

INTRODUCTION

1. Aim

This research report explores the role of external forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from 1997 to January 2001. It is established that external forces led by the United States, abhorring Joseph-Desiré Mobutu's regime, chose Laurent-Désiré Kabila to undertake the adventure of overthrowing the Zairian dictator by launching the Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL) rebellion in October 1996; and Mobutu got removed from power seven months later. However, after sixteen months of the AFDL regime, the same external forces brought about turmoil in the heart of Africa by backing two rebellions against Kabila's regime in about four years. This compromised 'the 17 May Revolution' and the DRC's sovereignty and opened the way to political dictatorship by Kabila, a deepening political quagmire, and the escalation of a war of aggression that will be dubbed 'Africa's First World War'.

2. Historical Overview

The starting points of any discussion of the recent historical intervention in the DRC are undoubtedly the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and Mobutu's downfall in 1997. By 1996, the genocide in neighboring Rwanda had spilled over into Zaïre. The former Habyarimana government, the Rwandese Armed Forces (ex-FAR), and the Rwandan Hutu militias (Interahamwe) using as human shield their compatriots refugees that were harbored in camps set up by humanitarian organizations in Eastern Zaïre, launched guerilla attacks on Tutsi communities (Banyamulenge) in Eastern Zaïre and genocide survivors within Rwanda.

The Rwanda government responded by backing a revolt led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila and the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo- Zaïre (AFDL). The demoralized Zairian army offered little resistance and by May 1997, Laurent-Désiré Kabila had declared himself president and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

However, in spite of the death of many of them, which was perpetrated by the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) during the anti-Mobutu rebel group's progress towards Kinshasa, forces loyal to the Hutu Rwandan government in exile remained in the DRC and, by 1998, were mounting increasing incursions into the Rwandan territory. Kabila's inability to deal with the situation, his failure to address the issue of the Congolese nationality claimed by the Banyarwanda and the Banyamulenge, and his decision to realise the Congolese people's aspiration to expel Rwandese militaries and civilians to their country, prodded Rwanda and Uganda to initiate a fresh rebellion, the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD). Declaring its aim to swiftly topple President Kabila from power, the RCD sparked the Second Congo War that involved several other regional powers and rebel groups. Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi sided with the rebels while Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia supported the government. Yet, the military situation reached a stalemate as the RCD, suffering lack of popularity, internal incoherence and growing disagreement between Kigali and Kampala, broke up into factions (RCD-Goma and RCD-Kisangani) and faced the competition of a new Ugandan-backed

Movement of the Liberation of Congo (MLC). A cease–fire agreement was then signed by the warring parties in Lusaka, Zambia, on 10 July 1999.

The Lusaka Accord set out a framework for the development of an Inter-Congolese Dialogue intended to establish foundations for a new constitution and free and fair elections. Little progress was made until January 2001, when Laurent-Désiré Kabila was shot dead presumably by one of his own bodyguards. His son, Joseph Kabila, was sworn in as the new president, and immediately undertook to implement the Lusaka Accord, open up domestic politics, improve human rights and liberalise the economy. After an immediate review of the UN operation, a new plan was drawn up to verify the disengagement of conventional forces under the Lusaka accord in February 2001. The cease-fire has generally held, and all foreign troops have been withdrawn from the DRC. The Global and All-Inclusive Agreement on the Transition will be signed by major belligerent parties in Pretoria on 17 December 2002, paving the way for a new national unity government that started working on 30 June 2003, and held the first general democratic elections in more 40 years in July 2006.

3. Rationale

This research hopefully enables us to understand the motives of belligerent parties. While many people are writing about the DR Congo, few till now have tried to establish the real role of those external forces in the DR Congo at the political, economic and social levels¹.

External forces do have a special interest in the DRC insofar as this country enjoys a string of alluring characteristics: --it features a strategic position as a massive country located in the heart of Africa and possessing a mineral that is highly sensitive and able to shift hegemony in the international relations: uranium²; --it harbors innumerable natural resources that make it a key provider of raw materials for the development of the world economy; furthermore, the Congo's strategic and economic assets constitute the main object of its being exceptionally held in the thrall of major powers (the US, Belgium and France, in particular) throughout its postcolonial era; so the role of external forces in this big Central African nation from 1997 to 2001 is to be apprehended, most importantly, as the sponsoring of two conflicts which claimed millions of lives, in the bid to replace in Kinshasa two successive, reckless, stubborn dictatorships (Joseph-Désiré Mobutu's and Laurent-Désiré Kabila's) with a regime that is technocratic but also a star pupil of the Bretton Woods institutions and of the multinational corporations. However, because of the strongly denounced bloodiness of the two Congo Wars and the hegemonic rivalry between the major powers involved in the Congolese crisis (notably the Franco-American rivalry), this macabre role shall be later countervailed by the intervention of the international community, the

¹ See, for example, Olivier Lanotte (2003), *Guerre sans frontières*, Editions GRIP, 260 pages; Nzongola Ntalaja (2002), *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A people's History*, New York, Zed Book, 304 pages; Honoré N'Gbanda Nzambo (2004), *Crimes organisés en Afrique Centrale: Révélation sur les réseaux occidentaux et rwandais*, Editions Dubois, 456 pages; *War and Peace in Zaire/Congo: Analyzing and Evaluating Interventions, 1996-1997*, 360 pages; and Kelvin C. Dunn (2003), *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 221 pages.

² It is worthwhile to remind the readers that the first uranium was discovered in the DRC (then the Belgian Congo) and sent in the 1940s by Brussels to the US for the invention of the first nuclear bomb that was dropped upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in August 1945, immediately ending World War II and causing the rise of the USA as a world superpower. Today, the US and other great nations fret at the possibility of this mineral's ending in the hands of "rogue" states, such as Iran, North Korea and Syria, or of any terrorist network, especially Al-Qaeda.

European Union, the Organization of African Unity and the Southern African Development Community for the brokering of a peace agreement and a democratic process, which shall be fully observed thanks to the fortunate seizure of power by Major-General Joseph Kabila.

4. Research Problem Statement

Two standpoints underpin my research and orient discussions in this work. Firstly, the collapse of the Congolese state, which characterized the country at the dawn of its independence and which materialized anew at the twilight of the Second Republic³ (during the 1980s), stems from a string of vices spawned by Marshal Mobutu's authoritarian, arbitrary, kleptocratic regime: absence of freedoms, violations of human rights, mismanagement of public assets, impoverishment of a population yet called to be amongst the better-off of the world given the scandalous natural resources with which their homeland is endowed, and dependency—psychic at the foremost—on Western powers, which has depleted patriotism on the part of the majority of the Congolese. Second, Mobutu's dictatorship and the Congolese's noticeable lack of self-determination are products of a particularly infamous control of the post-colonial Congo by major powers, especially Belgium, France, and the USA. Indeed, it is that "troika" that brought Mobutu to power after the physical removal of Patrice Lumumba and the ending of his short-lived nationalist government, on 14 September 1960; whereas the political immaturity of the Congolese leadership is due to the paternalistic way of colonizing the Congo adopted by the Belgians. This unwavering resolution by foreign powers to master the Congo, which evolves in nature with the change of contexts in the world arena, determines my discussion of the role of external forces in the DRC from 1997 to 2001: their propelling of Laurent-Désiré Kabila to power at the expense of their old stooge Mobutu, the sponsoring of many anti-Kabila rebels after the new president's reconsideration of all deals signed with them, his assassination, the rise of his son, Joseph Kabila, and so forth.

In the aftermath of the demise of the Cold War, one of the patterns of North-South relations is the quest by Western nations, in their endeavors for the domination of the Third World, for an archetype of African leadership that combines modern management of its country's affairs and service of Western interests within the country and abroad. The model of this leadership is found in the pre-Second Congo War government of Museveni government of Uganda. President Museveni had been praised by the West for his technocracy and his status of the star pupil of the IMF and the World Bank. That is why he was chosen by the sole superpower, the US, to play a pivotal role in the reshuffle of the Great Lakes Africa and the fight against terrorism in Sudan. The reshuffle included the promotion of a new head of state for the Congo, who can lead this country on the model of Kampala: good governance, observance of the IMF conditionalities, protection of America's interests in the region, in spite of dictatorship, violation of human rights, and worsening of the social conditions of the populaces. So, the Ugandan leader propelled Laurent-Désiré Kabila to power. Unfortunately, for the US-led forces in the Great Lakes region, Kabila not only rejected this agenda, but also challenged the international community's scrutiny of its human rights record. This evaporated any possibility of financing the Congo's economic recovery by the club of donors. It also brought the Second Congo War that claimed the lives of more than 4 million Congolese, and cost Kabila's life. The advent of his son, Joseph, appears to

³ The Second Republic is the period of the DRC's history that marks the 32-year long Mobutu regime (1965-1990) prior to the launching of democratic transition by the Zairian tyrant on 24 April 1990.

be positive both for the major powers and the Congolese people, since he is determined to open the country to the world arena.

5. Scope of the Research

This research comprises four chapters. The first chapter describes the Congo's background which underpins Laurent-Désiré Kabila's resurgence and ascension to power. This background is featured by the decline of the state authority at the end of the Mobutu era, and the consecutive quagmire that characterizes the DRC from 1990 to 1997 and culminates in the First Congo War (1996-1997). The second chapter discusses the management of the Congo's affairs by the AFDL regime from 1997 to 1998. The third chapter analyses the converging domestic and external factors behind the Second Congo War, underlining the primacy of the latter. And the fourth chapter underscores the outcome of the conflict, which is marked by the brokering of the Lusaka Agreement, a period of stalemate due to the Accord's deficiencies, and its conclusion by President Joseph Kabila who took over from his assassinated Laurent-Désiré Kabila, his father.

6. Methodology

The research design is based on a review of secondary literature. There are many publications on this topic. It also uses data for analysis and interpretation. In addition, this research draws information from official documents and press statements, published and unpublished studies, journal articles and internet materials, texts, newspapers and opinion pieces.

CHAPTER ONE: POLITICAL CONTEXT BEFORE 17 MAY 1997

1.0. Introduction

This chapter describes the background of the imbroglio into which the Democratic Republic of Congo was plunged from 1997 to 2001. Indeed, since its independence on 30 June 1960 from Belgium, the country's history has been heavily influenced by the major Western powers interested in its geostrategic position in the heart of Africa and its immense resources. The external influence on its postcolonial course, using Colonel Joseph Désiré Mobutu as the key stooge, starts with the political and physical removal of its first prime minister, Patrice Emery Lumumba. It is also clearly evident in the squelching of Lumumbist rebellions—particularly the dismantling, by the Americano-Belgian-led Operation Red Dragon in Kisangani, of Christophe Gbenye's separatist government in November 1964—paving the way to the military coup that brought Mobutu to power on 24 November 1965. Finally, it is apparent in external sponsorship of the Mobutu regime that is deemed one of the most corrupt dictatorships of the twentieth century, but also the main bulwark against the expansion of communism in Africa. And the West's backing is the foremost reason of the regime's longevity: a 32-year lifetime divided into two parts: the one-party system (1965-1989) and the transition to multiparty democracy (1990-1997).

Hence, the standpoint defended in this chapter runs as follows: the march of the DRC in the post-independence era is characterized by an overpowering external interference, particularly of the US, Belgium and France. This interference permeates as much the politics of the Mobutu regime as that of his successor, Laurent-Désiré Kabila; so, the two Congo Wars, rightly viewed as wars of aggression against a sovereign country by its neighbours, and analyzed in the subsequent chapters, are to be comprehended as attempts by the West to maintain over the country its thralldom entertained for years during Mobutu's dictatorship. The latter, condemned to doom by the world's masters since the demise of communism rendered it useless and because of its blatant ineffectiveness in nation-building, is discussed in this chapter.

The attempt to analyze this historical background leads me to: (1) point out the internal and external causes of the Mobutu regime's collapse; (2) analyze the conception and the evolution of the First Congo War toward Marshal Mobutu's capitulation; and (3) describe the final negotiations for a peaceful triumph of the AFDL.

1.1. Causes of the Mobutu Regime's Collapse and Laurent-Désiré Kabila's Political Resurgence

The relevant grasp of Laurent-Désiré Kabila's dazzling, speedy ascension to power necessitates the mastering of the Mobutu regime, particularly its declining period, as the historical background of 17 May 1997 sensational revolution. This necessity justifies my focus on the causes of the Mobutu dictatorship's collapse and my avoiding concentrating on its earlier glorious years, since that is a history work and does not concern my research period: 1997-2001. There are many theories on the origins of the first war in Kivu, which was launched in October 1996. Diverse scholars and observers defend the standpoint of a plot orchestrated long ago by the

Congo- Zaïre's neighbouring countries supported by the US⁴. The hypothesis is supported by evidence detailed below.

Hence, I side with Congolese scholar Bob Kabamba's viewpoint that the Zairian democratic transition launched on 24 April 1990 by President Mobutu is not due to the "fact of the prince" converting himself to democracy; rather it stems from numerous pressures linked both to the Zaïre's internal situation and the international context⁵. Below I (i) discuss the internal causes of the Mobutu regime's collapse; (ii) describe the external causes of the same collapse; (iii) analyze the circumstances of Laurent-Désiré Kabila's political resurgence.

1.1.1. The Internal Causes of the Mobutu Regime's Collapse

According to Lanotte's pertinent observation, three uppermost internal causes bear out Mobutu's downfall and the end of the Second Republic, namely the economic recession, the rise of political contestation, and the overall collapse of the state apparatus (Lanotte, 2003:16), of which the most visible testimony is the gradual weakening of the national army.

1.1.1.1. The Economic Recession.

The Mobutu regime (1965-1997) was characterized by, among others, the mismanagement of public assets and resources. After the prosperity period brought about by the 1967 monetary reform and the nationalization of the High Katanga Mineral Union (becoming the Gecamines), President Mobutu launched on 30 November 1973 an irrational campaign of *Zairianisation* of the means of production. Far from being a scientific development plan, *Zairianisation* is merely a cronyism-oriented economic policy, which transferred the hard-earned enterprises of Europeans to Zairian nationals. Eventually the failure of *Zairianisation* was noticeable. Isidore Ndaywel, Congolese historian, elaborates the causes of this fiasco, which are "improvisation, absence of an economic class that is qualified in business management, [and] inability to provide a rational training aimed at implementing such a brusque measure" (1998: 730). As a result, the President's family members and friends, main beneficiaries of the measure, indulged in the consumption of the wealth they never worked for. Additionally, exacerbated by "radicalization" (30 December 1974)⁶, *Zairianisation* is fatal to the country's economy inasmuch as it inhibited foreign direct investments. And, though the government decreed the "retrocession" of the enterprises to their owners, the recession held its grip until the regime's end.

There are other internal factors that played a role in the nation's economic recession: the lowering of raw material prices in the world market, particularly that of copper, business' distrust in the disordered bank system, a national budget oriented toward consumption rather than

⁴ Isidore Ndaywel e Nziem (1998), *Histoire générale du Congo: de l'héritage ancien à la République Démocratique*, Edition Duculot, p.793; Georges Nzongola Ntalaja (2002), *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, Idem, Lanotte (2003), *Guerre sans frontières*, Editions GRIP; Honore N'Gbanda Nzambo (2004), *Crimes organisés en Afrique Centrale. Révélations sur les réseaux rwandais et occidentaux*, Editions Duboiris, Paris, 2004, pp.85-117.

⁵ Bob KABAMBA, Quoted by Lanotte (2003: 15).

⁶ Ndayiwel explains "radicalization" as the establishment of state control of nationalized enterprises through the appointment of a "general delegate" as head of each of them. Unfortunately, the general delegates were poor managers; they enjoyed serving themselves rather than serving the population (1998: 730).

investment, the destruction of infrastructures, and investment in ‘white elephants’⁷. The consequence was the impoverishment of the population. The same people that sang and danced for President Mobutu started murmuring. This paves a way for political contestation.

1.1.1.2. Political Contestation.

One year and a half since Mobutu took over, the Democratic Republic of Congo is on the threshold of a new political era: the creation of the People’s Revolutionary Movement (MPR) on 20 May 1967, which consecrates a one-party system. Then the propaganda of the sole and ruling ideology – Mobutism -, shrewdly implemented by the very skilled Sakombi Inongo, Information Minister and director of the Party-State Propaganda Mobilisation and Political Animation (MoPAP), succeeded to win the people’s minds and hearts. Mobutu was so loved (and at some extent worshipped) that, after the complete neutralization of opposition, he dared waging a fight against the Church and won it. However, on 1 November 1980, a group of 13 parliamentarians, aware of the gradual weakening of the system due to the threat of a military coup and the two Shaba wars (1977-78), and emboldened by the Carter administration's hostility to the regime, wrote an 82-page defiant open letter to President Mobutu, and founded the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), an opposition party, on 15 February 1982. Despite its senior members’ getting arrested and tortured in prison by the dictatorship and the return of some of its founding fathers (Joseph Ngalula Pandajila and Kibassa Maliba) to the People’s Movement for Revolution (MPR) in the wake of the Gbadolite Summit (1987), the opposition party carried on its clandestine undermining actions, which culminated in the 1988 Pont Kasa-Vubu meeting, during which its charismatic leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, tore down the Mobutu myth. From then on, people overtly started turning their back on Marshall President, and seriously believing in UDPS as the alternative to the ailing monolithic system⁸.

1.1.1.3. The Gradual Weakening of the National Army.

Thanks to the military cooperation with the West, Mobutu developed the structures of the national army, and made it one of the mightiest in Africa. Indeed officers were educated in renowned military academies in the US, France, Belgium, Israel, etc. The army was provided of required logistic, and Western officers were there to supply with necessary expertise. Unfortunately, Marshal Mobutu weakened the army with his divide-and-rule strategy. Indeed, each division (such as the Presidential Special Division and the Civil Guard), independent from the national army’s staff, was accountable solely to the head of State. This state of affairs was comfortable to Mobutu, inasmuch as, while it was breeding competence conflicts between the army components, it made the Marshall –who sometimes was their author—the supreme referee⁹. However, in reverse, at the end of his reign, it became bitter, since the subordinate officers involved in infighting were frustrated after realizing that they were merely manipulated

⁷ Entreprises such as the Inga Power Plant, the Maluku heavy Metallurgical Industry, the space project, and the CCIZ Building are deemed white elephants because their realization was too costly, the space project failed to send a single fuselage into the orbit, and they did not ameliorate the nation’s quality of life. They merely matched Mobutu’s megalomaniac ambition in Africa. On the space project, see *Mobutu le roi du Zaire*, a Film by Thierry Michel produced by Christine Pireaux, Martine Barbé, Serge Lalou: 1960 - 1997.

⁸ Nzongola Ntalaja (2002), *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People’s History*, Zed Books, New York, p. 274. [

⁹ Cf. N’Gbanda Nzambo (1998), *Ainsi Sonne le glas. Les derniers jours du Maréchal Mobutu*, Paris, Gideppe.

by the army's commander-in-chief, and planned their revenge, to the latter's detriment. The First Congo War (1996-1997) was the opportunity for that revenge which occurred in several ways. For example, General Mahele, the army's chief of staff, betrayed President Mobutu in yielding all the government's military strategies to the AFDL of Laurent-Désiré Kabila, and in demobilizing soldiers on the battlefield¹⁰.

The second main evidence of the weakening of the national army is its dereliction. Forsaken, underpaid, undertrained, under-equipped, and under-armed, the Zairian Armed Forces (FAZ) became the major source of insecurity and disorder in the Congo (Lanotte, 2003: 22). Since the 1975 failed coup d'état, which was masterminded by Colonel Omba, his private secretary from the Tetela ethnic group, and the 1978 imaginary coup d'état, President Mobutu proceeded to the purge of officers from most of the country's provinces. He appointed at the army staff and at the direction of almost all units, officers from the Equator, his natal province, and the Eastern province. He also built up two divisions for his personal security: the Presidential Special Division (DSP) and the Civil Guard. Appointing at their head respectively General Nzimbi, his nephew, and General Baramoto, his close relative, he granted them all the favours normally available for the whole army.

1.1.2. The External Causes of the Mobutu Regime's Collapse

The Democratic Republic of Congo's position as an immense potentially very rich country in the heart of Africa allures the great powers so that the orbit of its march is essentially shaped by them. This can be illustrated by the Mobutu regime: the external factors of its downfall, as well as those of its rise, are the most determinant. I analyze here the most important ones, that is, the Belgo-Zairian contention, the IMF- Zaïre crisis, the end of the Cold War, and the rise of the US Democratic President Bill Clinton.

1.1.2.1. The Belgo-Zairian Contention

This contention is rooted in a bewildering series of policies set by President Mobutu and detrimental to the Belgian interests in the Congo: the nationalization, in 1967, of the High Katanga Mining Union—the biggest enterprise since colonization—the propagation of the 'authentic Zairian nationalism' for cultural decolonization (in 1971), the Zairianization that made numerous Europeans lose their businesses, and the 1988 declaration, on the very Belgian soil, of the rupture of the Belgo-Zairian privileged relations by a Zairian high profile delegation led by Kamanda wa Kamanda¹¹. However, thanks to the end of communism, and despite the March 1990 Rabat Accords signed under the Moroccan King Hassan II by President Mobutu and Prime Minister Wilfried Martens, Brussels deadly bounced back: it initiated a powerful worldwide campaign to isolate the arrogant despot, with the condemnation of the student massacre in the Lubumbashi University campus during the night of the 11th and 12th of May 1990 as the starting point.¹² The campaign resulted into the rupture of the structural co-operation between Zaïre and its main bilateral and multilateral partners, and the birth of the famous troika Belgium-France-

¹⁰ N'Gbanda Nzambo (2004), *Crimes organisés en Afrique Centrale: Révélations sur les réseaux rwandais et occidentaux*, Editions Duboiris, Paris, 215.

¹¹ The HEBDO, A Broadcasting by Jean-François Bastin and Isabelle Christiaens with the production assistance of Sophie Janssens, Brussels, 1988.

¹² G. de Villiers, quoted by Lanotte, 2003: 18-19.

US, which was the sword of Damocles suspended upon the Zaïrian leader's head. But Brussels, from then on, indulged in rescuing its former colony through "the support of NGOs addressing humanitarian needs"¹³.

1.1.2.2. The IMF- Zaïre Crisis

The crisis begins with the Mobutu government's inability to observe the conditionalities set up by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, within a fresh plan coined Structural Adjustment Program "to promote economic growth, to generate income, [and] to pay off the debt which the countries have accumulated"¹⁴: austerity (cutting social expenditures), privatization (divestiture of all or part of state-owned enterprises), balancing budget and not overspending, increasing the stability of investment (by supplementing foreign direct investment with opening domestic stock markets), enhancing the rights of foreign investors vis-à-vis national laws, and improving governance and fighting corruption¹⁵. Indeed, in 1988, there is diversion by Mobutu and other public servants of public resources for personal gain, unproductive expenditure, the shunning of privatization, the sharpening of budgetary imbalance and inflation (due to a disorderly bank system), the strengthening of dictatorship that denies human rights to citizens and inhibits foreign direct investments, and institutionalized corruption¹⁶. The situation is so irritating that, the same year, a standoff starts between the IMF and Zaïre, the latter being unable to make debt payment. It ends up in early 1990 with the Bretton Woods institutions' suspension of most disbursements, and the IMF cutting off Zaïre's borrowing rights in February 1992, and the World Bank freezing its credits in July 1993¹⁷.

1.1.2.3. The End of the Cold War

The end of the Cold War is the utmost external cause of President Mobutu's ousting. The demise of Communism led to a very significant upheaval in the global geostrategic context, which forced President Mobutu to launch the democratization process into Zaïre. The upheaval curbs Mobutu's status of 'the strongman of black Africa' and the bulwark that halts Communism expansion and ensures the West's interests in Africa. It comprises a series of changes within many political institutions' traditional alliances, ideologies and/or strategies. Lanotte cites some of them that intervened in Africa: the withdrawal of Cuban soldiers from Angola, the independence of Namibia and signs of openness between parties in South Africa (2003: 6).

The withdrawal of the Cuban soldiers from Angola in 1989 marks the end of the Cold War in this battered country and put it at the treshold of a peace era. Indeed, since the demise of Communism is a fact, the Soviet Union's tie with its satellites, including Luanda, has been loosening fast. And the presence of Cuban troops is unnecessary for the cause they were

¹³ Philip Verwimp and Els Vanheusden, *The Foreign Policy of Belgium during the Zaire/Congo Crisis: March 1996-March 1997*, in *War and Peace in Zaire/Congo. Analyzing and Evaluating Intervention, 1996 -1997*, Edited by Howard Adelman & Govind C. Rao, Africa World Press, 2004, p.320.

¹⁴ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobutu_Sese_Seko

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobutu_Sese_Seko. –Because of the social tensions due to a long lasting budgetary austerity, the MPR Central committee, at its twelfth session, abandoned the Bretton Woods conditionalities, and Zaire gave up its status of the IMF's star pupil, and President Mobutu uttered: "rigour cannot be eaten" (I. Ndaywel e Nziem, 1998: 744).

¹⁷ Wikipedia

struggling for (the defense and building of socialism) has passed away. Thus, the US rushed to fill the vacuum left by this loosening tie by setting up diplomatic and structural relations with President Jose Edouardo dos Santos' government, its former enemy. This evolution frightened Mobutu insofar as the Americans were relying on him to provide Jonas Savimbi's UNITA with arms to fight against the ruling MPLA, from Kamina base, Zaïre, and will not be anymore. In other words, by changing alliance, the US has dumped both Mobutu and Savimbi, who, from now on, are subjected to the Angolan president's revenge¹⁸.

The independence of Namibia on 27 March 1990 is another consequence of the end of the Cold War. Since the end of the World War II, the country has been a *de facto* protectorate of the South Africa backed by Western governments. The creation of the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) supported by the Soviet Union fueled the liberation struggle in which both superpowers were indirectly involved. The war extended to Angola: South Africa's apartheid regime attacked it, and for a while it took control over its Southern part, and helped UNITA; whereas Angola's Marxist-Leninist regime offered its territory for training Soviet Union-backed African National Congress (ANC) and SWAPO. Hence, Mobutu was playing an important role of destabilizing Luanda, in a concerted effort with the South African establishment. The independence of Namibia put an end to that role, and made the Zaïrian leader useless to the West.

Finally, the signs of openness between parties in South Africa, another result of the demise of Communism, constitute another blow to the Mobutu government. Amongst these signs I can cite the unbanning of the ANC and other liberation movements, the liberation of Nelson Mandela from prison on 11 February 1990, and the launch by President Frederik de Klerk of the process of the establishment of the democratic South Africa. The ruling National Party and the ANC came to the point that they had no other choice than to negotiate a new dispensation: the former being exhausted by internal unrest and the international community's outcry, and the latter being disillusioned by the fading of socialism and the drying up of the Soviet Union's strategic, military and financial support it was benefiting. Therefore, Mobutu's traditional influence in the African international affairs to the service of the West became very slim, inasmuch as the axis Kinshasa-Pretoria was disrupted.

1.1.2.4. The Rise of the Democrat President Bill Clinton

The election of Bill Clinton as the 42nd president of America ends a bond of strong affective feelings bred by Marshall Mobutu and the US Republican statesmen (Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W Bush senior) and the CIA officials. Clinton's African agenda, as unveiled to a cheering crowd of supporters in the wake of his victory, includes as priority the political elimination of Mobutu as a man belonging to the past (N'Gbanda, 2004:185).

1.2. How the Democratic Process Failed and Paved a Way for the Ascension of Laurent-Désiré Kabila

Compared to all other transitions that occurred throughout Africa, the democratic transition in Zaïre is the most mesmerizing not only for its exceptionally long duration, but also because of its richness in events and fluctuations of fortune. The transition actors, in power and in opposition alike, multiplied mistakes that engendered frustrations on the part of the Congolese people and

¹⁸ See also N'Gbanda Nzambo, 2004: 222-224.

the world powers. While President Mobutu, like any other dictator, was hanging on power and plunging the populace into indescribable miseries, the opposition was decrepit in its struggle for democracy and rule of law, because of its lack of character, revolutionary voluntarism, and weak leadership, easily outmaneuvered by the experienced Zairian leader. Indeed, embodied by Etienne Tshisekedi, the leader of the most popular political party, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), the opposition committed the mistake of only playing the populism card, by largely developing a people-centered discourse and by wholly relying on popular non-violent uprisings and internal convulsions to tear down tyranny in Zaïre. It ignored the necessity of an intertwined action with the mighty nations that brought Joseph-Désiré Mobutu to power, notably the US, Belgium and France—which action implies a clear bargaining on both national and foreign interests to safeguard in the country in the post-Mobutu era, and therefrom a concerted scheme to forcefully sideline the Zairian dictator in the event of his violating the institutional order set up by the Sovereign National Conference (SNC). The opposition mistakes, contrariwise, delayed the end of the socioeconomic doldrums and the Congolese renaissance, and paved the way for a violent change brought about by Laurent- Désiré Kabila. This can be illustrated by salient facts in the chronology of the Congo’s transition to democracy, which run as follows:

1990 April 24: Owing to internal and external pressure, Mobutu announces the end of the one-party regime.

May 11-12: Massacre of university students in Lubumbashi. Brussels broadcasts the affair and successfully launches a worldwide campaign for an embargo against Mobutu. The opposition misses this opportunity of Mobutu’s international isolation to topple down the Zairian statesman.

1991 July: Mobutu’s nomination of Tshisekedi as prime minister is vetoed by the population, as demonstrators convince the latter to decline.

August 7: The Sovereign National Conference (CNS) begins in Kinshasa.

September-October: Looting and violence by poorly paid soldiers all over the country. Interviewed later by Lanotte, Ambassador Jean Coen rightly pointed out that these manifestations verified a veritable power vacuum likened to that of May 1968, which swept away General de Gaulle’s leadership. The diplomat added: “If he had wanted to, Etienne Tshisekedi should have easily taken over the power, thanks to the presence in Kinshasa of Belgian and French Troops. Yet the UDPS leader rejected any idea of a coup d’état”¹⁹.

