Zaire

General

1996 - 1997

March.
Sleepy-time in Zaire’s main port — it’s often that way...

MATADI — When there are no ships, Zaire’s main port sleeps. Good-time girls loll around the bars waiting for foreign sailors. Taxi-drivers doze in their cars.

Trucks parked chaotically in the hilly streets wait patiently for a cargo.

Built to take up to 10 deepsea ships at a time, the quay now sees only a handful of visitors a week. But over the past year there has been a gradual increase in traffic.

Matadi, 300km from Kinshasa, carries virtually all the capital’s external trade and is a barometer for the country’s economic health.

Bringing in the only ship that day, Thomas Kimbo, who works for one of Zaire’s biggest importers, said: “We are increasing our tonnage and the situation is going a little bit better than it was before.”

Port director Kaki Kebaken-tane said activity was up about 25 percent over past year because of relative political stability, but said efforts to stamp out theft had also helped.

“Some ships refused to land, saying there was too much theft. Losses stood at around 10 percent, but we have brought this down to only one percent,” he said.

Official figures for port traffic show an improvement from a monthly average of 62,000 tons in 1994 to 83,000 tons in 1995, but this is still far from the average of 128,000 tons a month in 1989.

Matadi began life at the end of the 19th century, when journalist-turned-adventurer Henry Morton Stanley, under orders from Belgian King Leopold II, turned it into the main port for trade with the Belgian Congo, which became Zaire after independence.

Between Matadi and Kinshasa, rapids make the Zaire river unnavigable. With great speed and loss of life, the colonisers pushed a railway through the rocky terrain. At Kinshasa a stretch of 1,600km of river and numerous tributaries fans out into the vast tropical forest basin.

The railway still runs but is badly maintained.

Three decades of mismanagement and corruption have put paid to much of Zaire’s infrastructure. In 1990, as Zaire began its transition to multiparty democracy, political violence and bickering turned the decline into a precipitous collapse.

In 1991 foreign donors pulled out, annoyed by the slow progress towards democracy and Zaire’s failure to pay even arrears on the interest of its debts.

Two rounds of army-led rioting in 1991 and 1993 scared many businesses off and forced others to close.

Production at copper and cobalt mines in the southern region of Shaba, which provided a quarter of Matadi’s export traffic, was literally decimated.

These days the only significant exports requiring the port are timber and coffee. Most of the freight handled by Matadi is basic food for the capital.

Centrist Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo, who took office in 1994, promised to cut inflation, crack corruption in the state sector and boost economic growth.

In December a mission from the International Monetary Fund said Zaire was now on the right track but there was no sign of worthwhile investment in what is still a high-risk country.

Diplomats say Zaire is unlikely to have access to overseas funds until it holds elections. After many postponements they are now supposed to take place by the middle of 1997. — Reuters.
Aire: A country betrayed by its leader

wo plane crashes in a month, a breakdown in services, widespread corruption. Marco Turco visited Zaire and found a sorry state of affairs

SURVIVAL is the criterion in Zaire. The once magnificent country has been betrayed by its acquisitive dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, and has now virtually vanished into the quagmire of corruption. "Cadeau" (gift) and "donner" (give). These words will, inevitably, be the most common French words a foreigner is likely to hear. In a country where the president invests millions of dollars in real estate in Switzerland, France, Belgium, the Ivory Coast and South Africa, the salary of a policeman is less than R250, and being paid each month is something of an achievement. The sheer volume of corruption is staggering. From air hostesses to policemen, bank clerks to nurses, all ask, and indeed demand, a cadeau before they will help you.

On Boulevard du 30 Juin, piles of ivory tusks, leopard skins, baby chimpanzees and African Grey parrots are sold, despite a world-wide ban on the trade of these creatures.

In the rural districts, kwashorkor is prevalent, malaria-bearing mosquitoes are rampant and, the biggest killer in Zaire, AIDS, has been carried to even the most remote, road-linked settlement by long-distance truck drivers and soldiers. The military, in particular, is responsible for the spread of transmissible diseases, fulfilling their duties with cruelty in a system where rape is a given. Travellers will quickly come to realise that the powers of the Zairian security forces — notably the Garda Civil, Mobutu Sese Seko's private army — are far greater than those of any First World general.

At night, groups of heavily armed soldiers roam the streets in provincial towns such as Luvungi and Bukavu, defying residents to come out. Ordinary citizens in Kinshasa are terrified. Mwamba Kasonga, financial director of the Zaire Express airline company, was not surprised when informed that a traveller had been abducted and robbed of R1,000 by the security police. "It happens to us, not only foreigners. They (police) are everywhere, watching, waiting and controlling every part of our lives." While the US, France and Germany support Mobutu, who masquerades as a democrat, his forces dominate the country with a blood-stained rod of fear.

Whispered in dark bars and village huts are the stories of human rights violations being perpetrated on a massive scale. In the forests, entire villages, such as Mwaka, near Mojuli-Mayi, have been burned to the ground to find the precious high-quality diamonds and alluvial gold for which Zaire is famous. Mobutu has greedily acceded to the "kick-backs" and pressure from wealthy Lebanese diamond dealers, who work the diamond divers for 16 hours per day at R52 per month, and Greek industrialists exploiting poverty-stricken provincial labour and pouring thousands of litres of effluent into the rivers each day.

Senior government officials, most members of Mobutu's Ngoingle tribe, have used the military and police to enforce their partnership schemes with European businesses. The Songri refinery, on the upper Zaire river near Kisangani, employs 52 workers at R1 a month, working 12 hours per day. Each night, Sorgere's barges empty their ballast bunkers by pouring several hundred litres of used engine oil into the Zaire river, while downriver the villagers at Yakusu and other fishing settlements wonder why their nets come up empty each day and their children are developing strange maladies and deformities.

The cost of living is high in Zaire. This is surely one of the reasons for the high incidence of bribery, robbery and begging that seems to infuse the very fabric of Zairian existence.

Disaster prone: This week's plane crash in Kinshasa is the second in Zaire in a month. Chaos in the country's civil aviation structures has been blamed for the crashes, but they are just another symptom of a country on the verge of disintegration

PHOTOGRAPH AP

While Nigeria was quickly condemned for executing human rights activists, the situation in Zaire is far worse. But nothing is done

Mercifully, there is now growing restiveness among the youth. The great historical cultures of the Kongo, Luba, Kuba, Zanda and Mongo, spread across the 11 provinces, are beginning to rally against Mobutu's Movement Populaire Revolutionnaire (MFP).

After 30 years in power Mobutu is aware of this rising discontent and knows that one day, perhaps soon, it will rise against him. Already he refuses to live in the presidential palace in Kinshasa, preferring to remain behind the walls of his palace and a cordon of guards in the village of Gbadolite. He travels only in a bulletproof limousine or by aeroplane at night, always surrounded by his Garda Civil, the highest-paid civil servants in the country; financed out of Mobutu's own foreign bank accounts.
Zaire turns on heat as refugee leaders held

Goma - Zairian soldiers detained five leaders of the largest Rwandan refugee camp yesterday in an apparent move to neutralise those who could prevent the 189,000 refugees from agreeing to leave for home.

UN workers at the camp said the UN-paid security contingent took the five away for questioning.

Like Rwanda itself, most of the refugee camps are well organised into small administrative units in which every member is known and can be accounted for.

It was this organisation that in mid-1994 enabled extremist members of the government, then dominated by the majority Hutu ethnic group, to round up and massacre at least half a million people, most of them minority Tutsis.

Fearing retaliation, an estimated 1.7 million Hutu refugees fled towards Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania as the rebel Tutsi army moved into the capital and ended the civil war.

Last week Zaire made it clear it wanted the 1 million refugees on its territory to go home and said it was preparing a gradual and orderly departure. On Tuesday Zairian troops closed off access to the Kibumba camp and banned all commercial activity inside. Zaire's ministers of defence and interior were planning to go today to Bukavu, south of Goma on Lake Kivu, to finalise plans to begin closing down Kashasha, a camp holding 47,000 refugees. UN officials said yesterday.

Meanwhile, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is struggling to raise funds to keep the camps operating and the lack of donations is already taking its toll. - EPA-AP.

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Refugee economy in a slump
Refugees ‘to leave Zaire before elections’

KINSHASA — Zaire, reluctant host to up to 1-million Rwandan refugees, says they must leave before it holds elections, and it plans talks with the UN refugee agency on relaunching its camp closure plan.

Interior Minister Kamanda wa Kamanda said the Kigali government was training groups to send into Zaire to destabilise the refugee areas.

“We haven’t yet relaunched the closure operations at selected refugee camps,” he said. “We are waiting for an evaluation meeting with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees’ representatives to see the right moment for relaunching these operations.

“We want the question of the refugees to be settled before elections are held so that North and South Kivu (the refugee zones) are not penalised,” Kamanda said. “We must avoid all confusion during the elections.”

Foreign Minister Titwa Tumanssi said at the weekend Zaire could not go on bearing the burden of the refugees. However, refugees say they fear their safety if they return home. — Reuter.
New pledge to call elections in Zaire

Kinshasa - Under pressure to reform or face ethnic conflict and economic collapse, the Zairean government is promising another attempt at elections for May next year.

Organisers said voters would choose a president and parliament in this nation of 40 million people.

It was unclear, however, whether strongman President Mobutu Sese Seko, who has ruled the huge former Belgian colony since 1965, would hand over power if not re-elected. He has reneged three times since 1991.

Elections were supposed to have been held in 1995 but were cancelled.

Registration for the 1997 vote was to begin in November, university professor Bayona Ba Maya, president of the electoral commission, told a news conference this week.

A constitutional referendum was planned for December, he said, but there were no details on the initiative. Civilian, church and human rights groups would be involved in the electoral and pre-electoral proceedings, he said.

Last year, a United Nations report said simmering ethnic and political tension in the country, a patchwork of six major ethnic groups and 450 tribes, could erupt into a bloodbath. - Sipa
Aids threatens the Zambian education system

BY MOSES CHITEROYE
Lusaka

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Zambia will have a devastating effect on the education system within the next 10 years, says the latest issue of Impact, the newsletter of the Zambia Catholic Secretariat in Lusaka.

Father Michael Kelly of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, says in Impact that he foresees a tragic scenario where many breadwinners would be sick or dead. Noting that HIV/AIDS is having a chilling effect on the education system, Kelly says: "There will be a great loss of teachers, managers and educational personnel."

His statistics show that the testing in 1992 of almost 400 teachers and government officials found that 42% were HIV positive.

"If this applies across the country and converts to full-blown AIDS, it means that more than one third of the current stock of teachers could become sick or die from AIDS within the next 10 to 15 years. Replacement numbers from the training colleges would be much smaller than such losses," he says.

Kelly adds the loss of skilled human resources and use of personnel and national resources for consumption rather than investment are expected to lower the national income by as much as 10% by 2000.

"This means that fewer national resources will be available for education, leading to continued shortages of places and poor quality of schooling."

He notes that as many family breadwinners will be sick or dead, there will be fewer in the active age-group (15-55) to take up income-generating activities.

"The consequences will be almost no money to pay for children in school, with the result that fewer children will attend school," he says.

"It looks as if school education as we know it may not be possible in 10 years' time," Kelly says. "Independent Foreign Service..."
Province goes its own way as ethnic solidarity fuels a boom

‘Jews of Zaire’ reverse decay

FROM THE ECONOMIST

Mbui-Mayi, Zaire — In Zaire, and it is not alone in Africa, the structures of statehood are vanishing. Some have collapsed, while others, such as the province of Eastern Kasai, are mutating into local power centres.

Eastern Kasai is all but independent of Kinshasa, Zaire’s capital 1,000km away. Instead, it responds to two local powers: the bishop and the diamond mine. Tapping into ethnic Luba solidarity and the revenues of the mine, the bishop of Mbui-Mayi, Monseigneur Tharcisse Tshibangu, and Jonas Mukamba, the head of Ministère de Bakwanga, have reversed the national trend of economic collapse.

The industrious Luba people like to describe themselves as “the Jews of Zaire”. From 1992 to 1994 they were ethnically cleansed by the neighbouring province of Shaba, to which they had spread. Thousands of Luba died in ethnic clashes and concentration camps, and 100,000 fled to Kasai. Most still live in refugee centres.

But Shaba’s loss has been Kasai’s gain. Mbui-Mayi has become Zaire’s second-biggest city, and it is booming. Technicians and engineers from Gécamines, the all- Shaba mining company, have returned to Kasai to strengthen Ministère de Bakwanga, 80 percent of which is owned by the state and 20 percent by Sibeka, a subsidiary of Société Générale de Belgique.

Years of decline have been reversed, raising diamond production to about $25 million last year. Outside the main mine, syndicates and individuals, legal and illegal, are digging and sifting furiously. The province’s diamond output may have reached $250 million. Buyers, including Sediza, the local arm of De Beers, crowd one street in the city centre, and the resultant prosperity is clearly visible.

The pivot of local politics is Mukamba, an ex-ambassador and former governor of Kasai and Shaba. He works closely with the bishop, and dines almost nightly with the local army commander. He describes himself as a friend of President Mobutu but also keeps good terms with Etienne Tshisekedi, Zaire’s main opposition leader, who is from Shaba.

Few in Mbui-Mayi advocate secession, yet a strong scent of indepedence hangs in the air. Kasai still uses the old Zairean notes, officially replaced in 1993 by the central government. Many are falling apart, yet new ones keep turning up, flown in, say local officials, by relations of Mobutu eager for diamond dollars.

The province has set up its own university. The bishop donated the premises, and Mukamba gives it $10,000 a month. Many of the teachers and students are exiles from Shaba’s University of Lubumbashi. The University of Liége, in Belgium, sends visiting professors.

Mukamba is also a powerful businessman in his own right. He heads the Conference for the Economic Development of Eastern Kasai, which is replacing evaporating state structures and drawing up a regional development plan. Neglected for years, roads, water and electricity supplies have to be put to rights. Mukamba hopes to raise $33 million to expand a local hydro-electric plant.

