. As a result, passage on the C-130's to go to the various fighting sections of the Congo could not be officially sanctioned. The United States refused to allow mercenaries to ride on these aircraft, since to provide air transport would be considered damaging to the American "image" in the rest of Africa. However, the mercenaries did manage to

sneak rides from time to time to proceed to and from the areas of battle.

Briefly, the mercenaries were officially considered had news. The employment of white mercenary troops to fight black men, regardless of the apparent calling, was something that the U.S. Government could not officially approve. Possibly the comments of Major Hoare can provide a different understanding of this perplexity:

I sensed that the Americans were in something of a dilemma. It could be argued that on one hand that the use of mercenaries would help to achieve a stable and unified Congo. To that extent we should be *faute de mieux*, the end justifying the means. On the other hand, Washington must forever, it seems, justify its African policy to that one-tenth of its population which is Negro, and the notion that white mercenaries fighting black men with the tacit approval of the United States Government was not one that would prove popular at home.

As a result, we [mercenaries] could expect no assistance whatever from them other than that which had been promised to the Congo as a whole under the terms of the general agreement between Harriman and Spaak . . . What I liked about American officials in the United States Embassy in Leopoldville was that they were always able to maintain their formal policy, yet at the same time remaining helpful and charming on a purely personal level.<sup>48</sup>

And helpful they were, for the materials, trucks, boats, ammunition, weapons, food, et cetera necessary to support 5th Commando operations in the Congo were transported by the C-130E aircraft and continued to support almost every mercenary operation during 1964 and 1965 in the Congo.

With ground troops being supplied by recruitment from South Africa and Rhodesia, tactical aircraft and "unofficial" air transports from the United States, pilots from South Africa, Rhodesia, Belgium, and the United States, weapons (7.62 *Fabrique Nationale*)

from Belgium, logistics support (air from Italy, ground from Belgium), Israel for paratroop training, all was in order for this internationalized military aid program. What was now needed was a campaign plan for the force.

**Vanderwalle Plan.** A plan was forthcoming. Belgium had consented to send a military adviser intimately acquainted with the Congo. This was Colonel Vanderwalle who was requested by Tshombe to organize the *5th Brigade Mecanisee* (5th Mechanized Brigade) consisting of foreign volunteers, Katanga gendarmes, and soldiers of the ANC.<sup>49</sup> Vanderwalle wanted to make the attack on Stanleyville from the South along the extension of the Congo River, the Lualaba. In this manner he would kill 2 birds with 1 stone. He could operate from the powerful base and supply center of Kamina, and in the course of his advance he would be able to occupy Maniema around Kindu, one of the rebels' main territories. The attack was to be made by a column under the cover name of Lima 1<sup>50</sup> commanded by Colonel Liegeois, an active Belgian officer. Liegeois, who had been trained in one of the best Belgian army corps, the *Chasseurs d'Ardennes*, was allotted Hoare's South Africans as his vanguard. The 5th Commando, as it was christened by Hoare in honor of his commando unit during World War II, had meanwhile grown considerably and had undergone training for several weeks. For support it was followed by Lima 2 consisting mainly of Belgian mercenaries and commanded by an active Belgian officer, Lieutenant Colonel Lamouline.

Andre Protin, an active major in the Belgian Army (who had been seconded to the Congo as a "technical assistant"), was assigned a column to operate east of the main column, thrusting north toward Stanleyville, covering its right flank, and attacking the rebels' second main territory, the Fizi Mountains. A fear prevailed that the rebels would get

support from Tanzania across Lake Tanganyika.<sup>51</sup> The 5th Commando was assembled at Kamina base, and then the subcommando moved as follows: the 51st Commando moved by air to Gemena (Mobutu's home town) via Coquilhatville in the northwest then to Bumba. By air, 51 Commando would rejoin the *Stan Column* at Kindu. The 52nd Commando would move by air to Coquilhatville, then to Ikela, continue by air to Bumba, relieve the 51st Commando, and continue to Paulis. The 53rd Commando was to move west by air to Uvira, then to Mambasa. The 54th Commando was to move by air to Coquilhatville; then with the 52nd Commando, to Ikela; then on their own to Opala. The *Stan Column* (55th, 56th, and 57th Commando and Headquarters) would move by air to Kongolo, then to Stanleyville (joined by the 51st Commando at Kindu).<sup>52</sup>

Each column was officially headed by a Congolese officer with about 300 Congolese soldiers and 50 mercenaries. The 50 mercenaries were used as a spearhead at the head of the column to break through rebel positions. The mercenary forces were in reality headed by a white officer who would "advise" the Congolese column commander. In practice, the spearhead existed independently, but in theory they were always under Congolese command. The Congolese soldiers in the columns were the best to be found. In reality they were drawn largely from the former Katangese gendarmes who were reintegrated into the ANC.