October: Tshisekedi is once again named prime minister, but is dismissed after a few days due to disagreements with Mobutu.

Yet Western governments, resolute since the end of the Cold War to rid Zaïre of Mobutu, dazzlingly side with the opposition leader so, as Kenneth B. Noble points out, the Zairian president accused them of wanting “my head at any price” and declared, “They cannot dictate how I run Zaïre”²⁰.

1992 August 4: The CNS adopts a provisional constitution for the transition and votes to give the country its original name of ‘Congo’.

¹⁹ Lanotte (2003), *Guerres sans frontières*, Editions GRIP, p.20.

²⁰ Kenneth B. Noble, “Zaire’s Chief Vows to Stay in Power and Warns West to Meddle”, in *The New York Times*, October 28, 1991.

August 14-15: The CNS elects Tshisekedi as prime minister, with 71 per cent of the vote cast by 2,842 delegates.

December 1: Mobutu carries out the third coup of his political career by shutting all of Tshisekedi's ministers out of their offices, demanding the naming of a government acceptable to the head of state, and ordering Mgr Laurent-Désiré Monsengwo who is the CNS president, to bring the conference to an end. Next day, the premier delivers a speech before the CNS delegates, in which he nullifies the new Zaïre 5 000 000 banknote issued by Nyembo Shabani, the Central Bank governor, to fight Mobutu's resources-stealing policy that causes an artificially high inflation. A few days later, Tshisekedi is forced to step aside, while simultaneously France, Belgium, and the US issue statements of support for him²¹.

December 1: The CNS closes prematurely.

1993 *January 28-30:* The rejection of the Zaïre 5 000 000 banknote by consumers and the business leads to the second wave of looting and violence by soldiers paid with it. During the wave, French Ambassador Philippe Bernard is assassinated and hundreds of people are killed in Kinshasa. Here again politics seems a comedy scene: forces of change are passive while facing the anti-constitutional Tshisekedi dismissal; whereas Tshisekedi's nullification of the Zaïre 5 000 000, though effective, is anti-constitutional too. The issue is one does not understand why the forces of change can successfully embark the entire people into such a sensitive anti-constitutional venture, and fail to dismiss Mobutu from the highest office. So, the bloodbath consecutive to this venture is sadly vain. Yet, given that Mobutu has undoubtedly been the stumbling block in the road map traced out by the CNS toward democratic elections, the Western troika reiterates its support for the Zairian opposition on 4 February. Kenneth Noble reports: "As bloodshed intensifies here [in Kinshasa], the United States, France and Belgium demanded today that President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaïre transfer power to the transitional government led by his rival, Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi"²².

March 9-19: A political conclave by the People's Revolution Movement (MPR) and its political allies results in the establishment of a dual constitutional framework, a dual legislature, and a dual executive, with Tshisekedi and the CNS related institutions as legitimate, while Mobutu's illegal government under Faustin Birindwa has effective control of the reins of power.

September: Negotiations between the forces of the status quo and the forces of change agree on ways of ending the dual authority structures.

1994 *January 23:* A single legislature of over seven hundred members is established as the provisional parliament, Haut Conseil de la République-Parlement de transition (HCR-PT).

April-July: Genocide in Rwanda results in over one million Hutu refugees fleeing into the Congo, including remnants of the former national army (FAR) and the

²¹ See <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/data/drclubachro.htm>.

²² Kenneth B. Noble, "3 Western Nations Demand Zaire Leader Yield Power", in *The New York Times*, February 4, 1993, Cfr http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/t/etienne_tshisekedi/index.html .--Invigorated by Western backing, Tshisekedi refuses to relinquish power, without taking further measures to counter-attack and end the dictatorship by, Cfr *Zaire (Selective) Chronology, 1990-1997, updated: 3/1/97* in <http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/ir/cews/database/Zaire/zaire.doc>.

interahamwe, the extremist Hutu militia.

April 9: A single fundamental law is adopted as the Constitutional Act of the Transition.

July 6: Leon Kengo wa Dondo, the longest-serving prime minister of Mobutu's Party-State (1982-86 and 1988-1990) is once again sworn into office as the prime minister of the transition to democracy. The opposition is tripped up: instead of the expected rehabilitation of Tshisekedi as prime minister, Mobutu's political family bribed some opposition parliamentarians, raised majority in its favour, and brought Kengo wa Dondo to winning the vote in the HCR-PT.

1995 June: The HCR-PT prolongs the Kengo government for two years, until June 30 1997, to allow it to fulfill its mandate of holding free and fair elections.

1996 January 1: The National Electoral Commission (CNE) is inaugurated, with 44 members, 22 for each of two political 'families', the Mobutu camp and the democratic opposition.

October 6: Rwandan troops begin to dismantle the Hutu refugee camps in North and South Kivu and to pursue those refugees and fighters fleeing westward.

October 18: AFDL is established at Lemeru, with Laurent-Désiré Kabila as its spokesperson, with the aim of overthrowing the Mobutu regime.

1997 May 17: With Rwandan and Ugandan backing, the AFDL take over Kinshasa; Kabila changes the country's name to 'Congo' and proclaims himself its president.

This chronology is essentially drawn from Professor Nzongola Ntalaja (2002: 274-276) who significantly participated in the shaping of the nation's march during this time of the Congo's history. However, it is enriched by my consideration as an eyewitness of the national life during the Transition –I was a zealous supporter of the UDPS. Nonetheless, because the latter lacked a clear pragmatic vision of change, the Anglo-Saxons, having no choice and determined to overthrow the 'Leopard of Zaïre', had to back the ex-Communist long-time rebel, Laurent-Désiré Kabila's revolution. That leads to the First Congo War.

1.3. The First Congo War and Effort for Political Negotiation

As I mentioned above, Western powers, notably the President Clinton's US, Belgium, and Britain, are determined to end Marshal Mobutu's regime. And given that there is no serious opponent in Kinshasa who can bring the change from within the country, either through popular uprisings or through a military violence sustained by foreign troops, these powers decided to launch a rebellion from a neighbouring country. This part of the first chapter is concerned with the manner the powers mentioned above handled the process of the elimination of Mobutu, from their allying with Uganda's President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni to the seizure of Kinshasa by Laurent-Désiré Kabila's AFDL. It discusses four moments: the beginning of the conspiracy, the launch of the rebellion, the creation of the AFDL, and the tardy negotiations and Mobutu's downfall.

1.3.1. The Beginning of the Conspiracy

1.3.1.1. Franco-American Standoff

The conspiracy against the Mobutu regime has as starting point the end of the Cold War in 1989. The huge reshuffle of the international arena, resulting from the evaporation of the East-West ideological tension, entails a new American vision of Africa. Contrary to the past that saw the Third World divided into influence spheres of the Northern powers (i.e. Latin America and Middle East for the US, Africa for France [as well as the European Community behind it], Asia for Japan, and Marxist-Leninist states for the Soviet Union), the American establishment nowadays believes that those strategic frontiers have fallen alongside the Berlin Wall. The time has come for the sole hyperpower's capitalism to invade the entire world, including taking away Africa from the dominion of France. This new US stance is described by Robin Philpot:

“In 1993, the American Senate, the Under-Secretary of State Georges Moose had declared: ‘we must ensure our access to the immense natural resources of Africa, a continent that harbours 78% the world reserves of chromium, 89% of platinum, and 59% of cobalt’. After the Dakar Franco-African Summit of May 1995, the secretary of Commerce, defunct Ron Brown, stated: ‘The Americans are to hold themselves higher in front of the traditional partners of Africa, France on the forefront. We shall no longer leave Africa to Europeans’”²³.

The US determination to change the world geopolitics is underscored by another American high-ranking personality under the Clinton tenure: the US Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Asteris Hularias relates that, in October 1996, during his short-lived stay in francophone Mali, whose purpose was the promotion of the idea of an American-supported peace-keeping force in Africa, he unequivocally replied to the apprehension of a French official in these terms: “The time is past when outside powers could consider whole groups of countries as their private domains”²⁴.

The Franco-American standoff over the Great Lakes region, strategically speaking, starts with the dumping of Marshall Mobutu by the US, which is consecutive to the finding by Washington of the new ‘strongman’, in replacement of the Zairian leader, to rely on in the management of the affairs of the Central Africa in particular, and the whole continent in general: Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni²⁵. Amidst these affairs figures the invasion of Zaïre toward Mobutu’s ouster. This is brilliantly reported by scholars such as Howard Adelman and Govind C. Rao who note:

²³H. N’Gbanda Nzambo (2004), *Crimes organisés en Afrique Centrale: Révélations sur les réseaux rwandais et occidentaux*, Editions Duboiris, Paris, p. 113 ; translated from the French version.

²⁴ Asteris Hularias, *(Non) Policies and (Mis) Perceptions: The United States, France and the Crisis in Zaire*, in *War and Peace in Zaire/Congo*, Ibid., p.297.—The scholar adds to the list another US official, Daniel Simpson, the US ambassador in Zaire, who reiterated: “[French] imperialism...is no longer tolerated” (Ibid.).

²⁵ Though Western media, while praising Museveni as a new breed of Africa’s leaders, claim that he ended the generation of strongmen in the continent, American officials think otherwise. Indeed, M.E. Korkblum, the Deputy Secretary of State in the Clinton administration, declared to a French journalist: “Beware about Africa; France is misled. The strongman is in Uganda, not in Kinshasa (H. N’Gbanda: 2004: 192). Translated from the French version.

“...Museveni’s close ties to the US and the UK as well as Western financial institutions lessened international condemnation of Uganda’s participation in the invasion of Zaïre. Some, especially the French government, even accused Uganda of being a pawn of Anglo-American interests. However (...) Ugandan interests were primary within the context of imperial rivalry in which the imperial powers [the case of the US and France] had not yet formulated a coherent policy”²⁶.

Furthermore, the American strategic shift over the Great Lakes region fathered France’s fear of losing its dominion over Central Africa, particularly Zaïre that is the world’s second biggest francophone country. According to Hularias, the French fear was legitimate for a couple of reasons, aside the abovementioned rollback of the spheres of influence in the aftermath of the demise of communism. On the one hand, the post-Cold War era had experienced the birth, in Washington, of the consensus that “the American external policy should serve as the facilitator for US private enterprise” (2004: 297). This consensus entailed the requirement of the openness of the African market to every actor in the spirit of a free and fair competition and, therefore, the obligation to overturn its control by Paris. Hularias illustrates this with the viewpoint of Herman Cohen, the Assistant Secretary of State under the senior Bush administration, which was formulated as follows: the US could “no longer afford to accept France’s determination to maintain its privileged *chasse gardée* (private hunting ground) within the economic realm [of Africa]” (2004: 297). Consequently, in July 1995, President Jaques Chirac, infuriated, annotated from the oil-rich Gabon, “the Anglo-Saxons’ dream of pushing France out of its position in Africa without paying a price” (2004: 298). On the other hand, the divergence of US and French policies toward Central Africa was equally due to hearty Franco-Sudanese relations while Khartoum is then a bitter foe of Washington because of its sponsoring and harbouring of Islamic terrorism. The fact that Mobutu got involved in these relations, siding with Paris, likely hastened US plans to topple him (Hularias, 2004:298).

1.3.1.2. The Axis of the Conspiracy: The Americano-Ugando-Rwandese Alliance

Although the Anglo-Saxon conspiracy theory appeared to withstand any opposition, it was developed by the French public opinion. French policymakers and journalists asserted that the US and Britain have plotted to end France’s control over the Central Africa through regime change in Rwanda and the aggression of Zaïre. This assertion is founded on three reasons that drive the plot.

The first and foremost reason is strategic: the US and Britain sought to build a broader security belt in Africa to isolate and squeeze the Sudanese terrorism-sponsoring regime, which belt included Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA)-controlled area, and is to expand westward to integrate Zaïre and the rest of Central and West Africa. Commenting *The Times* of London (17 January 1997), Ogenga Otunnu notes that “the coordinated armed interventions in neighboring countries by the leaders of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda not only have the potential of confirming Paris’ fear of an Anglophone conspiracy in East and Central Africa, but that they also have the unwavering backing and approval of the United States and Britain”²⁷. Hence, as noted above, the Mobutu regime was an important target to eliminate for the Zairian tyrant unfortunately signed

²⁶ Howard Adelman and Govind C. Rao, *The Zairian War and the Refugee Crisis, 1996 -1997: Creating a Culture of Conflict Prevention*, in *War and Peace in Zaire/Congo*, Ibid, p.18.

²⁷ Ogenga Otunnu, *Uganda as a Regional Actor in the Zairian War*, in *War and Peace in Zaire/Congo*, Ibid, p. 55.

cooperation accords with Khartoum, including the squelching of the SPLA's activities. Thus, Daniel Simpson, the US ambassador to Zaïre, well trusted by President Bill Clinton, mentioned that the Mobutu government was "a decadent regime sustained by France"²⁸

The second reason is economic: the facilitation of the Anglo-American enterprises in the region. This can be verified by the above declarations made by different US officials about American interests in the post-Cold War Africa. Citing *Africa Confidential*, Ogenga Otunnu notes: [t]here are nuggets of facts in what *the Anglo-Saxons* refer disparagingly to as 'Parisnoia' such as the way US commercial interests are edging Belgian and French ones out of the region"²⁹. I will point out later the nature of each Anglo-American enterprise and its radius of activity in the invaded Zaïre that is so naturally endowed that it is dubbed a "geological scandal".

The third and last reason is historical and cultural: the "Fashoda syndrome" and the wiping of the French language off the region. The "Fashoda syndrome" is a cultural attitude which traumatizes the French psyche and is characterized by an inferiority complex toward the Britons (and the Anglo-Saxons in general), an interpretation (sometimes erroneous) of any Anglo-Saxon initiative in France's private hunting ground (former colonies) as a display of imperial competition, a usually protective counter-initiative, and a devotion of the French authorities to France's 'grandeur'. The syndrome carries back up to a 1898 incident that is felt by the French public as a humiliating defeat inflicted by the Britons in Africa (Asteris Hularias, 2004:295).

Further, the Fashoda syndrome is accompanied, in the French mind, by a suspicion of the Anglo-saxons' resolution to remove from France's former colonies the French language and culture, and the imposition of the already omnipresent English language. The suspicion was later reinforced by *The Times* of London that observed that the involvement of Uganda and Rwanda in the war, with the approval and backing of Washington and London, "has resulted in the spread of the English language in Zaïre, traditionally an area of French influence" (Otunnu, 2004: 55). Thus, even though it might be causing the French to exaggerate their reckoning of the US/Britain foreign policy in Africa, the syndrome flaunted a reality: the Franco-American imperialist rivalries "that turned local crises [such as the Zaïre war] into a pawn for hegemony within the context of a global struggle" without manifesting "an assertive imperial policy" (Otunnu, 2004: 57).

The post-Cold War Anglo-American policy in the Great Lakes region needed the establishment of a reliable axis. The Clinton administration found suitable the person of the Ugandan President Museveni as the key player in the erection of this axis. But one can wonder what motivated this choice?

The US's uppermost strategic interest in Africa lay in the counter-terrorism war against Khartoum. Uganda enjoyed the best position within the 'security belt' against the Sudanese regime: it is situated in the middle of the belt that still ranges from Egypt to Tanzania. It is also a southern neighbor of Sudan, meaning that it constituted the best sanctuary for Washington-sponsored SPLA in its struggle against the fundamentalist regime of the Sudanese President Omar al-Bachir. In addition, the person of President Museveni was fascinating in many respects. Though introduced to his American counterpart by the Britons as the most reliable statesman in the Great Lakes subregion and in central Africa, for the achievement of the project of eradicating

²⁸ *Le Monde*, 5 December 1996, quoted in Kevin C. Dunn (2003), *Imagining the Congo. The International Relations of Identity*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, p.164.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 54.

the French influence in Africa³⁰, it is certain that the uppermost factor that influenced Clinton's tying the knot with the Ugandan President was the international recognition the latter has been enjoying. *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia, points out that, from the mid 1990s, he "has won praise from Western governments for his adherence to IMF structural adjustment programs, i.e. privatizing state enterprises, cutting government spending and urging African self-reliance". His good governance was so dazzling that he was admired by the Bretton Woods institutions—which considered his management as the greatest achievement of the structural adjustment programs--, governments, Western media and academics. The model of this praise was designed by James C. Mckinley's article titled *Uganda Leader Stands tall in New African Order*, and published in the *New York Times*, which writes that "President Yoweri K. Museveni started an ideological movement that is reshaping much of Africa, spelling the end of the corrupt, strong-man governments that characterized the cold-war era"³¹.

Secondly, Museveni's urge harmonized with Clinton's determination to remove the 'Leopard of Zaïre' for economic motives. The Washington rationale might have been the following: Mobutu rose to power as a strongman whom the US needed to halt the expansion of Communism in Africa; Museveni rose to power as a manager whom the US needs for the expansion of its capitalistic businesses in Africa; actually capitalistic businesses have overpowered and superseded counter-Communism; therefore Museveni is to overpower and supersede Mobutu. It is to be reminded that, in the post-Cold War era, one of Washington's main objectives in its foreign policy is the facilitation of Anglo-American private enterprises in Africa, particularly the Great Lakes subregion. While they might be less valuable to the US as a nation, the mineral riches in Zaïre had lured scores of Anglo-American and European mining *cum* investment companies. Otunnu notes:

"The companies—which included De Beers' Diamonds (South Africa), American Mineral Fields (Arkansas, USA), Anglo-American Corporation (South Africa), AMAX (formerly American Metals Climax, USA), Phelps Dodge (USA), Barrick Gold (Canada), and Lonrho (UK)—clamored for the removal of Mobutu because of his interventionist approach to economic management. Mobutu had a record of nationalizing natural resources, and was visibly reluctant to embrace the IMF and the World Bank's structural adjustment programs" (2004: 51).

The connection of these corporations with their respective countries' governments—of which prototype is the marriage of the American Mineral Fields and President Bill Clinton, both hailing from Arkansas—may explain how Western private businesses had been wielding more influence over Zaïre and at home than America that lacked a structural strategy for the Central African massive country.

Thirdly, at last, well-established in Washington, the Tutsi lobby had been impacting on the American administration even before Bill Clinton's tenure³². According to N'Gbanda, its current key aim seemed to be the establishment of a Hima-Tutsi empire or the *Republic of Volcanoes* (H. N'Gbanda, 2004: 94). This claim is supported by the fact that Museveni, as the leader of the

³⁰ Numerous evidences of the undertaking of such project have been widely provided. It is worthwhile, however, to note that the role that Museveni has to play in this project is compared to that played by Mobutu during the Cold War against the Soviet Union influence in Africa. About the introduction of the Ugandan leader to the American authorities by the Britons, see Honoré N'Gbanda Nzambo, 2004: 188-189.

³¹ *The New York Times*, June 15, 1997, excerpt by Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoweri_Museveni

³² Proof: Honoré N'Gbanda has exposed the George W Bush senior administration's involvement in the Tutsi-led RPF invasion of Rwanda on the 30th of September 1990. On this RPF invasion of Rwanda, see Roger Winter, *Lancing the Boil: Rwanda's Agenda in Zaire*, in *War and Peace in Zaire/Congo*, Ibid, p.110.

RNA—the fiercest armed opposition against the Obote and Okello regimes—, rallied behind him the Burundi Tutsi-led regimes of Jean-Baptiste Bagaza and Pierre Buyoya (in promising to protect their interests once in power in Kampala) and the Rwandan-Tutsi warriors as well, by vowing to support the Tutsi-dominated rebel group of the RPR in its endeavour to overthrow the Habyarimana regime; the promise, made between 1982 and 1986, included the extension of the protection to the Zairian Tutsis, ‘Banyamulenge’, who have been denied Zaïre’s nationality since 1981, implying the stretching of the war into Uganda’s eastern giant toward the toppling of the Mobutu government.³³ As a result, Museveni’s rally of the Burundian Tutsi regimes along with the Rwandan Tutsi guerrillas living in Uganda and the Zairian Tutsis, writes Otunnu, “created an appearance of an emerging pan-Tutsi nationalism, based on common descent, common persecutions and aspirations, and based on a particular history of the ‘golden age’ of Tutsi cultural supremacy” (2004: 37).

As soon as he seized the power, Museveni, keeping his promise, broadened the Washington-Kampala axis to Kigali with following initiatives. The most determinant of them was the Ugandan leader’s recommending, under the Uganda-USA military agreement, Major Paul Kagame along with a bunch of the RNA officers (who will constitute the RPF backbone) for military training at the US Army Command and General Staff at Leavenworth in Kansas, and thereafter, hastily, recalled him to succeed Rwigyema in the command of the Rwanda armed opposition³⁴. The Americo-Ugando-Rwandese alliance got concluded. A few months later, the Rwandese rebellion resumed its military offensives against the Hutu-majoritarian Habyarimana regime, and seized the power in July 1994.

1.3.2. The Launch of the Rebellion

1.3.2.1. The Official Reasons and the Outset of the Rebellion

Apart from the abovementioned core motives of dismantling both Habyarimana and Mobutu regimes, which were driving Washington, Kampala and the RPF, the Kagame government raised two pretexts to launch the first civil war (actually a war of aggression) in the neighbouring Congo in autumn 1996: the presence of the ‘genocidaires’ in Zaïre and the marginalization of the Banyamulenge.

The presence of the Rwandan ‘genocidaires’ in Zaïre, on the one hand, was consecutive to the seizure of power in Kigali by the RPF in July 1994. The Hutu Rwandan refugees provided a social base for the *Forces Armées Rwandaises* (FAR), the former members of Habyarimana’s MRND government, and the *interahamwe* (Hutu militia at the service of the defunct President Habyarimana), who were involved in the three-month-long genocide, as well as the civilians. Moreover, the holding by the genocidaires of weapons and all the cash taken away from the Central Bank of Rwanda was worrisome to Kagame³⁵. The Rwandan Deputy President’s worries are legitimate not only because of the genocidaires’ training towards counter-attacking the new

³³ Ogenga Otunnu, *Uganda as a Regional Actor in the Zairian War*, in *War and Peace in Zaire/Congo*, Ibid., p. 37.

³⁴ Ogenga Otunnu, 2004: 38. The promotion of the Rwandan-Tutsi rebels in Museveni’s Uganda is justified by that the Ugandan leader is probably a Tutsi or Hima-Tutsi. Conformably to Ogunnu’s account, one dominant view regards Museveni’s father as “a Mtutsi from Rwanda, a view that adds credibility to the claim made by some Rwandan-Tutsi in the 1980s that Museveni is their ‘blood-brother’ who grew up among the Bahima in Ankole. With an invented Hima ethnic-identity, he contested but lost the 1980 elections to a member of the Democratic Party (DP)” (2004: 35).

³⁵ See N’Gbanda Nzambo, *Idem*, p.157.

regime in Kigali (Lanotte, 2003: 36), but also because of Marshal Mobutu's traditional "insolent carelessness" (Ndaywel e Nziem, 1998: 793).

The marginalization of the Banyamulenge, on the other hand, was the immediate motive of the launch of the 'rebellion'. The Banyamulenge are Zairian citizens of Rwandese descent whose the Zairian nationality was denied in 1981 by the Central Committee of the ruling People's Revolution Movement inasmuch as, as argues N'Gbanda, in any Congolese map drawn by the colonizers, there is no indication of any ethnic group called 'Banyamulenge'; and this Kinyarwanda-speaking ethnic group came into the Belgian Congo notably due to the 1959 Hutu-Tutsi conflict, and late in 1962 and 1970 consecutively to Rwandan civil war³⁶. The series of resolutions taken by the HCR-PT and assimilating the Kinyarwanda-speaking people to the Rwandan refugees, as well as the South-Kivu Vice-Governor Lwabanji Lwasi's ultimatum expelling those people to Rwanda, constitutes the detonator of the First Congo War starting with the creation of the *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo* (AFDL).

1.3.2.2. The Creation of the AFDL³⁷

The AFDL was created at Lamera on 18 October 1996. It was the fusion of four politico-military revolutionary forces: (1) l'*Alliance démocratique des peuples* (ADP), presided over by Deogracias Bugera (Munyarwanda of Masisi), and representing the Tutsis of Congo; its key demands were the acknowledgement of the Zairian nationality to Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge, and the improvement of the relations with other ethnic groups of the Kivu, in order to end discriminations and spoliations of which these Congolese of Rwandan descent were victims under the Mobutu regime; (2) le *Conseil National de Résistance* (CNR) led by the Lumumbist André Kisase Ngandu, who claimed since its creation in 1993 that it is the military branch of the MNC/Lumumba; (3) le *Mouvement Révolutionnaire pour la Libération du Zaïre* (MRLZ) directed by Masasu Nindaga, a Congolese young man from the Swahili-speaking East, precisely of a Bashi descent; it was composed of young soldiers dubbed the *kadogos*; -and (4) the *Parti révolutionnaire populaire* created by Laurent-Désiré Kabila on 24 December 1967; being a revolutionary movement of workers and peasants, it was settled in the forests of Fizi and Baraka, South-Kivu; its last grandiose achievements were the offensives against the town of Moba its fighters occupied in December 1984 (Moba I) and in July 1985 (Moba II); it was quite eradicated in 1987 by the FAZ with the surrendering of the major part of its members (Lanotte, 2003: 44). The creation of the AFDL was accompanied by the conclusion of a series of secret accords – coined the *Lamera Agreements*—by diverse parties: the US, Britain, Canada, Belgium, Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Though confidential, this agreement had been unmasked through the unfolding of events and the utterances of its

³⁶ N'Gbanda Nzambo, 2004:53. In claiming the non-existence of a Banyamulenge ethnic group in any colonial archive, N'Gbanda reiterates the 1996 Zairian government position that is summed up by Abbas Gnamo (2004: 100).

³⁷ The *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo* (AFDL) is a Rwando-Ugandan instrument aiming at overthrowing Mobutu. According to the very testimonies of Kagame and Museveni, the toppling of the Zairian dictator was one of the primary objectives at the onset of the First Congo War (Otunnu, 2004: 68). President Museveni appointed Laurent-Désiré Kabila the rebel group's spokesman for many reasons, inter alia, strategically, to cover the predominantly Tutsi character of the AFDL, which could have frustrated the guerillas' progress toward Kinshasa, and, emotionally, because of Kabila's wide friendship long ago tied with the Ugandan leader in the scrubland and more recently with high-ranking Tanzanian officials, Mugabe, Kagame, and Mandela (Ibid, p. 66).

designers. Another source of its unveiling consists of the revelations of scholarly works, such as Lanotte's, and the testimonies of former statesmen, N'Gbanda Nzambo ko Atumba, in particular. For example, Lanotte reports:

“A secret clause of the Lemera Agreements would have stipulated that Kigali agrees to support militarily the AFDL in 1996-1997 in exchange of the cession of a part (Idjwi Island), the totality of the Kivu, or even the whole East Congo” (2003: 164, translated from the French version).

Given those sources and diverse explanations of the ‘Anglo-Saxon conspiracy’ as well, It can reasonably be concluded that the Lemera Agreements include four elements. They are as follows:

Firstly, the yielding, for exploitation, of the DRC mines to different companies whose the governments are parties into the agreement. The lion's part is to belong to the US. Indeed, President Bill Clinton's African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA), signed in 1995, is the expression of his administration's determination to conquer mineral potentials in Africa, the Congo-Kinshasa in particular, in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War. The exploitation task is to be undertaken, in the pole-position, by the American Mineral Fields Inc. (AMFI), a company of the Lundin Group created in 1995, and whose headquarters are situated in Arkansas, Bill Clinton's native state. Other companies include the American Diamonds Buyers, an AMFI branch specialized in buying diamonds, and small corporations: RidgePointe and Caled. Canada's part is to be exploited by two mammoths: the Consolidated Eurocan Ventures (another company of the Lundin Group), which is interested in copper and cobalt located in the Gecamines' Tenge-Funguruma domain, and the Barrick Gold Corporation (BGC), which has been the world's second producer of gold. In addition, there is Banro Corporation, a smaller company that aims to exploit gold through its wholly owned Lungushwa project, located in the Twangiza-Namoya gold belt, DRC. The South Africa's part is to be ensured by two giants: the Anglo-American Corporation (ACC), which is the world's number one in the production of gold, and De Beers, the world's first producer and exporter of diamond; the other two smaller corporations are Gencor Ltd and Iscor. Other corporations involved in this venture are Darnay (United Kingdom), Umicore (Belgium), Cluff (Australia), and Mindev (Luxembourg). The list is not exhaustive (N'Gbanda, 2004: 229-230). These corporations will largely contribute to the financing of the AFDL war, with the biggest contribution made by the American Mineral Field Inc. that has “signed a one billion dollar contract a single month before the fall of Kinshasa”³⁸.

Secondly, the annexing of the Kivu province to Rwanda so as allegedly to establish the Hima-Tutsi empire or the Republic of Volcanoes in the Great Lakes region. This revelation was made by President Laurent-Désiré Kabila in the wake of the second civil war that started on 2 August 1998³⁹. It is confirmed by N'Gbanda Nzambo, a noteworthy voice as a former chief of the national Intelligence during the Mobutu reign:

“Clearly, Kagame's project through the RPF did not stop in Rwanda. His ultimate aim was not restricted in seizing power in Rwanda and in settling down in. Rather, it is embodied into his global vision that finds relevant meaning and notoriety in Colette Braeckman's euphemism of ‘*transborder nationality*’: progressing and extending his empire to the Great Lakes region after the conquest of Rwanda (...) Can one still doubt, at this stage, Kagame's agenda of erecting a Tutsi empire in

³⁸ M. Rozen, quoted by Lanotte, 2003: 38. To add other companies to the list, see Otunnu (2004:52-53).

³⁹ I was myself an eye- and an earwitness to President Kabila's revelation at the *Radio et Télévision Nationale Congolaise* (RTNC), the state-run audiovisual media, in Kinshasa.

the Great Lakes?” (2004: 98).

The project rhymes with America’s geostrategic interests in the African Great Lakes subregion. The expansion of the power of Kagame, a precious ally, throughout the heart of Africa is a good affair for Washington: it is a tool for halting and eradicating Islamic fundamentalism in Africa, just as Marshal Mobutu’s ubiquitous influence in Central Africa during the 1970s and 1980s was useful in countering communism.