What could disturb this new statelet? Mobutu seems to tolerate its autonomy. But national elections are promised for July next year. If they happen, it is assumed that he will rig them. The natural result will be violence.

Would Mbui-Mayi’s citizens really be willing to fight? A local priest replies: “Let’s not lose sight of the determination of the people to set themselves free.”

FROM REPORTER

Brussels — Belgium, exceptional France on today for allowing President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire into the country, and for his subsequent meeting with President Jacques Chirac of France over the controversial visit. Chirac said the trip was guided by a desire to see Mobutu, said Bertrand Delange, the Belgian foreign minister.

Belgium's foreign ministry sources said there was absolutely no question of Mobutu, who is normally shunned by the CEEC, being able to visit Belgium either privately or officially.

Chirac would have preferred more consultation with Paris before Mobutu arrived. He said, saying he would seek clarification on reports that Paris was resuming aid for public health and education.

Delange said the two leaders met for less than an hour.

The trip officially is private, one to allow Mobutu to visit his dentist, who was seen as a reward for his help in French efforts to end the Rwandan genocide during the 1994 Rwandan genocide.
ZAIREAN dissidents living in South Africa are intent on increasing pressure on this government to turn its back on Mobutu Sese Seko's regime and give more forceful support to pro-democracy opposition groups in the huge equatorial state.

The dissidents say "Mobutu's people" are being allowed with impunity to invest fortunes in South Africa, amassed at the expense of Zaire's hardpressed people, to use their recognition in South Africa as leverage in international diplomacy and to harass their opponents in South Africa.

The dissidents say the alleged assault of activist Ilunga Tchoma bin Kitenge Omar in Cape Town highlights what they regard as an unfortunate irony: the one nation in Africa they would have expected to be the most ready supporter of democratic change on the continent is "allowing itself to be used by one of Africa's most corrupt regimes".

They have vowed to step up pressure on Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo to reconsider the diplomatic recognition given to Zaire.

Mr Kitenge Omar also warned that if harassment of dissidents continues, they would "use all the means at our disposal" to make life difficult for Zaire's chief representative in Pretoria, Koya Bambi Guga.

"What we cannot understand is that Mobutu was a friend of apartheid South Africa. He supported the apartheid regime. Now he is a friend of the new government."

"We are urging South Africa to reconsider this and take practical steps to help the cause for democracy in our country," he said.
Zaire's miracle man turns out of luck

President Mobutu Sese Seko, whose regime has lasted for 17 years, faced an unprecedented challenge from his own military, which launched a coup attempt in December 1996.

The coup was led by Lt. Col. Frederick Mvogo, who announced on national television that he had seized power from Mobutu. However, the military council was quickly replaced by a new government led by Gen. Pascal Emery Lissouba, who had been a key figure in the anti-Mobutu movement.

The fallout from the coup attempt led to widespread civil unrest and a deepening of the country's economic crisis. Zaire's economy had been in decline for years due to a combination of mismanagement and international sanctions.

In the aftermath of the coup, Mobutu fled the country and established a new government in Madagascar. However, his eventual return to Zaire and his arrest in 1997 marked the end of his long reign.
ZAIREANS’ plea to Mandela

MICHAEL MORRIS
Staff Reporter

ZAIREANS dissidents in South Africa have made a direct appeal to President Mandela to support their “struggle for the overthrow of the military regime” of Mobutu Sese Seko.

The Union pour la Democratie et le Progres Social (UDPS) faxed its appeal to the President’s office on Thursday.

Its bid for Mr. Mandela’s support is part of a mounting campaign against the Mobutu government by dissidents who say they believe that a democratic South Africa should be more forceful in promoting a shift to democracy elsewhere in Africa.

Next week, the UDPS and another dissident group, the Freedom Flag for Congo-Zaïre, will be making a formal appeal to Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo to cut diplomatic relations with Kinshasa.

Hunga-Tchoma bin Kitenge Omari, spokesman for the UDPS in Cape Town, said dissident organisations would intensify their campaign. In the letter to Mr. Mandela, the UDPS urged South Africa to “place pressure on President Mobutu Sese Seko to hand over power to a democratic government”.

“Mr Mobutu”, the letter continued, “flagrantly removed UDPS Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi from office in October 1991 after a negotiated settlement between the illegitimate government and the opposition that there should be joint rule for two years.

“Mr Mobutu remained in power long after his popular mandate had run out, six years ago. The Zairean regime is characterised by corruption, and the killing of political activists, journalists and freedom fighters.

“I hope that South Africa will help the Zairean people to emerge from the satanic dictatorship in which it has been for 32 years.”
Inga fever

James Lo mon t

P il Botha, the minister of mineral and energy affairs, has never been one for stargazing, even if he is fond of quoting the Shakespearean dictum that “the fault is not in our stars but in ourselves” to incite a bit of local self-criticism. At the Sub-Saharan Oil and Minerals Conference held in Johannesburg this week, his opening address, one of his last as a leading politician, did not disappoint.

While delegates were grappling with the practicalities of sharing an integrated power pool, compatible railway tracks and the problems of attracting capital for infrastructure in southern Africa, Botha was characteristically looking some 20 years ahead at a huge hydro-electric project on the Zaire river as the continent’s elixir.

Botha urged his fellow African ministers and “enterprising entrepreneurs” to rally around the Inga dam project, 208km up river from the Atlantic coast, to realise a dream of African development.

A series of dams have the potential of producing 50,000MW of electricity for all of Africa and the project could export power to the Middle East and Europe.

It was first put on the table in 1962, but many delegates would be pardoned for not sharing Botha’s Inga fever.

But the promise remains. Already at Inga there are two small hydro-electric schemes with a maximum capacity of 1775MW. A further stage would produce 3500MW. But in the next-door basin lies a potential hydro-electric giant which could supply 40,000MW.

Zaire, cursed with a corrupt political regime, is blessed with a river that has a discharge rate of 41,000m³ of water a second, exceeded only by the Amazon and the Brahmaputra in Bangladesh. Over a distance of 20km the river plunges some 150m. At Inga, where the river flows at its lowest, 25,000m³ surge towards the sea a second.

Botha envisages 13 low-head electricity-generating water turbines, each with a capacity of 3000MW, and power lines stretching 5000km north to Cairo and 3500km south to Johannesburg. He is proposing South Africa as an anchor buyer alongside Europe.

“Southern Africa’s grid demand will take some 20 years, at an average GDP growth of 5 to 6 percent a year, to utilise Inga’s capacity. Even if half of this capacity is available to the SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries we could cope,” he says.

Botha says a strategy must be formed for the integration of local hydro-electric potential with that of North Africa to establish the demand for Inga’s power and arouse the interest of financial agents. He also proposes the inclusion of Zaire’s electricity utility, SNEl, in the Southern African Power Pool and the strengthening of transmission systems between Angola and Namibia and between Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana.

Maher Abaza, the Egyptian minister of energy, shares Botha’s vision. Egypt secured a $10 million loan from the African Development Bank to finance a study on the feasibility of building dams in the central African country and his government, alongside those of central Africa, will approach the European Union to finance the project.

Abaza’s focus, however, is on supplying Europe through Turkey, Spain and Italy via electricity grids in the Middle East. Through the transmission of electricity along lines with a range of 7000km countries along the way will receive a royalty fee.

Abaza says Europe is gearing itself up for a hydro-electric era in the next century. He says companies are taking steps to adapt their power systems in anticipation of a supply from Inga dam.

The World Bank estimates that at least $17 billion will be required for projects in the electricity sector in sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) by the year 2005. It is estimated that governments, including donors, will be in a position to provide $3 billion of this, and lenders another $2 billion. The remaining $10 billion will have to be sought from the private sector, as yet reluctant to invest in Africa, let alone Zaire.
RED CROSS TO STAY ON

UN agencies evacuate staff from eastern Zaire

KIGALI: As artillery on both sides of the Rwanda/Zaire border continue to pound their opposite numbers, international aid agencies have begun moving their non-essential personnel to safer locations.

UNITED Nations agencies started evacuating non-essential staff from the eastern Zairean town of Bukavu yesterday following heavy exchanges of gunfire overnight between the Rwandan army and Zairean forces.

Ms Brenda Barton, a spokesperson for the UN World Food Programme (WFP) in Nairobi, said the first plane with eight passengers had left Bukavu for Nairobi yesterday afternoon and a C-130 Hercules transport plane would leave later with 43 passengers.

"It is a relocation of non-essential staff because of the situation in Bukavu," Barton said.

"The idea is to minimise risk for our staff," said Mr Fernando del Mundo, Geneva spokesman for the UN refugee agency, which is also moving out non-essential staff.

The Rwandan army said yesterday it exchanged eight hours of heavy gunfire with Zairean government forces across the border town of Bukavu overnight.

Mr Emmanuel Ndahiro, Rwanda's defence ministry spokesman, said Zairean forces in Bukavu opened fire first, using anti-aircraft guns.

It was the second night of fighting between the two sides, each firing from its own territory.

Zaire's relations with Rwanda have worsened recently but have been poor since 1994. More than one million Rwandan Hutu refugees live in camps in eastern Zaire from where Rwanda says they mounted guerrilla incursions.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it would continue to operate in the area despite the fighting.

"Operations are continuing in Bukavu, Uvira and Cyangugu," said Mr Bernhard Julier, head of the ICRC in Rwanda. "We are not suspending or evacuating any of our operations."

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) pulled out three of its seven foreign staff in Bukavu on Monday.

IFRC official Mr Jon Valfebs said indiscriminate shelling began late on Sunday.

"Two shells fell in the garden of the Bukavu hotel where most foreign aid workers stay," he said.

Zaire government spokesman Mr Oscar Lugendo said Rwanda sent in armed Hutu infiltrators on missions to destabilise its volatile eastern refugee zone.

The government warned aid agencies caring for the estimated 1.1 million Rwandan Hutu refugees in eastern Zaire that they would be banned unless they limited themselves to aid work.

Human rights watchdog Amnesty International on Friday accused Zairean troops and officials of atrocities against Banyamulenge civilians in eastern Zaire over the past month.

There are some 400,000 Banyamulenge, all of whom claim to be Zairean. — Reuters
Ill Mobutu 'thinks about retirement'

Doctors say the Zaireian leader has four years to live – but only in a temperate climate.

BY JAMES TOMLINS
Lausanne, Switzerland

President Mobutu Sese Seko, stricken with prostate cancer, is considering stepping down after three decades of governing Zaire, according to members of his entourage in Switzerland.

Doctors told him after his operation on August 22 that he had a four-year lifespan at the most, but only if he lived in a temperate, European climate.

The tropical, humid weather of Zaire could cut this period by more than half. Mobutu, who is 67, seized power in the then Belgian Congo on November 11, 1965.

One Swiss daily has queried: "Are we about to see a Bosnia-type situation in central Africa?" "Mobutu's succession raises great fears in Africa's largest Francophone country where there is already an end-of-regime atmosphere."

"The mysteries about his real state of health during his lengthy convalescence here makes observers fear the worst."

In Kinshasa, the weekly Reference Plus reported: "Nobody dares to think about an after-Mobutu era. His dictatorship has not built up state institutions to deal with such a situation. Apart from some powerful generals, there are only a handful of ambitious colonels, captains and lieutenants. It is difficult to see how their 28 000-strong army could take power and rule a country of over 2 300 000 square kilometres in area."

The Paris weekly Jeune Afrique commented sarcastically: "How can there be a coup d'état in Zaire, because there is no state to seize?" – Star Foreign Service.
CONCERN FOR FUGITIVES FROM FIGHTING

UN refugee agency fears disaster in Zaire

GENEVA: Fighting between ethnic Tutsis and the Zairian army has driven thousands of Central African refugees from camps in eastern Zaire, taking the region to the brink of a crisis similar to those experienced in Burundi and Rwanda.

The United Nations refugee agency has warned that the situation in eastern Zaire could degenerate into a humanitarian disaster.

The warning came as the first group of 4,000 refugees arrived in the eastern Zairean town of Bukavu near the border with Rwanda after a trek of several days.

Mr. Ron Redmond, spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), expressed concern yesterday for the safety of the 220,000 refugees who fled camps near Uvira at the weekend because of heavy fighting between the Zairian army and ethnic Tutsis.

Most of the Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi have fled to the hills and banana plantations near Uvira to await the outcome of the fighting.

The UNHCR was making contingency plans to receive 75,000 of the refugees in camps in the Bukavu area, north of Uvira, Redmond said.

It had unconfirmed reports that columns of several thousand more refugees were on the road to Bukavu.

The UN was also trying to evacuate 54 relief workers trapped by the fighting in the Uvira region.

"They are in harm's way," Redmond said. "The situation is so dangerous that it's difficult to get them out."

Zairian officials have refused to allow the aid workers to leave overland, a trip of about 30km around the northern end of the lake.

"We appeal to all sides to stop back from the brink of a humanitarian disaster in a region that has suffered enough," Redmond said.

"The situation has deteriorated almost to the point of an emergency phase like that we faced in 1994," he added, referring to the exodus after the massacres in Rwanda.

The UNHCR expected that the 143,000 refugees from Burundi would stay in the Uvira region, Redmond said. It was looking into the possibility that some Rwandan refugees might wish to go home.

The fighting has cut all lines of supply to the refugees in Uvira.

"There is a huge population in inhospitable territory. It has taken us years to get a sense of stability and enough assistance to provide minimum aid," Redmond said.

Zaire's army had been battling the Bunyanakengo Tutsis for more than six months, but the fighting had been confined to the plateau above Uvira.

The clashes have spread to the plains, closing most of the 100km road between Uvira and Bukavu. — Reuters
Fears of new humanitarian disaster in Zaire

Bukavu, Zaire – Thousands of Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi yesterday fled fighting in eastern Zaire, whose premier cut short a visit to Britain to tackle the burgeoning humanitarian crisis there.