This multicolumn mercenary octopus, with its focus on Stanleyville, was made up of all of the mercenary types. The Greek waiters and kitchen boys who wanted to make war; Lieutenant Gardien, who liberated Manono, whose mines produced the tautalum for American space and military rockets; Lieutenant Vida, Hungarian ex-freedom fighter; Lieutenant Lamhrette, a former member of the French Foreign Legion;

Flemish Capt. Jaky Verwaeke, who was consumed with the idea of creating order in a country he regarded as his home; Galinos, a Greek officer who fought against the Communists of General Markos; Leon de Grouwe, the Fleming who was married to the rich proprietress of a jewelry shop in Belgium; Jungels from Arlou in the Ardennes who fought for the white race; Peter from East Germany who considered he was fighting the same enemy as the one suppressing his country; Tavernir, Flemish Franciscan Father; Pat Kirton, a South African who had been through the Military Academy at Pretoria; Siegfried Mueller, a former sergeant in the Wehrmacht during World War II; Erie Bridges, recently a Royal Marine Commando; Grant, an NCO in the Black Watch who also served in Katanga; Jack Carton-Barber, regimental sergeant-major in the best tradition of the British Army; Heremy Spencer, ex-Coldstream Guard; Gary Wilson, who could claim attendance at Sandhurst; and many others were all part of this hiring force. In retrospect, this force compared much more favorably than the polyglot force that was created by the British in 1915 to fight in East Africa against German General Von Lettow-Vorbeck. Ironically, the *région de combat* was very close geographically in that the battles also took place adjacent to Lake Tanganyika. The difference this time was that Lima 1 and Lima 2 were fighting against a force that did not possess white leadership in their military. It was this element that was to provide the difference between the ANC and the *Armée Populaire de Liberation (APL)* of the rebels.

The columns consisted of approximately 1 platoon in the vanguard, a company of ANC in the center, with a Belgian logistics tail to provide the support. The Belgian Technical Assistance (BTA) program was to provide the needed logistics administration to sustain the columns in their push toward



Stanleyville. The main personalities were Colonel Bouzin of the Belgian Air Force who once complained to the author that "he had more air forces than NATO." The Congolese Air Forces consisted of the T-28's and B-26's of the 21st Squadron with Cuban pilots, the T-6's of the 20th Squadron with South African and Rhodesian pilots, the T-6's of the Italian Air Force Training Mission with Italian pilots, C-47's and H-21's of *Force Aerienne Tactiale (FATAC)* with Belgian pilots, the C-47's of the *Force Aerienne Congolaise* (Congolese Air Force), and the C-130's and H-34's of JTF Leo.

Colonel Marlier, a regular Belgian Army officer, was with the BTA and was the ideal of a fighting man, spending much of his time actively encouraging the ANC to fight and, as a result, was usually in the field.

It was this field "army" and the headquarters staff that drove the forces to successful combat against the pro-Communist rebels. In this decisive hour Vanderwalle was the supreme commander. The orchestra and their leaders had been fused together by hard work. It was now only necessary to pick up the baton, and the overture to Stanleyville would begin.

**The First Attack.** The first operations of the mercenaries, the raid on Albertville, was not the sort that will go down in military annals as a brilliant operation. This is as much as admitted by the leader of this attack, Major Hoare, in his book, *Congo Mercenary*. Au "amphibious raid" on Albertville, led by Michael Hoare, became a debacle. A lack of proper fuel for their boat motors, a partial rout by the rebels, and the prolonged rowing against tide and wind to get away from Albertville to save their lives caused Hoare to return to Kamina to additionally train the mercenaries and acquire more equipment.<sup>53</sup>

On 15 September the mercenaries brought off their first victory in a battle

that was to prove typical. A column stormed the town of Lisala on the Congo River (300 miles downstream from Stanleyville). The ANC bolted into the jungle at the first sound; however, 15 trained mercenaries put the 400 Simbas to flight or death.

In late September, when rebel forces made an attempt to capture Bukavu, Col. Leonardo Mulumba had, in addition to his own men, a platoon of white mercenaries. They stopped the Simbas, inflicting heavy casualties, and put them in full retreat. Bukavu was the high water mark of the rebellion and was the last time the rebels would take the offensive. The mercenaries began to boast that they would soon be in Stanleyville.

American aid, combined with the force of mercenaries, gave the ANC the edge over the rebel forces, and in October the mercenary-led force began to push back into the eastern Congo.<sup>54</sup> Central Government forces stiffened their resistance and, aided by mercenaries, began to recapture rebel-held cities. During October, Central Government pressure on the rebels built up, and in November a series of rapid victories were in the offing.

**Operation Stanleyville.** On Sunday morning, 1 November, Lima 1 and Lima 2, with Colonel Vanderwalle heading his brainchild, pushed off with a motorized column of white mercenaries and ANC troops and set out from Kongolo bound for Stanleyville. After 4 weeks of hasty preparation, the Tshombe government was starting its big push on the Simba capital. If the mercenary force could strike swiftly, they might be able to rescue the foreign hostages.

