

vention in Africa. Although Carter did not crack under the pressure, in part because the sudden French intervention eased the immediate crisis, not a single U.S. political spokesman or group outside of the U.S. Labor Party had the courage to challenge Kissinger's crisis-mongering and pin the blame on Belgian royal neocolonialism!

As a result of the Big Lie's success, the CIA and National Security Council have intensified pressure on Congress and the Administration to unleash American troops and covert aid into Africa.

#### *France's Role*

The Giscard government played a critical stabilizing role at the height of the African crisis. In the midst of an overt effort by Gen. Haig and Tindemans to coordinate a NATO military action into Africa — with all NATO defense ministers present in Brussels! — the French leadership met and secretly began an intervention to put down the rebels in Shaba.

By that single action, the French prevented the rebellion in Shaba from spilling over into Angola and Zambia, the possible overthrow of President Mobutu, and a world crisis over Africa.

Who initially protested the French action? The rebellion's sponsors! Tindemans and Simonet bitterly criticized the French. Their allies in France, led by Socialist Party Chairman Francois Mitterrand, attacked the party of President Giscard. From Algeria, Willy Brandt pronounced himself to be opposed to any and all intervention into Africa, implicitly hitting the French. The British press, led by the *Daily Telegraph*, accused

the French of neocolonialism. And at an EEC foreign ministers meeting in Denmark, British Foreign Secretary David Owen singlehandedly attacked France for not "consulting" its EEC and NATO partners before moving into Africa!

France's move had blown the Belgian-British conspiracy.

Meanwhile, in Paris, Giscard and key African leaders began to map out a plan for the rapid development of Africa. In a series of speeches, reported below, French and African statesmen reiterated that only through economic progress and development could dangerous tribal, border, and regional conflicts in Africa be stabilized before they led to major flareups.

The focus on African development was only one of a series of far-reaching proposals and plans that spanned the globe in regard to development.

Mexican President Lopez Portillo initiated a large-scale Soviet-Mexican accord for petroleum and industrial development. In the Pacific, Japan proposed an immense \$20 billion scheme for energy and steel development among Mexico, the United States, Canada, and Japan. Hans Friederichs of West Germany's Dresdner Bank outlined a gigantic plan for Middle East industrialization based on nuclear energy, and a top West German economics official toured the Persian Gulf, including Saudi Arabia, to discuss nuclear power plant construction. King Khalid of Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, prepared for a state visit to France, and his No. 2 man, Prince Fahd, will soon make a major visit to West Germany at the head of a big industrial development delegation.

—Bob Dreyfuss

## How The Zaire Crisis Unfolded

**May 11-13:** Exiles opposed to the government of Zaire President Mobutu invaded the mineral-rich southern province of Shaba and immediately attacked the city of Kolwezi, a mining center of 35,000. The exiles, primarily members of the Lunda tribe (which lives in southern Zaire, northwest Zambia, and eastern Angola) entered Zaire from Angola via Zambia. (According to reports in the *International Herald Tribune*, the rebels arrived in civilian clothing. They had already stockpiled large quantities of arms in and around Kolwezi.)

The rebels quickly occupied the airport and other strategic points, taking control of the city, with the goal of blackmailing Mobutu by threatening the economic backbone of Zaire. Minerals exports account for about two-thirds of the foreign exchange earned by the weak Zaire economy. About 2,700 highly skilled European technicians and management personnel, necessary for the functioning of the mining and mineral processing industry, were living in Kolwezi.

**May 14:** Mobutu's initial reaction was to charge that the invasion was a plot to topple his government backed by Cuba, the Soviet Union, Algeria and Libya. Mobutu appealed to all friendly countries, including the United

States, France, Morocco, Britain, and Belgium, for aid. The rebels were reportedly holding European hostages.

**May 15:** The initial reaction by the U.S. State Department was cautious, with spokesman Hodding Carter III saying: "We are, as last year, concerned about the territorial integrity of Zaire. . . ." The spokesman added that the U.S. had not yet determined "a definite course of action."

That evening, however, Henry Kissinger was on national television demanding that President Carter "draw the line" in dealings with the Soviet Union, citing the Zaire invasion as an example of the Soviets expanding their empire in Africa. This was accompanied by a crescendo of articles and editorials in the press raising the specter of Cuban and Soviet expansionism in Africa, and asking what the West, and the U.S. in particular, was going to do about it.

**May 16:** The *Washington Post* editorially called for the U.S. to intervene into the crisis caused by the invasion, which the *Post* termed "a communist-supported attack."

"Just as the Administration seems more primed to counter another communist-backed advance in Africa,

however, so the public would also probably be readier to go along. That is the difference a year's African experience has made," the *Post* concluded.