Thirdly, the securing of the borders shared by the DRC and Uganda. This task is expected from the AFDL government, and consists of neutralizing Ugandan guerilla groups that regularly wage offensives against Kampala from the Congo’s territory, particularly the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), the West Nile Bank’s Front (WNBF), and the *Forces Démocratiques Alliées* (FDA)⁴⁰. Washington too is eager to see this objective attained; that is why it brought all its weapons geared up for the failed *Operation Restore Hope* in Somalia to Uganda, so as to strengthen the Museveni Christian democrat regime as “the sole credible shield to the destabilizing proselytism of the Islamic regime of Khartoum in sub-Saharan Africa” (Lanotte, 2003: 38).

Fourthly, the eradication of the French dominion in Zaïre in favour of the English language and the Anglo-American culture. It is the cultural dimension of the global revolution initiated by America to uproot France from Africa. The DRC has to follow the path of Kigali in gradually making the English the major education language, and in boycotting the *francophonie* summit.

1.3.2.3. The Unwinding of the War

The unwinding of the First Congo War can be articulated into three phases. The first phase begins with the launch at Lemeru of the ‘liberation’ struggle by the AFDL as the revolutionary movement aiming to topple Marshall Mobutu. Its progress is facilitated by the leadership of Laurent-Désiré Kabila who is highly cultivated: polyglot, i.e. speaking French, English, Swahili, Kinyarwanda and Lingala, he easily rallies all Congolese populations behind the rebel group, after having broadened his relationship network in the international arena by befriending Presidents Yoweri Museveni, Nelson Mandela and Robert Mugabe, and Rwandan Deputy President Paul Kagame. His appointment as the rebellion’s spokesperson is further motivated by his being the credible embodiment of the passion-driven movement toward overthrowing the Zairian dictator, since he is the sole politician, amidst the political class in Kinshasa and within the AFDL, who has been continuously fighting Mobutu since early 1960s⁴¹.

The phase culminates into the fall of Goma and the ‘Rwandan solution’ to the humanitarian sanctuaries issue by the dismantling of the Hutu refugee camps. Indeed, a Franco-Spanish initiative, later agreed by the US, led on November 25 to the Security Council’s resolution 1078 warranting the sending of a 12.000 soldiers-multinational force (including 3.000 to 5.000 marines) under the Canadian command, to Eastern Zaïre for the security of the refugees. But an AFDL-Kigali concert made the resolution abort by subduing to intense bombardments the

⁴⁰ The LRA, created in 1987 by the priestess Alice Lakwema, was quite neutralized, just to bounce back with a growing membership of 4000, from 300. This resurgence, along with the creation of the FDA, was seen by Americans as the product, and the provocation, of the French government. The American consideration is exacerbated by the Juma Oris’ WNBF activities, inasmuch as the rebel group, composed of the Aringa and Kakwa tribes whose the former dictator Idi Amin Dada is a descendant, is Islamic; so, it is supported by the ‘terrorism-backing’ Sudanese regime, and, because of the Paris-Khartoum co-operation, indirectly by France.

⁴¹ The leaders of other components of the AFDL are appointed in the rebel movement as follows: Andre Kisase Ngandu: military commander; Deogracias Bugera: secretary general; and Masasu Nindaga: commander of the young fighters dubbed *kadogos* (O. Lanotte, 2003:44; see also G. Nzongola, 2002:225-226).

refugee camps (including the huge notorious camp of Munguga) and forcing the bulk of 600.000 Hutu refugees to return to Rwanda, while the ex-FAR and Interahamwe militias ran northward.

The “Rwandan solution” that overtly challenges a Security Council resolution, verifies the determination of the Conspiracy axis to put an end to the Mobutu regime. Kigali knew that the presence of a multinational military contingent, including France as a key participant, would halt the AFDL progress and save Mobutu’s power (Winter, 2004: 124). Thus, backed secretly by the US and Uganda, it chose to overtake the UN resolution, paying the price of death of thousands and thousands of refugees, and the international community looking on, powerless.

The second phase is dominated by three significant events: the involvement in the Zaïre venture of Kampala on November 30, 1996 to squelch the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attacks from the North Kivu, and of Luanda that sought to put to an end the UNITA’s offensives from the Zairian territory; the death of André Kisase Ngandu, the ‘Congolization’ of the AFDL through a massive enrolment of young soldiers, and the March 15 1997 fall of Kisangani that starts harbouring the AFDL headquarters, after the fiasco of the “total thunderous counter-offensive” widely trumpeted by the Zairian Defence Minister, General Likulia Bolongo.

I consider necessary to comment a bit on the assassination of Kisase Ngandu and the fall of Kisangani. The former is a consequence of the nationalization of the AFDL and the addition of Angola to the struggle. Indeed, because of “his Lumumbist sense of nationalism and patriotic duty” (Nzongola, 2002: 226), and deeply saddened by the Rwandan command of the operation, the rebellion’s military commander exposed his intention to gradually replace Rwandan fighters with the inflowing Congolese enrollees. His boldness awakened Washington’s suspicion about his longstanding nationalism, and challenged Kagame’s project, and inevitably sealed his death. Notwithstanding the tragedy, Kisase Ngandu’s passing precluded, within the rebellion, influence conflicts with his fellow Lumumbist Kabila, and definitively unified the ‘liberation’ movement under the latter’s leadership. That is why, as Nzongola (2002) suggests, it is likely that the future leader of Congo was involved in Ngandu’s death. The fall of Kisangani “constitutes a real moral blow, and a dazzling humiliation, for the FAZ that appear completely as a *cartoon leopard*” (Cited in O. Lanotte, 2003: 62). Surely, it seals Mobutu’s downfall. Relieved and emboldened by Edouardo dos Santos’s competing with his godfathers in the venture, Kabila subtly achieves his dream of being viewed in Zaïre and overseas as the true commander of the rebellion.

The third phase, though geographically the most expansive one, has recorded the AFDL’s quickest advance during the ‘liberation’ struggle. The rebellion progresses in two directions to encircle the FAZ, and in line with the necessity of Rwanda and Angola to eradicate their respective rebel groups. The RPA pursues its advance westward, i.e. towards Gbadolite, while the Angolan troops and the Katangan Tigers progress speedily southward, that is, towards Lubumbashi and Mbuji-Mayi. Thus, within less than a month, the two provinces seen as the ‘useful Zaïre’ (Katanga and Kasai) are overrun by the rebellion of Lemera. Their respective capital cities successively capitulate: Lubumbashi (2 April) and Mbuji-Mayi (6 April).

The key events relating to the impact of foreign powers on this phase of the civil war run as follows: (1) The transfer of the AFDL headquarters from Kisangani to Lubumbashi. It is thought of as Laurent-Désiré Kabila’s desire to consolidate his security and his independence from his godfathers, in staying in his native town, far away from Kigali and Kampala; it also aimed at directly managing the immense economic resources offered by the ‘useful Zaïre’ (diamond in Kasai, and copper in Katanga), so as to dry up the legal government’s source of income. (2) The final deal with the corporations that financed the rebellion’s war effort, in view of the exploitation of mines in the imminent post-Mobutu era. Those deals are concluded in

Lubumbashi between Kabila's rebel government and several companies, particularly with the abovementioned American Mineral Field Inc., which signed a one billion dollar contract.

The fourth and last phase is characterized by the thorny issue, discussed in political circles in Kinshasa and in the international arena, of how the rebellion of Lemera is going to seize power in Kinshasa. Indeed, with the spectre of large-scale massacres looming in a capital city of 6 million people, the international community, especially the powers concerned with the war and backing one or another side, initiated a series of negotiations aimed at facilitating Mobutu's dignified departure and the AFDL's peaceful succession. The attempt of solution to this issue shall be made by South African President Nelson Mandela through a series of round talks that successively took place at Cape Town (5-8 April) and Pointe-Noire (4 May 1997). At Cape Town, the Zairian government's delegation is led by N'Gbanda Nzambo, the President's special adviser in security matters, whereas Laurent Kabila leads the AFDL delegation, alongside the American diplomats Georges Moose and Suzan Rice. However, the talks fail due to Kabila's arrogance and assurance of victory after the fall of Mbuji-Mayi, and Mobutu's stubbornness (Lanotte, 2003:64), and Moose's pressures on N'Gbanda for the ailing dictator to step aside⁴². The same dead-end is suffered at the famous meeting that takes place over the Atlantic ocean, under Mandela's mediation, aboard the South African luxury boat *Outeniqua*, at the distance from the shore of Pointe-Noire, because of Kabila's steady "certainty of an almost reached military victory", and of Mobutu being "blinded by boastfulness and the complex of a great national and international status"⁴³. Thus, Laurent-Désiré Kabila carried on his struggling-while-negotiating strategy. The latter will bear fruit in the aftermath of the abortion of the second round of the *Outeniqua* talks scheduled on 12 May, despite the heroic resistance waged at Kenge by the Presidential Special Division (DSP) of 2 000 soldiers helped by Jonas Savimbi's UNITA rebels. Indeed, crippled by General Mahele furnishing the secret strategies of the defence of the town to Kabila, the two-week-long resistance is quenched by the multinational coalition of Rwandans, Ugandans, Burundians, Angolans, Eritreans, and Congolese (Lanotte, 2003: 64-65). And, deluged by the wave of exhortations in the Zairian capital city by Thabo Mbeki and the American delegation headed by Bill Richardson⁴⁴, Marshall Mobutu, prodded by new development, quits Kinshasa on the dawn of May 16 1997. Overnight, General Mahele, while ordering officers and soldiers in Camp Tshatshi to lay down weapons to avoid bloodshed in the city, is condemned for high treason, and he is shot dead by General Wezago. Sooner the population will celebrate him as "the martyr of Kinshasa"⁴⁵. Unfortunately for Monsengwo and the remnant of the Mobutu regime, 24 hours later, i.e. on 17 May 1997, the AFDL peacefully takes over Kinshasa, and Laurent-Désiré Kabila changes the country's name to the Democratic Republic of Congo, and proclaims himself its president.

⁴² N'Gbanda Nzambo, 2004: 217. He quotes Moose as saying to him on the occasion of the restricted meeting held by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki in Johannesburg: "Our decision [to oust Mobutu] is irrevocable. Our timing will never change. And you shall never delay even of a day this war's calendar".

⁴³ N'Gbanda Nzambo, excerpt by Lanotte, 2003: 64.

⁴⁴ Bill Richardson, George Moose and Suzan Rice added a threat to the exhortation, warning Mobutu: "We do not want to see your corpse pulled down in the streets of Kinshasa (N'Gbanda Nzambo, 2004:133; see also his book *Ainsi sonne le glas*, 1998).

⁴⁵ Lanotte, 2003: 65.

1.4. Conclusion

The rise of Laurent-Désiré Kabila to power results from the combination of favourable internal and external factors, the uppermost ones being the popular support due to a desperate state of affairs the Congolese were plunged into by the Mobutu regime, and Mobutu's useless status in the world arena following the reshuffling of international relations in the aftermath of the Cold War. The Democratic Republic of Congo, since the post-Communism era, has been a key target of foreign powers. While Western countries, the US, Britain, Belgium, and Canada in particular, are allured by its scandalous riches⁴⁶, neighbouring governments in the Great Lakes subregion (notably Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi) nurture the project of annexing its eastern part for the erection of a 'Hima-Tutsi empire'. And the main mission assigned to the Laurent-Désiré Kabila regime is to ensure the implementation of the ambitions of these nations coalesced into the axis of conspiracy against the Congo. But is the rising Congolese government going to realize that agenda? The answer to this question constitutes the object of the next chapter.

⁴⁶ Apart from traditional natural resources, such as copper, diamond, gold, cobalt, wood (47% of Africa's forest), oil and coffee, the DRC harbours a new highly important mineral of columbite-tantalite or coltan (world's largest reserves: 80% according to Wikipedia), used in high technology, such as cell-phones, DVD players, playstations, satellites, etc. Moreover, its historic mineral of uranium continues to play a strategic role in the international affairs: Western powers fear that under a chaotic or 'rogue' Congolese regime it may end up in the hands of nuclear-bomb-hungry nations, such as North Korea and Iran, and of terrorists.

CHAPTER TWO: LAURENT-DESIRÉ KABILA IN POWER

2.0. Introduction

The advent of Laurent-Désiré Kabila in power on 17 May 1997 is saluted with euphoria by an overwhelming majority of people within the Democratic Republic of Congo and by many outside it. Within the DRC, at first, because the new president's liberation message, repeated after each military advance, induces in the Congolese people relief at getting rid of the 32-year long regime of Marshall Mobutu. It also stirred up in their collective unconscious the hope of establishing a democratic state whose institutions were conceived in the Sovereign National Conference. Meanwhile the foreign powers involved in the AFDL venture are celebrating the first step towards the achievement of their agenda, which is the takeover of the Congo's immense natural resources⁴⁷ and/or the annexing of the Eastern part of the war torn state by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi.

Unfortunately, the laws of destiny being often beyond human intelligence, the expectations of all parties concerned with the arrival of this new era are not realised. Regarding the nationals, the first measures taken by the head of state herald a murky future insofar as they tend to set up another one-party system. Moreover, the people of the east, the Grand Kivu in particular, consider as treason the fact that Kabila shares power with Rwandans, their longtime enemies. As far as the external powers are concerned, they are shocked by Kabila's nationalistic, Third-Worldist rhetoric from the early days of AFDL rule.

The object of this chapter is to comprehend the actions and reactions of the external forces in relation to Laurent-Désiré Kabila's mode of governing the DRC during the period preceding the Second Congo War. The chapter is subdivided into three parts. Firstly, I shall describe the Kabila government's enjoyment of the backing of external powers that are, though, differently motivated. Secondly, I shall unearth the influence of the allies on the new regime. Lastly, I shall expose the new stance of the AFDL's traditional allies, and show that at the end of the day they are not really the friends of Congo.

2.1. The Backing of External Forces

Amongst the unstated objectives of the multinational coalition backing the AFDL, I have suggested, is the establishment of a political system like Ugandan President Museveni's: a façade democracy that serves the interests of the Bretton Woods institutions and of the concerned governments through their corporations. In other words, it is setting a dictatorship that is technocratic, i.e. characterized by the know-how of dealing with the big businesses, and the implementation of management rules in governing the country, even though the regime is fraught with violations of human rights and civil liberties. This objective is attained with two features of

⁴⁷ Kelvin Dunn provides us with a noteworthy account of the Anglo-American interest in the Congo's riches (2003:167). Indeed, he quotes Madeleine Albright, the then Secretary of State, as asserting the urgency of "unlocking the Congo's vast potential", and as proclaiming: "The new Zaire offers a bonanza to US investors" (see also *Newsweek*, 12 May 1997). He adds: "Foreign gold and diamond mining corporations, especially American Mineral Fields Incorporated (AMF), engaged in what some saw as another 'scramble' for Congo's wealth (...). As one observer wryly [Gray, 1998] commented, war made good business sense for the mining corporations"

the Kabila regime at its outset: the suppression of political debate and the monopolization of power.

2.1.1. Suppression of Political Debate

It is marked by the early political measure taken by President Kabila of banning political activities opposed to, or outside of, the AFDL, on 26 May 1997. The former rebel easily and without hesitation decrees this measure because of his traditional belief in the dictatorship of the proletariat within a Communist society, and thereby, his dislike of the multiparty system. He claims that the latter engenders “‘dispersions’ and ‘weakening’ of Congolese people facing ‘fundamental questions’”⁴⁸. As a result, he ends up muzzling the press, intimidating civil society and arresting stubborn politicians. The most spectacular arrests are of Etienne Tshisekedi, the leader of opposition, who is exiled into his native village, Kabeya-Kamuanga, on 12 February 1998, and two other great figures—Joseph Olengankoy (leader of the *Forces Novatrices pour L’union et la Solidarité*) and Arthur Z’Ahidi Ngoma (founder of the *Forces du future*)—who are condemned by the Military Order Court for infringement of State security, and jailed in Buluwo Prison, Lubumbashi, on 19 May 1998.

Nonetheless, President Kabila, in decreeing the prohibition of opposition activities and, later in early September 1997, the ban on political parties, is spurred by a favourable international conjuncture. All mighty nations involved in the AFDL venture (US, Britain, Belgium, Canada, and South Africa), as well as the Congo’s neighbouring countries (Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Angola, and Zambia) back the presidential decree. A monolithic system suits those nations provided that it follows the Ugandan model (which has excelled in guaranteeing foreign interests and in observing the IMF’s conditionalities while repressing the opposition and disregarding social development) and the Congolese Head of State remains under President Museveni’s mentorship. The proof of the allied powers’ backing, apart from their consenting silence, appears when the heads of state of some of these nations, alongside ministers or diplomats of some others, attend, three days later, Laurent-Désiré Kabila’s swearing in ceremony, on 29 May 1997. It also lies in the South African President, Nelson Mandela’s expression of support immediately after the promulgation of the decree, and, a year later, President Bill Clinton’s consideration at the Entebbe Summit that every people has the right to organize democracy as they wish⁴⁹.

2.1.2. The Monopolization of Power

The multinational coalition that initiated and sponsored the AFDL venture is equally determined to tighten its control over the DRC by quietly supporting Kabila’s strategy of monopolizing power. This is achieved by the promulgation, on 28 May 1997, of a decree-law on the organization of power for the transitional period. This decree-law consecrates as the State key institutions the presidency of the Republic, the courts and tribunals, totally ignoring the existence and the role of the parliament (Lanotte, 2003: 68). The parliament’s absence can be explained as the attempt by President Laurent-Désiré Kabila and his African and Western godfathers to avoid

⁴⁸ Laurent-Désiré Kabila, quoted by G. de Villiers, *Guerre et politique. Les trente derniers mois de Laurent-Désiré Kabila*, cited in Lanotte, 2003: 74.

⁴⁹ This stance is clearly in continuity with the one enjoyed by Museveni close to the West. Quoting M. Mamdani, O.Otunnu observes that Western powers, ‘particularly the US and the UK’, applaud Museveni’s tyranny and present it as ‘the African way to democracy’ (2004: 56).

accountability before Congolese people on their management of public affairs. Thus, the check and balance principle is purely virtual inasmuch as the head of state concentrates in his hands the substance of the three traditional powers: the legislative (because of the absence of parliament), the executive, and the judiciary (Lanotte, 2003: 68).

2.2. The Influence of the Allies on the Laurent Kabila Regime

It is noticeable the most in three areas: army, politics and economy, as a consequence of Mobutu's saddening legacy.

2.2.1. Foreign Dominion of the National Army

The foreign dominion on the national army is essentially marked by the presidential decree appointing James Kabarebe, a Rwandan Tutsi, to the strategic post of the chief of staff of the FAC (Lanotte, 2003:76). The nomination is a shrewd way used by President Kabila to cautiously deal with the Tutsi control over the new-born Congolese National Forces (FAC) in avoiding to repeat the attempt by Kisase Ngandu to nationalize the army, which cost his life since it swam against the multinational coalition's plan of owning the Congo. The appointee used his influence to learn the FAC's strengths and weaknesses, to keep in touch with Kigali in providing the Kagame regime with all information about Kabila's plan for the development of the Congolese army, and to bring about, if necessary, the regime change in Kinshasa. Furthermore, claims grew more numerous about James Kabarebe's countrymen's misdeeds in the FAC high positions: massacre of the Congolese citizens in mineral zones⁵⁰, sporadic killings in Kinshasa and other cities, and confiscation of private properties. However, the Rwandan dominion is gradually and subtly shaken by Kabila's emancipatory policies of joining the SADC, and of developing military co-operation with Zimbabwe, Angola and China,--the objective being the building of a new strong army (600 000 troops) able to face and overcome any retaliation from the multinational coalition, once the latter is driven out from the DRC territory⁵¹.

2.2.2 Foreign Influence over Early Government policies

2.2.2.1 A Chaotic Politics: From Cronyism to Nationalism

The influence of foreign powers on the Kabila regime between the two civil wars is more dazzling in politics. In order to preserve for a little while the dominion wielded by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi on the DRC, Kabila appointed Bizima Karaha, a Tutsi leader of the AFDL, Foreign Affairs Minister, while another Tutsi leader of the Alliance, Deogratias Bugera, retained his post as the ruling coalition's general-secretary, Moise Nyarugabo became the head of the Office of Ill-Gotten Assets, and Benjamin Serukiza, Munyonyo Mutwale, Jonas Sebatuzi, Gafundu Kanyamuhanga and Nzabara, all Tutsis, are respectively appointed vice-governor of

⁵⁰ The most noticeable massacre having taken place in the domain of MIBA, the country's number one company in exploiting and exporting diamond, when the Congolese youths of Mbuji-Mayi tried, as usual, to invade fraudulently the company's reserved domain.

⁵¹ China is renowned at this time for having welcomed and formed Joseph Kabila, the Congolese leader's son and successor in power after his death on 16 of January 2001. The military co-operation with Zimbabwe is shaped in continuity of the Mugabe regime's aid of 40 million dollars to the Alliance during the First Congo War, see Lanotte, 2003: 178, and Nzongola, 2002: 238.

South Kivu, mayor and prosecutor of Bukavu, governor of North Kivu, and mayor of Goma (Lanotte, 2003: 76-77). But, nurturing the idea of hereafter getting rid of his godfathers, the President erects a security belt by nominating in his government's strategic positions his fellow Balubakats: Gaetan Kakudji (Home Affairs), Jeannot Mwenze Kongolo (Justice), Henri Nyembo Kabemba (Economy), Severin Kabwe (Security Services), etc., and some Lumumbists and Tshisekedists: Juliana Lumumba (Culture and Art), Justine M'Poyo Kasa-Vubu (Civil Service), Faustin Tala Ngai (Finances), and so on.

It can be argued that these nominations suggest quite a broad based executive and, therefore, contradict my thesis of foreign domination. The blunt reality is, apart from Bizima, Bugera, Kakudji, Mwenze Kongolo, and M'Poyo, all these members of government don't play the role proper to a minister in a democratic law-ruled state: the autonomous management of a portfolio. Drawing on respectively W. Oyatambwe, scholars Gauthier de Villers and Jean Omasombo, and former minister Justine Kasa-Vubu, Lanotte notes that every minister that does not come from the AFDL's innermost circle is "escorted by a vice-minister devoted to the AFDL who is endowed with prerogatives that extend beyond his simple substitute status" (2003: 71).

The heading of the Foreign Affairs portfolio by Bizima, well imposed by Kigali to block off any attempt by the international community to investigate on the massacre of the Rwandan Hutus on the DRC soil, drives Laurent Kabila to entertain straightforward nationalistic rhetoric. That is a calamitous diplomacy.

2.2.2.2. A Calamitous Diplomacy

President Kabila's diplomacy towards the West and its African allies is characterized by what Lanotte dubs "the art of making enemies" (2003:90). A discussion of this diplomacy reveals the real motive that drove the new Congo leader's dramatically turning from the US-led multinational coalition's stooge into a bitter challenger of imperialism.

**** Poor Management of the Garreton Commission***

This bellicose diplomacy is prominently branded with the deal with the Garreton Commission. Indeed, the latter was created by the United Nations Human Rights Commission and assigned the mission of investigating the allegations of massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees inside the territory of Zaïre by the AFDL, when the rebel movement was progressing toward the takeover in Kinshasa. It was run by the Chilean attorney Roberto Garreton as its chairman, the Senegalese Waly N'diaye for investigation of arbitrary executions, the Ghanaian J. Foli for investigation of voluntary and involuntary disappearances, and five experts. Kabila's government, squarely rejecting massacre allegations, rules out any possibility of the commission conducting investigations in the DRC, particularly in the Equator Province allegedly hiding mass graves. Actually, the Kabila government obtained from the world body agreement to send a new, more (in Kabila's mind) trustworthy investigation team led by the Togolese Atsu-Koffi Amega. Yet, despite this and Kinshasa's attempt to hinder investigations under the pretext that the team would profane tombs in Mbandaka, the Amega commission confirmed the involvement of the AFDL in large-scale massacres which are tantamount to genocide⁵².

⁵² Cf. Lanotte, 2003: 90-91. See also *The United Nations Investigation Mission Report led by Koffi Amega*, New York, UN, July 2, 1998.

Both the December 1997 Garreton report and the 2 July 1998 Amega report are right and true in their claims of massacres. Kabila himself later acknowledged them on the state-run television channel, in the wake of the launching of the 2 August 1998 civil war. This belated acknowledgement suggests that Kabila's earlier hindrance of UN investigations was aimed at covering up the responsibility of the Rwandan Deputy President, Kagame. For, from the bombing of the Mugunga refugee camps, which forced half a million Rwandan Hutu refugees to return home, to the AFDL's seizure of power in Kinshasa, Kagame's RPA troops hunted and killed thousands of Hutu refugees like rabbits, including thousands of Congolese. To be sure, Kabila covered up the RPF's massacres on Congolese soil partly because he knew their exposure would lose him credibility before the international community. However, there was a further risk: had he dared let the UN teams work according to the schedule of the international community, Kagame and Museveni might have precipitated his downfall. Kabila was vulnerable to overthrow because Rwandan and Ugandan troops still dominated the Congolese army staff, and secret service operatives from both neighbouring countries still controlled DRC security.

*** *Tense Relations Between the DRC and Its Troika***

By 'troika', I mean the three western nations that have been playing the preponderant role in the Democratic Republic of Congo's history since its independence in 1960: the US, Belgium and France. It must be at the foremost observed that the cartel is not unanimous every time. Its members' interrelations shift from friendliness to rivalry depending on their evaluation of particular situations and their respective interests. On the matter of the AFDL-era Congo, their stances are convergent, given Kinshasa's disturbing nationalism.

President Kabila caused the first diplomatic tension by irritating the already frustrated France through the boycott of the Francophone Summit held in Hanoi, Vietnam, in November 1997. On the 13th of this month, the former guerilla announced, through Raphael Ghenda, Information Minister, that he was not going to the summit because it is "a form of neocolonialism"; the President stated himself that "the participation of the DRC at this organization [the 'Francophonie'] has contributed to the ruin of its economy", and "the 'Francophonie' is the prolongation (...) of the umbrella of France" (Lanotte, 2002: 91). In ridiculing Paris, Kabila is acting in line with the American-sponsored Lemera Agreement, and is siding with Kigali that got disappointed by the French *Operation Turquoise*. What, then, happened in Americano-Congolese relations that transformed them into ones of bitter enmity?

Lanotte notes that "the President [Kabila] will reject many times exhortation made by the United States for political openness and resumption of the democratic transition process" (2003: 92). The tension between the two countries will reach the climax in February 1998, when the Congolese leader and his Foreign Affairs minister refuse to welcome Reverend Jesse Jackson, President Bill Clinton's special envoy assigned the task of 'promoting democracy in Africa'. Kinshasa argues that the American envoy did not observe diplomatic practices by failing to communicate to the Republic's government the informal program of his visit that included a meeting with the opposition leader, Etienne Tshisekedi. But one can wonder: why have Americans operated this 180 degree-turn, which consists of blessing the new regime's prohibition of political opposition activities, and only less than a year later, championing political openness and the resumption of the democratic transition process? Why do they not demand the same to Museveni and Kagame whose respective regimes are also undemocratic?

How can one explain the sudden wooing of Tshisekedi by the Clinton administration while the latter was contemptuous toward him during the AFDL war and at Mobutu's downfall?

As I underlined above, Americans never fully trusted Laurent-Désiré Kabila as the AFDL leader, given his revolutionary past; though he was useful for their purpose of removing Mobutu from power. The Americans could be seen as playing a game in which they used Kabila as a pawn, and which was divided in three phases: the ousting of Mobutu, the establishment of a technocratic dictatorship likened to Museveni's, and the diplomatic taming of Kabila in the event of his unwillingness to match up the coalition's large interests in the potentially rich Congo. The first phase had been reached. The second one's realization is mitigated: though Kabila has established the dictatorship, the latter is not at all Ugandan-styled. Not only does Kabila refuse to acknowledge that the DRC owes, and has to pay, 14 billion US dollars to the IMF, but he also acts against the agenda of the exploitation, under the AFDL-run Congo's lenient rules, of the country's mines by the corporations of the coalesced countries, including the US⁵³. Indeed, President Kabila, who embraced the social market economy as the economic regime of the AFDL-run Congo, toughened his stance toward the mining companies by imposing on them the obligation to build infrastructure and contribute significantly to Congolese social development. Thus, Reverend Jesse Jackson's controversial visit to the DRC, including an unofficial meeting with Tshisekedi, can be viewed as the launch by Anglo-Saxons of the third phase: bewildering Kabila by quickening his isolation within Congo-Kinshasa and abroad so as to compel him to return to the 'wisdom' of the Lamera Agreements. That is why, just a few days after the expelling of Reverend Jesse Jackson from Congo by Kinshasa, President Clinton planned a meeting with his Congolese counterpart in Washington⁵⁴, and later sent the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, to Kinshasa. Faced with the total failure of diplomacy the Clinton administration finally adopted a forceful solution.

Notwithstanding the degeneration of Americano-Congolese relations, which undermines plans for the socioeconomic recovery of the DRC, the Kabila regime will not spare the Kingdom of Belgium from his conflict-based diplomacy. The tension between Kinshasa and Brussels is the liveliest one since the early months of the Kabila tenure. It goes back to the Belgian government's position, in Autumn 1996, to send a multinational force to the Kivu province to rescue the desperate Rwandan refugees, a position motivated by its shameful, generally condemned inability to prevent the Rwandan genocide, and radicalized in February 1997 by the State Secretary of Cooperation and development, Reginald Moreels, who, relaying news spread by the NGO Broederlijk Delen, labeled the alleged massacres of Rwandan Hutus in East Congo as 'genocide'⁵⁵. This position irritated the progressing AFDL, and behind it the American-led multinational coalition committed in the change of the Great Lakes sub-region's geopolitical

⁵³ It must be remembered that the Congolese leader's stance puts at stake the dividends that President Bill Clinton and former President George W H Bush and company were allegedly expecting to reap on the DRC's soil from respectively the AMFI and the Barrick Gold Corporation.