The refugees streamed up to the Bukavu high plateau to escape clashes between Zairean government forces and ethnic Tutsis, triggering fears of a new humanitarian disaster.

UN staff said all 220,000 refugees had left their camps around Uvira, near the border with Burundi, following the clashes, which have made relief operations impossible.

In London, Prime Minister Leon Kengo blamed the growing insecurity in eastern Zaire on neighbouring Rwanda and Burundi.

He refused to comment on the danger of war erupting between the central Africa states.

Kinshasa formally accused “Rwandan and Burundi armed forces” of attacking Zaire, citing the presence of 1,700 troops in the South Kivu region, where fighting continued between local Tutsis and Zaire’s army.

Zairean officials have accused the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan and Burundian governments of backing armed groups of ethnic Tutsis known as Banyamulenge.

They want both these people and the Hutu refugees to leave the country.

Burundi’s army, which, like Rwanda, denies supporting the Banyamulenge, said exiled Hutu rebels from Zaire carried out a raid over the border, attacking the town of Cibutoke for 90 minutes.

The fighting between Zairean troops and the Banyamulenge also involves indigenous peoples opposed to the presence of the ethnic Tutsis, and has claimed at least 83 lives since last week.

Clashes are also taking place around refugee camps north of Bukavu, near Goma. – APP.
Leaders urged to meet over Zaire crisis

US calls for governments and militias to ‘show restraint and end the fighting’

Reuters
Washington

The United States said yesterday it had urged the leaders of Zaire and Rwanda to meet as soon as possible to discuss the spiralling violence in eastern Zaire, and believed they might soon do so.

The State Department renewed calls for an end to the fighting, in which a Tutsi rebel advance has uprooted nearly 300,000 Rwandan and Burundian refugees.

"We met at the highest level of the Zaïrian and Rwandan governments to tell them that we condemn the violence and we call upon those two governments and the militias that they influence ... to show restraint and end the fighting," spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

"We have urged the senior Zaïrian and Rwandan leaders to meet face to face as soon as possible in order to defuse the very tense situation that exists," Burns added.

"We understand there may be some progress under way in arranging such meetings."

Ambassadors Daniel Simpson in Zaire and Robert Gribbin in Rwanda had also urged the two governments to arrange cross-border meetings of regional governors and prefects to ease tensions in the affected areas, Burns said.

He did not say which Zaïrian and Rwandan leaders might meet, or when they might do so.

Zaire’s President Mobutu Sese Seko is receiving chemotherapy as an outpatient at a hospital in Switzerland after a cancer operation there in August.

Former European colonial powers Belgium and France are also involved in diplomatic efforts to end the fighting between the army and the rebels in Zaire.

Burns said Washington supported Rwandan government appeals for the 1.1 million Rwandan refugees in Zaire to go home, but that the volatile situation in Burundi meant it could be risky for the 145,000 Burundian refugees in Zaire to return.

He said the United States would work with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to encourage the safe return of Rwandan refugees, and provide reception centres, food and other relief assistance in Rwanda.

In addition, to $30-million (R135-million) provided last month to the UNHCR for projects in the region, the United States was “standing by ready to assist in any way we can”, he said.

Meanwhile Zaïrian troops were reported to have pulled back in confusion in eastern Zaire yesterday in the face of a Tutsi rebel advance.

A spokesman for the Tutsi rebels, known as Banyamulenge, said their forces captured three eastern towns and were besieging the South Kivu provincial capital of Bukavu at the centre of the refugee crisis. – Reuters.
EC in aid plan to beat Zairean crisis

BRUSSELS: The European Commission's (EC) top humanitarian aid specialists are working on a complicated but desperately needed plan to airlift food and other emergency supplies to hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing ethnic violence in eastern Zaire. European aid officials and diplomats said yesterday.

The officials said the EC's Humanitarian Office (ECHO) was hoping to airlift up to 300,000 tons of emergency supplies to the Zairean towns of Bukavu and Goma to prevent severe food shortages among the mass of displaced people.

Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans, Burundians and Zaireans have left their homes recently to escape escalating violence between Zairean troops and the country's Hutu population known as the Banyamulenge.

Aid agencies have warned that the sudden influx of refugees could lead to a humanitarian catastrophe in eastern Zaire. The UN Food Programme has warned that the region faces a serious food crisis.

EC aid experts are hoping to airlift food, medicines and other supplies from Uganda to the crisis-ridden region, using Belgian C130 military aircraft stationed in Nairobi.

But officials involved in the preparation say the "logistical aspects" of the operation still have to be worked out.

For one, the Zairean government will have to give its permission for the use of its airport facilities.

Secondly, Brussels officials say they still do not know if there will be enough UN and other staff in the region to ensure the distribution of the aid.

The UN has urged aid workers to leave the area after attacks on aid vehicles by Zairean soldiers.

But sources said that the EC had asked some of its staff in Zaire to go to the eastern part of the country to help the refugees.

Also, the European Union (EU) is pressing the Rwandan and Zairean prime ministers to hold a crisis meeting immediately to study ways of ending the violence. Officials say the EU's special envoy to the region, Mr. Aldo Ajello, is hoping to arrange such a meeting for early November. — Sapa-DPA
In absence of Mobutu, convulsions of war may rip Zaire apart

Half a million flee as rebels close in on two provincial capitals and drive government soldiers from their positions

The Times, London
Gisenyi, Rwanda-Zaire border

Rebels continued their rout of Zaire's army yesterday, closing in on two provincial capitals and raising the spectre of a break-up of the vast country held together for 30 years by a dictator whose grip has only been weakened by the onset of cancer.

Tutsi fighters drove Zairian soldiers from positions close to Bukavu, capital of South Kivu province, with rifle and mortar fire. Goma, capital of North Kivu, was swamped with 5,000 refugees arriving every hour as they fled fighting to the north.

A few thousand Rwandan Hutus yesterday returned to their homeland, which they fled in fear of retribution for their part in the 1994 genocide of a million Tutsis, but the bulk, including 220,000 from Kibumba camp near Goma, were being handed west by their Hutu supremacist leaders.

Originally aimed at heading off a mass slaughter of Tutsis by Zaire's army and the 1.2 million Rwandan Hutus living in Zaire as refugees in the Kivu province, the Tutsi uprising has gained momentum with the backing of other Zairian opposition movements.

Muller Rutimbike, a spokesman for the Tutsi rebels, said their aim was to take both cities, and demand the resignation of Mobutu Sese Seko as well as his government. Zaire's numerous opposition voices have now joined the Tutsi clamour.

The Tutsi demands amount to a declaration that they intend to break away from Zaire if, as is expected, they manage to take Bukavu and Goma. Victory for Kivu's rebels would spark similar demands for independence from the southern Shaba and Kasai provinces.

Mobutu, Zaire's leader since 1965, has fought off several attempts by east and southern Zairian opposition groups to secede. But now in his mid-60s and under chemotherapy for prostate cancer in a Swiss clinic, Mobutu, whose dictatorial rule was held together with a mixture of bribes and brutality, may have to watch his demise from his hospital bed.

With Mobutu's convalescence, Zaire's central government broke down in 1992 when, rather than bow to calls for democracy, he unleashed his presidential guard inooting frenzies which destroyed the economy and the civil service.

This left his personal wealth, and revenues from diamond smuggling, as the nation's only source of income as Western donors cut off funding.

His three-month sick leave overseas has rendered his government unable to control South Kivu's governor, who sparked the rebel uprising earlier this month. The governor, Kimbwa Wabumusa, tried to expel Tutsis from South Kivu, their home for 200 years, and threatened to kill those who remained behind. Zaire's government tried to disarm him for his racist outbursts last month.

"Mobutu was a dictator. But he was strong and was always ready to negotiate. If he was healthy this could never have happened. But with him in hospital, the country will fall apart," said a Tutsi businessman who fled eastern Zaire, convinced by killings of Tutsis by Zairians and Hutus.

Kengo Wa Denda, the prime minister, has sent a unit from Kirehwa to try to show up the crumbling battalions around Goma and Bukavu. Yesterday they could be seen abandoning their positions and running in terror from the Tutsi advance, joining the flood of Rwandan refugees already on the move.

Great Lakes area area fears crisis worse than '94

Bukavu, Zaire - Ethnic warfare engulfing eastern Zaire has sparked a new refugee crisis in Central Africa's Great Lakes region haunted by Hutu-Tutsi bloodshed.

Aid workers said half a million Hutus fleeing attacks on their refugee camps in Zaire were now streaming back towards Rwanda, the homeland they left in 1994 to escape massacres and civil war.

"Over 100,000 people have already arrived in Musungu camp outside Goma," UN official Panos Mountain told CNN last night.

Earlier he said: "There is a stream of people about 25km long... I saw pregnant women, handicapped people, little children." Refugees emptied their camps after an attack on Kibumba at the north-western corner of Lake Kivu in which one Zairian gendarme and four refugees were killed. A similar attack on Kalele camp wounded three soldiers.

Many Zairian civilians were also on the run to try to escape fighting between the Zaire army and ethnic Tutsi rebels.

For the Hutus, a return to Rwanda would be a gamble. Hutu refugees are afraid of reprisals for the genocide of Rwandan Tutsis in 1994 by Hutus.

Amid the panic and confusion, the UN appealed for states in the region to open up humanitarian corridors.

"A catastrophe greater than the one we knew in 1994 is what worries me most," UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata said in Geneva.

Western nations advised their citizens to leave Zaire. The appeals came most notably from the three countries with the greatest clout in the troubled region - the US, France and Belgium, the former regional colonial power.

International aid agencies evacuated most of their staff from Bukavu, the South Kivu provincial capital, which was under threat of attack by the Banyamungu Tutsi rebels.

Diplomats said Hutu refugees could launch attacks in north-west Burundi while attempting to reach Hutu refugee camps in Tanzania. - Reuters.
In absence of Mobutu, convulsions of war may rip Zaire apart

Half a million flee as rebels close in on two provincial capitals and drive government soldiers from their positions

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With Mobutu's incompetence, Zaire's central government broke down in 1992 when, rather than bow to calls for democracy, he unleashed his presidential guard in looting frenzies which destroyed the economy and the civil service.

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"Mobutu was a dictator. But he was strong and was always ready to negotiate. If he was healthy this could never have happened. But with him in hospital, the country will fall apart," said a Tutsi businessman who fled eastern Zaire, convulsed by killings of Tutsis by Zairians and Hutus gauged into hatred by their leaders.

Kengo Wenzono, the prime minister, has sent army units from Kibungo to try to clear the heavily armed groups in Goma and Bukavu. Yesterday it became known that many positions and running in terror from the Tutsi advance, joining the flow of Rwandan refugees already on the move.

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Diplomats said Hutu refugees could launch attacks in north-west Burundi while attempting to reach Hutu refugee camps in Tanzania. - Reuters.
Conflict threatens Zaire

Conflicts between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi have spilled over into Zaire, protected by a rabble of an army, writes James C McKinley Jr.

Rwandanese refugees flee again ... this time from Zaire

by Hutu, killed more than 500 000 Tutsi civilians before being routed by a Tutsi rebel army.

In the last six months, Rwanda has become more and more like Burundi.

With Hutu guerrillas making daily forays from camps in Zaire, both countries seemed headed towards drawn-out wars between armies dominated by an elite ruling class and roving rebel groups who have working-class sympathy.

Now it appears the Tutsi are trying to turn the tables, and the main wedge being used is a new rebel army made up of Tutsi who have lived in Zaire for centuries.

These Tutsi, known in Zaire as the Banyamulenge, have pushed the Zairian Army out of the region bordering Burundi and are attacking refugee camps, sending Hutu fleeing westward.

Naked truth

"The naked truth is that Burundian and Rwandan armies have invaded Zaire and are fighting its army."

Innocent Nimparaise, a spokesman for the main Burundian rebel group, said: "They decided to use the Tutsi ethnic group of the Banyamulenge as pretext."

At the same time, unidentified armed bands of Tutsi have begun to attack camps near the northwestern border of Rwanda.

One camp about 48km north of Goma was abandoned by its 200 000 inhabitants after an attack early on Saturday. The main road supplying two other camps is now in the hands of the insurgents.

Diplomats and aid workers say that while there is no hard evidence that the Rwandan Army is behind these incursions, the attackers came over the border from Rwanda.

Zairian officials have accused Rwandan troops of carrying out attacks in the north and supplying and fighting alongside the Zairian Tutsi rebels in the south.

Refugees coming out of the region say the Zairian rebels have new camouflage uniforms and modern weapons.

Rwanda has denied the accusations, though it has said it supports the rebels' cause and has accused Zaire of planning a genocide against its Hutu residents.

A root cause for the revolt in Kivu province is the feebleness of Zaire's central government.

Mobutu Sese Seko, the Zairian president, has prostate cancer and has been in Europe for months.

The eastern borders have been left in the hands of local politicians and Zaire's poorly paid and ill-disciplined army.

Some of those politicians come from ethnic groups that have had long standing feuds with the Hutu over land and cattle.

Found allies

When the Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi flooded in during 1993 and 1994, those officials found allies among the former Rwandan soldiers and militia who had taken part in the genocide, as well as among the Burundian rebels.

They shared an enemy. The current fighting broke out after local Zairian officials announced plans to strip local Tutsi of their citizenship and their property.

"This is worrying because it could deteriorate into war," said Faneo Muitziz, a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Goma.

"Zairians have a very strong feeling of resentment about a foreign intrusion on their territory." — New York Times News Service.
Humanitarian disaster as Zaire nears political meltdown.
Chaos as mobs attack and last aid officials flee

Tutsis advancing on Zaire city

NEWS

Cape Aku

Justice Minister Dullah Omar

(-8) 234 901 074
Aid workers forced to flee Zaire

Two regions have been placed under a state of emergency due to unrest.