Later that day, units of the 82nd Airborne Division and military airlift planes had their alert status raised, ostensibly for the purpose of possibly evacuating 73 Americans who were living in Kolwezi.

**May 17:** In an unusual move, Cuban President Fidel Castro met for the first time with Lyle Lane, the U.S. representative in Cuba, to emphasize to the U.S. that Cuba had not planned the destabilization of Zaire, and was not backing it. The Soviets and Angolans issued similar denials, and the government of neighboring Congo (Brazzaville) made contact with the governments of both Zaire and Angola to keep channels open to ensure that the destabilization would not lead to hostilities between the two countries.

Jean-Marc Kalfleche, writing in the conservative French daily, *Le Figaro*, ignored all the allegations of Soviet and Cuban involvement in the destabilization, and instead observed that the French had to do two things: 1) make a quick military intervention to end the destabilization; and 2) put pressure on Mobutu in order to ensure a detente between Angola and Zaire, which he saw as a necessary first step to arranging a longterm regional peace.

**May 18:** For days, NATO General Alexander Haig was coordinating an attempted EEC-wide intervention into Zaire for purposes of getting the Europeans out and negotiating with the rebels. At the same time, National Security Council chief Z. Brzezinski and CIA Director Stansfield Turner were doing their utmost to fuel the Soviet-imperialism-in-Africa hysteria in the U.S. In Europe, Belgian Prime Minister Tindemans was trying to get the Europeans to go along with his plan of negotiating with the rebels by emphasizing the danger to European civilians in Kolwezi. "Frenchmen are being hunted in Kolwezi," raved Tindemans. On May 18, however, French Prime Minister Barre responded to Tindemans' ravings at a press conference, saying there "was not reason to dramatize the evacuation of the European population . . . There is no hunt against French citizens. . . ."

**May 19:** As the pressure on Carter to intervene escalated, White House spokesman Jody Powell ominously announced that the U.S. had "unimpeachable evidence" that the Cubans had trained the rebel force. While not disagreeing with this report, the State Department line at this time was that they had no evidence of direct Cuban involvement in the destabilization.

## The French Intervention

The French decision to intervene militarily to end the destabilization was arrived at carefully. The French knew that if Mobutu's situation continued to deteriorate, the pressure on Carter to intervene would increase. Giscard was well aware that such a U.S. intervention would plunge the U.S. and the Soviets into a confrontation over the issue of Africa, wrecking his efforts to pull

together a European-African development axis.

The French decision was taken independently of NATO, the EEC, and Belgium at a meeting among Giscard, his foreign and defense ministers, and Chief of Staff. According to sources in the French Defense Ministry, the size of the invading force was being exaggerated: it amounted to at most 1,500 people. The sources did report however that the rebels had sophisticated weapons of Soviet manufacture. The Defense Ministry sources emphasized that the degree of sophistication of some of the weaponry eliminated the Angolans, and hence the Cubans or Soviets as the suppliers of these weapons. Some of the thousands of Zaire exiles in Angola fought on the side of the MPLA during the Angolan war, and were thus trained by the Cubans. It is on this fact that the reports charging Cuban involvement in the Zaire destabilization are based. The Defense Ministry sources reported that their final evaluation was that the rebels' weapons had been "laundered" by non-Soviet forces for the express purpose of provoking a French-Soviet fight over Africa.

Despite attacks on the French intervention as "imperialist," etc., in the Soviet press, the French have shown restraint so as not to fall into the trap of an anti-Soviet posture. On May 22, after several days of Soviet attacks of this nature, French Foreign Minister de Guiringaud, while ordering the French ambassador to Moscow to protest, noted that "we don't have any proof that the Soviets and Cubans were involved in the Katanga rebel affair."

## Belgians Attack The French Intervention

Belgian circles attempted to sabotage the French intervention by announcing the French intervention before the French troops actually arrived. It was during the interval between the Belgian announcement May 19 and May 20 that most of the Europeans were massacred, according to reports of refugees from Kolwezi. The French had wanted to keep their intervention a secret in order to prevent just such an atrocity. One hundred thirty Europeans in addition to several hundred Africans were murdered by the rebels, and another 60-70 Europeans are unaccounted for.

The French moved troops and equipment to Kinshasa (capital of Zaire) secretly on May 18, and then dropped 400 paratroopers at Kolwezi in two waves at 3:10 PM and 5:15 PM GMT on May 19. By the next morning the rebels had been dislodged from the city. However, at 11:00 AM May 19 Belga, a Belgian press agency, began broadcasting the fact that a French intervention was imminent, signaling to the rebels that their blackmail game was up. It was at that point that they began the largescale murder of Europeans.