⁵⁴ That meeting was denounced by the Washington-based Congo Educational Council Association (CECA) through the Press release of March 24, 1998. According to the CECA "President Clinton's meeting with Kabila is a mistake", see <http://www.geocities.com/rainforest/canopy/3048/WMISTAKE.html> .

⁵⁵ Lanotte (2003: 202-203) —Unfortunately, the Belgian government's position was ineffective, given its weak, sounding 'neutrality diplomacy' adopted in the wake of the Rwandan genocide, and the strong opposition raised against it by the senate rallied round the voice of the liberal Senator Alain Destexhe. The latter, embracing the American determination for regime change in the Great Lakes sub-region, in a stormy debate in Parliament, accused the state secretary of spreading a 'revisionist discourse' of the Rwandan genocide.

configuration—since it was counter to the objectives fixed in the Lemera Agreements⁵⁶. But the tension was fueled by a series of incidents after Laurent-Désiré Kabila's takeover, which incidents are consecutive to the difficulties met with by the United Nations Investigation Commission for the Rwandan Hutus disappeared in the DRC. These incidents include: (1) the discovery, into the Belgian Consulate of Lubumbashi on 3 April 1998, of two boxes of weapons allegedly belonging to Belgian troops that were assigned to protect expatriates during the eventual violent takeover of the AFDL, but which Kinshasa claims is to be used in the attempt to assassinate President Kabila at Lubumbashi Airport; and (2) the consequent arrest of three Belgian diplomats and the killing of a Belgian nun, Sister Anne Desrumeaux, in Kananga on 9 April 1998 (Lanotte, 2003:204-205).

Besides, another factor contributed to the isolation of President Laurent-Désiré Kabila: his mediocre African diplomacy.

** A Mediocre African Diplomacy*

President Laurent-Désiré Kabila's unsuitable attitude towards many African heads of state and experienced politicians shows that he was not properly prepared to lead the Congo. His behaviour was characterized by an unshakable arrogance. To make things worse, the victims of his disturbed mind include leaders of Africa's most influential countries: South Africa and Egypt.

The South African President Nelson Mandela was deeply frustrated by the fact that Kabila did not honour his promise to take part in the second meeting organized into *Outeniqua*, a South African warship, on 12 May 1997, in order to find out a dignified ouster of President Mobutu Sese Seko. Gravely hurt, Africa's most venerated man firmly condemned Kabila's "lack of political culture and of respect towards heads of state and elders"⁵⁷. He will never forgive the notorious rebel who, three days later, turned into the DRC president. The incident made the new regime miss an opportunity to build a strong army and a recovering economy: without it the Congo would have benefited from the trumps for which South Africa is atop the continent: weapons manufacturing and deal, and foreign direct investments. Politically, Pretoria could have taught Kinshasa the art of making concessions internally and externally, thus paving the way for democratic dispensation.

Egypt, at last, is another country that suffered Kabila's misconduct. Its president, Hosni Mubarak, once remained two hours to the airport to welcome his guest in an official visit to Cairo while the aircraft carrying the Congolese leader circled over Egyptian territory. Lanotte writes that the delayed landing resulted from the fear of his entourage of seeing President Kabila, once out of the plane, collapsing before his host, since he got drunk; and a week later, he sent his State Minister Victor Mpoyo to Cairo to fix the damaged relations (2003: 93). The course of events proved that the latter had never been fully fixed.

This incident constitutes another blow to the possibility that Kabila might root his power in national and international approval, because it precludes the head of state from playing precious

⁵⁶ The fact that the Belgian government frustrated the AFDL results from a wrong reading of the evolution of the Great Lakes sub-region's position in the world arena by Mr. Derycke, Foreign Affairs minister. Indeed, as Lanotte points out, while the Clinton administration was hanging on the removal of Mobutu from power, the Socialist Derycke, misled by newly appointed Social-Democrat minister Reginald Moreels, spurred Brussels to decide in late 1995, "to intensify indirect bilateral cooperation(...) in re-establishing the co-financing procedure"(2003: 202). The Senate's fierce opposition compelled the government to adhere the Washington stance on the issue.

⁵⁷ Nelson Mandela, quoted by H. Ngbanda Nzambo, 1998: 320.

trumps offered by Egypt, especially its diplomacy. Older and more enriched than those of the rest of the continent, the Egyptian diplomacy has reached a complex equilibrium which ensures national interests as well as those of the Arab world, Islamic community, Israel and the West, the US in particular, so Egypt is, beside the Hebrew State, the core country in the Middle East. This diplomatic experience could have spared Congolese population the bloody second civil war.

2.2.3. Foreign Influence over the AFDL-ERA Congo's Economy

This section focuses on the impact of external powers, international financial institutions and multinational political blocks on the way the Kabila regime managed the Democratic Republic of Congo economically, as well as on the absence of foreign direct investments in Congo as a detonator of President Kabila's visceral hostility against the West. I equally analyze the way that this internationally dissipating economic interest in the AFDL-era Congo contributed to the deterioration of relations between Kabila and his godfathers in Kampala and Kigali.

2.2.3.1. The AFDL-Era Congo and the International divestment

As alluded to above, the economic factor is the most determinant in Kabila's toughening stance before Congo's troika—that is, the US, France and Belgium—the European Union and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Belgium, at first, organized a meeting designated "the Conference of the friends of the Congo" in December 1997. Yet its contribution to the revival and the stabilization of its former colony's economy was very small, since Brussels denounced the bad handling by Kinshasa of the UN investigation commission on the disappearance of thousands of Rwandan Hutus (Lanotte, 2003: 204).

France never contributed to the revival of the Congolese economy under the AFDL regime, neither through the cash desk set by the Friends of Congo Club nor through the bilateral cooperation. This is explained by the above mentioned hostility between Paris and the AFDL. At the climax of the French defeat in the Great Lakes (marked by the deposition of Mobutu), President Laurent Kabila, unhesitatingly, could dismiss his participation in the annual French-speaking community summit held in Hanoi, taxing it with a 'neo-colonial' status. So, he knew that he had nothing to expect from Paris.

The US had a clear strategy for the "useful" Africa, including the Democratic Republic of Congo: establishing a technocratic regime to promote the interests of big businesses in line with rules envisioned by the IMF and the WTO. Nevertheless, for the Clinton administration, the US-Congo partnership is based upon this philosophy: "commerce rather than cooperation, punctual support rather than formal alliance"⁵⁸. The US underplaying of cooperation appears when it

⁵⁸ Stephen Smith, cited in Lanotte, 2003: 224. --So, for the case of the AFDL-era Congo, Washington was envisaging its reconstruction more on trade exchanges that would have resulted from the exploitation of the Central African country's immense natural resources by diverse abovementioned corporations from America, Britain, Belgium, Canada, South Africa, Australia, etc. Hence, for the White House, particularly its offices committed in protecting America's commercial interests in Africa in the post-Cold War era, say, the State Department and the Commerce Department, foreign direct investments for the Congo's reconstruction ought to be granted by these multinational corporations and through the IMF and the World Bank. This vision stems from what E. Kennes calls "the general trend of the privatization of security [and economic] structures", which implies the multiplication of decisional centres in the public arena (White House, State Department, CIA, Pentagon, NSC) and unofficially (mining multinationals linked to security and mercenary enterprises).

comes to granting funds for Kabila's triennial plan to revive and stabilize the Congolese economy. President Bill Clinton, in 1997, gave 35 millions for Congo's reconstruction, whereas the Congolese government evaluated the total amount of necessary investments at 3 billion US dollars, including 40% coming from external contributions, for the implementation of the Development Triennial Program (Lanotte, 2003:85). This donation angered the Congolese leader, who was expecting from his friends in Washington billions of dollars, taking into account his country's immensity and numerous needs. Thus, it fueled the former guerilla's anti-imperialistic outburst against the sole hyperpower.

The European Union, following the path shaped by Belgium⁵⁹, excelled in double standard politics, which was detrimental to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Its conditionalities for the reprisal and the pursuing of aid programme in favour of Kinshasa, like Harare and Bujumbura, amount to a refusal for, in Congo's immediate post-Mobutu era, they were pretty impossible to observe. They run as follows: -political criteria (respect of human rights, establishment of a law-ruled state); and economic criteria (debt payback, macroeconomic stability, etc.). The observance of human rights is very hard for the Kabila regime, since it is involved in the massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees alongside Kagame's RPF. As far as the debt payback is concerned, President Kabila has ruled it out, arguing logically that Mobutu, who contracted it, did nothing for the country and its people; yet the donors encouraged his kleptocracy. Nevertheless, Kinshasa has succeeded in implementing the macroeconomic stability by building up some sound fundamentals. Amongst them, Ebonda Anzolo Wea cites: the progressive restoration of state authority; the demolition of barriers set by ill-remunerated militaries and bandits to harass traders on roads linking rural areas to towns; the revival of the security of people and goods; the reunification of different monetary zones, which heralds economic recovery; the improvement of economic growth rate, which went from -4.7% to +2.5% (2003: 30). I can add the cleaning of the bank system and the control of inflation.⁶⁰

In contrast, the European Union has developed a positive stance vis-à-vis other sub-region's countries, namely Rwanda and Uganda, even though they are far from fulfilling the above conditionalities. Both countries continue to receive the EU'S practically unconditional aid under the fallacious concept of "positive selectivity"⁶¹.

The IMF and the World Bank, vis-à-vis the Kabila regime, behaved in the same way as, and in collaboration with, the European Union, using a double standard policy. Though the Kabila government's triennial recovery plan was enriched by the World Bank's expertise, the multilateral moneylenders (the Bretton Woods institutions) ruled out granting aid for the recovery and the stabilization of the DRC economy. Like other "Friends of Congo", the World Bank could not contribute significantly to the very Trust Fund it created to channel the financial aid the "Friends of Congo" would have been ready to grant (Lanotte, 2003:234). The Trust Fund collected merely 85 million dollars over 1.6 billion US dollars needed by the Congolese authorities as urgency aid (Anzolo, 2003:58). But the IMF, like the EU, provided unconditional aid to the undemocratic governments of Rwanda and Uganda. This prodded Kabila to develop South-South cooperation.

⁵⁹ Let's remember that they share the same city, Brussels, as the location of their headquarters.

⁶⁰ The pillar of the renovation of the whole monetary system is the monetary reform of 30 June 1998 which Lanotte thinks of as "the sole genuine achievement of the Kabila government" (2003: 85).

⁶¹ Catherine Andre and Laurent-Désiré Luzolele, cited in Lanotte, 2003: 234.

2.2.3.2. The AFDL-Era Congo and South-South Cooperation

The divestment of the Western troika, the European Union and the Bretton Woods institutions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, alongside their double standard policy, irritated Kabila and reignited his old anti-imperialist sentiment. He reiterates his bush vow never to bow down before “the will of foreign masters”, and he declares that his country “does not need money from imperialists” (cited in Lanotte, 2003: 93). To fund the government’s triennial plan, he turns, from early 1998, to the Third World, left-leaning countries, championing South-South cooperation in all international forums he attends.

Until the Second Congo War in August 1998, the countries Kinshasa nurtures closer economic cooperation with are China, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, and Libya. As abovementioned, the People’s Republic of China donated 30 million US dollars, becoming Congo’s biggest partner. But Kabila’s closest friend is Robert Mugabe, the Zimbabwean President. The contribution of Zimbabwe to Congo’s wars comes from military spending by the Zimbabwe Defence Industries, worth more than 100 million dollars (40 millions during the liberation war, and 60 millions during the first year of the Kabila regime) (Lanotte, 2003: 181). The Angolan contribution, instead of donation or loans, emphasizes commercial exchange involving the supply of oil and food products. Likewise, Namibia excels in providing food products, particularly fish.⁶²

Notwithstanding the South-South cooperation’s meager funding, Congolese people can perceive positive signs in the government’s implementation of the Development Triennial Program. Public servants along with teachers get paid regularly; the re-organization of the banking system halted rising inflation. Contrary to the disastrous life of the *Nouveau Zaïre*, which was born from the monetary reform made by the Birindwa government in October 1993, the *Franc Congolais*, entering the economic transaction in June 1998, remains relatively sound even during the apotheosis of the second war. The self-reliance philosophy is being achieved through the National Service that makes agriculture and farm priority of priorities⁶³. Perhaps, if he were left alone by external forces, Kabila would have laid down sound fundamentals for economic recovery in the DRC, especially by investing more in agriculture and infrastructure.

2.3. Allies or Enemies?

The first half of the year 1998 sees the emergence of discordance between Kabila and his allies and godfathers, Museveni and Kagame. The discordance was unexpected by the multinational coalition at the creation of the AFDL but was a logical consequence of political developments. Turning the allied parties (the DRC on one side and America, Britain, Belgium, Canada and South Africa, acting behind Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, on the other side) into bitter enemies, it results from many causes that can be summarized under three headings: Laurent-Désiré Kabila’s unshakable nationalism, Western powers’ double standards and the Congolese people’s pressures.

⁶² So, it supplants South Africa in supplying the traditional market of the fish commonly called *Thomson* in the DRC, since the latter’s adhesion to the Western divestment position against Kinshasa.

⁶³ The first activities of the National Service are launched at Kanyama-Kasese, along with a promising chicken farm in the Kinshasa’s remote City of N’sele. Agriculture being priority of priorities, every investment in this area is tax free; for example, any investor, who imports agricultural tools, such as tractors, is free of charge from the customs services. This is another outstanding policy of the Kabila regime.

2.3.1. Laurent-Désiré Kabila's Unshakable Nationalism

The dream of Kabila, a heir of the Lumumbist spirit, is the rise of Congo as “the trigger of Africa”, to recall Franz Fanon’s concept, given its strategic position in the heart of Africa, and its immense natural and human resources. Nonetheless, though legitimate and laudable⁶⁴, Congolese nationalism has so blinded Kabila that he falls into a dangerous arrogance and is deprived of the ability to rationally read the state of the world in the post-Cold War era. President Kabila made a significant shift from the deals he signed with his coalesced partners, which were jeopardizing the sovereignty of Congo and the future of its people. For example, under the pretext that they were signed by the “rebel Kabila”, Kinshasa reconsidered all contracts concluded by the AFDL Commissariat of Economy and Finances and the above mentioned American, Canadian, British, Australian, Ugandan, South African and Belgian corporations for the exploitation of the Congo’s mines. So, it is asserted that the corporations, such as the American Mineral Field Inc., American Diamond Buyers, Adolphe Lundin, Banro Resource Corporation, and Russel Resource Group paid millions of dollars as war taxes. The contracts’ reconsideration is motivated by two facts. On the one hand, these companies, also called “Juniors” for the small-scale character of their quotation in stock exchanges, are “mineral speculators”, i.e. they are yield thirsty and ready to run away from the country with their proceeds as soon as they want to. And on the other, like other speculators, they are unwilling to invest for a long-term in Congo, whose mineral portfolio they are keen to exploit; thence, with the AFDL in power, they are unable to grant 2 to 3 billion dollars required by the latter for the reprisal of the activities of the Congolese mineral industries (Lanotte, 2003:v86-87). This is why the angry President Kabila shall tax them with being “vultures” and “predators”⁶⁵.

2.3.2. The Western Powers’ Double Standards

The double standard policy of Western powers, the European Union, the IMF and the World Bank in particular, consists, as I said earlier, of conditioning the granting of aid to the DRC on the observance by the Congolese authorities of international norms, such as the law-ruled state and the respect of human rights, and of unconditionally fattening with aid some other governments, like Rwanda and Uganda, which are renowned for numerous abuses of these international norms. Yet, according to Catherine André and Laurent-Désiré Luzolele referred to by Lanotte (2003:235), this policy is troublesome for the Great Lakes sub-region: not only are its perverted effects opposite to the objectives proclaimed by the multilateral institutions (like fighting poverty and corruption, strengthening democracy and human rights), but mainly it

⁶⁴ Since the whole political class during the Mobutu era, as Georges Nzongola points out, was characterized by selfishness rather than patriotism: it developed the culture of elitism, breaking of signed agreements, interminable negotiations over the spoils of the political game, endless splits within parties, and the shameless shifting from one political camp to another (2002: 256).

⁶⁵ Yet Kabila’s shift shall cost his life: feeling betrayed by him, the “Juniors” assisted by their respective governments and the Congo’s neighboring countries (Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi) will wage another aggression war which shall culminate into the assassination of the rebel-president, and during which many of them will exploit minerals in the rebellion-occupied zones to make more profits, beyond the “war taxes” they paid to the AFDL-rebel government during the liberation struggle. See also *The State against the People. Governance, Mineral Exploitation and Transitional Regime in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA), 2006.

represents a considerable support to the beneficiary regimes (like Rwanda and Uganda), empowering them to refuse even slim concessions during peace talks.

The biggest effect of the double standard policy in the AFDL-era Congo is the fact of irritating President Kabila. It is the main root of the Congolese leader's anti-imperialistic outbursts, rather than his longtime hatred of capitalism, as some scholars are tempted to claim. Indeed, Lanotte observes that the "president Kabila", while reconsidering all mineral contracts signed by the "rebel Kabila" and the "Juniors", hung on "the already adopted orientation of reshaping the mining industry by means of privatizations" (2003: 87). By clinging to privatizations, which are a pillar of capitalism in its current neo-liberal version, Kabila expressed his intention to integrate the Congo into the global market economy. However, the AFDL government opted for the social market economy⁶⁶ which was impossible to attain within the framework of the yield-thirsty neo-liberal economy. Unfortunately the "Juniors", preferring the yield economy rather than the rebuilding of the DRC, refused to observe the above requirements of the ruling AFDL, felt betrayed, vainly attempted to bring their contention with the latter to International Center for the Settlement of Investment-Related Disputes, located in Washington, and finally resolved to launch a new war of aggression. This prodded Kabila to turn to the "Seniors", i.e. the Congo's traditional partners in the mining industries, who own decisive financial bulk and control necessary technical know-how, during the Conference of the Friends of Congo (Lanotte, 2003: 87).

2.3.3. The Congolese People's Pressures

The Congolese people's pressures on President Laurent-Désiré Kabila can be classified into two kinds: those relating to the necessity to improve their social conditions, and those stirred by the popular desire to displace Rwandan and Ugandan nationals from power and to send them back to their respective countries.

President Laurent-Désiré Kabila is touched by the fact that his popularity is still high at the first anniversary of his tenure. The poll organized by the Bureau d'études, de Recherche et de Consulting International (BERCI) on 7 –11 May 1998 in the 4 major cities of Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Kisangani and Mbuji-Mayi, shows that 60% of the public are satisfied with the AFDL regime's efforts to improve the security of persons and goods. Another BERCI poll organized in July 1998 after the launch of the franc congolais (monetary reform) reveals the victory of President Kabila (33%) versus Etienne Tshisekedi (20%)—who was still credited 32% of vote intention in May 1998—in the event of free and fair presidential elections (Lanotte, 2003: 89). Indeed, the Head of State is surprised to learn that he could defeat the longtime charismatic leader Tshisekedi despite unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and corruption, which he promised to address in his swearing-in speech of 29 May 1997⁶⁷; his troubled relationship with the Kivu province, where the population has stood up against the newly-empowered Banyamulenge and

⁶⁶ Ebonda Anzolo Wea reports the Development Minimum Triennial Program's view of economic priorities as expressed by the AFDL: "Running a political action aimed at restoring the Congolese people's control over the production, distribution and consumption of their above-ground and underground wealth on the basis of the social market economy" (2003: 14). Thus, within the framework of the social market economy, President Kabila wished his partners would make profits in the mineral industry while addressing economic needs (roads and means of communication) and the people's social needs: building houses, schools and hospitals, and creating employment.

⁶⁷ The same BERCI poll underlines that more than a half of the public reckon that no noticeable progress has been made since 17 May 1997 in improving the economic situation and access to education, health and transport (Lanotte, 2003: 89).

Banyarwanda, whom they want expelled to Rwanda; his indecisive dealing with the nationality issue raised by the latter; and his inability to address the Mai-Mai issue⁶⁸. Hence, he felt a heavy moral debt to live up to his promise of matching his people's expectations.

The first step to paying back the moral debt to the Congolese people is to establish himself as the real head of state by freeing the state apparatus from Rwando-Ugandan dominion. Furthermore, the ending of this dominion will help curb the tension between the government and the Mai-Mai militias in the eastern Congo. Thus the "ingratitude imperative"⁶⁹ will prod Kabila to take the following bold measures: the removal of the Rwandan officers and replace them with the Katangan militaries, his fellow provincemen, to his security⁷⁰; the axing of Deogracias Bugera the same month from the post of the AFDL secretary-general, and his appointment to that of minister of state to the presidency of the Republic⁷¹; and the sacking of the field commander, James Kabarebe, as the chief of staff of the Congolese Armed Forces (FAC) and his replacement with General Celestin Kifwa, an ex-Katangan gendarme, in July 11, 1998⁷².

2.4. Conclusion

The Kabila regime's policies during the period between the two Congolese civil wars left an interesting legacy for Africa's intellectuals and young generation of politicians. Its legacy is interesting because it provides three lessons.

The first lesson is that, no politician can sign a secret agreement with external forces that intend to jeopardize the sovereignty of his country and the well-being of his people, and hope to reconsider the agreement without a high price to pay. So, realizing that their interests were at stake in the Congo venture, the *Juniors*, Kigali and Kampala backfired in launching a bloody anti-Kabila war.

The second lesson is that, it is wise for a leader that runs a country whose the state is still shaky to humble himself and learn from elder counterparts' countries' experiences, and arrogance is mortally dangerous. Were President Kabila humble enough to learn diplomacy from the countries whose leaders he hurt (South Africa, Egypt, Angola and Tanzania), he might have rooted his authority in the world arena and spared the DRC the Second Congo War.

The third and last lesson is that a state leader does not challenge a superpower, unless he is certain of the weapons at his disposal being able to lead to victory. President Kabila was so idealist and phantasmagoric that he promoted the art of making enemies, including the United States,--unless he was willing to be a martyr of Africa. Definitely, he will become a martyr during the Second Congo War.

⁶⁸ The Mai-Mai phenomenon is characterized by the spawning of indigenous militias assigned the mission of fighting the occupation forces (here Rwandans and Ugandans) brought to the east Congo by the AFDL, and of expelling them to their respective native countries. (Lanotte, 2003: 78-81).

⁶⁹ By "ingratitude imperative", Colette Braeckman means President Kabila's harsh ending of his relationship with his godfathers Museveni and Kagame, which stems from the incompatibility between leading the Congo with the backing from Kampala and Kigali and enjoying continuously the support of the Congolese people (Cf. Lanotte, 2003: 94-95).

⁷⁰ Lanotte, 2003: 95.

⁷¹ Nzongola Ntalaja, 2002: 227.

⁷² Lanotte, 2003: 95.

CHAPTER THREE: LAURENT-DÉSIRÉ KABILA AND THE SECOND CONGO WAR

3.0. Introduction

The object of this chapter is the defense of the following standpoint: the second war in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the product of the capitalism-imperialism nexus, dominated by the West, assisted by its satellite states in the Third World, including in the heart of Africa. This conflict emerges not only from the greed for Congo's immense natural resources on the part of the West, the US in particular, and its allies, but also from the danger embodied by the stubborn President Laurent-Désiré Kabila that ex- Zaïre might become an Eldorado for "rogue" states, and offer sensitive minerals (like uranium) to terrorists and reclusive communist governments such as North Korea's. Clearly, the Second Congo War is due less to the disagreement of internal forces on the mode of running the country than to the imperialistic agenda of external forces lured by Congo's riches. Hence, the war's aim is twofold: to remove politically, even physically if necessary, the Congolese leader, so as to revive the Lamera objectives. Furthermore, the involvement of other African powers in the war beside the Kabila government to counter the US-led multinational coalition determined to implement the above agenda has made the conflict what scholars coined the "African first continental war"⁷³ or, more relevantly, "Africa's First World War", according to Ambassador William Lacy Swing, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Coordinator of United Nations activities in the DRC⁷⁴.

An analysis of the Congolese government's actions and those of different foreign powers that partake in the war shall lead me to: (1) explain the origins of the conflict; (2) defend my argument of the preeminently external character of the war; (3) and detail the responsibility of each country involved in the war either against, or beside, the Kabila regime.

3.1. Origins of the Conflict

3.1.1. Axing of Rwandans from Leading Positions in the DRC

The failed coup d'état orchestrated by Bugera during Laurent-Désiré Kabila's trip to Cuba, from the 24th to the 25th of July 1998, is the genuine detonator of the cessation of the cooperation between the DRC and its neighbors, Rwanda and Uganda. Bizima, Bugera, and other Banyamulenge working in the public services immediately leave the country. The 27th of July 1998, to the people's euphoria countrywide, President Kabila announces the end of the presence of all foreign troops in the DRC, and brings *manu militari* James Kabarebe and 800 Rwandan troops to the N'djili international airport for their boarding to Kigali⁷⁵.

⁷³ See Lanotte, 2003:97.

⁷⁴ William Lacy Swing, *The Role of MONUC and the International Community in Support of the DRC Transition*, Preface to *Challenges of Peace Implementation. The UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Edited by Mark Malan and Joao Gomes Porto, 2004: xii.

⁷⁵ Lanotte, 2003: 97. On the Deogratias Bugera's paternity of the failed coup, see Nzongola Ntalaja, 2002: 227.

However, inasmuch as the axing was branded as treason by the masters that brought Kabila to power, i.e. the Westerners as well as their satellites in Kampala, Kigali, and Pretoria⁷⁶, the latter did not fail to react promptly. Museveni, interviewed by the BBC, declared: “Insofar as we brought him [Laurent-Désiré Kabila] from Kampala to Kinshasa after we had removed Mobutu from there, we are equally capable to remake the operation”⁷⁷.

3.1.2. Hearty Relations between the DRC and the States Blacklisted by America

Angered by the reluctance of the Friends of Congo Club to grant any public aid to the AFDL for the reconstruction of the DRC, President Laurent-Désiré Kabila started championing South-South cooperation. And, in conformity with his communist past, the Congolese leader launched of befriending left-leaning states, such as China, Libya, Cuba, and North-Korea, along with allegedly terrorism-sponsoring states like Sudan and Iran. According to *The Economist*, it was aimed at signing an agreement that Kinshasa would welcome 400 North Korean instructors to whom would have been assigned the task of training new FAC enrollees in exchange for Pyongyang’s participation in the exploitation of copper, cobalt and, mainly, uranium of Katanga province (Lanotte, 2003: 93-94).

The Congo’s new diplomacy hastened the onset of the second war in the heart of Africa, since it constituted a serious threat to the interests and the security of the coalesced forces, particularly Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, on one side, and the US, on another. Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi are fearing the eventuality of the empowered Kabila to equip their respective rebel groups that move into the Congo’s territory. As far as the US is concerned, it fears that Kabila might offer the uranium to “rogue states” such as Sudan (which harbored the al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden), Iran and North Korea. Indeed, these countries are eager to get the Congolese uranium for various reasons. Iran and Korea in particular appear to want uranium with view to developing nuclear weapons capabilities.

3. 2. The Second Congo War: Rebellion or Aggression?

The object of this second section of the chapter is to defend the claim that the Second Congo War is due less to the undemocratic, non-inclusive mode of managing the country’s affairs than to the determination of external forces to perpetuate their dominion over the Congo. In other words, while acknowledging that Kabila regime’s dictatorial trend has frustrated the political class within and without the AFDL, alienated a portion of the population, and thereby incited marginalized politicians to bring about rebellion and unrest, I contend that the key driver of the war is the aim by the AFDL’s godfathers (the US-led multinational coalition in the Great Lakes sub-region) to punish President Laurent-Désiré Kabila, their puppet turned into a ‘traitor’, and to revive the implementation of their agenda of mastering the immensely endowed Congo. This is

⁷⁶ On the role of Pretoria as a West’s satellite in the rise of Laurent-Désiré Kabila, see Ngbanda Nzambo, 2004: 216. Besides, Otunnu notes: “South Africa’s vested economic interest in the mines in Zaire, its public disapproval of Mobutu’s autocracy, and its desire to impose itself, with tacit support from Britain and the USA, as Africa’s super-power and the leader of the so-called Africa Renaissance, also made it possible for Uganda to obtain Mandela’s support for the project in Zaire” (2004: 64). Drawing from *The Monitor*, Tuesday, June 2, 1999: 19, he quotes President Museveni as saying: “In particular, I knew that the position of H.E. Mandela was very much important...These [western]external forces feared going against South Africa because of the rather hi-tech weapons that South Africa commands” (2004: 64-65).

⁷⁷ Museveni, cited in Ngbanda Nzambo, 2004: 221; translated from the French version.

fundamentally a war of aggression; and the fact of rebellion stems from the necessity for the aggression forces to mask this very nature of the conflict and, by the way, to satiate the thirst for revenge of politicians harmed by Kabila.

Making this argument requires me to examine the converging causes (internal and external alike) that underpin what Howard Wolpe, the US special envoy to Africa's Great Lakes sub-region, calls 'the most widespread interstate war in modern African history'⁷⁸, and to show their inter-relationship.

3.2.1. Internal Causes Leading to Rebellion

In essence the internal cause is President Kabila's dictatorship. Specifically, the internal causes can be found in actions such as Kabila's overthrow of the Mobutu regime's 'barons' the sidelining of the democratic opposition and the regime's maverick stance toward the AFDL-linked Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda populations.

The overthrow of the Mobutuist barons, who had fled abroad, germinated a rebellion against the AFDL regime for many reasons. Indeed, the triumphant forces illegally took over properties left in the country by the fugitives, and the Kabila government instituted the abovementioned Ill-Gotten Gains Office⁷⁹ to expropriate some goods owned by runaways. The looting engenders in the exiles the thirst to bounce back militarily so as to recover their goods⁸⁰. Another motive that spurred them to become rebel fighters is the difficulties encountered in their new way of life of exiles, which is characterized by the necessity of frugality. In other words, it is unbearable for them to turn away from their habit of extravagant spending of money embezzled from public assets. And, inasmuch as President Kabila has ended their luxury living and is always accusing them of having destroyed the country, the best way of recovering their extravagance is violently to remove him from power. Lastly, because exile life is made of a string of restrictions and requirements, the best place to be better-off into is the DRC, their country in which the former dictator Mobutu habituated them to do whatever they want to.