KINSHASA - The Zairian government has named military governors to replace civilian administrators in two eastern provinces where soldiers are fighting Tutsi rebels, the state-run television reported early yesterday.

The government had already declared a state of emergency in the provinces, North and South Kivu, on Friday.

The European Union envoy yesterday said he would try to ease tension in the Great Lakes region where fighting between soldiers and Tutsi rebels has plunged eastern Zaire into chaos.

"My visit is linked to what is happening in Kivu," Mr Aldo Ajello told AFP, referring to a troubled eastern province of Zaire.

Ajello, a special envoy for the region, arrived in the Rwandan capital Monday evening for a two-day visit.

Zaire has accused the Tutsi-led regimes in Rwanda and Burundi of aiding the local Tutsi rebels fighting Zairean troops. Both countries deny this.

Tutsi rebels advanced steadily on the provincial capital of Bukavu, as mobs attacked Tutsi residents. Zairian soldiers set up barriers on the road leading into Rwanda yesterday.

The violence prompted the remaining foreign aid workers - six Red Cross officials - to flee Bukavu on Monday amid the spreading chaos.

Mortar shells exploded on the city's outskirts, and reporters saw several bodies lying in the streets.

Watching from a high vantage point in Cyangugu, reporters could see what appeared to be a two-pronged move on Bukavu by Tutsi rebels.

Mobs could be seen rampaging and attacking people in a shanty town on the south side of Bukavu.

"I was hiding in my house, and I thought I was safe because I was married to a Hutu," said Mrs Josephine Yarara, a Tutsi resident of Bukavu who managed to escape.

"But they came searching for me. I was able to get out with the help of a priest." - Sapa-AP.
This army may make short-term gains from refugee exodus.

Zaire chaos could engulf Burundi!
Artillery duel flares on Zaire border

Rwandan 76mm warning

(36) Apr 30/Jul91

CAFE ARGUS, WEB
Moebius seeks to reassure authority in war.
The heart of Africa moves closer to war

Archbishop killed as fighting escalates

between Zaire and Rwanda

Zaire and Rwanda moved closer to war yesterday with a second day of cross-border artillery exchanges, after fighting in eastern Zaire claimed the life of a Roman Catholic archbishop.

The Vatican said Archbishop Christophe Munsuliwa was killed in the eastern town of Bukavu in an attack on the city late on Tuesday. Church sources in Rome said they believed he had been killed in an ambush.

Rwandan Vice-President and Defence Minister Paul Kagame told a news conference in Kigali that Rwanda would be forced to respond if faced with what he termed Zairian aggression.

"If Zaire brings the war to us we shall fight Zaire. That is not a big problem for me. We are ready to fight even though we seek no war with Zaire," said Kagame.

Asked whether Rwanda was edging closer to war with Zaire, he replied: "Going by the declarations made by Zaire there is every indication that we are going in that direction."

Rwandan Lieutenant-Colonel Firmin Kagame later said he sent "a good-sized" force of troops into Zaire after nightfall on Tuesday in retaliation against Zaire firing into Rwanda.

Zaire, a giant country at the heart of Africa, has long been in chaos but this crisis in its east is seen as potentially the most far-reaching in its 36-year history.

President Mobutu Sese Seko, whose strongarm tactics helped keep his country together, is sick in Switzerland, recovering from cancer surgery.

At the Kagame news conference, Rwandan officials handed out a pamphlet from the president's office calling for a Berlin conference of former colonial powers in the region - France, Germany and Belgium - to take a renewed look at territorial boundaries and the question of the ethnic Tutsi Banyamulenge.

At a Berlin conference from 1884 to 1885 Belgium, set up the Congo Free State, later to become Zaire, under King Leopold. Deadly rivalry between Hutus and Tutsis, which resulted in nearly one million dead in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, has split into Zaire, host to 1.1 million Hutu Rwandan refugees.

A Roman Catholic priest in Bukavu said yesterday the town was cut off from aid supplies and thousands of refugees in the region were in danger of starving to death.

In diplomatic moves, the United Nations in New York said Canada's ambassador to Washington, Raymond Chretien, had been appointed as a special envoy to help resolve the crisis.

French President Jacques Chirac yesterday urged heads of state and central African states to call a conference on the situation.
Chaos and palm-greasing as Zaire totters on the edge

FROM THE TIMES OF LONDON

London — Chaos in Zaire begins in the capital Kinshasa and spreads throughout the country. From the moment you land at the airport, you are made aware that government employees are not paid enough to live on; armed soldiers block your exit if you do not accept the help of their friends who offer to collect your passport and luggage in return for "un petit cadeau".

In the car park, armed men in uniform gather round your car to discourage you from moving off without giving them a contribution towards a drink. The taxi-buses that weave along the pot-holed streets, full to overflowing with passengers, stop at main junctions to pass a wad to the helmeted traffic policemen.

A militiaman called at a convent I visited to tell the nuns that President Mobuto was gravely ill and who knew what might happen if he were to die; he, the militiaman, might come back and kill them. On the other hand, if they were to give him some money, he could protect them. A few days later, the same man brought his small child to the convent, saying he desperately needed a transfusion but did not have enough money and demanded they give it to him.

A doctor working in a hospital in the Bandundu region said: "I waited a year and then was paid four dollars. At first, when our pay stopped coming through, the doctors and teachers went on strike. Then we realised that that didn't make any difference. So we mark up the medicines by about 80 per cent. We can't screen blood for AIDS, because the test costs two dollars and we cannot afford it. I worry about the children."

It is becoming increasingly difficult to travel to the interior along disintegrating roads left unrepaired. A journey that took one day in 1982 might now take between two and four. Few people have access to a car, so most have to find a lorry going in their direction and pay the driver.

Small traders, who used to supply villages with soap or cloth or other basic goods, now had to give up their businesses because the transport is so poor and the rate of inflation so chronic that they cannot make a living.

Villagers have to subsist on what they can cultivate or find in the forest. If they have any surplus to sell, their only outlet is the infrequent lorry, whose driver can set a price without fear of competition.

Lack of commerce leads to chronic shortages. At the start of term one typical village school, where there are no textbooks and children are taught by rote or copying information from a blackboard, had to send a pupil on a five-hour hike to the nearest mission to ask for a box of chalk.

The uniformed men in the airport seemed to have lost interest by the time I left. Instead, a group of people in plain clothes insisted I follow them down a dark corridor to a small room to be politely questioned and searched. Who were they, I later asked the uniformed customs women escorting me to another small room. "Nothing to do with us. Maybe it was the police."

This second search ended, as had the first, with a question: "Avez-vous un petit cadeau pour nous?"
Tutsis seize key Zaire airport in dawn attack

Goma streets are deserted

NAIROBI - Tutsi fighters early today seized the airport in the eastern Zairean city of Goma, the centre for efforts to aid refugees in eastern Zaire, a United Nations spokesman said, quoting Zairean military authorities.

"The airport has been taken over. It is confirmed from the Zairean side," UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman Pithos Moutzis in the city of Goma said by telephone.

"Right now there is no movement in town. It is completely deserted," added Mr Moutzis, adding that aid workers remained inside their offices in the lakeside city after heavy fighting.

A Reuters correspondent in the Rwandan border town of Gisenyi said he could see fighting around Goma airport, 5km from the city centre, after Mr Moutzis said it had fallen.

An aid official earlier quoted the Zairean military authorities as saying that, if necessary, it would give up the airport to attackers.

Aid workers in the North Kivu provincial capital and centre for relief efforts for refugees in eastern Zaire were awakened by firing on the edge of the city early today.

The conflict began with a Zairean army campaign against Tutsis, but sprang from deadly rivalry between Tutsis and Hutus, which killed up to a million people in Rwanda's 1994 genocide and left Zaire hosting 1.1 million Hutu Rwandan refugees.

Incoming and outgoing mortar bombs and heavy weapons fire centred on an area about 2km north of the city limits, and from the Rwandan border mortar bombs were seen exploding in the outskirts of Goma.

"There is fire from the Zairean army going north from the airport. We spoke this morning with a Zairean military official who said the rebels had broken through a line at Manigi, 10km outside Goma," said Steve Pratt, an official with the CARE International agency in Goma.

"The Zairean military official told us we should not worry because the Zaireans would leave the airport and let it be occupied by the other side," he added.

The airport was a key target because aid agencies used it to bring in staff and supplies for refugees, and the Zairean military had used it to bring in army reinforcements.

Mr Moutzis said: "There is a general feeling of law and order breaking down. Some aid agency compounds and offices have been attacked by Zairean soldiers and there is looting," he said. - Reuter
The crisis in Zaire threatens stability in the region as the UN fails to cope

FEATURE

The current conflict in Zaire is a complex issue involving various political and economic factors. The UN has struggled to address the crisis effectively, leading to a situation where stability in the region is at risk. This situation highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to resolving the conflict and supporting peace and development in the region. The role of international organizations and regional bodies is crucial in addressing this challenge and promoting lasting solutions.
Pressure mounts on SA to help Zaire

By CHIARA CARTER

SOUTH AFRICA is under growing pressure to become more involved in resolving the bloody conflict engulfing the Great Lakes area of Africa – which Foreign Affairs officials fear might lead to internal conflict in central Zaire.

A crucial summit to discuss the conflict is taking place on Tuesday.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Aziz Pahad this weekend warned that the growing conflict had serious implications for all African states – including South Africa.

He said the fighting in eastern Zaire – where Hutu refugees from Rwanda backed by Zairian soldiers are fighting against Zairian Tutsis – might develop into full-scale war.

There were fears of an “implosion” in Zaire itself – a development which Pahad warned would have “disastrous consequences” for the entire continent.

Zaire, one of the largest countries with the most natural resources in Africa, is ruled by the ailing Mobutu Sese Seko who is out of the country, receiving treatment in a Swiss clinic.

Pahad said Sese Seko’s absence was aggravating the situation and the Zairian central government did not have sufficient authority over other parts of the country.

Endemic conflict has made it impossible to have sustained economic growth and has resulted in a mass migration of refugees.

Pahad said South Africa was expected to play a more proactive role in Africa, including the Great Lakes region.

While the country favoured the maintenance of peace rather than restoring peace after conflict has erupted, Pahad conceded that there was some urgency to call for the formation of a humanitarian peace-keeping force of African states including South Africa – the idea recently mooted by the US – but warned that the formation of such a force should not mean the rest of the world washes its hands of Africa.

Until now, South Africa has argued that the country’s defence force was in a state of transition and that until transformation was completed, South Africa could not send troops to other countries.

Pahad said South Africa’s viewpoint was that the region’s problems needed to be addressed as a whole.

There could be no long-lasting peace in the region unless the refugee camps on the border between Zaire and Rwanda were closed.

He said these camps – occupied by Hutu refugees, some of whom had been involved in the genocide against the Tutsis – were being used as bases to destabilise Rwanda.

Refugees should be repatriated with guarantees of security.

Those who did not want to return home should be moved deeper within their host countries.

Both Pahad and President Nelson Mandela said although the sale of South African arms to Rwanda was being assessed constantly, South Africa held the view that the R86-million sale was justified because Rwanda needed to be able to defend itself against Hutu rebels who launched raids into Rwanda from their bases in Zaire.

Should Rwanda launch military attacks across the border – as had been claimed – the matter would be reassessed.

The Rwandan ambassador to South Africa, Eliphaz Karenzi, met with South African officials twice this week to assure them that the Rwandan army was not involved in the fighting within Zaire.

Karenzi said Tutsis in Zaire were fighting to win back their Zairian citizenship and to resist genocidal attacks by Hutus.
Zaire caught up in a Hutu-Tutsi conflict

International intervention needed now to stop a bloodbath in the troubled region

By Howard W French

AIDIAN, IVORY COAST—Horrible as the reports of refugees and new fighting are, the news out of Zaire in recent weeks has had a ring of "here we go again". But this time may well prove different.

For decades now, the world has been hearing that Zaire is going down the tubes and threatening to take much of Africa with it. What's new is how close the latest crisis may be to producing the dreaded outcome of continental mayhem, because two things are happening at the same time: states near the heart of Africa are near collapse, and they have begun to shoot across each other's borders.

Experts on the region have said for a long time that they expected the future of African strife to involve not wars between countries, but the collapse of states into chaos brought about by ethnic tensions and competition for scarce resources.

That prospect is bad enough -- especially considering that huge Zaire, which borders eight neighbours and sits astride the heart of the continent, always seemed the most likely candidate for such a fate, given its weak and venal central government.

Rumblings of secession

Its leader, President Mobutu Sese Seko, is ill with prostate cancer and out of the country, rumblings of secession are being heard again and units of the underpaid army have gone on a looting binge.

But that's only one part of what may be unfolding -- the part of the story that evokes past crises.

Many now fear that the larger threat is to the very idea of the modern map of Africa, with its states that have their roots in a European partition of the continent more than 100 years ago.

The current crisis blossomed when the Tutsi leaders of Zaire's neighbour, Rwanda, openly encouraged an armed rebellion of their ethnic kinsmen in eastern Zaire.

Rwanda's offensive has included raining artillery fire on Zairean positions in cities along the border between the two countries and staging infantry incursions.

All of this breaks a cardinal, and seldom violated, rule of African politics: "Do what you wish to your own people and your neighbours will not get involved."

Just as vital has been a cordiality that warns the continent's governments to respect the borders they inherited, however illogical they may seem, to avoid opening a Pandora's box of border conflicts with untold political consequences.

The grudge borne against Zaire by Rwanda has its origins in one of this century's worst ethnic massacres, carried out by Rwanda's Hutus against that country's Tutsi minority in 1994.

Ever since, Hutu guerrillas have used refugee camps in Zaire as bases from which they have mounted regular raids against the Tutsi-led governments in Rwanda and Burundi.