After many small battles along the route to Stanleyville, Lima 1 and Lima 2 stood ready for the final assault on Stanleyville. At the same time, however, the hostages in Stanleyville were placed in jeopardy when the Simba leaders encouraged the populace to execute the

hostages in the event of the attack on the city. It was under these conditions that Belgium and the United States decided to use bilateral force to liberate the hostages. This involved a paradrop of Belgian troops (*Dragon Rouge*) over Stanleyville transported by U.S. Air Force C-130 aircraft.

With the rebellion's leadership expected to order the execution of the whites, a slow advance in attacking Stanleyville would be tantamount to condemning to death all those not immediately rescued. If, however, the rebellion collapsed rapidly after the city was attacked, then the risks of "jumping" could be seen as worth taking.<sup>55</sup> It was this argument that ended in a decision to jump with Belgian troops, with the CIA air force (T-28) providing air-to-ground support. The city was taken by the military forces of the Belgians and handed over to elements of the Congolese Army (Lima 1) which entered the city hours after it fell to the Belgian paratroopers.

The rebel leaders fled after the fall of Stanleyville, and whatever organization remained was not localized and seriously weakened. Two days after the Stanleyville paradrop, a similar rescue (*Dragon Noir*) was staged at Paulis. Two other missions were contemplated, but international antagonism, which was being heaped on Belgium and the United States, caused the missions to be canceled, and the troops returned to Belgium. Just 4 days had transpired since the Stanleyville operation on the morning of 18 November. Between 24 and 28 November, a Belgian-United States rescue mission evacuated 1,900 non-Congolese hostages from Stanleyville and Paulis. Stanleyville was recaptured on 24 November, and during the first week of December 1964, Central Government forces recaptured most of the major towns in ex-Orientale Province.

Once again the Belgian soldiers, called into the Congo for humanitarian

purposes, were forced to withdraw under international pressure,<sup>56</sup> leaving the mercenary-led ANC forces remaining behind to provide internal and external security. Tshombe's regime was once again temporarily stabilized by mercenary forces from foreign countries.

However, all was not serene in the Congo. In spite of the successful operations in Stanleyville and Paulis, the situation in the Congo was far from satisfactory. For one thing, the contracts for the first group of mercenaries were expiring, thereby removing the combat-trained group that had cleaned up a good portion of the eastern section of the Congo. This included the leader of the 5th Commando, Michael Hoare. After difficulties concerning command relationships, Hoare, tired of the remote control by a Belgian staff had decided to return home to South Africa. The efficient Vanderwalle had gone, and for the rest of the staff, Hoare had absolutely no faith.<sup>57</sup>

**Other Mercenaries.** Tshombe's response to Hoare's decision, when he heard of his intentions, was full of despair. The borders of Sudan and Uganda were open, and the rebels were receiving arms through the border towns. Every day the rebels were being aided by Algerians, Ghanaians, Ugandans, and advisers from Burundi with Communist arms. Indicating that Hoare's work was only half done, and after much persuasion, Tshombe convinced him to engage in another 6-month contract.

It was during this time that the West was the primary object of abuse due to the mercenaries and the combined Belgian-American parachute operations at Paulis and Stanleyville. The countries of Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, and Tanzania confessed quite openly that they were now going to support the rebels with modern arms and instructors. Operation Stanleyville, planned and executed so

ingeniously by Vanderwalle, did not end the rebellion. It was not his fault, but it appears that the fault lay with the halfheartedness of the West. Only a few hundred parachutists had jumped on the right bank of Stanleyville, while on the left bank the rebels were able to massacre hostages undisturbed. Again, on the next day, parachutists jumped on the second largest city of the east, Paulis, to evacuate hostages and then, in turn, vacated the city. The army (ANC, plus 5th Mechanized Brigade) later had to spend time and troops on retaking Paulis. Had the Belgians used not 500 but 1,500 paratroopers on the Stanleyville right and left bank simultaneously, and in Paulis, Bunia, and Faradje near the Sudanese border, several hundred more hostages would have been saved. There were airfields and landing strips in the area that, if they had been held until the army arrived, could have occupied the essential nerve centers of the northeast and could have sealed off the borders of the Sudan and Uganda.<sup>58</sup>

During this time, AN-12 Soviet-made transports with Algerian markings and Soviet crews were ferrying supplies from Algeria through Khartoum to Juba in Sudan. Aircraft from Ghana and Mali also landed at Juba with ammunition and other supplies. The United Arab Republic, additionally, was providing trucks carrying ammunition and supplies through Uganda and the Sudan in the northeast for the rebels regrouping there. The ports of entry into the Congo were near Aha, Aru, and Mahagi. The movements were conducted at night to preclude the Congolese air force from detecting their location. The problem of infiltration across the frontiers represented the greatest threat to Congolese security. The arms flowing from these two countries were the main props of the rebellion. Were it not for this help from supposedly "friendly" African states, the rebellion would have been virtually over. The rebels had been driven out of most of the main towns

but some resistance remained in the bush surrounding the towns.<sup>59</sup>

Ammunition captured at the former Congolese army depot on the eastern outskirts of Stanleyville where the rebels had their main military base divulged that the shipment of Communist bloc arms to the rebels had been successful. Soviet designed 12.7mm heavy machine guns bearing markings of the Chinese, quantities of an 8mm rifles manufactured in East Germany, Czech rifles and submachine guns, Soviet and other Chinese arms were found.<sup>60</sup>