The sidelining of the democratic opposition frustrated many opponents of the former dictator Mobutu, who believe that President Kabila too easily reaped the fruit of power they had nurtured to ripeness in a long struggle that was widely supported by the population. Amongst frustrated opponents figure: (1) *the radicals* led by the charismatic Etienne Tshisekedi; constituting the most powerful opposition wing, they firmly dream of a democratic state in the DRC; (2) *the moderates* led by Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma; patronized by France, they are deeply saddened by the new authorities that are resolutely intent on eradicating French influence in the heart of Africa in support of the US. On the edge of extinction following the imprisonment of their leader, they will back the aggressors on the wake of the second war; afterward, in reference to the warming

⁷⁸ Howard Wolpe, 2000: 27.

⁷⁹ Lanotte, 2003: 77.—The office is run by Moise Nyarugabo, a man originally from Rwanda.

⁸⁰ Although some exiles peacefully returned to the DRC after President Kabila offered a general amnesty in line with his 'forgiveness revolution'. Far from being disinterested, the forgiveness revolution is founded upon Kabila's strategy of learning the art of long-lasting power (like Mobutu) from his predecessor's subordinates. The former rebel intends to keep a strong grip on power, suppressing rebellious maneuvers by the band of four Mobutuist officers - Generals Nzimbi, Eluki, and Baramoto, and Admiral Mavua - and expecting from the returnees assets to invest for the country's reconstruction. Amongst the returnees are General Likulia Bolonga, the last prime minister of the Mobutu era, who was appointed Portfolio minister at Kabila's last government reshuffle, in September 2000, and Kisombe Kia Kimuisi, a magnate who owned the country's fourth-largest fortune and a former chairman of the People's Revolution Movement (MPR) for the region of Kinshasa. They both recovered many of their properties.

of diplomatic relations between Paris and Kinshasa, they will get close to President Kabila; (3) the *cold ones* led by Antoine Gizenga; Lumumbists, they felt tricked by the new President, Kabila, who, imitating the Rwandan system, promised Gizenga the presidency of Congo, and was contemplating to be himself deputy president, given their common nationalist past. During the second war, like before it, they remained aloof, i.e. backing neither the government nor the US-led coalition. And, while squeezed by the course of the national history, their silence allows them to retain a certain popular aura, as Tshisekedi's popularity declines outside Kinshasa (collapsing in eastern Congo) and Z'Ahidi Ngoma's support base disappears.

The third and last cause leading to rebellion is President Kabila's increasingly maverick stance toward the Rwandan component of the AFDL. This component turned into the forth opposition brace for it got frustrated by Kabila's unwillingness to resolve the issue of granting a collective Congolese nationality to the Kinyarwanda-speaking population,--which issue was highlighted by the US-led coalition from the outset of the first war.

3.2.2. External Causes Leading to Aggression

In the background, according to Nzongola Ntalaja, lay "the logic of plunder in the new era of globalization, which has to do with the growing tendency of states, Mafia groups, offshore banks and transnational mining companies to enrich themselves from crises" (2002: 227). The International Crisis Group supports this point, arguing that for both Rwanda and Uganda, the "control over the exploitation of Kivu's considerable economic potential constitutes a recurrent objective"⁸¹.

This clear accounting of the causes of the Congo's second war brings me to the following conclusion: the African first continental war is essentially an aggression; the rebellion dimension intervenes into it as a necessity for the aggressors to mask their goals of border security, plunder and hegemony within the favorable context of the indifference of the international community. Finally, inasmuch as the Second Congo War is the most widespread interstate war in modern history, I think it is interesting now to explain the responsibility of each nation that got involved in it and contributed to the shaping of its course in Central Africa.

3.3. Implications of External Forces and their Impact on the Course of the War

Aggression marks the outset of the war. On 2 August 1998, after the double failed attempt to assassinate President Kabila in June and July, and consecutively to the RPA troops' insurgency in Kinshasa a few hours before, General James Kabarebe commanded an airborne operation that brought Rwandese troops, weapons and ammunitions from Goma to Kitona, far west Congo, aiming to launch a flash-war that would topple President Kabila from power within a few days. The operation took place before the creation of the Congolese Rally for Democracy, a Rwandan-backed anti-Kabila rebellion. However it ended into a fiasco because of the intervention of Angola and Zimbabwe beside the Kabila regime, and the lack of support from the people of Kinshasa who killed hundreds of Rwandese soldiers in revenge for the latter's having cut off electricity to the capital city. Then how did the war unfold? The response to this question is conditioned by the description of the participation of each external power in the conflict: international community, powers hostile to Kabila (Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi), the Congo's

⁸¹ *North Kivu: Into the Quagmire?*

allies (Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Sudan, and Chad), so-called neutral powers (South Africa, Zambia, Congo-Brazzaville, Central African Republic, and Libya).

3.3.1. International Community and the Second Congo War

The international community is responsible of the Second Congo War essentially by omission⁸². Like in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, it is notorious for its indifference from the outset of the conflict onwards. By indifference I mean the refusal to take tough measures either to compel warring parties to broker a peace accord or to defeat, within the framework of the UN, the warmonger party (as did NATO Slobodan Milosevic's Yugoslavia during the Kosovo crisis). It is grounded upon the US-led coalition forces' resolution to get rid of the 'renegade' Kabila regime and to pursue the Lamera agenda through the service of a pliant government in Kinshasa. Scholars are unanimous on this indifference. Nzongola Ntalaja notes that the indifference of the international community constitutes a major factor in the war's outbreak since the US, which is the community's uppermost component, emboldened Rwanda and Uganda (2002: 227). Washington's passivity can be explained in two respects: the determination to forcefully remove Kabila from power through its confidential political, economic and military sponsorship of Kigali and Kampala, on the one hand, and the fear of plunging into a mess as deadly as that encountered during the Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, on the other hand. Lanotte situates the indifference in the West's "Africa to Africans" strategic policy in the aftermath of the Cold War's demise, that is, the loss of interest in Africa resulting in non-interference in political issues within a state or between states—except countries in which strong interests are at stake (the "useful Africa"): for example petrol and Islamist terrorism, and where citizens' lives are endangered—and the yielding of the resolution of these issues to pan-African institutions (2003: 199-200). This explanation, however, is not sound since it does ignore that the DRC is part of the "useful" Africa, as has been illustrated above.

Furthermore, the indifference of the international community stems from causes that I have already noted. The most important one is the shame experienced by major powers, the US in the forefront, for the failure to prevent the Rwandan genocide while they were able to. This shame led them to tolerate any abuse by Tutsi-led governments in Kigali and Kampala, and to plump them up with public aid. Another cause is the wrong handling of the affair of massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees in the DRC by the Kabila regime, as well as its anti-imperialistic utterances towards the United Nations and Western nations in the standoff caused by the affair. The standoff resulted in the international community's double standard policy that favors President Kabila's allies (Rwanda and Uganda) while depriving the DRC.⁸³ Lastly, consecutively to Kabila's anti-imperialistic stance and to his championing the South-South

⁸² When I talk about the international community I mean at the forefront the Western major powers (US, Britain, France and Belgium) inasmuch as they shape worldwide peoples' minds through their gigantic media, schools, cinema, humanitarian missions, and the widespread use of English and French languages.

⁸³ About the international community's double standard policy in the Great Lakes Africa, see also Georges Nzongola Ntalaja, 2002: 234. Regarding the second cause, it is unfair for the major powers to isolate the Kabila regime: the US, Britain, Belgium, Canada, and South Africa know exactly that Kigali is the genuine perpetrator of the massacre of the Rwandan Hutu refugees on the Congolese soil, simply using the westward progressing AFDL as a cover, since they witnessed the bombing by the RPA of the Mugunga camp just after the UN resolution to send a multinational contingent for the protection of refugees, in November 1996. It is absurd to punish the accomplice while fattening the author of massacres.

cooperation, the Clinton administration was resolute about removing the Congolese leader from power and in backing and supplying the aggressors; and the international community was expected simply to respect the hyperpower's option. These causes constitute the world context into which the Congolese second war occurred. And the intervention of the following powers is determined in last resort by this international context.

3.3.2. Responsibility of Powers Hostile to the Kabila Regime

The powers directly hostile to the Kabila regime during the Second Congo War are Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. They bear the first, direct responsibility of the conflict that claimed 4 million Congolese people. But, insofar as their respective objectives in attacking the DRC are divergent and sometimes competing, and their crimes different in intensity, they are to be analyzed one after another.

3.3.2.1. Rwanda

Rwanda is obviously the first direct aggressor of the Congo-Kinshasa for diverse reasons: demographic, hegemonic, and security. As regards the first reason, Rwanda is characterized by the paradox of a small country featured one of Africa's highest demographic growth rates and one of the world's highest demographic densities. To resolve this troublesome paradox, Rwandese authorities since 1962 dream of sending portions of the population to the DRC, especially the Grand Kivu, so making this East Congolese region "the outlet of undesirable Rwandese populations" (N'Gbanda, 2004: 45). In the context of the Second Congo War, the demographic issue, though not publicised, influenced the Kagame regime.

The flow of the Hutu refugees into the DRC in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide is welcomed by the RPF government for it precludes any eventual ethnic-related land conflict resulting from the return of Rwandan Tutsi exiles. Thus, in launching what will be "Africa's first world war", Kigali appears to envisage the serial killing of Hutu refugees and other genocidaires—which started with the bombing of the Mugunga camp in November 1996—in order to stave off any possibility of their cumbersome mass return to Rwanda⁸⁴. Indeed, Roger Winter, drawing from *Reuters*, 20 January 1995, quotes Rwandan Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu as stating that Rwanda would "do everything so that they [the refugees] return. But I must admit that we do not want them all to come back en masse. We want to have an orderly return" (2004: 114). The pretext of an 'orderly return' hides Kigali's sharp apprehensions due to two factors: "internal disorganization and lack of resources" (Winter, 2004: 116). It is perhaps to avoid the thorny but urgent challenge of massive return that Kigali may have opted for a return forced under bombs with the intention of having as few back as possible and many, including the ex-FAR troops and *Interahamwe* militias, fleeing deep into DRC territory where many would be killed by the RPA troops. Intended or not, this outcome was realised: of over 2 million Rwandans harboured in eastern Zaïre (Kelvin Dunn, 2003: 143), only 600 000 refugees went back home, and many

⁸⁴ Deputy President Kagame's Machiavellian strategy of mass killing is essential to his statecraft: if he did sacrifice the lives of his fellow Tutsis on the altar of the genocide to fulfill his ambition of conquering the power, as I peeped it out above from the bitter denouncing of Lieutenant Abdul Ruzibiza, his former subordinate and fellow Tutsi (H. N'Gbanda Nzambo, 2004:149), it is easier for him to massacre thousands of Hutu refugees for the sake of the throttling of any eventuality of refugees' troublesome mass return to Rwanda.

thousands got killed during the AFDL march toward Kinshasa and during the Second Congo War.

The second reason that led Kigali to attack the DRC in October 1996 and in August 1998 is hegemonic. As mentioned above, the RPF regime nurtures the ambition to annex the East Congo, or at least the Kivu. Indeed, it is alleged that a secret clause of the Lemera Agreements signed by Laurent-Désiré Kabila and the Rwandese authorities in October 1996 forecast the creation of a Hima Tutsi empire or the Republic of Volcanoes. N'Gbanda denounces Kabila's signing an agreement "to sell a portion of the national territory to Rwanda and Uganda in exchange for their warfighting assistance" (2004: 220). Lanotte reveals the serious probability of the existence of a secret clause contained in the Lemera Agreements that verifies N'Gbanda's claim (see chapter I). This clause is indirectly confirmed by the declarations of the Rwandese authorities themselves. The latter suggest convening a Berlin Conference II so as to resolve the border issue in the Great Lakes subregion.⁸⁵ Let's remember the Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu's claim, made during his speech in Cyangugu, on 10 October 1996, to his compatriots the Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda expelled by the authorities of Greater Kivu, that some parts of the Province of Kivu belong to Rwanda prior to colonization. His contentious claim recurred eighteen days later in Kigali, where he displayed "the map of Greater Rwanda"⁸⁶.

Nonetheless, given the unwelcome character of the Berlin Conference II suggestion in the world arena, precisely the United Nations, the Kagame government, in launching the second aggression in August 1998, preserves the option of making Eastern Congo an independent state led by a puppet regime, totally depending on Kigali⁸⁷. Lanotte writes:

"It is in any case certain that Kigali seeks to strengthen its negotiation capacity on the regional level by establishing in Kivu a kind of a "puppet" state that should constitute a "security zone" able to shield Rwanda from any Hutu rebel attacks. The DRC's current *de facto* dismemberment seems legitimating some people's claim that Kigali aims not at all the pure and simple annexing of the Kivu—which cannot fail to stir up much protestation from the international community—but the creation of a vast eastern Congo (including both Kivus and the Katanga) led by a "friendly" regime, where it would have the liberty to export its redundant populations, and to exploit the immense riches therein" (2003: 163).

Lanotte here shows that the Congolese riches, along with the demography solution, constitute the major target of the Rwandese authorities' hegemonic ambition. The last and most authoritative account of the Rwandese thirst of hegemony is provided by the UN Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and other Forms of Wealth in the DRC. The Panel writes:

"Prominent members of a Congolese Hutu group, Benemugabohumwe, recently began to encourage Hutus living in the Democratic Republic of Congo, some of them opposition groups, to work instead for the cause of Rwanda in the country. Eugene Serufuli, RCD-Goma Governor of North Kivu Province and reportedly himself a Hutu, has promoted a non-governmental organization, Tous pour la paix

⁸⁵ Lanotte: 2003:164.

⁸⁶ Idem.—The Belgian scholar argues that a study published in December 1996 by the Centre d'études de la région des Grand Lacs, Anvers, Belgium, contradicts Pasteur Bizimungu's displayed map.

⁸⁷ The Berlin Conference II suggestion is unwelcome by the United Nations because, if implemented, it would necessarily serve as an antecedent to other African states that may reclaim parts of their neighboring states. This would lead to an endless escalation of border conflicts in the continent.

et la démocratie, aiming to conscript Hutus of all political persuasions to throw in their lot with the Rwandans. Their purpose, as described by the *Nord Kivu Reveil* in a circular dated 16 April 2002, has been to ‘express allegiance to Rwanda by joining its efforts to control eastern Democratic Republic of Congo’” (2002: 14).

The last reason that motivated Kigali to attack the DRC in August 1998 is borders security. But, contrary to the two first reasons and destined to their service, it is a pretext, in two senses. On the one hand, while the AFDL government failed to neutralize the Hutu rebellion and *interahamwe* militias, RPA troops were allowed to hunt and exterminate the genocidaires wherever they might have been on the Congolese soil. On the other hand, Rwandan authorities ought logically to have deployed their troops only on the borders or in the eastern part of both Kivus. Curiously, they went far beyond the Kivus: to Kisangani. Seemingly, they were lured by the diamonds of this third town of the DRC. Lanotte sustains my position when he writes:

“...if the fundamental reason of the presence of the Rwandese army in Congo-Zaire since 1996 is the care to ensure its western frontier vis-à-vis the threat of the ‘negative forces’, how then can one explain—as ask quite rightly numerous Congolese—the presence of the RPA at more than a thousand kilometers from that frontier? It is thus evident that the Rwanda’s legitimate security worry is not sufficient to motivate the omnipresence of its army in Congo since 1996...” (2003: 161).

The Belgian expert discovers beside this security argument a formidable economic stake. Nonetheless, before describing the pillage by Rwandans on Congolese territory, I aim to analyze their war policy during the second conflict.

Rwanda’s war policy involves the creation of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) on 5 August 1998. This is a political-military movement that Kigali built to mask their aggression and occupation of a sovereign country behind the idea of rebellion. Indeed, the RCD is a sham rebellion because, though, in the 12 August 1998 Declaration of its creation in Goma, it claims to be “open to all Congolese living forces” and aims at “the dismantling of Mr. Kabila’s dictatorship and the establishment of a democratic regime based upon a really popular legitimacy” (cited in Lanotte, 2003: 102), both of its branches (the political and the military) are run by Congolese citizens co-opted by Kigali. Its presidency (political branch) is assumed by Arthur Z’Ahidi Ngoma, who shall be replaced by Ernest Wamba dia Wamba nearly two weeks later;⁸⁸ whereas its military branch is yielded to the leadership of Commanders Jean-Pierre Ondekane and Sylvain Mbuki, and Dr Emile Ilunga.⁸⁹ The total dependency of the new-born rebellion on Rwanda is equally perceived in its sourcing of arms and ammunition. Inasmuch as

⁸⁸ Swiftly appointed by Kigali to give a Congolese character to the war, Arthur Z’Ahidi Ngoma, is rapidly axed because of the Rwandan authorities’ fear of another deviating dictatorship (taken into account his French-leaning political position). So, the RCD presidency shall be a collegial one led by Ernest Wamba dia Wamba. The co-option of the latter, described by Lanotte (2003:102-103) and Georges Nzongola (2002: 228-229), is justified by his rootedness in the Anglo-Saxon sphere, precisely his friendship with Former US President Jimmy Carter and former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere and his lectureship in the History Department, University of Dar-es-Salam, and by his being originally from the same strategic Bas-Congo province (i.e. where the Rwanda-led operation aimed at ousting Kabila took place) as Arthur Z’Ahidi Ngoma. Moreover, a couple of month after his sacking, Z’Ahidi Ngoma quits the rebellion and testifies that it is “controlled by Rwanda” (Georges Nzongola: 2002: 231).

⁸⁹ Commanders Jean-Pierre Ondekane and Sylvain Mbuki are James Kabarebe’s trusted lieutenants. That is why, during the advancing Bas-Congo operation, Western media, RFI in particular, speculated about the former as the eventual successor of Kabila.

its leaders were not prepared to launch it, they do not have any fund for armament, and therefore have to rely on their godfathers in Kigali and Kampala plus assets earned from the exploitation of resources at their disposal in the territory under their control. Finally, another element of the RCD dependency on Rwanda is that Kigali controls its finances. All proceeds that it makes in East Congo are stored up in Rwanda at the pleasure of the Kagame regime (see e.g. UN Panel 2002: 16). However, dependency on Rwanda is not the rebel group's sole Achilles heel.

The RCD suffers another weakness: given that it is a Rwandese invention, it does not enjoy popular support in the DRC. And the country's eastern part, which is under its control, is the most hostile to its activities. Insofar as resistance to the Rwandese occupation is a factor that strengthens the Congolese nationhood under Kabila's leadership, it is impossible for the Rwanda-backed RCD to progress westward. In fact, it shall face popular resistance through the Mai-Mai movement in the eastern province, the Grand Kivu and the North Katanga, as well as the counter-attack waged by the Congolese Armed Forces assisted by Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, and the former Rwandese Armed Forces (ex-FAR).

The RCD's military actions were accompanied by the enrichment of the Rwandan government on the DRC soil and subsoil. This enrichment is based on the pillage of gold and coltan. The UN Panel is clearer in numbers:

“While revenues and expenditure in the Congo Desk are considerable, they are kept strictly separate from Rwanda's national budget. A reliable source associated to the Desk provided 80 per cent of all RPA expenditure in 1999. The official Rwandan budget for 1999 allocated \$80 million to the military. If this official Allocation of \$80 million represents the 20 per cent referred to by the Panel's Source as the portion of military expenditure not covered by the Congo Desk, then the total military budget from all sources would approximate \$400 million. This comes to 20 per cent of the GNP for 1999 and approximately 150 per cent of recurring budget expenditure for that year. The Congo Desk's contribution to Rwanda's military expenses would therefore have been in the order of \$320 million. The activities funded by revenues generated by the Congo Desk strongly shape Rwanda's foreign policy and directly influence national decision-making in a number of domains. These transactions are, however, hidden from the scrutiny of international organizations (2002:15).

According to the study done by Professor Stefaan Marysse of Antwerp, Belgium, and his colleague Catherine André, “the value of the (gold) production that is reoriented or siphoned off by Rwanda is increased respectively to 5.6 and 5.4 million US dollars for 1999 and 2000”⁹⁰. The exploitation of coltan is undertaken in different ways, according to the analysis of Father Didier de Failly, a Belgian Jesuit. If the exploitation areas are under the RCD military control, “diggers pay a weekly rent (...) to military chiefs who themselves buy [the coltan] or grant money to Congolese dealers assigned to buy coltan on their behalf. These rents in kind and the amount (of coltan) bought are boarded by aircraft straight to Rwanda”⁹¹.

⁹⁰ S. Marysse, C. Andre, cited in Lanotte: 2003:125.

⁹¹ D. de Failly, cited in *Idem*.

3.3.2.2. Uganda

Uganda is directly involved in both the Congo wars of 1996 and 1998. Alongside its southern neighbor, it is a godfather of a new rebellion, the RCD, since it summoned the conference that sealed the creation of the rebel group in Kabuga. Its role in the Second Congo War is preponderant: President Museveni is still enjoying the attribute of the new strongman of the Central Africa from the West, and all parties disappointed by President Laurent-Désiré Kabila's U-turn since his takeover on 17 May 1997 (Western governments, the US in particular, South Africa, Australia, and the mineral companies coined "Juniors" and headed by the AMFI) rely on him to topple the Congolese leader whom he presented to Washington as the sole credible alternative to Mobutu. Furthermore, it is Museveni who really appointed a 'new friend' as an alternative to Kabila at the top of the RCD collegial leadership: Ernest Wamba dia Wamba.

Uganda has a couple of stakes in the DRC⁹². The first stake is in the systematic pillage of the DRC natural resources including minerals (gold, diamond, coltan, etc.), farming products (notably coffee), game (okapis, gorillas, elephants), timber and livestock⁹³. More than its southern ally, Uganda has looted the Congo. Stefaan Marysse and Catherine Andre report that "on the basis of volumes exported (by Uganda, which is not a gold producer), the value of the gold exported would reach 95 million US dollars in 2000 (...) The value of economic pillage amounts to 19 million US dollars for 1999, and to 18 million US dollars in 2000"⁹⁴, apart from "one ton of Congolese gold valued at over \$9 million" to which Ugandan soldiers helped themselves⁹⁵; whereas, as showed above, the value of the gold exported by Rwanda amounts to 5.6 million US dollars in 1999, and to 5.4 million US dollars in 2000. Furthermore, like Rwanda, the Ugandan presence in the DRC aims to ensure security for the "Juniors" plundering activities, through the AMFI, as well as those of President Museveni's half-brother General Major Salim Saleh's company Caleb International, and the interests of the Canadian corporation Barrick Gold Corporation, which took over the monopoly of gold exploitation from Okimo (Zairian Kilomoto Gold Office) in August 1996⁹⁶.

⁹² Set aside, evidently, the expansionist project (this one being bred more by Rwanda because of the paradox of its tiny surface area for a strong demographic density, the involvement of Kampala in it is indirect and spurred by the Tutsi character of the Ugandan leadership, --the Tutsi solidarity being binding) and the imperialist powers' reliability on the person of Museveni.

⁹³ Lanotte: 2003:169.—The Belgian scholar confirms the thesis of the preeminence of the economical-commercial motives in Uganda's implication in the August war that tore down the DRC; he also writes the following as an example to explain the hideous character of pillage: "Nearly 4.000 elephants over a population of 12.000 had been killed in the Garamba park in the north-east of the DRC controlled by the UPDF [Ugandan army] troops and Sudanese rebels, between 1995-1999"; see this in the same page.

⁹⁴ S. Marysse and C. Andre, quoted by Lanotte: 2003:124-125.

⁹⁵ Human Rights Watch, *Democratic Republic of Congo. The Curse of Gold*, 2005, p.1.

⁹⁶ N'Gbanda Nzambo: 2004:256-257.—The former chief of the Congolese secret services so denounces the impunity enjoyed by President Museveni in the world arena, and explains it as an effect of the money-making instrumentalization of Kampala by Westerners in the Congo adventure. He gives as proof of this instrumentalization the fact that Western high profile figures got involved into the bargain of takeover of the monopoly of the gold exploitation in the Eastern province by Barrick Gold Corporation: Georges W Bush senior, former US president, Brian Mulroney, former Canada prime minister, Paul Demarais, chairman of the Canadian company Power Corporation, Karl Otto Pol, former director of the Central Bank of Germany, and Peter Munk, chairman of the Canadian company Clairtone Sound. See page 257. Otunnu appends that those board members of the company "influenced policy-makers in the US and Canada either to support or to ignore armed intervention by Uganda and Rwanda" (2004:52).

The second stake is in border security. Kampala claims to invade the DRC in line with its "right of chase" against diverse fighting groups that have been using Congolese territory as their rear base to destabilize Uganda and to topple the Museveni government (Lanotte, 2003: 165). However, the security argument is not fully convincing because of the presence of the UPDF troops inside of the Congo at 1000 kilometers far away from the Ugandan-Congolese frontier. Moreover, since President Kabila's takeover, hot pursuit of rebels has not required toppling the government. A *Memorandum of Understanding* between Kampala and Kinshasa permits troops to pursue Ugandan rebels within Congolese territory⁹⁷. Hence, the security stake is likely less urgent than the economic one.

Uganda's war policy features the participation of Kampala in the creation of the RCD and, nearly three months later, in November 1998, that of the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC). Presided over by Jean-Pierre Bemba, the new-born rebellion comprises the members of the former Zairian Armed Forces (ex-FAZ), essentially from the notorious DSP and Civil Guard, and it is financially supported by barons of the Mobutu era, such as Generals Nzimbi Ngbale and Kpama Baramoto. The MLC is founded to allow Museveni to stay aloof from the disastrous management of the war by an RCD marked by growing internal quarrels, deepening Rwandan dominance and violation of human rights. Nevertheless, the economic motive equally incited its birth: a deal concluded by James Kanzini, commander of Ugandan forces in the DRC, and Bemba⁹⁸. The rebel group defines itself as a nationalist, "anti-Rwandan", Congolese alternative to Kabila and the RCD. Lastly, while the RCD domain comprises the two Kivus, Maniema, North Katanga, Kabinda, Sankuru, and the southern part of the Eastern Province, the MLC stronghold is composed of all northern territories ranging from Ituri to North Ubangi (Equator). The MLC's weaknesses run as follows: dependence on Kampala (which makes it as unpopular as the RCD), the mercantile nature of its birth (which associates it with domestic and external pillage), an inability to rally powers other than Uganda, and its collision with the RCD inside of the town of Kisangani, leading to a high death toll and eroding the remnant of its credibility vis-à-vis the national and international opinion.

⁹⁷ Lanotte, 2003: 166-167.—So, quoted in the same excerpt, John F. Clark notes: "the UPDF should have crossed the Congo-Ugandan frontier to chase rebels conformably to the agreements without waging any total war against Kabila". Georges Nzongola backs John Clark in rightly raising the following question: "With respect to Uganda, President Kabila had authorized the stationing of a UPDF battalion on Congolese soil to police the Congo-Uganda border. How, then, Kampala and Kigali accuse Kabila for having failed to put an end to rebel incursions when they were directly involved in the management and activities of Congolese security forces until July 1998?" (2002: 238).

⁹⁸ The alleged deal is described by the UN *Expert Group Report on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Riches of the Democratic Republic of Congo*, New York, United Nations, S/2001/357, 12 April 2001.

3.3.2.3. Burundi

Unlike Rwanda and Uganda, the role of Burundi in the Congo second war is very slim and is summarized by F. Reyntjens as “resulting from tolerant complicity” rather than as “active commitment”⁹⁹.

The Burundian responsibility for the war is mere complicity, that is, the expression by Bujumbura of a simple moral support to Kigali instead of the sending of troops that may assist the RPA in the new Congo adventure. This moral support stems from the fact that both regimes are Tutsi; so they respectively face rebellions that are based in Congo and animated by the ethnicist ideology of *Hutu power* aiming at toppling the Tutsi establishment. And the more either regime succeeds in neutralizing its respective ‘negative forces’ in the giant neighbor, the more it pacifies its population within the national territory. Thus is developed an “objective alliance”¹⁰⁰ between the two countries, in which the Buyoya regime is using the same “right of chase” to send the Burundian Armed Forces (FAB) to counterattack against National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD) guerillas making incursions into the Burundian territory. But the Burundian occupation of the DRC, according to Bujumbura, is sporadic, i.e. limited to “some police operations”¹⁰¹ that aim to neutralize rebel incursions.

Burundian complicity is tolerant: it implies simultaneously sympathy for Rwanda and respect of the Congo’s sovereignty. This respect is due to a couple of factors. On the one hand, President Pierre Buyoya’s government faced an East African embargo after his coup d’état of July 1996. The embargo constituted a deterrent against committing to another conflict and thereby worsening his notorious international image, and he anyway has reason to be grateful to Kabila’s Congo, which was the sole country in the region to open its borders to Burundian businesspeople during this embargo, and to fight for the ending of the latter. At the same time Bujumbura’s mono-ethnic Tutsi army, already facing three rebellions, is not numerous enough to engage troops in an uncertain Congo adventure (Lanotte, 2003: 173).

Nonetheless, the Burundian complicity during the ‘Africa’s first world war’ is economically interested. The UN Expert Group on the illegal exploitation of the Congo’s resources exposes the “systematic pillage” of assets in areas occupied by the FAB. N’Gbanda notes that, in the wake of its relief from the embargo and thanks to the onset of the August 1998 war, Burundi has been enjoying the revival of its Bujumbura Free Trade Zone for the smuggling of the DRC precious materials (mainly gold, diamond, and now coltan) (2004: 263)¹⁰². The fueling of this free trade zone has been exacerbated by Kampala’s and Kigali’s direct and rampant involvement in the gold trade on Congolese soil.