Belgian interest in general, and Union Miniere (Belgian-based mining interests in Zaire) in particular, wanted to get rid of Mobutu according to numerous accounts in the European press, since the beginning of the destabilization. The French weekly magazine *Le Point* and the Italian daily *Corriere Della Serra* report that the Belgians wanted Mobutu out; *Le Point* said that the Belgians wanted a moderate "socialist" government.

*Corriere Della Serra* of May 21, as well as a *Le Monde* editorial of May 21 both assert that Belgium would be happy with a "new Tshombe" leading an independent Katanga.

Moise Tshombe was the vehicle for predominantly Belgian and British financial interests who attempted to separate Katanga (now Shaba) from the rest of the Belgian Congo (later Zaire) at the time of independence in the early 1960s.

Commenting on editorial support for the Shaba secessionists such as a May 19 *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* editorial, a Zaire diplomat in Europe commented that this represented "the old conservatives behind the Oppenheimers." he added that the rebels were telling the local population of their intention to return the state-owned mines back to the Belgian-based Union Minière.

#### *Belgians Angry At French*

The Belgian government was clearly hoping for prolonged negotiations between the rebels and Mobutu as a way of gaining political leverage on Mobutu, which could serve on eventually pushing him out of office. *Matin de Paris* reported on May 20 that Belgium has accused France of going to war (British-connected press such as Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post* accused France of invading Zaire) and of sabotaging the contact Belgium had with the rebels through the Red Cross (a notorious cover for secret British intelligence operations). One Belgian official expressed his dissatisfaction with the unceremonious end the French put to this scenario thus: "It's another example of Giscard's Africa Corps." The pseudo-liberation front cover for the rebel operation,

FNLC, charged in a May 22 press conference in Brussels that the French alone had destroyed their plans, adding that the FNLC plans of finding a reasonable partner in the West (for their dismemberment plans) "has been deceived."

#### Mobutu Attacks Belgium

The first blast levelled by Mobutu against the Belgians was published in the conservative Belgian daily *Libre Belgique* on May 18. Responding to an attack on Zaire by Belgian Foreign Minister Henri Simonet, Mobutu said: "Belgium should remain quiet as they are the ones to offer protection to the FNLC, et al.," referring to large anti-Mobutu lobby maintained in Belgium. Mobutu later charged that the whole invasion was planned in Brussels, according to the Berlin daily *Tagespiegel*. *Tagespiegel* also reported that Simonet had to cancel an upcoming trip to Africa after being criticized for wanting to gain sympathy for Mobutu's opponents.

"I want to know if Simonet is both the Prime Minister and the King," said Mobutu, taking a jab at Foreign Minister Simonet, who Mobutu charged with withholding his request for armed assistance. "Anyway, I never asked these Belgians anything because I know their mentality." Mobutu ordered Zaire diplomats not to have any contact with Simonet, "even if it means a break in diplomatic relations."

The FNLC is threatening to go back to Kolwezi as soon as the French troops leave. Notwithstanding this, the rebels and their backers have already accomplished their goal of sabotaging the economy, putting Mobutu in a very precarious position.

## Franco-African Summit Focuses On Peace And Development

The leaders of 20 French-speaking African nations met with French President Giscard D'Estaing in Paris May 22-23 to discuss a full range of topics in African security and development, including the current French stabilization role in Zaire.

Not mincing any words, President Giscard set the tone of the summit with a statement that "peace itself becomes a first precondition for the progress of Africa." At a press conference later, Giscard stressed: "We must do everything so that the still fragile tissue of Africa not be cruelly torn by the rivalries of the blocs. . . We must reinforce the African tissue through development."

Although the full details of the meeting are not yet public, it is clear that the discussions were, in part, defined by the terms of the historic Brezhnev-Schmidt 25-year economic development deal concluded earlier this month. As the diplomats were gathering, the USSR-West Germany accord was celebrated in the French industrial press, which suggested that the accord — which France could, but has yet to, join in — could be a vehicle for the industrial development-based stabilization of Africa. The

Gaullist magazine *Perspectives* editorially hailed the deal as a "Grand Design whereby the Western world and the East bloc would cooperate toward the industrialization of the Third World." A second article, in the review published by a think tank associated with the Paribas, warned that French industrialists must not slough off the importance of the 25-year agreement, as their participation is urgently required to meet the task of Third World development.

In this context, French Prime Minister Barre introduced the debate on economic questions at the summit by saying that: "We are in solidarity when what is at stake is to establish on new bases the economic relations between industrialized countries and developing countries.... France ardantly hopes that the North-South dialogue, which it initiated, will bring about a just economic order..."

The Sahel region, and its terrible drought problems, was also a particular subject of emphasis at the summit; Giscard met with the leaders of Senegal, Mali, and Mauritania on May 20 to discuss the question. At the