Tanzania Foreign Minister Kambora stated quite openly that his country was prepared to intervene on the side of the rebels. Columns of trucks full of ammunition, arms, and provisions arrived at Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika. In a camp there, 3,000 Congolese rebels were being trained. The arms were being brought across the lake to Baraka where, in the mountains of Fizi, a base was being formed to renew the conflict in the east. The other area in the plan would be in the northeast where the Chinese, Algerian, Sudanese, and Ugandan arms would marry up with a battalion of "volunteers" from East Africa, former Mau-Mau fighters from Kenya, and ex-soldiers of the black British colonial units in Uganda. The objective for this extensive Pan-American plan was to attack from the north and east against the Paulis, Stanleyville, Bukavi, and Bunia area and the Kongolo-Kindu area. Open intervention of supporting African states would then finish off the government forces in the Congo.<sup>61</sup>

With this new threat, the termination of contracts of the first group of mercenaries constituted a considerable problem. Many of these men did not renew their contracts and were returning home and would not return until their money ran out. At this time there were only 100 South African and British mercenaries in the Congo as compared to the high of 300 during the Stanleyville operation. At the same time

there were slightly over 100 European mercenaries, most of whom stayed on therefore outnumbering the South Africans and British. The policy of the Congolese Government appeared to be to replace the South Africans with Europeans. Tshombe's government was strongly criticized by the black African states and the United Nations. In a resolution in December 1964 the Security Council called for the removal of all mercenaries from the country.

Tshombe made it clear that he had no intention of complying with this request. The Congolese Army was still not capable of independent operations, and the white mercenaries were the only effective force at Tshombe's disposal.

**European Contracts.** The one concession that Tshombe made to African opinion was the gradual replacement of the South Africans by European mercenaries. South Africa's apartheid policy focused the hate of the African countries on those white soldiers fighting in black Africa.

The other reason for the gradual decrease of the number of South Africans stems from the controversy between those of the 5th Commando and the Belgian logistics officers and the Belgian technical assistance officers. The South Africans and British of the 5th Commando contended that the Belgians had held up food, supplies, and money and that they saw to it that the 5th Commando received the toughest and least rewarding assignments.<sup>62</sup> The threat to military operations first, as in previous Congolese historical example, originated in not being paid, and throughout the campaigns the mercenaries' pay seemed to be interfered with by the Belgians. Only when Hoare personally interceded did this problem disappear. The Congolese Government had provided the money, but the actual pay had been "delayed by some element of Belgian administration."

The organization of other elements

in the Congo at this time was also much confused. The French-speaking mercenaries, the 6th Commando force, had for all practical purposes disintegrated. There were defeats everywhere in the northwest part of the Congo. The defeat of Siegfried Mueller at Bafwasende was a shameful matter. The attack on the Mueller column had a significant effect on the 6th Commando. From that day forward no unit of the 6th Commando ever left its support base again.<sup>63</sup>

Two officers arrived in Leopoldville in February who were to play a decisive part in the conduct of the 6th Commando. The Belgian regular army officer, Colonel Lamonline, former commander of Lima 2, returned to the Congo and took over the command of the French-speaking mercenaries comprising the 6th Commando. His right-hand man was to be the newly arrived French major, Bob Denard. In 1963 Denard had commanded the fighting group called the Red Devils in Katanga till the end. In the last campaign and the last battle he still gave the United Nations a bad beating at the bridge of Guba. He, with 12 men, including Charles Gardien, forced a whole company to retire. He was with Schramme when the troops, ammunition, and planes were moved into Angola and the bases were established at Vila Lusó and Teixeira de Souza. Thereafter, Denard left the European mercenaries for the Imam of Yemen against the Egyptians of Abdul Nasser with Syrian, Soviet, and Czechoslovakian "technicians and advisers." Now he undertook the raising of an independent band of fighting men comprising mainly French volunteers. All the confidence tricksters, crooks, and cowards were thrown out, but before this troop was ready to fight, weeks or months might pass. It was obvious that Hoare's South Africans had to make the decisive attack.<sup>64</sup>

**Campaign in the Northeast.** Michael Hoare had been promoted to lieutenant

colonel and in strict secrecy had built up the 5th Commando again at Bunia in the northeast Congo. He had asked for a completely independent commando and his own sector, the decisive sector of the war. His mission was to seal off the borders of Uganda and the Sudan. This mission must have been farcical to the British element of the 5th Commando since they would soon be fighting against an army of a former colony.