Rwanda and Burundi resent what they see as Zaire's complicity with Hutu refugees, who include many of the Rwandan massacre survivors of 1994.

A threat by Zaire to expel a Tutsi-related minority, the Banyamulenge, from one border region recently, coming on the heels of a similar expulsion in another region last year, was a signal to Zaire's eastern neighbours to take the offensive.

"If Zaire wishes to give us the Banyamulenge, let them also give us back their lands," President Pasteur Bizimungu of Rwanda said in a radio interview.

He was suggesting, in other words, that for the survival of the minority Tutsi-led governments of East Africa, which already feel they have their backs to the wall, even the continent's colonial borders can be sacrificed.

It is as if the Tutsis of East Africa are stealing a page from the Serbs of the former Yugoslavia, who have fought bitterly to enhance their own sense of security by building a greater Serbian homeland on the ruins of a larger union.

Accusations have been flying back and forth at a rate that rivals the mortar rounds being exchanged across the border between Zaire and Rwanda, so apportioning blame in this crisis is an exasperating process.

Zaire, for example, has been criticised for allowing armed groups to operate in the densely populated refugee camps that virtually sit astride its borders with Rwanda and Burundi.

On the other hand, consider what the burden of having to shelter a million destitute refugees has meant for Zaire, itself an unstructured and miserably poor nation.

Until this latest spate of trouble, nobody expected the outside world to help Zaire by trying to fashion political deals in Rwanda and Burundi that would allow Hutu refugees to return home.

Such a deal would, of course, have also sent back the genocidal masterminds among the Hutus to face judgment by their countrymen.

But the international community is not likely to ignore this terrible business for long. Inevitably, it will be called upon to help clean up after the haemorrhaging is over.

Nightmare prospect

Only this time it may face the nightmare prospect that the successful break-up of a country, actively encouraged by a neighbour, could offer dangerous precedents for secession and adventurism in a host of other fragile post-colonial constructions, from Nigeria to Angola.

For that reason, experts on Africa are already beginning to say that Rwanda needs to be warned by the rest of the world against annexing Zairean territory, or further kindling the flames of instability in that country.

One such expert, Will Reso of Florida International University, has a suggestion that might well be heeded: "These countries are all very weak and need access to foreign exchange to wage war."

"A Rwanda can decide to invade its break with the international system, wagering that it will always be able to sell enough diamonds or whatever minerals it can get in Zaire.

"Then again, it can be made to wonder: Will there ever be another international loan?"

Students on Rampage in Kishnasah
Burundi strongman denies involvement

Bujumbura – Burundi strongman Major Pierre Buyoya has challenged Kinshasa to prove that his country is involved in the conflict in eastern Zaïre.

Speaking to the press here yesterday, Buyoya repeated his Tutsi-led government’s denial that it is supporting Tutsi rebels inside Zaïre who have vowed to bring down the crumbling regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko.

“The Burundian government has once again strongly denies allegations by the Zaïrean authorities that it is involved in the conflict,” he said. “We challenge them to produce the slightest proof of its involvement in the war,” he added, in remarks that were rebroadcast on Burundi radio.

Buyoya alleged that it was “an Zaïrean territory” that groups involved in ethnic strife in Burundi over the past three years had been “formed, trained and armed.”

Despite the growing tension in the heart of Africa, however, Buyoya said his regime – target of regional sanctions since it took power in a bloodless coup – would work for peace. – AFP

Talks with neighbours ruled out

Kinshasa – Zaïre yesterday ruled out negotiations with its neighbours to avert war in the east of the crumbling state and accused Uganda of joining in the fighting.

“The government will not undertake any negotiation, will not participate in any regional conference while a part of national territory is occupied by foreign forces,” Prime Minister Kenwo Bondo told an emergency session of parliament.

“This war which the combined forces of Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda are waging against Zaïre has brought to broad daylight Zaïre’s intentions not to welcome on its territory its nationals living in Zaïre and to pursue its interests.”

Insane plan to annex part of our territory

“Insane plan of annexing a part of our territory,” Kengo said.

Kenya’s state radio said Kenya planned to host a summit of seven African countries on Tuesday but did not say if the main subject would be the war in eastern Zaïre.

UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali and French President Jacques Chirac have called for urgent talks to end the war, which was seen as a conflict between the Zaïrean Army and ethnic Tutsis.

Rwanda has openly admitted sending its Tutsi-dominated army into Zaïre and some independent voices also see the hand of Burundi’s Tutsi army in the fighting.

Parliamentarians accused Kenwo and his ministers of taking a soft line on the fighting. – Reuters.

SA ready to play a part in conflict

Cape Town – President Nelson Mandela said yesterday South Africa was prepared to play a role in troubled Central Africa, but did not say what form this might take.

Mandela, who has been reluctant to be drawn into the crisis in the Great Lakes region, said he had discussed the situation with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni yesterday afternoon.

He said their conversation had not focused on specifics in the region, where more than a million refugees are caught up in fighting between ethnic Tutsi rebels and the army in eastern Zaïre.

“We are ready to play a part, provided that this coincides with our own law and that we have the capacity to perform what we are required to do,” he said.

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Fahad said South Africa was not ready for peacekeeping operations, but needed “to start preparing for any eventual involvement.”

Map of conflict ... Rwanda’s ambassador to Belgium, Manzi Bakuramutza, holds up a map of Central Africa’s Great Lakes region to illustrate a point while talking about the intense fighting on the Rwanda-Zaïre border.

Battles raging in eastern Zaïre threaten to spread through the Great Lakes region and could end up redrawing colonial boundaries, analysts warn yesterday.

Battle-hardened troops of Rwanda’s Tutsi-dominated army have already made an attack across the border, an army spokesman in Kisali acknowledged on Wednesday, and artillery guns have been trading fire across the frontier as their ill-disciplined soldiers fight Ban-yamulenge Tutsi rebels, putting to flight hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees from both Rwanda and Burundi.

If the fighting spreads, it could involve the armies of Uganda, whose president is basically pro-Tutsis, and of Tanzania, whose rulers tend to favour the Hutus, as well as Burundi’s Tutsi-dominated army.

The fighting in eastern Zaïre comes as Burundian troops battle Hutu guerrillas in a three-year-old civil war which has so far cost more than 150,000 lives, mostly of them civilian, according to Amnesty International.

Fighters among the more than 1 million Rwandan Hutu refugees in Zaïre and Tanzania regularly slip back across the border to ambush soldiers and kill witnesses to their genocide in Rwanda’s 1994 civil war, when Hutu extremists slaughtered more than 500,000 men, women and children.

Rwanda’s new Tutsi-dominated regime disclaims any territorial ambitions, but the analysts say the eventual stakes are whether the region of eastern Zaïre along the Rwandan and Burundian borders becomes a “Tutsiland” or a “Hutuland”, regardless of sovereignty.

Between them, Rwanda and Burundi have 11 million Hutus and just 1.8 million Tutsis. The root cause of the ethnic fighting in both nations is overpopulation. Both are tiny countries and are among the most densely populated on Earth. With most women bearing six or eight children, smallholdings are shrinking to the point where they can no longer support a family, and the two countries are just too small for their peoples.

Fighting in north Kivu’s Masais region earlier this year displaced thousands of Zaïrean Tutsis who did not fight back as they came under attack from Rwandan Hutu refugees, Zaïrean troops and local tribes.

This time the Tutsis living further south are fighting, and winning. One of their aims is recognition of their Zaïrean nationality, first granted, then retracted on the grounds that their forebears came from Rwanda 200 years ago.

Zaïrean troops fought back north of Goma on Tuesday, reac—
Central African crisis and reconsider arms sales to Rwanda

He said that, in the light of reports that Rwandan troops were attacking Hutu refugee camps in eastern Zaire, the Government was "constantly reviewing" its decision to sell arms worth about $86 million to the Rwandan government.

The National Conventional Arms Control Committee announced recently that it had decided on September 26 to authorize the sale in line with a UN Security Council decision to lift the arms embargo on the country.

Defence Minister Joe Modise said in reply to questions in Parliament this week that the value of the "possible contracts" was $86,984,287. He refused to say what types of arms were to be sold.

Pahad said information from the region was unreliable. But if the Government confirmed that the Rwandan military was involved in Zaire, this "would influence the decision whether we continue with the arms sales".

Pahad said the Government was in touch with both sides to try and end the violence.

He said the Government had met Organisation of African Unity secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim at the weekend to suggest that the OAU send a special envoy to the Great Lakes region.

He added that he hoped this decision would be taken at a meeting in Addis Ababa yesterday of the OAU's Central Organ for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

An envoy would add to the international pressure on the warring parties to settle the conflict.

It could also lead to a recommendation that the UN call a conference of the Great Lakes countries to try to resolve the conflict in the region.

Pahad said the current fighting might force people to attend such a conference.

He had earlier told Reuters that the conflict showed the need for an African peacekeeping force, but that no specific proposals were yet on the table.

ns stability of entire region

ng, and analysts warn that old colonial boundaries may be redrawn

Disbelief ... Kinshasa residents check the newspaper headlines yesterday, which read 'Archbishop of Bukavu killed by Rwandese'. The Catholic archbishop of Bukavu, Monseigneur Christophe Munzi Hirwa, a Jesuit, was killed in an ambush in Kinshasa on October 29. His body was found in the early hours on Wednesday.

The Zairian airforce has 22 aircraft and not one of them is airworthy.

Burundi's army is relatively small - about 20,000 men - but they are well used to combat.

Uganda's 50,000-strong army grew out of a guerrilla force led by Yoweri Museveni, now president, which fought a five-year guerrilla war to topple President Milton Obote in 1986.

Tanzania's army is 40,000-strong, but has no recent battle experience.
Reaping the whirlwind of indifference

With chaos and conflict spreading, Zaire, the UN and Western nations are seeing the consequences of their callous neglect, reports Chris McGeer

T he Zairean government has been criticized for its handling of the crisis in the Zairean province of South Kivu. Despite a peace agreement signed in June 1994, fighting between government forces and rebels continues, leading to widespread displacement and human rights abuses.

In the town of Bukavu, which has been a hotspot of violence, the presence of the United Nations mission in eastern Congo (MONUC) has done little to alleviate the suffering of the local population. The UN peacekeepers have been accused of doing too little too late, and their actions have been criticized for not effectively preventing the violence.

The situation in South Kivu is just one example of the broader conflict in eastern Congo, which has resulted in the displacement of millions of people and a humanitarian crisis. The United Nations has been criticized for its slow response and lack of resources to address the crisis.

The United Nations has deployed peacekeepers to the region, but the situation remains volatile. The conflict in eastern Congo is complex, with multiple armed groups operating in the area, and a lack of political will to end the violence has contributed to the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

In the town of Goma, which lies on the border with Rwanda, the population is divided on the issue of the conflict. Some support the government's efforts to end the violence, while others believe that the government is not doing enough. The situation in Goma is a microcosm of the broader conflict in eastern Congo, and it is clear that much work needs to be done to address the humanitarian crisis and bring an end to the violence.
Most voters in the United States have yawned off the presidential elections, to be held on Tuesday

Bill’s home run in the Big

Clinton jogs in as voters desert Dole, but the real playing field may be in Congress, writes Gary Younge in New Orleans

I n a city known more for its jazz clubs and Cajun cuisine than as an electioneering stamping ground, last week marked a high point in the political calendar of New Orleans. Both Bill Clinton and his challenger, Bob Dole, came to town on the same day, but to read the front page of the local PIOUINE-Times you would think it happened every day. The main story was about the new manager of the local football team and only at the bottom of the page came the news that, with just over a week to go before the presidential elections, the two leading contenders were visiting.

A helpful note for motorists read: “President Clinton’s visit will affect some rush-hour traffic today. No roads will be closed for Bob Dole.”

When history comes to record the 1996 presidential election, it will not be more sympathetic to the campaign, and particularly Dole, than electorate and media have been. It may cast it as the year when the “character issue” ceased to matter; when the Democrats recaptured the Senate; or when Republicans won most of the arguments and lost most of the votes. But until then the verdict of the voters on a campaign that has seen Clinton maintain a double-digit lead from the outset will be harsh.

When asked which word best describes the campaign, most people say “ dull.” Viewing figures for the presidential debates have been alarmingly low. According to one survey, one in ten voters does not know Clinton or the Democratic nominee or that Bob Dole is standing.

So in many ways the front page of the PIOUINE-Times speaks for the country. Between the lines it says that Dole stands little chance — but that four more years of Clinton prove little excitement.

Louisiana holds only one of the 538 Electoral College seats which decide the presidency. While it should be a key marginal — the state voted Republican in 1984 and 1988, but backed Clinton in 1992 — it now looks like a safe bet for the president. Meanwhile, Dole is trailing in places like California, which has 54 votes, and Florida, which has 25.

Clinton does not need to be here and Dole should not need to be here.

But both are here because the focus of the campaign has shifted from the battle for the presidency — which Dole is assumed to have lost — to the struggle to control both houses of Congress.

To take over both houses of Congress, the Democrats need to gain three Senate seats — if Al Gore, who would have a casting vote, is elected again as vice-president — and 18 House seats. Both are within their grasp but depend on too many local factors.

Of the 34 Senate seats being contested, 10 are marginal, four held by Democrats and six by Republicans. Many of the Republican seats are places where Democrats have won a real challenge, like Kansas, South Dakota and New Hampshire. Of the 435 House seats being fought, 70 are running close, with Nevada’s 4th looking the most vulnerable.

Clinton and Gore’s decision to hold their campaign into previously safe areas has angered Republicans en masse. Earlier this week Republican Party chair gave the go-ahead to three congressional candidates to write Dole’s presidential chances in order to alert voters to the dangers of the Democrats dominating Congress. “More voters think Clinton is going to win, the greater our chances of electing a Republican to the House and the Senate,” says Republican polster Neil Newhouse.