3.3.3. Responsibility of the Powers Allied to the Kabila Regime

The powers directly involved in the Congo second war backing the Kabila regime are Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad and Sudan. Each of them has a particular motive for its engagement in the conflict. The first three allies, though nurturing hidden agendas, justify their interventionism as a SADC action to defend the DRC against external aggression. Indeed, the defense agreements tying the SADC members rule that the Community’s member states have to

⁹⁹ F. Reyntjens, *Rebellion in Congo-Zaire: An Affair of Neighbors*, cited in Lanotte, 2003: 173.

¹⁰⁰ Lanotte, 2003: 173.

¹⁰¹ *Idem*, p.174.

¹⁰² See also Nzongola, 2002: 238.

support any member state aggressed against by one or several foreign forces facing a rebellion. However South Africa's refusal to engage the Southern African body in the war deprived their Congo policy of the community's legitimate framework. The last two states are driven by the chaotic environment of the region and its menaces to their security, mainly in respect of their enmity vis-à-vis Uganda.

3.3.3.1. Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is the biggest ally of the DRC in the second war. It has sent the largest military contingent to assist the FAC in their effort to resist the aggression of Rwanda and Uganda: as many as 11 000 to 12 000 troops (Nzongola, 2002: 239). In intervening in Congo, Harare is animated by several motivations: the hegemonic conflict in the SADC region, the economic dividends and the pacification of resistance to land reform.

The hegemonic conflict in the SADC region results from the "South African complex"¹⁰³ that President Robert Mugabe is suffering of, that is, the bitterness that characterizes the Zimbabwean leader, and that is caused by his country's loss of the leadership of the Southern Africa to the young democratic South Africa. The consequences of this big reshuffle in the region are many and swim against the Zimbabwe's fortune. Amidst them I note three. Firstly, Mozambican ingratitude: Zimbabwe committed a lot of its treasure to helping the Frelimo government to eradicate Renamo rebel activities during Mozambique's civil war, and was expecting the dividend of becoming thereafter Maputo's first partner in the region; yet, at the end of the civil war, the Frelimo government short-changed Harare and mostly strengthened its tie with Mandela's newly elected regime, woundingly forgetting that apartheid South Africa had actively supported Renamo (Nzongola, 2002: 239). Thus the Congo intervention is an opportunity for Harare not only to dress the wound caused by Chissano's betrayal, but also to hit back at Pretoria by counteracting South African business interests in the DRC¹⁰⁴. Secondly, the erosion of Mugabe's international prestige: during the Cold War, despite his backing of nationalist movements (like the ANC) and Marxist-Leninist regimes (such as the Frelimo), Mugabe was praised by major powers for good governance and guaranteeing big businesses and white farms in his country. Since the end of the Cold War and the liberation of Mandela in the early 1990s, his star has been waning to the profit of the South African president, whose the international stature is incessantly growing, and who is "wooed by all capital cities"¹⁰⁵. The competition of the two leaders for international prestige drove Mugabe, in disagreement with Mandela, to send troops to the DRC. Thirdly, the decline of the Zimbabwean economy: within the neoliberal environment of competitiveness, Zimbabwean businesses are disadvantaged vis-à-vis foreign actors such as the newly embargo-freed companies of South Africa and western

¹⁰³ The term is borrowed to Lanotte, 2003: 180.

¹⁰⁴ Pretoria was longing for business in Kabila's Congo, particularly in its mineral industry. That is why Mandela tried his best to negotiate Mobutu's peaceful replacement by Kabila. Kabila's U-turn from his attitude as rebel Kabila hurt Pretoria so much that it did not hesitate to support the aggressors during Africa's first World War.

¹⁰⁵ R. Cornwell (October 2000), *Zimbabwe: 90 days after the elections*, Halfway House, Institute for Security Studies, No. 46, quoted by Lanotte: 2003:180.

transnational corporations. Therefore, the Mugabe seeks in the Second Congo War a windfall to lean on so that the Zimbabwe's economy may bounce back and compete with South Africa's¹⁰⁶. *The economic dividends* are however the most important motive for Mugabe's intervention in Congo second war. As pointed out in the second chapter, the Zimbabwean leader had already assisted the AFDL in the first war. His investment in the AFDL paid off. The gathering isolation of the AFDL regime in the world arena led Kabila to yield key sectors of the Congolese mineral economy to Zimbabwe in exchange for "unlimited credit of the Zimbabwean Defense Industry"¹⁰⁷. Behold the fruits reaped by Harare from the business deal with Kinshasa: - Billy Rautenbach, a leading Zimbabwean businessman and Mugabe's friend, is appointed the managing director of the Gecamines to guarantee Harare's large interests in this mining company specialized in copper and cobalt, the mainstay of the Congo's economy, and an agreement creating the Central Mining Group is signed in partnership by the Gecamines and Rautenbach's company, Ridgepoint Overseas Development¹⁰⁸; -a Mugabe-Kabila venture for the extraction of Kasaian diamonds kickstarts the mining company of Sengasenga Mining Company that competes with the Congolese parastatal of MIBA in Mbuji-Mayi¹⁰⁹; -a contract of the exploitation of wood by the Zimbabwean Defense Forces in four provinces: Katanga, Kasai, Bandundu, and Bas-Congo¹¹⁰. *The need to pacify anticipated opposition to the forthcoming land reform*, finally, informs Mugabe's 'colonial' enterprise in the Congo.

We are in 1998, a couple of years before fast-track land reform: the Zimbabwean leader understands that white farmers will fight the confiscation of their farms. He also anticipated that land reform might result in an international embargo against his country, since the farmers enjoy the support from major powers, notably Britain, the ex-colonial power and ancestral home of the settlers. These dangers persuaded Harare to intervene in Congo. The Zimbabwean government planned to secure ownership of large concessions in the DRC, and to allocate them as compensation to dispossessed white farmers. Lanotte confirms this bargain, observing that "in the framework of the land reform policy in Zimbabwe, which stripped away slews of lands from white farmers, the [Zimbabwean] government would have sought to indemnify the latter by allocating them large farm concessions in the DRC" (2003: 181). Sampaio points out that "the Zimbabwe Agricultural and Rural Development Authority has ... received in concession the exploitation of more than half a million hectares of arable lands in the DRC"¹¹¹. However, this

¹⁰⁶ Lanotte notes: "The Zimbabwean interest in the Congo of Kabila results from the necessity for this enclosed state to maintain the Zimbabwe-DRC axis and its commercial corridors in order to pretend to compete somewhat with South Africa's economic leadership in the region" (2003: 180).

¹⁰⁷ D. Compagnon (March 2001), "Zimbabwe: l'alternance ou le chaos", in *Politique africaine*, No. 81, quoted by Lanotte, 2003: 180.

¹⁰⁸ *L'Etat contre le peuple. La gouvernance, l'exploitation miniere et le regime transitoire en Republique Democratique du Congo*, Niza: Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa, Amsterdam, 2006, p.45 in <http://www.congovision.com/images/NIZA.pdf>; Nzongola: 2002:239; Ngdanda, 2004: 249.

¹⁰⁹ Nzongola, 2002: 239; Ngbanda, 2004: 250. The former adds: "With a strong military presence in Mbuji-Mayi, Zimbabweans were said to be shipping diamonds home on a regular basis, by air". The UN Panel observes: "Sengamines claims an 800 square kilometer concession, just south of Mbuji-Mayi, carved out of the concession of the Societe Miniere de Bakwanga. According to company officials, Sengamines' diamond concession would be worth at least \$2 billion if they were put into full production" (2002: 9).

¹¹⁰ The British NGO Global Witness, quoted by Lanotte, denounces it as the 'world's biggest contract' in wood exploitation (2003: 182).

¹¹¹ M. Sampaio, "Les affaires derriere la guerre civile en RDC", *Marches tropicaux*, 15 October 1999, p.2101, quoted by Lanotte, 2003: 181.

compensation did not occur probably because of the political change in the DRC brought about by the death of Laurent-Désiré Kabila on 16 January 2001, just a year after the launch of the land reform.

Anyway, the presence of Zimbabwean troops in the DRC significantly contributed to the salvation of Kabila: first, alongside Angolans and the people of Kinshasa, they inflicted a humiliating defeat on a Rwandan commando unit and its Congolese allies in the Bas-Congo operation at the outset of the war; second, its assistance to the FAC and the Mai-Mai fighters in East-Congo helped to halt the progress of the RCD and bring the war to an end. Hence, they contributed immensely to preventing the fulfillment of the Rwandan expansionist agenda on the Congo's soil.

3.3.3.2. Angola

All experts agree that Angola's motive for intervening in Africa's First World War is not money-making. Angola is itself well endowed with numerous resources, notably oil and diamonds, and does not covet DRC's. What Luanda mainly needs is domestic peace to enable it to mobilise its resources for reconstruction. And, inasmuch as peace is attainable only if UNITA's rebellion is dismantled, the Dos Santos regime's policy in Central and Southern Africa is dictated by the stance of other regional powers vis-à-vis UNITA. Why, then, did Angola intervene in the DRC?

The driving motor of Angola's intervention in the Congolese second war is the same as in the first war: the imperative of defeating UNITA (Lanotte, 2003: 174). In quelling the Rwandan *Blitzkrieg* and protecting Laurent-Désiré Kabila's power, the Dos Santos regime has two objectives: "the securing of the Bas-Congo and the suppression of UNITA's rear bases in the Congo" (Lanotte, 2003: 177).

The securing of Bas-Congo, at first, is of utmost importance because it is essential to securing Angola's oil-rich Cabinda enclave. Given its links to UNITA, the RCD *Blitzkrieg* in the Bas-Congo implies the establishment of new sanctuaries there for Savimbi's rebellion, which would lead to the destabilization of Cabinda and the disruption of its vital oil industry. Furthermore, Kabila offers an Angolan-Congolese joint-venture in the production and commercialization of petroleum in oceanfront territory under Kinshasa's control. Kabila expressed his gratitude to Angola by signing a convention over to create a couple of Angolan companies: GIP and PANACHE, which enjoyed huge privileges, notably tax exemption, in the distribution per month, since 1998, of 24 000 m³ of oil products on the Kinshasa market, whose consumption capacity is of 600 000 m³ per year (2004: 254). But the acceptance of Kabila's offer by Dos Santos does not suggest that Angola's interventionism is money-making. I consider it a slim offshoot¹¹² of the Angolan preoccupation with the security of the Cabinda, the more so given that a string of parameters has eased Angola's economic worries in 1998: it enjoys windfall oil profits due to the Iraq embargo and the standoff between Washington and Baghdad; UNITA is deemed an outlaw by the international community since it resumed fighting in 1994; and it has no desire to damage its improved global reputation by being seen to be engaged in economic pillage.

The smallness of Angola's stake is suggested also by its decision to launch a limited intervention only. It is limited to ending the *Blitzkrieg*, securing the Congolese regime and defending parts of the DRC ruled by the legal government, especially the southern part bordering Angola. The

¹¹² Thus I disagree Lanotte's claim that "like most of neighboring countries, natural resources constituted a heavy argument in Luanda's decision to intervene beside Kabila's forces" (2003: 177).

Angolan contingent, though the most powerful of all in the war, never counterattacked against aggressor forces in the way envisaged by Kabila: namely by overrunning Kigali. So, Lanotte notes that, once the *Blitzkrieg* was doomed, Angolan authorities resumed contact with Rwanda and Uganda to explain them that Angola's intervention did not target them (2003: 177). They threatened Kigali and Kampala with a generalized conflict only when, in 2000, they learnt of the UNITA-MLC tie-up based upon the former supplying the latter with hardened troops, and the latter along with the RPA offering their rear bases and airports to the former for exporting diamonds and procuring arms and ammunition. The threat never materialized because the accused parties denied the allegations. Secondly, Angola's intervention is not too large or costly: it involved 5000 troops with air cover from MIG21 and MIG 23 military aircraft and MI-24 and MI-25 military helicopters (Lanotte, 2003: 177). Compared to the Zimbabwean contingent (11 000 troops), the Angolan contingent is too small to plunder Congo's oil while securing the Congolese government and Angolan-Congolese borders.

The suppression of UNITA's rear bases in the Congo is a priority for Angola. The UNITA-RCD link is dangerous for Luanda insofar as it implies, in the event of an RCD government, improved diamond-trafficking opportunities for UNITA in southern DRC. The Kabila regime, while not fully living up to its promise to eradicate UNITA activities in the Congo, is preferred by Angolan authorities to any success by RCD or MLC.

3.3.3.3. Namibia

Namibian intervention in Congo's second war involves 2-3 000 troops (one fourth of the total strength of the Namibian army) in the framework of the defense agreement among SADC member states (Lanotte, 2003: 184). It rests on four grounds: bush-era solidarity, the hegemony issue in the SADC region, SWAPO's gratitude to Angola, and business.

Bush-era solidarity is the main determinant of Windhoek's Congo policy during both Congo wars (2003: 184). It harks back to a common Marxist-Leninist past shared by Sam Nujoma and Laurent-Désiré Kabila in Tanzania under the mentorship of the President Julius Nyerere. Kabila was the leader of the PRP, the sole remnant rebel group that was waging war against the Mobutu regime; whereas Nujoma was leading the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), a mass movement struggling for Namibian independence. Nujoma rushed to welcome political change in the ex- Zaire, anticipating hearty relations between Namibia and the DRC. And practically beneficial relations too: for example, thirsty Namibia hoped for extended access to the water of the Congo basin. This is why Sam Nujoma quickly invited Kabila for an official visit to Windhoek and promised a renewable credit of four million US dollars as aid for the Congo's economic recovery¹¹³.

The hegemony issue in the SADC region. In the SADC rift on the Congo Namibia sided with Zimbabwe and Angola to counterbalance South Africa's influence in the southern region. Lanotte writes:

“...it befits at last to account the regional political dimension. The alliance of Namibia with Zimbabwe and Angola notably has the objective of constituting a pole susceptible to counter the deemed too popular influence of South Africa in

¹¹³ Lanotte, 2003: 184; regarding the need for the Congo river's basin's water, see p. 185.

Southern Africa. As soon as the SADC is divided over the issue of intervening in the Congo between Zimbabwe and Angola, on the one hand, and South Africa, on the other, the choice is quickly made by the young Namibian regime” (2003:185).

This hegemony argument is sound if one additionally views the Namibian option as a probable attempt by Windhoek to eradicate the last legacy of South African overlordship over Namibia—symbolised here by Pretoria’s exhortation not to intervene in Congo.

The Namibian government’s gratitude to Angola, thirdly, results from SWAPO’s recollection of the indefatigable support it enjoyed from the Angolan authorities during its struggle against South African tutelage (Lanotte, 2003: 185). Thus, since its rise to power in 1990, SWAPO has been supporting Luanda’s efforts to quell UNITA; and it was automatic for it to follow the path of the Luanda interventionism in the DRC.

Business, lastly, supplied an incentive for Windhoek to intervene in Africa’s First World War. Unlike Uganda, Rwanda and Zimbabwe, Namibia is not under the fire of the international community over the plunder of Congolese resources during the war. Yet N’Gbanda reports that the UN experts tasked with enquiring into the looting of DRC resources by external forces discovered that, in July 1999, the Congolese Mines minister vouchsafed to the Namibian company designated ‘26 August’ some diamond exploitation concessions in the district of Tshikapa, Kasai province (2004: 255). Quoting the *Windhoek Observer*, Lanotte confirms N’Gbanda’s report:

“...President [Sam] Nujoma would have been a merry owner of a diamond mine in Maji-Munene (sic), at 45 km from Tshikapa, in exchange for the Namibian military support to the DRC. While acknowledging the existence of trade agreements in this sense, the Namibian government defends itself from any claim whatsoever of participation in the exploitation of Congo’s mineral riches” (2003: 184).

The DRC government conceded some of the country’s riches in compensation for Namibian spending in the war, estimated variously at \$72 million (N’Gbanda 255) or \$150 000 per day (Namibian NGO National Society for Human Rights, cited by Lanotte 2003:185). But business was a secondary incentive for Namibian interventionism in the DRC second war: with or without it, Windhoek was inclined to support Kinshasa for the three first reasons.

3.3.3.4. Sudan

Sudan’s Congo policy at the outset of Africa’s First World War is covert but significant. It is covert, on the one hand, because Khartoum has not sent its troops to support Kinshasa against the RCD and MLC, notwithstanding warm-hearted relations between the two capital cities. Rather President Omar el-Bechir’s government’s stance in this affair is limited to denouncing the aggression of the Congo by Uganda that constitutes, according to the Sudanese president, “a threat for the security of the region”, and to declaring that its support to the Kabila regime is “purely political” (Lanotte: 2003: 187). Moreover, it is certain that Khartoum sent 400 troops, who were ex-FAZ soldiers that fled to Sudan during the AFDL’s westward progress, and were integrated in the Sudanese army in 1997, to protect Kindu, a Congolese town endowed with a highly strategic base for the legal government, against the RCD attacks¹¹⁴. And, according to disputed reports from the Ugandan army’s staff, Sudan supplied Kabila with Antonov warplanes to bombard towns controlled by guerillas in the northern Congo (Lanotte, 2003: 187). Lastly, Sudan’s intervention in the conflict is covert inasmuch as it involved eliciting from Chad’s

¹¹⁴ Unfortunately this bolt of Kindu will crack down weeks later as a result of the RCD intense assaults.

President, Idriss Deby, whom it helped to seize power in 1990, the sending of an important Chadian contingent in the DRC to back Kinshasa; and, unlike some other nations backing Kabila, it is pretty absent from the plundering of Congolese resources.

Sudan's covert intervention in Congo's conflict was likely due to a couple of factors. The first and foremost is fear of American retaliation. Khartoum still has in mind the US' recent bombardment of its pharmaceutical factory in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of American embassies in Nairobi and Dar-as-Salam, in early August 1998. At the same time el-Bechir may have feared jeopardising efforts to persuade Uganda to stop supporting the rebellion by John Garang's SPLA in southern Sudan, allowing Khartoum to exploit the freshly discovered large oilfield in the that region¹¹⁵.

Sudanese interventionism in Africa's first continental war, on the other hand, is significant, given its highly sensitive character on the strategic level. As reported by Lanotte, Sudan constitutes one of the main obsessions of Washington vis-à-vis the black continent (2003:1 87). It is allegedly Africa's principal supporter of Islamist terrorism against the West, the US in particular. Furthermore, Sudan is a rear base for three Ugandan rebellions committed to overthrowing Museveni's government - the ADF, the WNBF, and the LRA - and thus threatens Washington's goal of dominating the region through its ally in Kampala. The threat of extended Sudanese intervention is a card Kabila can moreover use against the US.¹¹⁶

3.3.3.5. Chad

Chad's commitment in the Congolese second war is important: a contingent of 2 000 troops assisted Kinshasa in halting the advance of the Ugandan-sponsored rebel Jean-Pierre Bemba's MLC in the Equator province. The Chadian President Idriss Deby, however, is a reluctant interventionist. Firstly, he still remembers Kabila's arrogant stance vis-à-vis France—Chad's main partner—and the Francophone community; and the Franco-Congolese relations are not warm-hearted hitherto. Nzongola notes:

“...there is no doubt that the geopolitical interests of France and its Central African allies were a factor, particularly through pressures exerted by President Omar Bongo of Gabon, the dean of heads of state in Central Africa. The countries of the subregion would like to see the Congo remain engaged with them, rather than turn eastward and southward with English-speaking countries” (2002: 240).

Secondly, as Lanotte underscores, the Chadian leader considers that the Congolese second war is an “adventure” that is “useless and extremely costly in human lives”, while he needs troops too to quench the Toubou rebellion launched in Niger and growing in the north of the country, and he is preoccupied by the implementation of the project of building a pipeline linking the Chadian oilfield to the Cameroonian port of Douala (2003: 190).

Nevertheless, N'Djamena is compelled to engage in the war by two African powers that chose to remain engaged spectators, and on which it hugely depends: Libya and Sudan. Tripoli wields much influence on N'Djamena because of the latter's reliance on its supply of food and gas oil. Libya does its best to remain neutral because of the fear of undermining Americano-Libyan negotiations towards ending the international embargo on the country, and in order to bolster its

¹¹⁵ a Ugandan-Sudanese agreement shall be implemented later in 1999.

¹¹⁶ Congolese intelligence likely calculated that Kinshasa *apparently* leaning on terrorism-sponsoring Khartoum could deter Washington from sponsoring more aggression lest the AFDL make the dangerous decision to welcome Islamist terrorism into the heart of Africa.

credentials as a Pan-African unifier (see below). Yet, in prodding Chad to overtly back Kinshasa, Tripoli shows that it cannot resist its old sentiments altogether: the hatred of a longtime enemy—the US—which is attempting to overthrow a longtime fellow socialist, Laurent-Désiré Kabila. Khartoum, in turn, encourages Chad onto the battlefield for the reasons given above.

Chad has participated to a degree in looting Congolese resources. The Chadian contingent, fleeing MLC offensives, brought to Chad coffee stock and farming products belonging to the businesspeople working in the North Ubangui territory; they also pillaged luxury goods adorning Mobutu's residences in Gbadolite (N'Gbanda 2004: 255).

Though ephemeral, the Chadian intervention stopped the MLC advance, giving Kinshasa the time to organize a counterattack. It contributed decisively to preventing of the Ugandan-sponsored rebel group from taking over the southern Equator.

3.3.4. Role of the Neutral Powers

There is another dimension that makes the Congo's second war the African First World War: the involvement, alongside belligerents and sponsors, of a range of states pursuing neutrality and mediation policies in order to extinguish the conflict. I shall analyze at this point two categories of these neutral powers: the engaged neutral powers (South Africa, Libya) and the noncommittal neutral powers (Central Africa, Congo-Brazzaville, Tanzania and Zambia).

3.3.4.1. Engaged Neutral Powers

By ‘engaged neutral powers’ I mean the nations that remain aloof as regards the military battle but that are committed to ending the war somehow or other, conformably to their respective visions of a new Africa and its position in the world arena. I can notice in this category South Africa and Libya. Nelson Mandela’s South Africa’s stance during the Second Congo War is an “ambiguous neutrality” (Lanotte, 2003:191). It opts for peace negotiations and rejects Mugabe’s resolution to send a Southern African military contingent to rescue the Kabila regime, while simultaneously it doesn’t hesitate to militarily invade the Lesotho to thwart the coup aimed at overthrowing the monarchy; and it carried on furnishing arms to Rwanda. This ambiguity is due to Mandela’s determination to punish Kabila for the latter’s reconsideration of the accord signed during the liberation struggle, and which granted the exploitation of the Congo’s minerals by South Africa’s mining companies during the AFDL regime. As regards Libya, it displays a two-faced stance towards the Congo crisis. At first, Tripoli remains neutral insofar as it doesn’t directly engage its troops in the conflict on either side; and its diplomacy successfully obtains a cease-fire agreement between Kinshasa and Kampala in Sirte, on 18 April 1999. On the other hand, it is an engaged neutral power because of its indirect intervention—through its “client” Chad—in favour of the Congolese government. Indeed, according to the Libyan intelligence, Uganda’s failure in the Congo constitutes a defeat for Washington and a victory for Tripoli (Lanotte, 2003: 189); and Libyan intervention can be used by Kaddafi as leverage in negotiations for the normalization of the Americano-Libyan relations, with Libya offering non-intervention in exchange for normalisation.

3.3.4.2. Noncommittal Neutral Powers

By ‘noncommittal neutral powers’, I mean the African states that did not, directly or indirectly, get involved in the war, but that remained sensitive to it because of their being neighboring states of the DRC. They are classified into two groups: Francophone and Anglophone. The Francophone group comprises Congo-Brazzaville and Central Africa. It is characterized by a neutrality due to the “fear of contagion”, that is, fear of the conflict’s escalation into their own territories as a consequence of Congolese nationals, militaries and civilians alike, flowing into them in search of refuge (Lanotte, 2003:192-193). The Anglophone brace comprises Tanzania and Zambia. It is neutral thanks to its peacemaker vocation. Tanzania, fortunate not to experience civil war since its independence in 1961, plays the traditional role of peacemaker in the Great Lakes region. Zambia equally has been a haven since its independence in 1964. It has no war culture. This element weighed heavy in the Mauritius Summit’s resolution to appoint President Frederick Chiluba the chairman of the commission of peace negotiations on the DRC—which includes, as assistants, Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa and his Mozambican counterpart Joaquim Chissano (P. Sundi Mbambi, 2005:361)—and in the brokering of the Lusaka Agreement in July 1999.

3.3.5. Course of the War

As mentioned above, the blitzkrieg launched by Rwanda and Uganda on the outset of the war aimed to overthrow Kabila within a few days, and these countries did not expect any strong military reaction against their agenda from Africa's military powerhouses. Unfortunately for them, the prompt military intervention of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Chad, and (especially) Angola undermined their calculation and unexpectedly laid the basis for the waning of the war. On both sides, contrary to the Congolese first war, there develops an impasse.

The aggressors, on the one hand, are forced to stop their progress as soon as they conquered almost the half of the DRC. Their hope of overrunning Kinshasa and ousting Kabila melts away because not only of the several nations opposing them on the battlefield, but also because of the popular resistance waged by the Mai-Mai militia in the conquered territories and various Congolese-backed counterattacks. Another blow to the aggressors' plan is the implosion of the RCD and the creation of the MLC. The most spectacular instance of the former is the departure of the movement's first president Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma and thereafter, the creation on 16 May 1999 of the RCD-Mouvement de Libération by Z'Ahidi Ngoma's successor, Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, who established its headquarters in Kisangani¹¹⁷. As regards the creation of the Ugandan-backed MLC, it weakened the anti-Kabila insurgency by concentrating much of its fire on competing for mineral-rich territory with the Rwandan-sponsored RCD-Goma. The dispute culminated in clashes between Rwandan and Ugandan troops inside Kisangani in 1999 and 2000. The Congolese government and its allies, on the other hand, see their trumpeted counterattack neutralized with the fall of the strategic town of Kindu, on 12 October 1998. After the fall of Kindu, Kinshasa and its allies had never bounced back. They limited their movement to strengthening their position in diamond-rich town of Mbuji-Mayi with Zimbabwean and Angolan help (Lanotte, 2003: 109).

Nevertheless, the most significant event that precipitated the war's waning is the Victoria Falls Summit. Convoked by Mugabe on 7 and 8 September 1998 to draw warring parties into peace talks, the Summit ends into a stalemate. Kabila refuses to talk to rebels and prefers to deal directly with the Ugandan and Rwandan delegations. His attitude is logical: negotiating with rebels implies acknowledging that the Second Congo War is an internal issue when it is in fact an aggression. Rebels, in turn, led by Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma and Bizima Karaha, categorically refuse to observe an agreement they played no part in formulating, and which they never signed. The failure to broker an agreement led some scholars, notably Richard Banegas, to rightly term the Victoria Falls Summit an "African Yalta"¹¹⁸. Victoria Falls is deservedly termed an African Yalta because the warring parties—without expressing it—have decided to divide the DRC into three parts: the East belonging to Rwanda and Uganda, the South serving as a security zone for Angola, and being a Zimbabwean-economical dominion, and the West yielded as jurisdiction to the Kabila government.

¹¹⁷ Lanotte, 2003: 113.—The new-born rebellion is also coined "RCD-Kisangani" to differentiate it from the mother-rebellion that from them on is called "RCD-Goma".

¹¹⁸ Richard Banegas, quoted by Lanotte, 2003: 108.

3.4. Conclusion

The Second Congo War is essentially a minerals aggression-related war whose battlefield is the heart of the black continent. Its visible authors are Rwanda, Uganda and, in some respect, Burundi, and behind them lies the mastermind: a coalition of major powers and mining mafias rallied round the Clinton administration's African Growth and Opportunities Act, which was signed in 1995 as the US new African policy charter aimed to make the continent an exploitation colony under the Anglo-American imperialism. Its target is the overthrow of Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who refused to live up to the terms of contracts he signed, which required him to yield, for plunder, the natural resources of the DRC to Anglo-Saxon and South African mining companies, and of enabling the expansionist Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi to solve their demographic and security issues, and enrich themselves, at the expense of the Congo.

This conflict turns into a long and bloody war because of the surprising intervention of several nations - Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Sudan and Chad - behind Kabila. Moreover, between Kabila's allies and enemies comes another type of nation: the neutral powers. They comprise two categories: the engaged neutral powers (South Africa and Libya) and the noncommittal neutral powers (Congo-Brazzaville, Central Africa, Tanzania and Zambia); and their common concern is avoiding war escalation and brokering a peace agreement.

The large number of powers involved on both sides prevents a decisive victory by either, setting in motion the winding up of the war. The Congolese army and its allies are humiliatingly defeated in the strategic town of Kindu in 1998. But their enemies fail to capitalise on this, and instead fragment into rival camps.

From this stalemate came the metamorphosis of the war into one less about political goals than plunder, informally underwritten by a carve-up of territorial spoils at Victoria Falls.

CHAPTER 4: ROAD TOWARD THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

4.0. Introduction

The violent impasse described in the last chapter also stirs the international community from its indifference and to intervene to try broker a peace agreement. This chapter analyzes the course and dynamics of this peace process. Its argument runs as follows: the US-led coalition, hiding behind the international community, after failing to oust President Laurent-Désiré Kabila by war, intends to topple him diplomatically through the Lusaka agreement; the discovery of the plot by the Congolese leader leads him to turn his back on the very agreement he signed along with other warring parties, and to launch the negotiation process of Libreville; the international community's failed attempt to bring Kabila back to the Lusaka agreement, which is deemed by the US and others the cornerstone of the peace process, produces a stalemate; Laurent-Désiré Kabila is assassinated, possibly with the backing of US-led powers (we shall consider the evidence for this hypothesis); Joseph Kabila rises to power, believed by many within and outside the DRC to be the *deus ex machina* capable of ending the Congo imbroglio. The chapter will (1) discuss the intervention of the international community, the UN and the OAU, in the DRC crisis, emphasising the role of the Congo's troika of the US, France and Belgium; (2) explain the circumstances that made the ceasefire agreement materialize; (3) examine the agreement signed by warring parties in Lusaka; (4) discuss the failure of signatories to implement the ceasefire agreement; (5) analyze the Kabila assassination; and (6) show how the rise to power of Joseph Kabila unlocks the stalemate.