With the sweep along the border toward Mahagi, Aru, and Aba and thence on to Faradje, Ugandan, and Sudanese, Egyptian troop evidence became more prevalent. The Ugandans had attacked the 5th Commando in their operations at Mahagi, inside the Congo. However, having noticed that the 5th Commando was a "British" unit conducting the campaign, they drew the right inferences and never interfered in the Mahagi area again. They knew the British Army, and they did not wish to get into trouble with the "English."

In the capture of Christopher Gbenye's<sup>65</sup> headquarters at Aru, documents in Russian were found. An interrupted rebel radio message became famous for its later implications. It was one of the last proclamations of Gbenye: "Our young artillery is very modern. It will destroy the imperialist mercenaries." This was followed by a peculiar message in English addressed to Uganda's Prime Minister, Apollo Milton Obote: "We know, Mr. Prime Minister, that you cannot go to war on our side but you are with us in spirit. We East African mercenaries will now start our war against the white mercenaries."<sup>66</sup>

On the way to Aba a large hostile force was encountered. They were quite different from the rebels. They wore green uniforms and flat caps of the former black colonial troops of East Africa, but with red stripes on their trousers and red epaulettes. All rebels found after previous battles had carried identification cards, but the pockets of these corpses were entirely empty.

There were no names and nothing on the uniforms to indicate who they were. They were typical of thousands throughout history and contemporary affairs that have been terrible marionettes distorted in death, nameless and soundless tools of a foreign power. These were the Ugandan mercenaries mentioned in the message.<sup>67</sup>

A column of Katangese and mercenaries moving on Faradje, Congo-Leopoldville, the ancient center of the Arabic slave traders, uncovered materials from the leftist government of the Sudan and Congo-Brazzaville. Congo-Brazzaville at this time had a training camp for the rebels at Gamboma. It appeared that half of black Africa had collected behind the rebels. In addition, black Castroite Cubans began to abound in Brazzaville. The opposition was getting formidable.

Strange, however, how history repeats itself. It was 85 years prior to this time that Belgian and British mercenaries of the private army of King Leopold of the Belgians had conquered Faradje. They broke the control of the slave hunters who came from East Africa and whose centers were in the Sudan and Zanzibar. Black soldiers under white officers fought against black soldiers under Arabian officers. Now, once again Belgian and British mercenaries, in company with black soldiers under white command, fought against black soldiers trained and led by Arabs. As in the past, the Sudan and Zanzibar were playing the tune. An Arabic proverb claims that "if one plays the flute in Zanzibar, the whole of Africa dances." The parallel to the slave hunters does not appear to be unjustified.<sup>68</sup>

**Fizi-Baraka.** In a short time the remainder of the northeastern border area was sealed. The Pan-African invasion of the Congo had collapsed. The border of Uganda and Sudan had been closed, and most of the fighting spirit of

the rebels had been utterly crushed. Before the offensive started, rebel leaders spoke of their approaching victory. Tanzania, Uganda, and Sudan announced their intention of intervening. When the offensive ended, Uganda and Sudan officially emphasized their non-interference and neutrality.<sup>69</sup> However, the enemy still had one invasion gate, the Fizi Mountains on Lake Tanganyika. Arms were still being brought in from Tanzania. Unfortunately, all was not well with recruitment, a periodic 6-month problem. From appearances, the bottom of the barrel in South Africa was being scraped. The possibility of raising 600 men for the battalion was not optimistically viewed by Hoare. Recruitment in the United Kingdom was contemplated in spite of the past request made by the British Embassy in Leopoldville, who thought it would embarrass Her Majesty's Government; but many written applications from London had been received with almost as many from America. However, the decision was made to continue with South African mercenaries. Hoare indicated that out of almost 1,500 volunteers, only 300 were able to meet the most minimum of qualifications. Volunteers as such were not lacking, but the requirement at this time was for the right type. Ironically, the most difficult campaign was to be fought with the last dregs of the South African recruiting barrel.<sup>70</sup>

The rebels were receiving massive Communist aid from across Lake Tanganyika via Dar-es Salaam and Kigoma. Most of the equipment was of Chinese origin and included land mines, 76mm cannons and a good supply of "bamboo" bazookas.<sup>71</sup>

Once again Tshombe was to ask Hoare to stay in the Congo and assist him in cleaning up the Fizi pocket. Hoare had continued to be plagued with the Belgian interference, and Tshombe had to persuade Hoare once more that his work was not finished.