It was written in this morning that Clinton and Dole squared up on either side of the Mississippi late last week. First came Dole addressing an aging and pro-dole crowd in a white shirt which only half-filled the park on the edge of the French Quarter. He was funny and so was the crowd, unusual for Clinton’s dinners, trial lawyer the Hollywood elite and the press were laughing while he was talking about the issues.

Three hours later the Clinton campaign cut a swath through rush hour traffic on route to the blo
TUTSIS MAKE MORE GAINS

Defeats could lead to break-up of Zaire

NAIROBI: More military defeats for Zaire in the east could encourage secessionist elements in mineral-rich Shaba, and diamond-studded Kasai.

If Zaire's shambolic army is defeated by Tutsi forces in the east, Africa's stumbling giant will be at greater risk of dismemberment than at any time since independence in 1960.

The prospect of military defeat loomed large yesterday with news of further Tutsi gains in and around Goma and Bukavu, capitals of the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu.

Zaire's armed forces, the FAZ, were already a byword for indiscipline in Africa. They have proved no match for the ethnic Tutsi rebels supported by the Tutsi armies in command of neighbouring Rwanda and Burundi.

"It is fair to say Zaire has no army today," said one Zairean analyst. "After years of tribalism and political interference we have a lot of men in uniform but no army."

The bad news from the east could stir a rare display of patriotic fervour in Zaire's capital, Kinshasa.

But it is just as likely to encourage secessionist elements in mineral-rich Shaba, bordering Zambia, and diamond-studded Kasai in the centre of Zaire.

The threat of break-up has long been an issue but one man, President Mobutu Sese Seo, kept the country whole by relying on foreign friends when he was a key pro-Western African leader during the Cold War.

The armies of France, Belgium and Morocco all intervened in the 1970s and 1980s to crush secessionist rebels, mainly in Shaba. An array of nations, led by the United States, provided arms.

Today the Cold War is over, Mobutu is a 66-year-old cancer patient in Switzerland and Zaire has no powerful friends.

"Zaire is alone for the first time and during its biggest crisis," the Zairean analyst told Reuters.

With Mobutu now in his third month abroad, the political vacuum is increasing. There is no designated or constitutional successor.

With nothing to show after six years of pro-democracy agitation, the opposition is split and many parties are tribal or secessionist.

Zaire's 35 million people will be insulted and ashamed at their army's showing. The government says the Tutsis of tiny Rwanda, with a population of only six million, have orchestrated the Tutsi rebellion in the east.

But even if Zaireans put rivalry aside and together decide to regain full control of the east, they will have a huge task. One of Mobutu's strategies to prevent his opponents getting together was never to build roads in sub-Saharan Africa's second-biggest country. -- which will make it almost impossible to send reinforcements to the east if the army loses Goma airport.

"I think those in charge in Kinshasa have every desire to restore order in the east. But I doubt their ability to do so," commented a senior diplomat who recently served in Zaire. -- Reuters
Zaire turns down peace talks amid fears of collapse

Gisasi, Rwanda - Zaire has defiantly rejected peace talks with its neighbours despite fears that victories by advancing ethnic Tutsi rebels could herald the disintegration of the vast Central African country.

The conflict in eastern Zaire assumed greater international dimensions, with the Kinshasa government adding Uganda to the list of its enemies and more world leaders urging round-table peace negotiations.

"The government will not undertake any negotiation, will not take part in any regional conference while a part of national territory is occupied by foreign forces," Zairean Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo told an emergency session of parliament yesterday.

"This war which the combined forces of Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda are waging against Zaire has brought to broad daylight Rwanda's intention not to welcome on its territory its nationals living in Zaire and to pursue its insane plan of annexing a part of our territory."

The new United Nations envoy to Central Africa, Raymond Chretien, said he would focus on securing a ceasefire before tackling any other problems.

"A great urgency exists because of the fighting that is taking place in the region. Only after a ceasefire will it be possible to tackle the humanitarian crisis," he said.

The Canadian diplomat said his first stop would be Lausanne, Switzerland, to see Zairean ruler Mobutu Sese Seko, who is having cancer treatment there.

Mr Chretien also intends to speak to leaders of surrounding countries, especially Rwanda, and will attempt to see local leaders in eastern Zaire.

Kenyan state radio said Kenya planned to host a summit of seven African countries on November 5, but did not say if the main subject would be the war in eastern Zaire, where Banyamulenge Tutsi rebels have seized a string of towns.

France, the UN and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) have called for talks to resolve a conflict threatening the lives of more than half-a-million refugees who fled to Zaire to escape the ethnic strife.

Fighting raged near Goma, the key town in the region, yesterday and aid agencies which had been responsible for feeding the Hutu refugees were preparing to evacuate the area, aid officials said.

The rebel victories raised a serious prospect that Zaire could collapse while President Mobutu, in power for more than 30 years, lay sick in Europe. - Reuters
Aid workers flee Zaire battle zone
Refugees abandoned

Goma - Aid workers have fled from the war-ravaged east Zairean city of Goma, leaving international efforts to feed more than one million Rwandan and Burundian refugees in Zaire in disarray.

Fighting in Goma has pitted Tutsi rebels and Rwandan soldiers against Zairian soldiers and militia members.

Reporters entered Goma behind troops of the Tutsi-led Rwandan army from Gisenyi.

There was no sign of Zairean troops in the town, the biggest in the area, as the government army's main eastern base. December 3, 1996

Reporters were barred from moving across the city, which was the administrative centre for relief operations for hundreds of thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees.

Some refugees are now dying of hunger, aid workers say.

Mark Richardson of CARE International said his aid agency had had contact with a radio operator who fled with a group of about 200 Rwandan refugees from the Zairean camp of Kazinga.

"He said they have just sat down to die. They have no water for four or five days. These are the old, the sick, the vulnerable, the children," said Mr Richardson in Nairobi.

CARE said they would return to Goma as soon as it was safe.

The fighting has left more than a million Rwandan Hutu refugees inside Zaire in desperate straits, aid workers say.

Peter Kessler, of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said in Nairobi that over 11,000 Zairean refugees had now fled across the border to south-west Uganda.

The UN Security Council on Friday demanded a ceasefire in eastern Zaire and called on the international community to come up with an urgent response to the crisis.

The United States threw its weight behind a regional conference due to be held in Nairobi next Tuesday which is expected to discuss the conflict.

Rwandan troops first thrust into Goma on Friday by lake and land after mortar and machinegun exchanges with Zairean troops, diplomats said.

On Friday Zairean and Rwandan troops traded fire across the border between Goma and Gisenyi, at the north end of Lake Kivu.

All sides ignored international calls for a ceasefire.

Bukavu, about 120km south of Goma, was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting in eastern Zaire and the Roman Catholic archbishop of Bukavu and Cyangugu was killed on Tuesday.

In the past week, Zairean and Rwandan troops have fired at one another across the border at the only two significant Zairean towns, Gisenyi and Cyangugu.

The conflict pits ethnic Tutsis against both the Zairean government and Hutu refugees, some of whom were responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda of up to one million Tutsis and other victims.

In their fight with the Hutus, the Tutsis accuse the government of President Mobutu Sese Seko, now in Switzerland, of persecuting them for years.

The Tutsis trace their roots in Zaire back two centuries. They say they have been refused Zairean citizenship since 1981 and on Friday Zairean state radio reported that parliament voted to purge Tutsis from the army, state companies and public administration. The move must be approved by the government. - Reuters

Mayor wants Mobutu out

Lausanne - President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire is defending the eastern frontiers of his country as well as his right to remain in this Swiss city.

His doctors announced he is suffering from cancer which has spread. They said Mobutu, 66, is suffering from exhaustion and cannot return to Zaire.

"But Lausanne mayor Yvette Jaggi told the federal government in Bern: "This man must quit my city immediately. His presence is a threat to public order.

This is a reference to political opponents from Zaire living outside his hotel shouting "down with the dictator!"

Mrs Jaggi's budget also has to pay for President Mobutu's security.

His stay in the five-star hotel with a huge entourage has cost millions and caused widespread criticism in Switzerland.

President Mobutu "stays glued to his television set watching CNN," a hotel witness told. - Reuters
No peace talks 'until foreign troops leave'

Kinshasa – Zaire, which is accusing Rwanda of fighting alongside Tutsi rebels in the east, has ruled out peace talks while foreign troops remain on its soil and has said refugees should be progressively forced to leave.

Zaire announced yesterday it had decided on a series of measures, including the closure of its eastern borders with Rwanda, Burundi and part of Uganda.

A government spokesman said Zaire meeting on the events in the east until the aggressors have left for good”.

European Union envoy Aldo Ajello said after two days in Kinshasa that he had so far failed to persuade the Zairean government to attend talks. “We are working to create the conditions for a meeting to take place, but we have not yet got Zaire’s agreement,” Mr Ajello said.

Efforts were being made to persuade Rwanda and Zaire to meet informally at which groups regional governments party to the economic sanctions on Burundi imposed after a military coup there last July, he said.

Zaire is the latest victim of bitter Hutu-Tutsi rivalry that has poisoned life in neighboring Rwanda and Burundi for generations. Over a million Hutu refugees have lived in camps in eastern Zaire since 1994, when they fled Rwanda fearing reprisals or an upsurge in civil war after
Zaire: SA sucked into the cauldron

Call to halt arms sales

ROSS HERBERT
in Kinshasa, Zaire.

PHILIP NUNN AND KENY SWART
REPORTERS

South Africa is coming under increasing pressure to halt arms sales to the region as the crisis in eastern Africa deepens.

Moshe of stone-throwing students have attacked the Rwandan embassy in Kenya and businesses of Tutsis in Kinshasa and fighting continues unabated in eastern Zaire.

Jan van Deventer, South Africa's ambassador to Zaire, told Sunday Argus that Pretoria's decision to supply arms to the Tutsi-led government in Rwanda had damaged South Africa's reputation for neutrality. "My honest opinion is that no arms should be supplied to this whole region.

He said there was a Zairian perception of an alliance of East African countries against Zaire, and arms sales created the perception that South Africa was also siding with Zaire.

Mr Van Deventer's comments came as news agency reports said weapons of South African origins, including SA assault rifles and armoured personnel carriers, had been used by Rwanda government forces in the clashes in eastern Zaire.

A high-powered delegation from Amnesty International, led by its secretary-general Pierre Sane, will arrive in South Africa today to discuss with the government the sales of arms to Rwanda as well as the illegal export of weapons to neighbouring Burundi, which is said to involve South African brokers.

The French government, which is lobbying for an international conference to end the fighting, said violence will only stop with an "immediate reduction of arms supply in the region". Christoph Barbeau, a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, told Sunday Argus: "But the arms supply to the region can only be resolved in the framework of an international conference and the sooner this happens, the better." The Belgian government has said it is opposed to the export of arms to a region already "swamped with weapons".

A spokesman for the London-based Campaign Against Arms Trade, Rachel Harford said: "It would be very sad if South Africa goes down the same path as the United Kingdom in indiscriminately arm-ing regimes, which are often oppressive governments."

Last week, both the Department of Foreign Affairs, and Water Affairs Minister, Ester Amul, who chairs the National Conventional Arms Control Committee, refused to divulge the nature of the weapons shipped to Rwanda, although Deputy Foreign Minister Arta Palad said South Africa had been assured by the government in Kigali that the weapons would only be used for defensive purposes. Mr Palad said the sales would be reviewed if there was clear evidence the weapons were being used to escalate the conflict.

However, this may already be too late. According to Rwanda's ambassador in Pretoria, Elphias Karama, some of the £1.7 million order has already been delivered.

In Kinshasa, mobs rampaged Tutsi-owned shops and businesses and trashed the Rwandan embassy.

"Emotions are so high there is a practical witch-hunt against anyone who even looks like a Tutsi," said Mr Van Deventer. Ross Herbert reports that, as he drove away yesterday morning from the shattered Rwandan embassy where several students were hiding, a man on the street screamed at him: "After the Rwandans, you are next."

Late on Thursday, the transitional Zairean national parliament voted to eject all Tutsis from government positions. Many Hutus have fled across the Zaire river to the Congo to escape persecution.

Rwanda initially denied aiding Zaire's Tutsis when they were first attacked by the Zaire army and Rwandan Hutu refugees. However, Mr Van Deventer said a Rwandan diplomat had told him three weeks ago that Rwanda intended to take action against refugee camps, from which Hutu extremists have been launching increasingly frequent raids into Rwanda.

The fact that a tiny country like Rwanda could invade and humiliate Zaire, the second largest country in Africa, has shocked Zairians and sharply focused attention on the country's corruption and disorganiza-tion. Zaire's corrupt and ineffective military may not be able to strike back at Rwanda immediately, but Zaire has been wounded sufficiently that a desire for revenge may simmer for years.
Zaire loses key airport to Tutsis

Bunjela said
OVER ONE MILLION MASSED IN ZAIRE

Warning of ‘biggest ever’ refugee disaster

KINSHASA: Huge numbers of refugees massing along a lake in Zaire are expected to die from hunger and disease, particularly after the onset of the rainy season.

Over one million people are massed along Lake Kivu in Zaire in “appalling conditions”, France’s honorary consul in Goma, on the border with Rwanda, said yesterday, the day after the last foreign aid workers fled the area.

Warning of “the biggest humanitarian catastrophe ever recorded”, Mr Patrick Lunes said that if nothing is done in two days “it will no longer be worth it for aid agencies to do anything”.

Apart from fighting they are fleeing, the displaced people face hunger and infectious diseases, a threat that increased with the onset of the rainy season last week.

Relief agency staff, who have their headquarters in Nairobi, say that a high death toll is inevitable, but that they are waiting for politicians to act. “It is above our level now,” one said on condition of anonymity. “It’s inevitable that there will be a lot of deaths.”

Mr Xavier Emmanuelli, French secretary of state for emergency humanitarian action, called on Saturday for a rescue operation for those displaced by the fighting.