4.1. International Community's Involvement in the DRC Crisis

The international community's involvement in the Second Congo War escalates gradually. I shall analyze this involvement under three heads: direct UN actions and reactions; the development of policies by each component of the troika; and the AU intervention.

4.1.1. The United Nations' Intervention

The UN first reaction to the war goes back to the 31st of August 1998 with the Security Council's declaration limited to urging the halting of hostilities and the launch of peace talks. It did not address the issues underpinning the war: Rwanda's expansionist project; the security of the border separating the DRC and its neighbours; the implication of several countries in the conflict, and so on (Lanotte, 2003: 251).

After eight months of indifference, the UN Security Council voted on 9 April 1999 for resolution 1234, that urged "foreign states (without citing them) to end the presence (of) non-invited forces [in the DRC]"; it condemned the actions of "armed groups, ex-Rwandan Armed Forces, Interahamwe and others"¹¹⁹. The foreign states alluded to in the resolution are Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. The fact that the world body is still refraining from naming and condemning the three aggressors stems from the US-led powers' being stuck with the idea of overthrowing Laurent-Désiré Kabila.

¹¹⁹ Lanotte, 2003: 242-251.

Nevertheless, after a series of shy measures, a stronger UN position appears on 24 February 2000 with Security Council resolution 1291 calling for sending 5 537 troop-strong contingent to the DRC. Even then, the contingent is too small for the immense Central African country, and it was to fulfill its duty when Rwandan and Ugandan troops were clashing in Kisangani. The international community, through US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who visited many African capitals to organize the resolution's implementation, merely reacted against them with "ineffective reprimands" (Lanotte, 2003: 254). In the end the heavy fighting between Rwanda and Uganda in Kisangani in May and June 2000 was "an eye-opener for the international community on what had been identified by Kinshasa as the real reasons for the war, namely the looting of the Congo's riches"¹²⁰. Then, thanks to the French government's activism within the world body, the US-led anti-Kabila coalition acceded to the drafting, by the Security Council, of the UN most forceful reaction to the Second Congo War: the voting on 16 June for resolution 1304, as well as to the establishing of a UN panel of experts to investigate the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth in the DRC. The resolution, indeed, ordered the withdrawal of the Rwandan and Ugandan forces from the DRC (A. Wea, 2003: 52; Lanotte, 2003: 255).

I suggest that the slowness of the world community in acknowledging the truth and taking strong measures is due to two factors: the continuing interest of the US-led alliance in overthrowing Kabila, and Kabila's inflexibility. The first factor has been widely explained above. The second factor sharpens in 2000; it is perceived in the Kabila regime's ridiculing of Sir Ketumile Masire, the OAU-appointed facilitator of the inter-Congolese political negotiations. Yet the man is Botswana's former president, and is revered in the international arena for his significant contribution to the stability of democracy in Botswana; he is also respected by other warring parties (Wea, 2003: 53-54).

4.1.2. The Troika's Congo War Policies

The states that constitute the Troika—the US, Belgium and France—have different approaches of the Congo crisis, given their divergent interests in the Great Lakes sub-region.

a) *The United States* is the country most responsible for the conflict, for already noted reasons. It is the backstage power that sponsored aggression against the DRC by Rwanda and Uganda, and that caused the UN's complacency and slowness in dealing with the war. For example: after the vote by the Security Council of the 1304 resolution ordering Rwanda and Uganda to withdraw their troops in Congo, the US and Britain, backing the aggressors, demanded that the latter's forces be withdrawn simultaneously as those of the Congo's backers: Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia; whereas France withstood their position, arguing that Rwanda and Uganda should withdraw before Kabila's allies insofar as they are non-invited forces. This rift in the UN Security Council over the implementation of the resolution, limits chances of ending the war (Ebonda A. We, 2003: 52).

Anyway, the US got seriously involved in the resolution of the conflict by seeking to get the belligerents to sign up to a ceasefire agreement in Lusaka. This suddenly intensified interest in

¹²⁰ Francois Grignon, *International response to the Illegal Exploitation of Resources in the DRC*, in *Challenges of Peace Implemented. The UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, Edited by Mark Malan and Joao Gomes Porto, Institute for Security Studies, 2004, p.46.

peace is spurred by two motives. On the one hand, the US, embarrassed by its marginalization from the peace process hitherto and the misdeeds and failures of its regional allies, seeks to reestablish its influence and prestige. This is what Lanotte calls America's "diplomatic prozac" (2003: 252).¹²¹ It is characterized by the marathon move made by two American diplomats to obtain a peace agreement: Suzan Rice, the Assistant Secretary of State, and Howard Wolpe, the US Special Envoy to Africa's Great Lakes sub-region; and, following the Rwandan-Ugandan clashes of Kisangani in May and June 2000, the Clinton administration's ceasing to systematically oppose the identification of Rwanda and Uganda as aggressors or to slow down the examination of the report of the UN Panel on the illegal exploitation of the Congo (Lanotte, 2003: 227). On the other hand, the America shift is not a capitulation to Kinshasa; rather it envisions the toppling of President Kabila by other means: politically, through the subtle trap of the Lusaka agreement.

After Laurent Kabila's assassination, the US finds two further reasons for pushing peace: the rise of Joseph Kabila to the presidency of the Congo, the takeover of George W Bush Jr. as the President of the United States, and the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the US. The young new Congolese young leader is open-minded and obedient to the West's diktat. The White House's new tenant, unlike Bill Clinton, has no moral debt to pay to Rwanda for his predecessor's failure to prevent the genocide; and Laurent-Désiré Kabila, the main obstacle to the *Pax Americana* in the Great Lakes Africa, is dead. Thence, Bush will be pushing Kigali to implement all the terms of the Lusaka agreement. The September 11 event shall reshuffle the world strategic configuration, enhancing the importance of DRC's uranium. From now on Washington urges Kigali and Kampala not to destabilize the DRC, lest the country be too weakened to keep terrorists out or uranium out of terrorist hands.

b) *France*, throughout the Second Congo War, displays the anti-American stance inherited from General Charles de Gaulle. With France irritated by America challenging it in its regional sphere of influence, its relations with the DRC have warmed since the First Congo War.

France's stance during Africa's First World War is dominated by prudence. It has stopped engaging directly in African conflicts since the fiasco of its Rwanda policy. Indeed, Paris faced criticisms from international opinion for its mismanagement of Great Lakes affairs, particularly its blind support of the dictators Juvenal Habyarimana and Mobutu Sese Seko. It also has been strongly blamed for its post-genocide Operation Turquoise, which seemed aimed not only at masking its shame stemming from the failure to prevent the genocide, but also at shielding the genocidaires from the RPF's revenge, just because they are supporters of the late pro-francophonie Habyarimana. That is why the Elysee's support for Laurent-Désiré Kabila at this stage is moral and indirect, i.e. through endorsement of its traditional Sub-Saharan clients' diplomatic or military support for Kinshasa (Lanotte, 2003: 216).

France's most significant action favoring the DRC during Africa's First World War is doubtlessly its lobbying in the UN Security Council to counterbalance the anti-Kabila offensives. It can be illustrated by the standoff over Security Council resolution 1304 enjoining non-invited countries to withdraw their troops from the DRC. Anzolo Wea notes:

"The United States and Great Britain, which side with Ugandans and Rwandans against the Kinshasa regime, assert that the total withdrawal of these two nations from the Congolese territory [must] take place at the same time as that of

¹²¹ The prozac is needed also to overcome American shame about failing to prevent genocide in Rwanda and, prior to that, being forcibly ejected from Somalia.

other forces engaged into the Congo (Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia), [while] according to France, Ugandans and Rwandese, non-invited forces, ought to withdraw before all other forces do” (2003: 52).

Unfortunately, the US, the world’s sole hyperpower, overpowered France: the resolution, which Paris worked hard to bring ashore, was never implemented, and the countries enjoined to leave the Congo cheerfully continued to plunder the DRC. Moreover, Kabila’s anti-colonialist outbursts, directed at the West including France, made France more cautious about defending Kabila.

Anyway, despite its weakness position vis-à-vis the US, Paris won a series of victories in the Security Council in favor of the DRC. The pressures placed by its representative to the UN, Jean-David Levitte, obtained the February 2000 resolution 1291 that fixed the MONUC strength to 5 537 troops furnished mainly by French clients in Africa: Morocco, Tunisia and Senegal; as well as the setting of a 12 member Security Council mission for the DRC. France’s condemnation of intolerable presence of foreign forces in Congo-Kinshasa and their consecutive plunder of the latter’s riches impacted on the international community’s final firm measures enjoining Rwanda and Uganda to withdraw from the DRC (Lanotte, 2003: 217).

c) *Belgium’s* stance vis-à-vis the Second Congo War is divided into two phases. The first phase—from August 1998 to June 1999—is characterized by a mitigated neutrality. The former imperial power is neutral because of the sacrosanct principle according to which Belgium shall no longer send militaries in its former African colonies, following the unsettling, impartial conclusions of the Rwanda Commission (Lanotte: 2003: 242). Indeed, the commission, set up by the Belgian parliament, established the responsibility of Brussels in the Rwandan genocide: the backing, alongside the US, of the RPF during the Arusha negotiations to anger the Hutu extremists; the alleged participation in the assassination of Habyarimana; and the humiliation of MINUAR (of which the Belgian contingent was a significant component), which remained apathetic vis-à-vis the looming and occurrence of genocide, and lost 10 Belgian men at the outset of the killing spree. So, it carries on the “Africa to Africans” policy. However, the Belgian neutrality at this phase is mitigated, given the reciprocal distrust that marked Belgo-Congolese relations at the war’s beginning: Brussels is aloof and critical toward Kinshasa, while favoring the rebels and their Rwandan and Ugandan progeny (Lanotte, 2003: 205).

The second phase—which continues until the end of the war in 2003—shall be launched with the June 13, 1999 elections that brought to power Guy Verhofstadt’s “rainbow” coalition (liberals, socialists and ecologists). It is characterized by the change of the Great Lakes African affairs’ philosophy by the liberal Louis Michel, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs minister: the “Africa to Africans” policy is replaced with an engaged voluntarism based upon “the ethics of international relations”, and aimed at bringing Belgium back to its leading role in Central Africa (Lanotte, 2003: 206-207). The findings of the above-mentioned parliamentary commission, and another establishing Belgian complicity in the murder of Congo’s first Prime Minister, Patrice-Emery Lumumba, moves the government to provide restitution by helping the people of DRC and Rwanda. The ethically-grounded voluntarism, matched up by the DRC’s skilled Foreign Affairs minister Leonard She Okitundu’s diplomacy, helps normalize Belgo-Congolese relations. But this normalization still remains formal: Louis Michel’s efforts to get Kinshasa to return to the process set up by the Lusaka ceasefire agreement are fruitless, given Kabila’s steadfast distrust in the international community that sponsored the agreement.

Belgium's engaged voluntarism bears fruits in the aftermath of Laurent-Désiré Kabila's death and the rise to power of his son Joseph Kabila in January 2001. Assisted by the diplomatic tact of She Okitundu, whom he re-appointed Foreign Affairs minister, the DRC's young leader operated a spectacular, unpredicted U-turn in the Central African country's diplomacy. To quote Nzongola Ntalaja, "after barely two weeks in office, Joseph Kabila set out on his first diplomatic mission, to Paris, Washington, New York and Brussels, where he seduced the international community with his apparent willingness to change course" (2002: 247). The willingness to change course proved serious as, to meet Brussels' wishes, he lifted the ban of political parties' activities, rehabilitated Ketumile Masire as the facilitator of the inter-Congolese negotiations, took part in the inter-Congolese dialogue held in Sun City, South Africa, under the auspices of President Thabo Mbeki, and agreed to share power with other parties in a transitional national unity government in the framework of the Mbeki-proposed 1+4 scheme¹²². I shall analyze this later.

Lastly, the warming of the Belgo-Congolese relations entails a genuinely impartial reading of the Second Congo War by Brussels. Underlying "Belgium's huge interest and its willingness to contribute to the development [and] to the reconstruction of Congo", Louis Michel denounces a main blockage to this goal: the presence of Rwandan and Ugandan forces in the DRC. Prime Minister Guy Verofstadt, leading a government delegation to Congo to celebrate the former colony's 41st anniversary of its independence, reiterated the Kingdom's determination to contribute to the pacification, democratization and rebuilding of the DRC (Lanotte: 2003:210-211). The denunciation is accompanied, in late 2001, by the institution by the Belgian Parliament of a Commission of Inquiry into the illegal exploitation of the Congo's resources by the RPA. All these efforts and firm measures, joined to the international community's pressures, forced Kagame and Museveni to withdraw their countries' forces from the DRC.

4.1.3. The Organization of African Unity

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) changed its philosophy of international law after the Rwandan genocide. Before the tragedy, its international law was based upon the principle of non-interference into the internal affairs of a sovereign state. So, it remained indifferent towards human rights violations within and aggressions between African states as well as indifferent, in the past, to external intervention by non-African Cold War patrons. Ashamed of its cowardice after Rwanda, and freed of Cold War allegiances, the OAU embraced the principle of the right of interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state "in exceptional circumstances" such as the flagrant violations of human rights.

During the Second Congo War, even so, the OAU stance is embarrassingly elusive. In the First Congo War, all (including African) energies converged on overthrowing a universally discredited kleptocrat. In the Second War, matters are complicated: the Kabila regime enjoys a growing popularity after expelling Rwandan and Ugandan forces, but is facing the aggression of these forces that have bounced back with the sponsorship of the US-led coalition. Therefore, the OAU must choose between the following alternatives: backing the US-led coalition's sponsored aggression with the risk of setting a precedent for further aggression throughout the continent or siding with the legal popular regime of Kinshasa and facing the wrath of the world's sole

¹²² The 1+4 scheme means the unprecedented political system consisting of one president and four deputy presidents, and a government comprising four commissions, each coordinated by a deputy president.

superpower. The OAU task is toughened further by the divergent interests of the member states, reflected *inter alia* in the Francophone-Anglophone rift and rivalries within the SADC.

The uncomfortable position of the OAU leads it to play the simple role of supporting the Lusaka peace process launched by the SADC (Lanotte, 2003: 132). Subsequently the OAU appointed the former Botswana President Ketumile Masire the facilitator of the negotiations planned for Sun City, South Africa.

4.2. Search of Peace and Ceasefire Agreement

As noted above, since the famous Victoria Falls Summit in September 1998, warring parties remain determined to continue the war, each contemplating a victory over the other. The Congolese government rejects the RCD as a valid interlocutor since it is a tool made by Kigali and Kampala; it prefers instead to directly talk with Rwanda and Uganda. It likewise rejects the Uganda-sponsored MLC, created in November. Conversely, the aggressors avoid any ceasefire agreement because their border security mission is unrealised and because of their interest in plundering the DRC. The rebels refuse to bow to any peace accord in whose formulation they are not involved. Amongst a series of initiatives to overcome the dead-end, only two are successful: the Sirte Summit and the Lusaka Summit.

4.2.1. The Sirte Summit

The Sirte Summit is the first significant attempt to unlock the impasse. It is organized under the auspices of the Libyan President Qaddafi, who is the self-appointed mediator between the Congolese President Kabila, the Ugandan President Museveni, and the Chadian President Idriss Deby. It fathered, on 19 April 1999, an agreement signed by the three parties. Officially, the agreement envisages the withdrawal of all external forces involved into the conflict as well as the deployment of an African force (Lanotte, 2003: 131). Museveni is the big winner inasmuch as he obtains the cutoff of funding for the Chadian contingent that halted the progress of the MLC in the Equator province. Deby equally is a winner since the agreement gives him the opportunity to free his regime from the costly and risky Congo campaign. As far as Kabila is concerned, the agreement is mixed: while he can seize the chance offered by any eventual violation of the accord by Museveni to smear his international image, he is the loser for two reasons: Museveni is allowed to keep his troops in the Congo; and the Congolese leader loses the support of Qaddafi, who, eager to end sanctions on Libya, now acts as a neutral peace-broker.

Anyway, the Sirte Summit is a success to the extent that it serves as a precedent that encourages protagonists and future mediators--such as the Sant Egidio Catholic community, Italy, and President Chiluba-- to believe in the possibility of a definitive peace agreement¹²³. The following press release is an illustration:

“Since April 15, diplomatic developments have been more significant than military developments in the Congo’s ongoing crisis. We hope we are seeing the beginning of a real peace process. The peace agreement signed by Presidents Kabila and Museveni in Sirte, Libya [...] appears to be the nucleus of an overall framework that will allow foreign forces to depart the Congo and the Congolese people to

¹²³ For further knowledge of the value of the Sirte agreement, see *Kabila-Museveni Agreement is a Reasonable Deal*, UN-Congo News: Press release by the DR Congo Permanent Mission, 23 April 1999 in <http://www.un.int/drcongo/pressreleases1.htm#KABILA-MUSEVENI>

undertake their internal political transition without external interference [...] President Chiluba of Zambia, the designated SADC mediator, will be building on the Sirte accord in his effort to negotiate the overall framework for a peaceful settlement”¹²⁴.

However, after the Sant Egidio negotiations failed to take place because of the refusal of the Rwanda-sponsored RCD-Goma leaders, the Lusaka summit materialized.

4.2.2. The Lusaka Summit

The road toward the Lusaka Summit is enameled of stumbling blocks and requires patience on the part of Chiluba, the SADC-designated mediator. First, Kabila initially refuses talks with the rebels. His stance is linked to a resumption of fighting between Luanda and UNITA. Accusations from Dos Santos that Zambia was assisting Savimbi's forces precipitated a crisis of confidence in Chiluba's mediation that extended to Angola's DRC ally. Kabila then sought alternative mediators in the Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi and Nyerere. Later Kabila will change his mind and seek direct talks with rebels in Lusaka after modalities had been found in the Zambian capital by the UN special envoy to the Congo, the former Senegalese Prime Minister Moustapha Niasse, and diplomats from the OAU¹²⁵, and after the success of the Sirte Summit four days later. On the other hand, President Kabila is outraged by his Rwandan counterpart President Pasteur Bizimungu's calling him “Milosevic”¹²⁶ and by reports that Rwandan and Ugandan army chiefs were preparing their forces for an assault on Mbuji-Mayi¹²⁷. He concludes that the international community is not serious about the peace talks, since it does not condemn the aggression.

Secondly, disharmony between Rwanda and Uganda over Congo policy, paralleled by the fragmentation of the anti-Kabila rebellion into hostile Kigali and Kampala backed elements, constitutes another stumbling block to the Lusaka peace talks. It finds reflection in differing approaches to participation in peace talks, with Rwandan-backed RCD-Goma reluctant to take part and Uganda-backed RCD-Liberation Movement more willing.

Nevertheless, these stumbling blocks will be overcome by pressures from the SADC subregion and some powers in the Security Council, such as France, modalities diplomatically found by the UN special envoy to the Congo, Moustapha Niasse, and the OAU delegates, and latter, the protagonists' readiness to negotiate. Therefore a strong peace process is launched and finds its first success: the Lusaka agreement.

¹²⁴ *Rwandan and Ugandan Governments call for Cease-fire, But Plan to Remain in the Congo Indefinitely*, UN-Congo News: Press release by the DR Congo Permanent Mission, 11 May 1999 in the same above mentioned website..

¹²⁵ See *Zambia-Congo: officials meet over rebels participation in Congo peace talks*, News from the DRC, 14 April 1999, The Associated Press, Idem.

¹²⁶ The Rwandan President made this remark during the ceremony commemorating the fifth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide; he argues that the Congolese leader is determined to “destroy Rwanda and to exterminate the Tutsis”. Kinshasa reacted through Victor Mpooyo, the State Minister in charge of petrol, who declared: “Our Nation has been aggressed by two rogues gangs that unfortunately preside over their respective countries”; he invited Museveni “to learn the great lesson of democratization from the base as we implement it in the DRC”; and he accused Kagame “to have sent Hutu prisoners to the battlefield to serve as flesh canon. There is a form of genocide, isn't there?” See *Kinshasa promet des sanctions severes contre Paul Kagame*, News from the DRC, Kinshasa, 9 April 1999, AFP, Idem.

¹²⁷ Press Release: Aggression Alert in the DR Congo, April 14, 1999, News from the DRC, Idem.

4.3. The Lusaka Agreement

This historic document was signed first on July 10, 1999 by the leaders or representatives of the countries directly militarily involved in the war - DRC, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Angola. Afterwards followed the signatures of the Ugandan-backed MLC's Jean-Pierre Bemba on August 1, 1999, and of 50 people representing factions of the Rwandan-sponsored RCD on August 31, 1999¹²⁸. Notwithstanding its brokering, the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement comprises successes and misfires.

4.3.1. Successes of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement

Four core elements constitute the success or strength of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement: the affirmation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC; the recognition of the imperative to resolve the internal Congolese crisis; the commission of its signatories to cooperation in re-establishing security in the Great Lakes subregion; and the commission of its signatories to the cooperation in neutralizing the “negative forces” (Wolpe, 2000: 29-34). It is important to analyze them.

4.3.1.1. Affirmation of the Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of the DRC

It is underscored by the signatories in the second paragraph of the agreement's preamble that stipulates the re-affirmation of “the dispositions of the article 3 of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which, among other things, ensure to all member states the right to their sovereignty and to their territorial integrity”¹²⁹. This (re)affirmation is a victory for the DRC, ruling out the repartition of the country. It insists on the withdrawal of foreign forces and the re-organization of the state; it thereby refuses Kigali expansionistic project. It is this that has most swayed Kabila to sign the agreement because it supports the aggression theory always proffered by Kinshasa.

4.3.1.2. Recognition of the Imperative to Resolve the Internal Congolese Crisis

It is pointed out in the agreement's article 3, indent 19 that stipulates: “From this Agreement being in effect, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the armed opposition, notably the Congolese Rally for Democracy and the Movement for the Liberation of Congo, and the political opposition commit to launch an open national dialogue. These inter-Congolese political negotiations, equally integrating the Nation's Living Forces, shall lead to a new political order and to the national reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The inter-Congolese political negotiations shall be supervised under the authority of a facilitator that is neutral and accepted by all Congolese parties...”¹³⁰

The success of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement at this point resides in its acknowledgement of a continuous internal crisis of the DRC as the secondary cause of the war. While nodding to rebel

¹²⁸ D.R. Congo. *The 2005 Constitutional Referendum in the DRC, 18-19 December 2005*, EISA Observer Mission Report No 21, 2006, p.8.

¹²⁹ LINELIT (National League for Free and Fair Elections), October 1999, *Accord de Lusaka pour un Cessez-le-feu en Republique Democratique du Congo et Modalites de sa Mise en oeuvre*, Editions LINELIT, Kinshasa, p.3.

¹³⁰ Idem, p.9.

claims about internal sources of strife, the acknowledgement satisfies Kabila too, since he has become confident of his ability to win the free elections that are the ultimate target of the inter-Congolese dialogue.

Another victory of the Congolese people in this clause is the inclusive character of the inter-Congolese negotiations. This is proper, since a key cause of Congo's crisis since 1990 is exclusion of opposition—the genuine opposition—from the transitional power sharing by both Mobutu and Kabila. Exclusion of the people, too, from policymaking and enjoying the country's immense riches. This deficit will be addressed by the inclusion in the inter-Congolese dialogue of the opposition (armed and unarmed) and the people represented by the Nation's living forces. Inclusion is laudable for it thwarts the vicious circle of conflicts.

Lastly, the Congolese stand to win from acknowledgement of the need for a neutral facilitator of efforts to end the DRC's internal crisis. The nine year-long unrest has engendered what US envoy Howard Wolpe relevantly calls “the erosion of bonds of trust” among Congolese, between the Congolese and their government, and within the Congolese leadership (2000:29). A neutral facilitation, i.e. one supervised by an experienced politician from a country that is not involved in the conflict, has a chance of creating the required atmosphere of negotiation.

4.3.1.3. Commission of the Restoration of Security in the Great Lakes Subregion by Signatories

The Lusaka agreement, notes Wolpe, commits its signatories to co-operate in addressing the common security concerns that underlie the Great Lakes crisis (2000: 30). This is underscored in article 3, indent 17: “The Parties to this Agreement shall have to take measures that are indispensable to the normalization of the situation of the international borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo, including the control over illicit arms trade and infiltration of armed groups”¹³¹. This ruling is the expression of another strength of the Lusaka ceasefire agreement. It requires the Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi - and the DRC - to neutralise their respective rebel groups, removes any pretext for colonizing East and North Congo, precludes any re-invasion of the DRC by the three bellicose neighbors and promises the rebirth of a good neighborhood policy that might assist the Great Lakes subregion's development.

4.3.1.4. Commission of the Neutralization of “Negative Forces” by Signatories

This fourth element binds the Joint Military Commission—an organ comprising all parties represented each by two persons and making decisions under the supervision of a neutral president appointed by the OAU—to get rid of the existing foreign guerrillas, so-called “negative forces”, in the Congo's territory and elsewhere. The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, in chapter 9 article 1, rules as follows: “The Joint Military Commission, assisted by the United Nations, shall map out and immediately implement mechanisms of tracking, billeting and documenting all armed groups that might be moving in the Democratic Republic of Congo, namely the ex-Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR), the ADF, the LRA, the UNRF II, the *Interahamwe* militias, the FUNA, the FDD, the WBNF, the NALU, the UNITA; it shall also take measures for: (a) the handover of the perpetrators of massacres and crimes against humanity to the International

¹³¹ LINTELI, *Idem*, p.8.

Tribunal or to the national tribunals; (b) the transfer of other war criminals [to the same tribunals]”¹³².

The fourth core element, like the third one, is welcomed by all parties for it is bolder and more authoritative than the previous successive resolutions made by the UN Security Council. Indeed, while the MONUC is ineffective in peacekeeping and ending fighting because of its mandate limited to observation and monitoring, the JMC, presumably assisted by the UN peacekeeping force, is assigned decisive practical tasks urgent in pacifying the subregion, such as chasing and disarming armed groups, handing over genocidaires to court, and attaining the objectives of assembly, repatriation and reintegration into society of members of the armed groups (Wolpe, 2000: 32).

4.3.2. Misfires of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement

Notwithstanding its strengths, the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement includes a number of weaknesses that cause it to misfire. I underscore three key weaknesses: brevity; juridical incoherence; and a trap for Kabila.

4.3.2.1. The Agreement’s Brevity

Articulated into three short chapters and two annexes, the agreement’s rules remain vague and fail to address a couple of important challenges: the nationality issue and the international coordination of peace implementation¹³³.

The nationality issue regards the granting of a collective Congolese citizenship to people of Rwandan descent—the Banyamulenge and the Banyarwanda—who settled in the DRC, notably in the two Kivus, before its independence in 1960. It is one of the main causes of the two Congo Wars. The fact that it is ignored by the mediators so angered the Rwandan-led RCD-Goma officials that they were reluctant to sign or observe the ceasefire agreement¹³⁴.

The international coordination of peace implementation required the UN to send a group of experts as well as a strong deterrent military contingent, given the size of the Congo. Yet the document “made provision of nothing other than a Joint Military Commission, and no troops” (Lanotte, 2003: 252). Thus the Lusaka Agreement suffered from the continuing indifference of the international community. Underlining this indifference, the Security Council did nothing to compel Kigali, Kampala and Bujumbura to withdraw from the DRC, apart from the late verbal demand expressed through the resolution 1304 of June 2000. Furthermore, the international community’s non-commitment is based upon a fallacious presumption that, for the major powers—the US in particular—to avoid being taxed with imperialism, the post-Lusaka peace process ought to be guaranteed by the protagonists, namely the Kabila government, the RCD, the MLC, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia. Yet the latter’s unwillingness to end the conflict has been clear since the Victoria Falls Summit. Bernard Jacquemart is right to reckon this presumption “the most flagrant mistake” of the formulators and brokers of the Lusaka Agreement¹³⁵.

¹³² LINELIT, *Idem*, p.23.

¹³³ I borrow these points from Jean-Claude Willame, quoted by Lanotte, 2003: 133.

¹³⁴ They were the last party to sign the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement on 31 August 1999.

¹³⁵ Bernard Jacquemart, quoted by Lanotte, 2003: 134.

4.3.2.2. The Agreement's Juridical Incoherence

The juridical incoherence weakness consists, according to Jean-Claude Willame, of conditioning “a non-negotiable obligation in international law (observance of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a country) on the obligation for the Congo to launch first an inter-Congolese dialogue, a matter proceeding from national sovereignty”¹³⁶. This is clear from the 360-day, 21-step peace timetable set up in the Agreement: the twelfth step is the beginning of the national dialogue; the thirteenth one its close; and the seventeenth one the withdrawal of foreign forces from the DRC¹³⁷.

Because of this juridical incoherence, Kabila felt betrayed by the international community, particularly the conceivers of the document: South Africa and Zambia. Indeed, the fact of conditioning the withdrawal of external forces on the preliminary holding of the inter-Congolese political negotiations supports the false thesis that the Second Congo War is foremost an internal crisis, the thesis defended by the aggressors but vehemently contested by Kinshasa.

4.3.2.3. The Trap for the Kabila Regime

The biggest weakness of the Lusaka Agreement is the subtle trap set for the Kabila regime. The document's chapter 5, indent 2, paragraph (b) rules: “all the participants to the inter-Congolese political negotiations shall enjoy an identical status”¹³⁸. The rule means any person taking part in the national forum is stripped of the authority they embodied prior to the forum. So, had Kabila taken part into the inter-Congolese dialogue, he would have ceased to be head of state. This outcome would have led to the appointment, by the participants, of a new Congolese head of state - which amounts to a full-fledged coup d'état.

This rule supports the suggestion that the international community, especially the anti-Kabila US-led multinational coalition, planned to achieve through the inter-Congolese dialogue what it failed to do through the Second Congo War: the political removal of President Kabila. It invites civil society to join the opposition, armed and unarmed alike, so that an overwhelming anti-government majority can arise and force Kabila's ouster. The plot is denounced by Lanotte who notes that the agreement

"urged Kabila to negotiate not only with the 'rebels' but also with the whole of civil society ... A veritable national dialogue engaging the country's living forces, as during the CNS in the 1990s, could not have failed to open the gates of a mass contestation probably able to end the Kabila regime itself. Posing the latter's political suicide as the preliminary condition of peace amounted to not seriously dealing with the issue" (2003: 252).