Along with military supplies and reported advisers from China, a contingent of black Castroite Cubans arrived in the area, specially trained in the art of guerrilla warfare. Their price of assistance was the establishment of a Communist presence in the Congo. Any doubts being entertained of the truth of the reports of Cuban assistance was a myth vanished with the discovery of a dead Cuban after a raid on Bendera. His diary and passport confirmed that he had travelled from Havana via Prague and Peking, undergoing training en route. An entry in the diary had the elation ring of truth where he described that the Congolese rebels were "too damned lazy to carry the 76mm cannon and its shells."<sup>72</sup>

An article written by Jay Mallin, who gathered material on Ernesto Che Guevara, indicates that he went to Africa sometime after disappearing from public view in March 1965. Guevara is described as having failed in his 6-months effort to organize a guerrilla movement in the Congo before he went to Bolivia. The experience turned out negative because the human element failed. There was no will to fight, the leaders were considered corrupt, and there was nothing that could be done. Therefore, the Cubans removed their support and gathered at Brazzaville-Congo awaiting the next opportunity.<sup>73</sup>

Fizi was the main administration center and Baraka the port for the last rebel stronghold in the Congo. The enemy was a very different type than the ones fought in the north. They were Bahembi, a fierce tribe who had consistently defied the past government and resisted nearly all attempts by the missionaries to convert them. They were proud, independent, and warlike and reveled in tribal fighting. In a word, they were the "Irish of the Congo;" they and the Irish-led 5th Commandos would soon be engaged in combat.<sup>74</sup>

It was obvious that the mercenary forces had overwhelming superiority on

the water and in the air. With this superiority the idea of an amphibian operation on the lake, attacking Baraka, took form. The idea of attacking directly against the Lulimba escarpments galvanized the amphibian plan into action. Security was a problem, particularly with the boats crossing the lake from Kigona supplying the enemy at Baraka. It was against this threat that the CIA provided Swift boats to the "Congolese Navy" to ply Lake Tanganyika. First, they were to distract the traffic in arms shipment from Kigona. Secondly, they would be used in the attack on Baraka.

**The Swift Navy.** The Swift boats had been cut into prefabricated sections in the United States in preparation for air transport to the Congo and then assembled in the Congo for service on the lake. Mercenary "naval" forces from Rhodesia and South Africa operated these craft. Once again, historical similarity existed. When the British broke the German control of Lake Tanganyika in April 1915, boats were also placed on the lake from far distant nations. In the 1915 case, however, they were not flown in but railroaded and wagoned across a strip of jungle and then floated down 400 miles of the Lualaba. The battle that followed gave the Allies complete control of the lake.<sup>75</sup>

Equally, after the battles of Fizi and Baraka, the lake and the Congo were now secure with the collapse of the rebellion. Ironically, German mercenaries killed in battle in 1965 were buried in the vicinity of Albertville near weathered tombstones with German inscriptions where a lieutenant of the Imperial German Navy and his gentlemen were killed in a naval battle off Albertville in 1914.

By the spring of 1965 the main thrust of the rebellion had been dissipated, and victory had come to the Congo. During the period from reapp-

ture of Stanleyville to mid-1965, Tshombe's government succeeded in consolidating its position in victories of government troops over the rebels. The rebels had lost control of almost all towns, were deprived of military aid from Egypt, Algeria, and Sudan, and were divided in their leadership. By mid-1965 Hoare indicated that while there still were some pockets of resistance, the war against the rebels in northeastern Congo was finished.<sup>76</sup>

**Return to Exile.** It was in this moment of victory that Tshombe, after 15 months in office, always a controversial figure, was removed by President Kasavubu. The rebellion was no longer the grave menace it had been previously. Fear had diminished, and in some political circles the feeling grew that perhaps a favorable moment had arrived for some to resume the game that had made the fortunes of many. As fear dissolved, schisms and divisions were renewed.<sup>77</sup>

Evariste Kimba was asked to form a government on 13 October 1965, but his efforts met with failure a month later when on 14 November he was defeated in Parliament. Kasavubu promptly asked Kimba to make a second attempt, which proved unsuccessful. During the weeks preceding and following Tshombe's departure from office, Congolese politicians devoted an inordinate amount of time and energy to political infighting and public quarreling. At the same time, a governmental stalemate resulted from Tshombe's successful efforts at defeating the Kimba government and the inability of Kasavubu and Tshombe to reach a workable compromise.

Faced with this situation now, Lieutenant General Mobutu, as the "superior authority of the army," with senior army officers executed a bloodless coup on the morning of 25 November. Mobutu named himself President for a 5-year period and appointed Col. Leonard Mulumba Prime Minister. Dis-

claiming any intention to establish a strict military regime, the new President filled all other ministerial posts with civilians, announced that Parliament would continue to function, and declared that the fundamental rights of the people would be guaranteed.<sup>78</sup>

Tshombe returned to voluntary exile in Europe following the seizure of power by Mobutu. Tshombe departed for his traditional "exile" location and left with his family for Brussels on 23 December 1965. Tshombe at this time was not in immediate danger of arrest, but to withdraw abroad was his normal response to a political setback. It brought him closer to his source of finance, the enormous bank account he built up in Switzerland during his period as "Chief of State" of secessionist Katanga. It also brought him in touch with the major European financial interests which later saw in him a much more sympathetic ruler of the Congo than Mobutu.<sup>79</sup>