“We must not let the pressure ease off,” Emmanuelli said. “Every day counts. One and a half million people are in danger.”

He said France was ready to “put everything into a humanitarian operation co-ordinated with Europe and the UN agencies.” Paris had stocks of food, clothing, tents and medicines ready to be sent “as soon as a possibility opens up”.

The last expatriate aid workers, as well as journalists and resident expatriates, evacuated eastern Zaire on Saturday under mortar and machine-gun fire as naked warriors armed with assault rifles guarded the Goma border post.

Relief workers in Nairobi said yesterday they had lost radio contact with staff left behind, and that they had no idea what had happened to the refugees, who have fled most, if not all, the camps.

The people massing along Lake Kivu’s Sake bay, 30km from Goma, include refugees from the Mugunga camp near Goma as well as Zaireans fleeing fighting between Zairean government troops, Tutsi rebels from Zaire and Rwandan troops, the French consul said.

Meanwhile, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Dr Sadako Ogata cut short her attendance of the UN General Assembly in New York to fly to Geneva on Saturday for emergency talks on the crisis.

In New York, Ogata called for an immediate ceasefire to protect the refugees and displaced people.

Huge preparations are underway for humanitarian intervention as soon as the situation allows, officials in Geneva said.

A Unicef plane loaded with 30 tons of medical supplies was headed yesterday for Kampala, the Ugandan capital, to await clearance to fly to Goma, the first of five planned flights to deliver humanitarian aid in the coming week.

The rains will increase the risk of epidemics, aid officials warned, recalling that over 50 000 people died of cholera two years ago despite the presence of international aid workers.

At the south end of Lake Kivu, residents of the Rwanda border town of Cyangugu yesterday reported heavy artillery battles in eastern Zaire overnight around the airport serving the South Kivu provincial capital Bukavu.

Sources in Cyangugu said Tutsi rebels from Zaire had captured the airport, and that Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi in two nearby camps had fled.

They said the population of the two camps near the airport had swelled to 150 000 with the arrival of refugees who had fled other camps further south.

The rebels captured Bukavu on Wednesday. — Sapa-AFP
MOVING AGAIN: Tutsi refugees queue as they wait to be transferred from one camp to another in the Rwandan town of Gisenye, on the border with Zaire. A refugee crisis is feared there as the Zairean army and Tutsi rebels fight for the control of the border town of Goma.  PICTURE: AP
War fever rages in Zaire as army, government rift widens

Kinshasa – War fever raged through Zaire political circles at the weekend as Tutsis fled the capital, students looted Tutsi homes and a bitter rift between the army and civilian government broke into the open.

On Saturday, Zaire’s armed forces chief of staff, Ehuki Mongo Aundu, bitterly criticised the government of Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo for the defeat his disorderly army had suffered at the hands of Banyumalenge Tutsi rebels in eastern Zaire.

“We regret that the government is moving too slowly and has not given the necessary means,” General Ehuki said.

He promised revenge against Rwanda, but his public criticism more directly threatened to fuel the collapse of Mr. Kengo’s government.

As the Zaire army and Tutsi rebels fought for control of the strategic Goma airport in eastern Zaire, hundreds of students stole vehicles from apparently Tutsi drivers and attacked Tutsi homes, businesses and the Rwandan embassy on Friday.

The students delivered a letter to Mr. Kengo supporting a call by parliament for a declaration of war against Rwanda. Late on Thursday, parliament also called for the ousting of all Tutsis from government jobs and the expulsion of Rwandan refugees.

Mr. Kengo, who is half Polish and half Tutsi, has seen his already weak hold on power further damaged by the rising anti-Tutsi sentiment here.

“Emotions are so high there is a practical witch-hunt against anyone who even looks like a Tutsi,” said Jan van Deventer, the South African ambassador to Zaire. “What is very worrying is that we are at grassroots level that the only ones who can sort things out are the military and that the situation in the east is the perfect excuse for a coup.”

United States ambassador Daniel Simpson discounted the threat of a coup but acknowledged the US was pressing hard to commit the Zaire military to the country’s transition to democracy.

Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi called on South Africa to stop supplying weapons to the Tutsi regime in Rwanda. Mr. Moi was quoted in Kenyan news reports as telling President Mandela that a halt in the shipment of arms to Rwanda could help stop the increase in fighting between Zairian Tutsis and government troops in eastern Zaire.

Kader Asmal, chairman of the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), said today that South Africa would reassess its R67-million Rwandan arms deal after meeting leaders from the Great Lakes region tomorrow.

There was no evidence, even circumstantial, that Rwanda had been using its arms or military formations in strife-torn eastern Zaire, and it would be "gross impertinence" to unilaterally suspend the deal without consulting the countries involved, he told a media briefing. – Foreign Service-Sapa-DPA
The rebels have seized a string of towns along Zaire's eastern border and are mopping up resistance in the city of Goma, the headquarters of OAU officials said the Nairobi talks would seek to broker a cease-fire between Zaire's retreating army and the rebels, who seemed to have formed a broad alliance with other groups opposed to Mobutu's rule.

Journalists saw Rwandan soldiers cross into Goma on Saturday, but Rwanda has persistently denied any presence in Zaire, and has said it morally supports their cause.

Rwandan army chief of staff Sam Kaku said: "There are no Rwandan troops in eastern Zaire, we never went there and we have no intention whatsoever of getting involved in that conflict." Those calling on Rwanda to withdraw its troops from Zaire were acting on false intelligence.

He admitted Rwanda had shelved or fired on the Zairean towns of Bukavu and Goma in the past week but said this was in reply to Zairean aggression on Rwandan soil.

Meanwhile, it is believed that a top level delegation from Amnesty International, which arrived in Johannesburg yesterday, is considering an appeal of SA's weapons sales to Rwanda and the possibility of illegal arms sales to neighbouring Burundi.

Pahad said government would be willing to meet the delegation to discuss SA arms sales to Rwanda.

He said that while all efforts should be made to establish whether South Africans were involved in illegal arms sales to Rwanda and Burundi, such allegations were often a "smokescreen" behind which the real arms merchants could hide.

He said if the amnesty delegation raised the issue of weapons sales to Rwanda and Burundi, SA would seek for concrete proof that the SA arms were being used for purposes other than those intended.

Reports this week suggested that SA arms, including R4 assault rifles, were being used by Rwandan government forces supporting rebels in Zaire.

Pahad yesterday reiterated that government had sold Rwanda weapons only "after long and deliberate discussions" and with the aim of helping to prevent further genocide.

"We thought at the time that it was the correct decision, and at present we are constantly inquiring if any of these arms have been sent abroad. We have sought and received repeated reassurances that the Rwandan army will not cross the country's border. We have also sought assurances that these arms will not be exported elsewhere."

Comment: Page 13
Zaire refuses to attend regional peace summit

KIGALI: Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu yesterday said he would attend a regional summit this week on the crisis in eastern Zaire, but it appeared there would be no one there from the Zairian side.

Bizimungu called on all sides in the conflict in eastern Zaire to declare a ceasefire and enable the refugees there — most of whom are Rwandan Hutus — to return home.

But Zaire said it would not attend the summit — called to try to deal with the fighting and the looming refugee tragedy in its eastern provinces.

Zaire's Interior Minister Mr Kamanda wa Kamanda reiterated his government's charge of aggression against Rwanda, which Zaire accuses of helping Tutsi rebels seize part of eastern Zaire.

"We are definitely not going to take part in talks in Nairobi, and could not talk while our territory is occupied by foreign forces," said Kamanda.

Anti-Tutsi sentiment mounted in the vast Central African country, with hundreds of frightened ethnic Tutsis escaping into neighboring Congo or going into hiding.

Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi plans to host the leaders of Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Cameroon for talks in Nairobi today.

Soldiers of Rwanda's Tutsi-led army have reportedly taken part in some of the fighting on Zaire's eastern border, which has sent thousands of refugees, mostly Rwandan Hutus, fleeing for their lives.

The Zaire army yesterday paraded before journalists people it said were Rwandan Tutsi prisoners, captured in recent fighting.

The 10 prisoners, one of whom claimed to be of Zairian origin, were brought to army headquarters with documents identifying them as members of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA).

Fighting flared two weeks ago following attempts by provincial authorities, backed by the army, to expel Banyamulenge Tutsis whose ancestors settled in Zaire from Rwanda 200 years ago.

And ethnic Tutsis were attacked and harassed during demonstrations in Kinshasa last week, and many Tutsi families have reported missing relatives.

A Zairian rebel spokesman declared a unilateral three-week ceasefire yesterday to allow for the repatriation of refugees.

— And while his country edged towards war, President Mobutu Sese Seko, an unwelcome guest in Switzerland, flew out secretly on Monday and landed in Lausanne on the French Riviera. Mobutu had prostate cancer surgery in a Swiss clinic on August 22.

French diplomatic sources said he would stay for a few days before heading home.

Zaire has been tottering on the brink of disintegration in the absence of the strongman president, who has held the vast Central African nation together for more than 30 years.

Sapa-Reuters-APF
World tries to work out a policy to settle Zaire

New York – The UN Security Council yesterday remained undecided on authorising a multinational force to protect refugees in Zaire amid fundamental questions over the mission's objectives, council diplomats said.

Informal discussions are underway here on merging French proposals for a multinational force with a German initiative calling for humanitarian corridors aimed at protecting refugees forced from their camps in eastern Zaire by fighting between rebel Tutsis and the Zairian army.

The Germans want to set up "neutralised zones as safe havens" and corridors to ensure the distribution of aid to more than 1 million Rwandan and other refugees in Zaire as well as their "voluntary repatriation".

Diplomats said that much of the discussion so far has focused on what type of force should be involved, whether the corridors should be used to feed the refugees now scattered in the bush, or to facilitate their return home, and what to do about the armed Hutu militia among them.

But "there is no agreement on what the problem is and how to address it", a US diplomat told AFP.

"Who is neutral in this conflict? Is France neutral? Is the US neutral?" asked another diplomat, referring to a French initiative to protect the Rwandan Hutus during the 1994 civil war, and the perceived US support for the Tutsis.

Although Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko yesterday expressed support for an "international neutral" force, Rwanda has expressed opposition to any troops on its territory.

"The president agrees to the sending of a neutral international force," UN special envoy Raymond Chretien told a press conference after talks with Mobutu Sese Seko at a hotel in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin on the French Riviera, where the president keeps a residence.

French former humanitarian affairs minister Bernard Kouchner, who met UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali yesterday, also pressed for the refugees' return.

Kouchner said the Rwandan refugees "should be escorted to their villages" to prevent retaliation by the Tutsi authorities, pointing to the example of northern Iraq in 1991 when Kurds who had fled Iraqi repression were successfully repatriated.

Security Council diplomats said that the situation here would become clearer as discussions in various European capitals and in Washington evolved.

The United States is considering offering logistical support, but no ground troops, for a military intervention, while France is refusing to go it alone. French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette yesterday denounced the "spinelessness" of the international community for its slow response to the two-week old crisis. – Sapa, AFP, Reuters.
SA plans support but no troops for peace force in Zaire

BY PETER FABRICIUS
Star Foreign Service

The South African Government is hurriedly preparing plans to contribute personnel, logistics and equipment - but probably not combat troops - to support an international peacekeeping force to intervene in the conflict in Zaire, if asked by the United Nations.

SA is actively participating in a wide-ranging series of international diplomatic initiatives to try to create such a force to establish safe corridors through which to escort Hutu refugees out of eastern Zaire and back into refugee camps, or to their homes in Rwanda or Burundi.

The fighting between Hutu refugees and Zairian Tutsis in eastern Zaire has already sucked in the Zairian and Rwandan armies and threatens to engulf the region, and even the whole continent. Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Patad said at a press briefing in Pretoria yesterday.

The Government announced yesterday that it had temporarily suspended the supply of an R37-million consignment of arms to the Rwandan government because of reports of incursions by Rwandan armed forces across the border into Zaire to fight alongside ethnic Zairian Tutsis.

Patad said that if asked by the UN to contribute to a peacekeeping force, the Government would have to consult with its southern African neighbours about what role it could play, and with the SA National Defence Force and the intelligence services to see how SA could contribute.

The Government was aware that SA was an important part of the continent and that it was in its broad interest to try to contribute to the solution of its problems.

He did not think SA troops were ready to participate in a peacekeeping force as they were still being trained for that role, but SA could contribute other personnel.

Various government departments had been meeting over the past few days to sketch out scenarios for SA's possible involvement in a Zairian peacekeeping force, by sending support personnel such as technicians or medical servicemen, or by providing equipment such as aircraft to carry the troops of other southern African countries to Zaire.
NAIROBI: A blur of international meetings and words is masking the fact that no power capable of saving 1.2 million refugees scattered in eastern Zaire has given them a single cup of water, let alone a foreign protection force.

Not only Africa but the world appears largely paralysed by bad memories of Somalia and the Rwanda genocide.

"The West is willing to give money for someone else to clear up a mess, but it will not send white bodies," said a UN official. Diplomats in Nairobi said it was clear the US was unwilling to send troops to bring order to eastern Zaire.

And without the military lead of the US, which dragged the UN as a force into Somalia in 1993, it appeared that France would have difficulty persuading enough Western allies to intervene.

Its allies, and arch regional enemy Rwanda, are well aware of the results of France's Operation Turquoise military intervention from eastern Zaire into Rwanda in 1994: safe havens for Hutus, many of whom took part in the genocide of up to a million Tutsis.

Lives were saved by the operation, but these people, including Hutu extremists, only fled over the border into eastern Zaire and helped fill the refugee camps that the international community has paid $1 million (about R4.7m) a day to support ever since.

"We have learnt nothing at all since we did nothing in Rwanda in 1994 during the genocide," said a UN aid official.

"It's not necessarily just because it's Africa. You don't really see people lining up to go into Afghanistan. The Europeans had something to prove in the former Yugoslavia. But no one has anything left to prove in Africa, except France."