The research fellow at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' (Conflict Research Unit) observes:

“Several features of the Dialogue infuriated the former DRC President. First of all, Laurent-Désiré Kabila could not stand seeing his rule put into question. The ICD [Inter-Congolese Dialogue] not only gave 'equal status' to each of his armed and unarmed opponents but was basically intended to result in a new power sharing

¹³⁶ Willame, *Idem*, 2003: 134.

¹³⁷ LINELIT, *Idem*, p.28.

¹³⁸ *Idem*, p.17.

arrangement within the DRC. Instead, the self-proclaimed President wanted a new constitution to be adopted and elections to be held (under his control) to provide him with some degree of legitimacy” (2004: 27-28).

The Lusaka Agreement’s three misfires naturally led to the failure by signatories to implement the peace process.

4. 4. The Failure of Peace Process Implementation

Feeling himself unfairly targeted by the Lusaka Agreement, Kabila would do his best to bypass the historic accord. Struggling for his political survival, he multiplied obstructions to the inter-Congolese dialogue.

First, he rejected Masire as the facilitator of the ICD appointed by the OAU, and shut down his office. The official motive of this action was his “protest against the fact that his proposal to appoint a (French-speaking) co-facilitator had been rejected” (E. Rogier, 2004: 28). Furthermore, there is a twofold, more profound reason that incited President Kabila to turn his back on Masire. On the one hand, the Kinshasa regime reckons that the OAU appointment of the latter is another trap, since the former Botswana leader had served as chair of the OAU Eminent Persons Panel on the Rwandan Genocide. This might render Masire “sympathetic to Rwanda because of the genocide” (Nzongola 2002: 235), and thereby to the RCD, during the dialogue. And, on the other, ironically, like Mobutu in 1997, Kabila is overcome by Anglophobia: his hatred for Anglo-Saxons is so strong that he distrusts any African English-speaking leaders, including Thabo Mbeki, Frederick Chiluba and Ketumile Masire, and except anti-Western Mugabe, because of their nations’ traditional ties with the Anglo-Saxon world. Kabila’s anti-Anglophone stand may have been strengthened by renewed ties to - and possible encouragement from - Paris.. Second, Kabila blocks the deployment of the MONUC contingent in the DRC (Lanotte, 2003: 134). The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, signed in July 1999 by almost all parties, including Kabila, provides for the deployment of the UN troops in order to monitor peace implementation in Congo. Indeed, the Agreement’s chapter 8, indent 1 rules: “The United Nations, in collaboration with the OAU, shall constitute, facilitate and deploy its own force in the Democratic Republic of Congo to ensure the implementation of this Agreement”¹³⁹. How can the Congolese President’s flip-flop be explained? It is due to his distrust of the UN, seen by him as US-dominated and as possibly likely to conspire against him as UN forces had done against Lumumba. Nonetheless, after tough negotiations, he welcomed the deployment of the MONUC force of 5,537 troops on 24 February 2000, to monitor the ceasefire¹⁴⁰.

Third, the Kinshasa regime reconsiders the timetable for the implementation of the Lusaka Accord. This reconsideration is the biggest obstruction to the Lusaka process. Emeric Rogier, on the matter, rightly notes:

“...Kabila refused to open discussions on the future of the DRC as long as the country remained under foreign occupation. Contrary to the terms agreed upon in Lusaka, he demanded that the withdrawal of the ‘aggressors’ be the prerequisite, not the consequence, of national dialogue, a factor which would obviously weaken the position of the rebels” (2004: 28).

As E. Rogier observes, withdrawal of the rebels would certainly weaken the position of the rebels during and after the national forum. Facing an opposition unarmed (or disarmed) during

¹³⁹ LINELIT, Idem, p.21.

¹⁴⁰ On this deployment, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Congo_War .

the negotiations, he would impose his view on the transitional process and root his power in the forthcoming democratic dispensation.

The Kinshasa regime enjoyed a couple of trumps. The most valuable one, pointed out by E. Rogier, was “the backing of the UN Resolution 1304 (...) which required that Rwanda and Uganda withdraw without delay” (2004: 28). Kabila argued that the Lusaka Accord was lower and less binding than the Security Council resolution. The second but not less convincing trump was provided by the notorious clashes between Rwandan and Ugandan troops in Kisangani in 1999 and 2000, which brought the Security Council to vote the Resolution 1304. It gave Kinshasa the opportunity to argue that the government cannot go to the dialogue while Rwanda and Uganda, signatories of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, still violate it by carrying on war inside a sovereign country.

Notwithstanding the soundness of the two arguments pushed by Kabila, his attempt to release himself from the commitments binding him to the dialogue remained “vain” (E. Rogier: 2004: 28). Howard Wolpe, the US special envoy to Africa’s Great Lakes region, insisted:

“The US will continue to appeal to Kinshasa to abide by both the spirit and the letter of the Lusaka Accord. Mutual confidence levels are understandably virtually non-existent at the moment, and arbitrary actions by Kinshasa authorities only exacerbate political tensions and make more difficult the flexibility and compromises that will be required on all sides” (2000: 36).

America’s opposition to Kabila’s stance toward the Lusaka Accord revealed that the US-led multinational coalition remained determined to remove the Congolese leader from power. With such powerful forces ranged against him, what were President Laurent-Désiré Kabila’s chances of survival?

4.5. The Kabila Assassination

Responsibility of the death of President Laurent-Désiré Kabila has not been established yet, despite the long time that has unfolded since the coup and the holding of the Kabila assassination trial in 2001. I am thus obliged to base my analysis of the event on a string of hypotheses and few sources. I have nevertheless decided to risk subjecting this crucial event to my scrutiny, while admitting that my conclusion will be essentially conjectural. It is that Kabila was the victim of a range of internal and external forces that viewed him as a stumbling block to democracy in the Congo. Let’s explore this through the examination of three data: the assassination as it happened; the palace revolution theory; and the Americano-Angolan conspiracy hypothesis.

4.5.1. The Assassination as It Allegedly Happened

The unfolding of the mortal coup is recounted by the sole witness: Mr. Emile Mota, President’s adviser in economic affairs. This is his report of what happened on this 16 January 2001, in the early afternoon:

“It was a quarter to two, and we were finalizing the cases we had been examining since morning. (...) We then were left alone, me and the head of state. We were discussing the Yaounde Franco-African Summit (...) and setting up a list of 27 people that had to attend it the following day, Wednesday. (...) The President was very relaxed. (...)”

“The bodyguard entered. (...) He knew all the Palace practices. It was normal to come and whisper the name of the next guest to the President’s ears. But, instead of whispering into the President’s ear, he very quickly drew his gun and shot closely the left side of the President’s neck. The President fell backward. Before reaching the door, the murderer again shot twice Kabila’s belly (...)”

“The bodyguard ran, and I followed him, soliciting rescue. Soon, he got shot once at the leg or the foot; but he was fired upon twice again before he was gunned down. I was not the eyewitness of the scene, rather I just heard shots”¹⁴¹.

The “presumed” murderer is a 25-year-old man and one of the President’s most trusted guards and a native of the Kivu province: Rachidi Minzele Kasereka. He is “presumed” murderer because the authorship of the murder is attributed to him by the unreliable testimony of one witness: the adviser Emile Mota. Another account clarifies the adviser’s: after being injured by a nearby guard, Rachidi Kasereka was killed by a bullet fired into his head by his superior: the chief of the President’s security, Colonel Eddy Kapend Irung. Afterward, within the chaos caused by the panic in the Marble Palace, the wounded leader will be brought by a helicopter to the Ngaliema Clinic 45 minutes later. While he is certified clinically dead, his cronies postpone the announcement of his death so as to resolve the succession issue.

About 04:00 pm Colonel Eddy Kapend delivers a speech that can be likened to that of a head of state. He “urges” the FAC troops “to observe composure” and “orders” the whole army staff (his hierarchical superiors) “to safeguard discipline (...) and, no matter what occasion, not to authorize a single shot into Kinshasa and throughout the Republic” (Lanotte 2003: 138). He equally decrees the blockade of the N’Djili international airport and the locking up of the Congo River frontier. The entire army bows to his orders. 06:44 pm: Uganda is the first country to announce Laurent-Désiré Kabila’s death. 10:30 pm: Belgium announces the Congolese leader’s passing through its Foreign Affairs minister, Louis Michel. Midnight: some members of government and high profile officers meet in the Nation’s Palace (the Presidency) to address the succession issue, while Angolan and Zimbabwean troops are ensuring security in the capital city. Quoting *Jeune Afrique* magazine, Lanotte points out that an Angolan military representative was the first to raise the succession question in suggesting that Colonel Kapend “take his responsibilities”; but the Congolese officer declined the suggestion (2003: 138). The Home Affairs minister, Gaetan Kakudji, number one in succession, wants to succeed the *Mzee*; but the Justice minister Jeannot Mwenze Kongolo discourages him because of his lack of popularity in Kinshasa. Subsequently the minister of state, Pierre-Victor M’Poyo, and General Lwetcha, FAC Chief of staff, decline the succession proposition too. Then arises the name of Joseph Kabila proposed, according to the Belgian Journalist Colette Braeckman, by General Lwetcha and Didier Kazadi (Lanotte 2003: 139).

17 January 2001: Congolese authorities announce, through Dominique Sakombi Inongo, government’s spokesman, that President Laurent-Désiré Kabila had been “injured in a plot” and “transferred outside the country (to Zimbabwe) for (receiving there) proper care”; and “the running of governmental and the high military command” are attributed to General-Major Joseph Kabila, “pending the recovery” of the President (Lanotte 2003: 139). The same day, under the order of General Nawed Yav, eleven Lebanese nationals, friends of Rachidi Kasereka, got shot dead by militaries in the capital city.

¹⁴¹ Emile Mota, quoted by Lanotte, 2003: 137.—My examination of the sensitive affair of the Kabila assassination shall be based on Lanotte’s analysis.

January 18: Kinshasa, through the minister Sakombi, announces in evening President Laurent-Désiré Kabila's death in Zimbabwe.

Based on this account, a pertinent question can be asked: is the Kabila assassination a palace revolution?

4.5.2. The Palace Revolution Theory

According to Lanotte¹⁴², the palace revolution theory is the most plausible. It stems from the following hypothesis: Laurent-Désiré Kabila is victim of a broad plot involving different high profile figures of his entourage (Justice minister Jeannot Mwenze Nkongolo, Colonel Eddy Kapend, Adviser Emile Mota, etc.) and one of the allied countries (Angola or Zimbabwe). Remaining hidden in the shadow, these strongmen of the regime then favor the rise of Laurent-Désiré Kabila's son, Joseph, secretly hoping to rule through this young man deemed self-effacing and inexperienced (Lanotte, 2003: 150).

This hypothesis has the advantage of answering many questions unanswered by the Military Order Court that held the "masquerade" Kabila assassination trial.

a) Why did the Congolese authorities announce in the early days after the assassination that, given the murderer's death, there will be no official investigation? It can be said that their aim was to prevent any possibility of exposing their responsibility in the coup or to delay the inquiries to enable them to harmonize their lies.

b) Why did Eddy Kapend gun down Rachidi? Being the key element in the coup, it is natural for him to get rid of a witness that can tell the truth of what happened to the opinion. The killing of Rachidi has covered all the plotters behind the scene. Moreover, it is very likely that Rachidi is not the genuine murderer. The chief of the presidential security retorted during the trial that the young man, overpowered by the burden of his crime, "shot himself in head after being wounded on the legs"; and, driven by the "motion of anger", Eddy Kapend emptied the cartridge clip in gunning down the presumed criminal's corpse (Lanotte, 2003: 147). But it also can be objected that it is difficult to imagine a security chief killing one of his subordinates upon the mere basis of the declaration of an adviser affirming that the President is assassinated. Plus, Kapend's claim is unsound because he put to death the "murderer" before going into the President's office, and Emile Mota, according to his statement, was still inside the palace when the "murderer" got killed; this means it is unthinkable for the security chief to get angry at Kabila's being murdered, since, normally, the bad news was not yet brought to him by the witness (the adviser) who was still into the palace. And it is surprising that Rachidi spared the witness Mota's life after killing the President. Therefore, pertinently concludes Lanotte, the Adviser Mota's testimony could be totally invented; and he might be one of the plotters or the true murderer of President Kabila or, to back the suggestion of the former collaborator to the presidency, Eddy Musonda, forced by the plotters to drown the palace revolution theory¹⁴³.

¹⁴² 2003: 145-151.

¹⁴³ Cf. Lanotte, 2003: 146.— as well as a rival *kadogo* vengeance thesis according to which Kabila angered the *kadogos* (children-soldiers) by killing their commander, Masasu Nindaga, in November 2000; and Rachidi Kasereka, one of them, carried out the crime since Kabila had ordered the murder of his brother.

4.5.3. The Americano-Angolan Conspiracy Hypothesis

This hypothesis means that the Kabila assassination had been orchestrated by the US and Angola. Washington is suspected of having signed a deal with Luanda whose terms run as follows: the Angolan authorities had to physically remove their protégé Laurent-Désiré Kabila whose security largely depends on them since the failure of the Rwandan blitzkrieg; in turn, the Clinton administration, which knows all positions and movements of Jonas Savimbi by means of American satellites, had to facilitate the location and killing of the UNITA leader by the Angolan Armed Forces (Lanotte 2003: 178).

The Americano-Angolan hypothesis is striking for it implies the coincidence of two factors: the enmity between the Clinton administration and the Kabila regime, and President Dos Santos' growing exasperation at the DRC President's behavior. The second factor is an effect of three of Kabila's psychopathological disorders that upset the Angolan leader. The first is chronic mood changeability, as evidenced in his turning his back on Lemeru and Lusaka. This caused Dos Santos to view Kabila as an unreliable ally. The second disorder is megalomania. It is displayed by recurrent disrespect of elder leaders of Africa. It probably raised inside of Dos Santos the feeling that, hereafter, his authority firmly established in the DRC and the international arena, Kabila would be tempted to dominate other powers in the region, including Angola. The third disorder is greed. It has been manifest in the Congolese leader's reluctance to stop Savimbi's diamond business in the DRC, given that he was also making money in it, as he was with his gold, ivory, and coffee trafficking during his long period in the bush. Hence, he became useless for Angolan interests in Central and Southern Africa, and merited death.

Furthermore, the Americano-Angolan hypothesis is appealing because of the smoothness with which the US and Angola dealt with the January 2001 events in the DRC, notably the transfer of power to General-Major Joseph Kabila¹⁴⁴. Indeed, it is curious that neither the US nor Angola condemned the Kabila assassination, even though international opinion increasingly condemned coup d'état as a way of seizing power. In addition, one could notice the strengthened presence of Angolan troops, taking control of Kinshasa, before and during Laurent-Désiré Kabila's funerals - which suggested that the Dos Santos regime was determined to implement his post-Kabila agenda¹⁴⁵. Finally, the hypothesis' credibility is confirmed by the abovementioned initiative taken by an Angolan military representative to propose Colonel Eddy Kapend to "take his responsibilities", viz. to succeed the defunct leader. The Angolan choice of Kapend would be sought by Luanda as its rewarding the DRC officer for the accomplished mission, as well as its assurance that the latter, as the new Congolese leader, will certainly abide by the Angola-Congolese cooperation accords, given his deeply affectionate feelings for Luanda, nurtured during his own earlier period in Angola.

Finally, the Americano-Angolan hypothesis answers many questions regarding the Kabila assassination: the absence, in the judicial proceedings launched by the international investigation commission and the Military Order Court, of ballistic expertise; the disappearance of the murder weapon and its silencer; the keeping of all troops working in Kinshasa in their barracks a few hours before the regicide; the timid reaction of the Lebanese authorities—who could not even launch any investigation—over the killing of their compatriots in the wake of the January 16,

¹⁴⁴ This smoothness is commented on in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Congo_War .

¹⁴⁵ And perhaps preempt the Mobutists'. Lanotte reports an allegation that the Mobutu regime's barons aimed to kill Laurent-Désiré Kabila "not on January 16, but the next day or the day after next day during his flight to the Yaounde Franco-African Summit" (2003: 145).

2001 regicide; an earlier announcement by the Congolese authorities of the impossibility of holding an investigation on the regicide; the holding of the Kabila assassination trial behind closed doors; the presence of only a few Congolese in the international investigation commission; and the Angolan troops' quick control of the whole city of Kinshasa from the regicide day. The answer to these questions seems to be clear: the necessity, for state reason, to protect the conspirators, nationals and foreigners alike, who grabbed the command of the DRC, and to avoid complicating their post-Kabila agenda. Likewise, in view of the re-normalization of the DRC relations with its bilateral and multilateral partners, the new President Joseph Kabila would have been urged by the Americano-Angolan conspirators and the clique of national accomplices at the top of the state to "guarantee ... a simulacrum of trial" and to endorse "this lack of transparency" in the Kabila assassination affair¹⁴⁶.

4.6. Joseph Kabila and The New Political Perspective

General-Major Joseph Kabila's rise to power can rightly be deemed the *deus ex machina* of the Congolese political landscape and the entire nation as well. The early days of his tenure as the DRC fourth president—the first hundred days of his regime—are characterized by the extirpation of his father's legacy. The fortunate changes he brought about can be seen in three areas: discourse, diplomacy, and domestic policies. He replaces his father's brutish and insulting rhetoric, which made him a champion in the art of making enemies in US, France, Belgium, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi and in the opposition, with a discourse characterized by pragmatism and promises of openness. His diplomacy of wooing Paris, Washington, New York and Brussels is so astounding that the UN Security Council brandishes the sword of Damocles upon Kigali and Kampala, both accused of human rights abuses by the UN Special Envoy for human rights in the Great Lakes subregion. Consequence: Kagame and Museveni start withdrawing their troops from the DRC. Lastly, his domestic policies cause a real political earthquake: his government, from which are excluded most of the LD Kabila era's influential ministers, is largely composed of technocrats educated in European universities; the army and secret services, freed from the monopoly of Katangans, integrate a significant number of natives of other provinces for purpose of securing balanced representation of the country's regions, tendencies and networks (Lanotte, 2003:152); he liberalizes the DRC's politics and economics; and, for the great delight of the population, his resolute leadership shall bring the Congolese political class to the ICD. His unconditional observance of the Lusaka Agreement, especially its clause of holding the ICD, facilitates Sir Ketumile Masire's task: other protagonists (RCD and MLC) are obliged to follow him. Thus the Botswana's facilitator summons all parties to a pre-ICD conference that takes place at Gaborone, from the 20th to 25th of August 2001. Generating hope, the conference is marked by the adoption by all parties of the Republican Pact—which will be often evoked by the Congolese political class as "the Gaborone Spirit"—and the scheduling of the debut of the ICD for 15 October 2001, at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia¹⁴⁷.

Nonetheless, in the wake of the fiasco of the Addis Ababa Conference, which was due to the failure to reach a consensus upon the composition of delegations to the ICD, President Kabila's

¹⁴⁶ The quoted phrases are Lanotte's (2003:151), but the entire contention is mine. So, I do not share the Belgian scholar's suggestion that Joseph Kabila might be a plotter of his father's death. It seems that he is a rising star that was unexpected in the conspirator's agenda.

¹⁴⁷ Radio Okapi, the MONUC media station, Archive, Newsletter of Friday, 25 August 2001, 13:00; contact newsletter@radiookapi.net.

government displays another fortunate flexibility, particularly toward the marginalized tendencies: the unarmed opposition and the civil society. The brotherly atmosphere he brought about will allow the UN Secretary General Kofi Anan at Kinshasa, in November 2001, and the Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister Louis Michel at Brussels, in January 2002, to harmonize the views and to enable Masire to schedule the ICD on 25 February 2002, at Sun City, South Africa.

4.7. General Conclusion

The life of the DRC from 1997 to 2001 is characterized by two wide and bloody conflicts referred to as the “First Congo War” and “Second Congo War”, or even as an African World War. These conflicts share a common feature: they are an invention of foreign forces led by the US to topple regimes in Kinshasa; and this adventure is directly carried out by rebellions that are sponsored by three neighboring countries: Rwanda, Uganda and, at a small extent, Burundi. Furthermore, the conflicts are a complex effect of combined factors: the attraction of external powers to Congo’s immense natural resources, Rwanda’s need of space for its huge population, the necessity for the neighboring states to thwart their respective rebel groups operating from the DRC’s territory as their rear base, and the American objective of dominating Africa by first eradicating the French dominion in Central Africa. Nevertheless, beside their common feature, the two wars differ in many aspects.

The First Congo War is characterized by the popularity of the rebel group, the Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL), due to the determination of its leader, Laurent-Désiré Kabila, to “liberate” the poverty-stricken population from Marshal Mobutu’s long kleptocratic dictatorship. During the course of a seven-month-long adventure the world witnessed the AFDL’s amazingly speedy overrunning of the vast country from the far east to the far west. The movement remains hobbled, however, by a reputation for human rights violations, dependence on Rwanda and Uganda and mediocre leadership.

The Second Congo War’s background is the interregnum of peaceful AFDL government between May 1997 and August 1998. The AFDL regime is overpowered by Rwandese and Ugandan control, which adulterate the DRC’s national sovereignty. Key posts of the state authority are run by Rwandans. DRC sovereignty is further endangered by illegal contracts signed during the AFDL liberation with foreign powers (such as Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe) and multinational corporations (the “Juniors”) for the exploitation of Congolese minerals and other resources. Kabila proves good at making enemies abroad (by refusing to cooperate with human rights investigations, abrogating agreements with the Juniors and adopting a stridently anti-imperialist path) and at home (by setting up a new dictatorship to replace the old). The detonator of the Second War is Kabila’s expelling of Rwandan and Ugandan forces from the DRC on 27 July 1998.

The Second Congo War, treated in the third chapter, is rightly coined “Africa’s First World War” because of the high number of the nations involved in it. Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi launched it in August 2, 1998 with a blitzkrieg aimed at overthrowing Kabila and replacing him by a puppet leader; it fails in this objective thanks to the support given Kabila by Angola and Zimbabwe. Notwithstanding this defeat, emboldened by the US-led coalition of nations and multinationals determined to oust the Congolese leader and to strengthen their grip on the Central African country, Kigali, Kampala and Bujumbura prosecute the war by creating at Goma the RCD rebel group. The war escalates, but it cannot achieve its goal due, *inter alia*, to the outside states supporting Kinshasa (joined by Namibia, Sudan and Chad), the unpopularity of the RCD and its split into three formations (RCD-Goma, RCD-ML, and RCD National), the creation of the Ugandan-sponsored MLC as a rival to the depleting rebel group, and tensions between Kigali and Kampala over the control of Congolese resources. On the other hand Kabila’s inability to stage a decisive counterattack is sealed with the fall of the strategic city of Kindu in October

12, 1998. In the face of this impasse some scholars and politicians seriously contemplate DRC's repartition. Richard Banegas strikingly observes that the Victoria Falls Summit is an informal African Yalta inasmuch as it has unofficially consecrated the division of the Congo into three: the east belonging to Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, the center and the south serving as the security zone to Angola, and a Zimbabwean economical domain, while the west is the Kabila government's jurisdiction.

The impasse drives African leaders rallied behind South African President Nelson Mandela and Zambian President Frederick Chiluba to launch peace process in Lusaka, Zambia. After months of negotiations, involving the UN, the US and the OAU, the Lusaka Agreement is brokered, and a peace process timetable set up. However, the Lusaka Agreement comprises weaknesses, such as ignoring the issue of the citizenship of the Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda, the undermining of DRC sovereignty by demanding that the Congolese launch the ICD before the withdrawal of aggressors and the demotion of Kabila by granting ICD participants identical status. If the first weakness angers the RCD-Goma, the two last ones infuriate the DRC president and are regarded as a US attempt to topple Kabila diplomatically after failing to do so militarily. The protagonists quickly resumed the conflict, with the UN passing timid resolutions and the US looking on indifferently.

The recurrent clashes between Kigali and Kampala inside Kisangani over the possession of the town's diamond areas finally brought about an international outcry that led the UN Security Council to pass, in June 16, 2000, the resolution 1304 overtly ordering Rwanda and Uganda to withdraw their forces from the DRC. But the stalemate gets sharper because the Congolese leader remains stubborn, and the international community remains wedded to the Lusaka Agreement clauses.

The surprise ending of the stalemate occurs with the mystery-shrouded January 16, 2001 assassination of President LD Kabila in his residence of the Marble Palace, Kinshasa. His successor and son Joseph Kabila reopens the peace and democracy process. He restores hearty relations between the DRC and major powers, re-liberalizes internal politics and economics, participates with other tendencies in the ICD in Sun City, South Africa.

Finally are encouraging the new optimistic perspectives offered by the 1 April 2003 signing of a transitional juridical framework by all political persuasions in Sun City and the formation of the 1+4 scheme transitional government, the December 18, 2005 constitutional referendum and 2006 presidential and legislative elections. The hope is strengthened by the direct present-day involvement of the international community and the determination of the people of the DRC, shown by their massive electoral turnout, to birth a democratic and law-ruled state. The challenge that remains is produce a new leadership, one endowed with lofty ideals for the DRC and Africa as well as realistic strategies to implement them; and to forge a strong African Union, endowed with credible mechanisms for preventing civil and interstate conflicts, and economically independent. Only then can Africa throw off Western imperialism and rise as a global power.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Books

Adelman, Howard, and Govind C. Rao, ed., *War and Peace in Zaire/Congo: Analyzing and Evaluating Intervention, 1996-1997*, Africa World Press, Inc., 360 pages.

Baracyetse, Pierre, *L'enjeu Géographique des Transnationales Minière au Congo, sos Rwanda Burundi asbl*, Buzet (Belgique), décembre 1999.

Barayanguiza, Jean- Bosco, *Rwanda: Le sang hutu est-il rouge ?*, Yaounde 1995.

Breckman, Colette, *L'enjeu congolais*, Paris, Fayard, 1999.

Dailaire, Roméo, *J'ai serré la main du Diable*, Québec, Editions Libre Expression, 2003.

Dunn, Kelvin C. (2003), *Imagining the Congo: The International relations of Identity*, Palgrave MacMillan, 221 pages.

Gran, Guy, and Galen Hull, ed., *Zaire: The Political Economy of Underdevelopment*, New York, 1979, 331 pages.

Lanotte, Olivier, *Guerres Sans Frontières. De Joseph Désiré Mobutu à Joseph Kabila*, Bruxelles : Complexe / GRIP, Coll. « Les Livres du GRIP », no 243-245, 2003, 264 pages.

Nest, Michael (2006), *The Democratic Republic of Congo. Economic Dimensions of War and Peace*, International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series, Ed Lynne Rienner Publisher London, 65 pages.

Ndaywel é Nziem, Isidore, *Histoire générale du Congo de l'héritage ancien à la République Démocratique*. Edition de Boeck & Larcier S.a., 1998 Département Duculot, Paris Bruxelles 995 pages.

Misser, François, *Vers un nouveau Rwanda ? Entretien avec Paul Kagame*, Paris, Editions Karthala , 1995.

N'Gbanda-Nzambo ko Atumba, Honoré, *Ainsi sonne le glas. Les derniers jours du Marechal Mobutu*, Editions Gideppe, Paris, 1998.

N'Gbanda-Nzambo ko Atumba, Honoré, *Crimes organisés en Afrique Centrale*, Edition Durboiris, 2004, 456 pages.

Nzongola Ntalaja, Georges (2002), *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, New York: Zed Book Publisher, 304 pages.

Onana, Charles, *Les secrets du genocide rwandais*, Paris, editions Duboiris, 2002.

II. Journals, Articles and Official Documents

Africa Institute of South Africa, Towards sustainable peace: the theory and practice of preventive diplomacy in Africa, edited by Hussein Solomon Publisher, Pretoria, 2003, 313 pages.

Congo- Afrique juin juillet et aout 2005, Depot legal No 41-ISSN 0049-8513- imprimerie St Paul, Kinshasa.

EISA Observer Mission, *The 2005 Constitutional referendum in the DRC 18-19 December 2005*, Report, No 21, 161 pages.

Human Rights Watch, *The Curse of Gold : Democratique Republic of Congo*: New York: Human Rights Watch, 2005, 159 pages.

Institute for the Security Studies, *Challenges of peace implementation 2004*, 277 pages.

United Nation Security Council, *letter dated 8 October 2002 from the Chairman of the panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the Secretary- General*.

Renaissance Congo 2000, Cercle de Réflexion, *Crise et Renaissance Politique au Congo : exploration à la lumière de l'expérience sud-africaine*, Johannesburg/ Afrique du Sud, 151 pages.

The South Africa Journal of International Affairs , volume 7 number 1 Summer 2000, 260 pages.

III. LONG ESSAYS AND DISSERTATIONS

Ebonda Anzolo Wea, *L'impact Socio-Politique Interne et Externe du Regime Politique du 17 Mai 1997*, Memoire de Licence SPA-FSSAP/UNIKIN, 2002-2003

IV. WEBSITES

<http://www.congovision.com/images/NIZA.pdf>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobutu_Sese_Seko

<http://www.geocities.com/rainforest/canopy/3048/WMISTAKE.html>

The New York Times, June 15, 1997, excerpt by Wikipedia,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoweri_Museveni

The New York Times, October 28, 1991, excerpt by
http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/t/etienne_tshisekedi/index.html

The New York Times, February 4, 1993, excerpt by Ibidem.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Congo_War

<http://www.wordreference.com/definition/pragmatism> .

newsletter@radiokapi.net

www.wordreference.com

[http:// allafrica.com/stories/200612070023.html](http://allafrica.com/stories/200612070023.html) .

V. MOVIES

Mobutu le roi du Zaïre, un Film de Thierry Michel produit par Christine Pireaux, Martine barbé, Serge Lalou Année 1960 a 1997.

L'HEBDO, Une émission de Jean-François BASTIN, assistance de production: Sophie Janssens, 1988.