The dismissal of Tshombe had touched off a wave of speculation as to the future of the mercenary force. The removal of Tshombe had come as a blow to most members of the Western World, where he was considered the one man able to restore stability to the Congo, chronically prone to unrest. The reasons for his dismissal from office and replacement by his former colleague, Kimba, were never fully understood in the Congo. However, it was known that it was a definite political move to remove Kasavubu's foremost rival from the scene. For now, Tshombe's popularity had become powerful. Everyone knew Tshombe, and not one in a hundred Congolese recognized the President. There is an old saying in the Congo that if one watches the Congo River long enough, the bodies of one's enemies will eventually go floating by. Kasavubu had been watching for 5 years, and four Prime Ministers had gone floating by.<sup>80</sup>

In an attempt to wipe out the sins of

the past perpetrated by Tshombe—namely the hiring of mercenaries—Kasavubu, at the Organization for African Unity meeting in Accra on 21 October 1965, made the statement that "the Congo rebellion was at an end and the white mercenaries could now be sent home."<sup>81</sup>

General Mobutu was furious at this announcement for final victory was not complete, but within the general's grasp. The President's statement had been made entirely without the knowledge of, or prior agreement with, the Commander in Chief of the ANC. It was this event, among many other items, that resulted in his military *coup d'état* on 25 November 1965. In the middle of this turmoil, Nendaka, the Minister of Security, claimed to have uncovered a plot by certain Belgian officers to bring Tshombe back into power again.<sup>82</sup> The two officers allegedly involved were summarily dismissed and expelled from the Congo with 24 hours notice. Lieutenant Colonel Lamouline, former commander of Lima 2 and commander of the 6th Commando, and Major Portin of the Judge Advocate General's Department were the ones involved.<sup>83</sup>

**Wild Geese Go Home.** After the fall of Fizi and Baraka with his third contract terminating, Michael Hoare passed command of the 5th Commando to John Peters, and soon he would also be going. Taking leave of General Mobutu, Lieutenant Colonel Hoare was presented with a letter which expressed Mobutu's gratitude for his services. It said:

It is with a sincere and profound regret that I see you are about to leave the Congo and which you have served for two years, and where so many of your men have fallen in its service. The Congolese nation owes you a great deal and will keep of you a living and very edifying remembrance. As for myself and all the Commanders of Army Groups who have had the honor to have you under their orders, we know that we can always count on you in case of need. A man of your character



cannot remain deaf to the call of his friends. Furthermore, you will learn with the passing of time and distance that the Congo is a country that you cannot forget easily. Sooner or later you will return here. I want you to know that you will always be welcome here and that at all times, my house will be opened to you. That is why I do not say *Adieu* but *Au revoir*.

President of the Republic  
Mobutu, J.D.  
Lieutenant General<sup>54</sup>

It was only to this "unusual mercenary" that Mobutu gave this accolade. The one man capable of putting together a military unit patterned along the lines of the British Army from a polyglot of misfits and adventurers. A hundred years ago Hoare would have become a great conqueror for the English colonial empire, a Lord Clive, a Lawrence, or maybe even a Gordon. It was his bad luck to have been born too late, with England no longer standing behind him. His campaign was a wild adventure in the service of a foreign government. History will hardly remember Hoare's march through the rain the night he broke the main line of the rebels en route to Stanleyville, as it remembers Clive's march to Arcot through the rain, and yet Hoare had the same number of soldiers with him and just as many enemies in front of him as had Clive.<sup>55</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Hoare was unable to conquer a new realm because Britain herself had given up the empire. His efforts were significant in saving the Congo from communism. He saved European hostages from a tortured death. He did not acquire universal glory, but he did gain the esteem of Europeans, Americans, and thinking

Africans for his saving efforts in the Congo. Without the mercenaries, especially Hoare's 5th Commandos, Central Africa from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, from Zanzibar to Leopoldville and Brazzaville, would have been under the control of the Chinese and the Soviets. The Western Europeans would have been chased out of the Heartland of Africa, a red-yellow imperialism would rule over the copper of Katanga, the diamond mines of Kasai, the tantalum of Manono, to include the African stream of fate, the River Congo.<sup>56</sup> A handful of white adventurers can be credited with stopping one of the projects of Mao Tse-tung. Now that their task was over, the "Wild Geese" were heading home. It was not their fault if the fruits of victory and their sacrifices were later to be undone by others.<sup>57</sup>

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#### BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Col. George H. Dodenhoff, U.S. Marine Corps, holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland and an M.A. in international affairs from The George Washington University. As an aviator, he has had a variety of assignments in fighter aircraft, including service as an exchange officer with U.S. Air Force fighter squadrons. Other assignments include Marine Corps Representative to the Chief of Naval Operations, Intelligence Officer, First Marine Air Wing; and while with Headquarters, U.S. Strike Command, he served with Joint Task Force 11 in the Congo. He is a graduate of the Naval War College, School of Naval Warfare, Class of 1968, and is currently serving as Commanding Officer of the Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment, U.S. Naval Air Station, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania.

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## FOOTNOTES

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8. M. Crawford Young, "The Congo Rebellion," *Africa Report*, April 1965, p. 6, 7.
9. J. Anthony Lukas, "Tshombe Seeking Troops in Africa; U.S. to Send B-26's," *The New York Times*, 18 August 1964, p. 2:3.
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12. Ernest W. Lefever, *Uncertain Mandate* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 201, 205.
13. J. Anthony Lukas, "Tshombe Meets Ethiopian Envoy," *The New York Times*, 25 August 1964, p. 5:1.
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15. "African Group is Divided on Congo Appeal for Aid," *The New York Times*, 23 August 1964, p. 29:2; Moise Tshombe, *My Fifteen Months in Government* (Plano, Tex.: University of Plano, 1967), p. 34.
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17. Howard M. Epstein, ed., *Revolt in the Congo, 1960-1964* (New York: Facts on File, 1965), p. 158.
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20. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
21. Hoare refers to Puren in his book as Gerry. *The New York Times* articles of the day alternately refer to Puren as "Jacque C." or "Jeremiah." Some articles refer to him as "major," but most refer to him as "lieutenant colonel" as does Hoare.
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24. Michael Hoare, during World War II, saw service in India and Burma; he was demobilized with the rank of major, the same rank initially bestowed upon him in the Congolese Army.
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26. "Men Line Up in Johannesburg after Tshombe's Ad for Troops," *The New York Times*, 25 August 1964, p. 1:1.
27. "Recruits Signed to Aid Tshombe," *The New York Times*, 25 August 1964, p. 5:1.
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31. "Congo," *Keesing Contemporary Archives*, 21-28 November 1964, p. 20424; J. Anthony Lukas, "Congo May Drop All Mercenaries," *The New York Times*, 7 September 1964, p. 3:1.
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33. Hoare, p. 66; "Mercenaries," *Time*, 11 August 1967, p. 28.
34. The Vanderwalle Plan later took the place of the Mobutu plan. The six-column philosophy, however, remained as a basis for the retaking of Stanleyville.
35. Hoare, p. 29-31.
36. Lukas, "Mercenary Unit," p. 1:1.
37. Hoare, p. 60.
38. Colonel Vanderwalle, former Administrator General of the *Suret * in Leopoldville, sent by the Belgian Government in 1961 to Elisabethville to the Belgian consulate. Referred to as "Richeheu" because of his behind the scenes intrigue in Congo affairs. The Vanderwalle Plan was the basis for military operations involving the retaking of Stanleyville.

39. Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo*, p. 131.
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41. Lukas, "Tshombe Seeking Troops," p. 1:1.
42. "U.S. Civilians Halt Congo Air Sorties," *The New York Times*, 18 June 1964, p. 9:1.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 1:7.
44. Tom Wicker, et al., "How CIA Put [Instant Air Force] into Congo," *The New York Times*, 26 April 1966, p. 30:1.
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47. J. Anthony Lukas, "U.S. Troops Given Mission in Congo," *The New York Times*, 14 August 1965, p. 1:3, 2:3.
48. Hoare, p. 37.
49. Tshombe, p. 38.
50. Col. Albert Liegeois had named the military columns of the Vanderwalle Plan with the letter "L," and Lima is the phonetic word in the international alphabet. The Vanderwalle Plan envisioned these columns aimed at Stanleyville. Maj. J. Schramme was posted to the 4th column, *Colonne Pappa*; also called Group Leopard by Schramme. His column was to strike from Manono in the direction of Fizi along the eastern border of the Congo.
51. Hans Germani, *White Soldiers in Black Africa* (Capetown: Nasionale Boekhandel Beperk, 1967), p. 10.
52. Hoare, p. 16.
53. Reed, p. 125.
54. Legum, p. 163.
55. C.R.I.S.P., *Congo, 1964*, p. xxx; "Belgian Troops Wait Congo Call," *The New York Times*, 21 November 1964, p. 1:7, 3:2.
56. Grndy, p. 242-255.
57. Hoare, p. 171.
58. Germani, p. 68-69.
59. "U.S. Concern Rises over Congo War," *The New York Times*, 16 December 1964, p. 1:7.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 19:1.
61. Germani, p. 73.
62. J. Anthony Lukas, "More Europeans Joining Congo Mercenary Force," *The New York Times*, 19 January 1965, p. 1:2, 11:8.
63. Germani, p. 70.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 71; "French Veterans to Fight in Congo," *The New York Times*, 6 March 1965, p. 4:1.
65. Christopher Gbenye was proclaimed chief of state of the Stanleyville regime. A triangular power struggle developed between Gaston Soumialot, rebel Prime Minister, Nicholas Olenga, General of the Revolutionary Army, and Gbenye after the declaration of a Revolutionary Government at Stanleyville.
66. Germani, p. 97.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
70. Interview with Michael Hoare, February 1968.
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74. Hoare, p. 240.
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79. Keith Kyle, "Plot and Counter Plot," *The New Republic*, 16 September 1967, p. 13.