President Nelson Mandela has pledged South Africa's support for a peacekeeping force in eastern Zaire, Radio 702 said yesterday.

"We will respond to any call made to us by the United Nations, by the Organisation of African Unity, and by the leaders in the region," he said. — Reuters, Sapa-AP

West won't send whites to Zaire
Pierre "Kosie" Roux: city hospital superintendent

Cape Town doctor and former Chief Superintendent of Somerset Hospital Pierre "Kosie" Roux has died at his Table View home after a long illness. He was 88. Dr Roux was born in Cape Town and went to Jan van Riebeeck School. After completing matric in 1943, he studied for an electrical engineering degree at UCT between 1944 and 1946 before deciding that medicine was his main interest. He graduated as a doctor in 1954 and started in private practice.

Dr Roux joined the Cape Provincial Administration medical service in 1972. He was Chief Superintendent of Woodstock Hospital for 10 years, then served as Chief Superintendent at Somerset Hospital from 1982 to 1992 when he retired. After retiring, Dr Roux and his wife, Dawn, travelled to England and Canada. He was a keen fisherman and in his spare time enjoyed playing the piano.

His wife described him as a "wonderful father and husband." He was totally dedicated to his family and always made me feel very special," she said.

Mrs Roux said her husband was a dedicated, hard working person who always strove to get a job done as soon as possible.

"He often worked with people who didn't pull their weight and ended up arguing with them," she said.

"He got along well with people most of the time," she recalled.

She said her husband fought his battle against his illness with courage and dignity.

Close friends and colleagues described Dr Roux as a "fighter" and said it was a great privilege and honour to know him and to be associated with him.

His daughter, Lucille, who lives in Canada, arrived in Cape Town for her father's funeral.

"It is a shock and we'll sadly miss him," she said.

His other two daughters, Pauline and Elise, arrived from Australia and Port Elizabeth this week to attend the funeral. Dr Roux is survived by his wife and his three daughters from a previous marriage, Lucille, Pauline and Elise, sons-in-law Robert, Johnny and Lee and grandchildren Jean Paul and Ash Lee.

The funeral was held at Maitland cemetery this week. - Mario Wyngaard, Staff

The South African Government is hurriedly preparing plans to contribute personnel, logistics and equipment - but probably not combat troops - to support an international peacekeeping force to intervene in the conflict in Zaire, if asked to do so by the United Nations Security Council.

South Africa is actively participating in a wide-ranging series of international diplomatic initiatives to try to create such a force to establish safe corridors through which to escort Hutu refugees out of Eastern Zaire and back into refugee camps or to their homes in Rwanda or Burundi.

The fighting between Hutu refugees and Zairian Tutsis in eastern Zaire has already sucked in the Zairian and Rwandan armies and threatens to engulf the region - and even the whole continent - Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad said at a press briefing in Pretoria yesterday.

The government announced yesterday that it had temporarily suspended the supply of a $87 million consignment of arms to the Rwandan government because of reports of incursions by Rwandan armed forces across the border into Zaire to fight alongside ethnic Zairian Tutsis.

Pahad said that if asked by the UN to contribute to a peacekeeping force, the government would have to consult with its Southern African neighbours about what role it could play and with the National Defence Force and the Intelligence services to see how South Africa could contribute.

The government was aware that South Africa was an important part of the continent and that it was in its broad interests to try to contribute to the solution of its problems.

Pressed further, Pahad said he did not think South African troops were ready to participate in a peacekeeping force as they were still being trained for that role, but the country could contribute other personnel and logistics.

Official sources said that various government departments had been meeting over the last few days to sketch out scenarios for South Africa's possible involvement in a Zairian peacekeeping force.

They said that although the SANDF was training troops to participate in peacekeeping, they were not yet ready.

But South Africa could possibly contribute to a Zairian peacekeeping force by sending support personnel such as technical or medical personnel or by providing equipment such as aircraft to carry the troops of other Southern African coun-
nising options in Zaire on the government to intervene

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state on his current tour. Phadah said that the UN Security Council would probably meet soon to decide what to do about Zaire.

Commenting on the government's decision to suspend arms sales to Rwanda, Phadah said the moratorium would be reviewed once stability returned to eastern Zaire and it was satisfied that no cross-border incursions were taking place and the weapons would only be used for self-defence.

Arms sales are controlled by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee, chaired by Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Kader Asmal, who told a parliamentary committee on Tuesday that the new government had only delivered armoured personnel carriers to the Rwanda capital, Kigali, since signing an R180million arms deal with that country.

While Mr Asmal briefed the committee, the United Nations published a report that nevertheless named South Africa as one of several states to have broken a UN-sponsored arms embargo against Rwanda since 1994.

The suspension of arms sales matched the first of several proposals profiered by Greg Mills, director of the South African Institute of Foreign Affairs, during an interview yesterday.

Dr Mills said South Africa had to formulate a clear foreign policy response to the crisis in the Great Lakes region, and had to divorce this response from a possible contribution to military peacekeeping operations. He said some analysts would doubt South Africa's capacity to make available more than 260 troops for such roles, and to do so within 18 months.

"South Africa has to become engaged in bettering the situation. It has to be recognised in the South African government that problems will result, both if there's no intervention by outside powers, or by South Africa.

"South Africa will be affected by refugee flows, and will be affected by an extreme amount of negativity, a sort of CNS perception of instability and chaos in Africa. Unless it engages in this situation, South Africa will have no role in Africa."

He said the first aid to be offered by South Africa should, ideally, be political intervention that took the form of conflict resolution and prevention.

"This would be South Africa's first active participation in such a force though it had observer status at the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. Several diplomatic initiatives are under way in the international community to find a solution to the crisis. Today the European Union development ministers meet to discuss a French proposal to contribute troops to a peacekeeping force in the United States, other European nations and African countries did so too, Phadah said.

Observers believe the Rwandan Government would not tolerate French troops because of France's support for the Hutus. Phadah stressed that South Africa believed that any peacekeeping force would have to be proposed by the United Nations Security Council and supported by the Organisa-

African dilemma: Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo whose department is now examining policy options

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Colin Danel

"Unless it engages in this situation, South Africa will have no future role to play in Africa"

He said South Africa supported a proposal for such a force made at a summit of regional African leaders on Wednesday in Nairobi which South Africa attended as an observer. The OAU would meet on Monday to try to carry the Nairobi proposal forward. Asked about reported Zairian opposition to international troops on its soil, Phadah said President Mandela had been trying to make contact with Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko for a week to discuss the crisis. Phadah said former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere and a Burundian mediator would visit South Africa on Saturday to discuss the crisis with Mr Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki would be

South African involvement would necessitate a high-level delegation being sent to the troubled region, but, he conceded, the difficulty was that in Zaire, there was no-one with whom to negotiate.

The president, Mobutu Sese Seko, is in France, where he is recuperating after cancer treatment. Back home, the rest of the government has been unable to stem the tide of rebels seizing control of vast areas of Zaire.

Dr Mills said if a ceasefire could not be achieved, South Africa would be expected to contribute to a peace enforcement force, but its engagement would have to be chan-
Thousands on the move as fighting erupts again

"We have no means of taking care of them, no food, no medicine," says charity group, as Zaire refugee crisis worsens

Reuters
Goma, Zaire

Mortar and anti-aircraft fire are thundering again in eastern Zaire, making worse the plight of a million Hutu refugees uprooted anew in the country they fled to after ethnic bloodbaths in Rwanda and Burundi.

Zairians scattered by the conflict face the same ordeals. Some of those seeking safety in the chaotic region have been reported dying of thirst in the jungle.

Yesterday's clashes were the first substantial fighting since Tutsi rebels declared a truce at the start of the week.

Plans for an international rescue mission remained mired in what some diplomats call apathy, with France and Spain largely isolated on their proposal to secure humanitarian corridors.

France yesterday asked the United Nations Security Council to approve an intervention force for two months. Other European Union governments and the United States are hesitant and the French plan is not expected to be adopted this week.

The ripple effects of the conflict in eastern Zaire swept through the capital Kinshasa more than 1,600 km away again yesterday. Students accusing the government of weakness briefly occupied parliament and paraded coffins of comrades killed in earlier clashes with security forces.

Witnesses said gunfire erupted at twilight north of the world's largest refugee camp at Mugunga, near Goma.

Fighting also raged along the frontlines between the army and Banyamulenge rebels, who effectively seized control of Zaire's two eastern provinces before declaring a unilateral truce on Monday.

Zairians feeling the Tutsi offensive arrived with swollen feet in Zaire's north-eastern city of Kisangani, more than 500km from their homes.

But there was little news of the largest refugee group - Rwandan Hutus who fled to Zaire in hundreds of thousands. They are afraid to go home for fear of revenge for the massacre of up to a million Tutsis or their sympathisers by hardline Hutus.

Some are armed and their presence in camps has provoked cross-border attacks by the Tutsi-led Rwandan army accused by Zaire of fighting alongside the Banyamulenge rebels.

Zairian villagers said yesterday that Rwandan Hutu fighters seized their children as hostages in eastern Zaire. Two mothers in Keshiro village near Goma said they had lost 12 children to Rwandan Hutu kidnappers and the director of a local school said about 100 children had been taken.

"The Interahamwe came to our house on Saturday. They forced my family to leave the village and took all eight of my children with them as hostages to Mugunga camp," said Suzanne Damukuzi.

The Interahamwe extremist Hutu militiamen had a leading role in the 1994 genocide of Rwanda's minority Tutsis.

In Brussels, ministers of the European Union, pilloried for inaction in the Zaire crisis, said they were ready to do all they could but only agreed to dispatch a new fact-finding team. EU aid chief Emma Bonino stressed it was up to the UN Security Council to create conditions necessary for aid work to resume. "We can go tomorrow ... only we are forbidden," she said.

France and Spain remained isolated in their drive to send their troops in a UN-backed force to ensure security for aid distribution, Ethiopia has also offered to contribute.

« Hutu refugees paint horrific picture.»

» Rebels try to administer east Zaire.«
TUTSI REBELS TURN DOCTORS BACK

Refugees ‘dying like flies’ as aid blocked

CT 8/1/1996

NAIROBI: Starving refugees in Zaire have been uprooting trees to suck the roots for moisture.

REBELS continued yesterday to block relief workers from reaching more than a million Hutu refugees stranded in eastern Zaire as some of them who crossed over into Rwanda said others had been “dying like flies”.

Mr Peter Kessler, regional spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said in Nairobi that refugees who crossed over into Rwanda yesterday told a UNHCR representative in the border town of Gisenyi that they had been trying to flee west, deeper into Zaire, but gave up because they were starving.

They had been uprooting trees in the mountains of North Kivu province to suck the roots for moisture, he said.

The refugees, who had earlier fled ethnic fighting in Rwanda and Burundi, started leaving their sprawling camps on October 13 to escape fighting between the Tutsi rebels and Zairean troops, and tens of thousands of Zaireans fled their villages.

The last expatriate aid workers in eastern Zaire crossed from the border town of Goma into Rwanda on November 2 under mortar and machine-gun fire.

More than 700,000 refugees were in camps near Goma, the North Kivu capital, and another 500,000 around Bukavu, the South Kivu capital, and Uvira, farther south. Most of them are unwilling to return home to their countries, where Tutsis dominate the armies, for fear of attack.

JOHANNESBURG: President Nelson Mandela has promised to play a major diplomatic role in peace efforts in central Africa, a senior Zairean envoy said yesterday.

It was not clear what Mandela would do to help end fighting in the Great Lakes region, where Zaire’s army has been bottling ethnic Tutsi rebels supported by Rwanda.

“Zairean” President Mobutu has asked his colleague (Mandela) to play a major diplomatic role in this conflict, and he is expected to play the role that is expected from him,” special envoy Mr Bonare Ngbanda told a news conference a day after talks with Mandela.

Ngbanda, special security adviser to Mobutu Sese Seko, said Mandela’s government had also promised humanitarian assistance.

Mandela has so far resisted a unilateral diplomatic role in peacemaking or a military role for his defence force.

In Bukavu, a UNHCR doctor had to use a Swiss army knife to operate on people wounded when rebels seized control.

Argentine Dr Abel Pasqualini, 44, was faced with dozens of wounded patients after Tutsi Banyamulenge rebels began fighting Zairean troops for control of Bukavu on October 29. Two days later he had carried out 92 operations for bullet wounds without anaesthetic.

The surgeon, sent to Bukavu by October 17, works by torchlight for lack of electricity, stitches up wounds with sewing thread and uses cut-up sheets soaked in hot water for bandages.

His operating theatre is a table in the lounge of his villa.

“arrested” by the rebels for two or three days and not allowed to assist any refugees, he said.

The rebels, who now control much of eastern Zaire, turned back other medical teams which tried to cross from Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania, Raich said.

Relief agencies were meanwhile stockpiling food and medicines in the region. UN World Food Programme spokeswoman Ms Brenda Barton said it had 60,000 tons of food in neighbouring countries, enough to feed 2.2 million people for two months.

Dr Jordi Raich, of Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders) said the rebels had turned back medical teams at several crossing points although they were allowing journalists through.

One team sailed down Lake Tanganyika from the Tanzanian port of Kigoma to the Zairean town of Kamembe, but were ”retained” by the rebels for two or three days and not allowed to assist any refugees, he said.

The rebels, who now control much of eastern Zaire, turned back other medical teams which tried to cross from Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania, Raich said.

Relief agencies were meanwhile stockpiling food and medicines in the region. UN World Food Programme spokeswoman Ms Brenda Barton said it had 60,000 tons of food in neighbouring countries, enough to feed 2.2 million people for two months. — Sapa-AFP
Mobutu may yet twist his way back as kingpin

KINSHASA: The end of the Zairean politics struggle has been postponed with the inauguration of Patrice Lumumba, the new president of the Republic of the Congo, on 17 June.

Mobutu Sese Seko, the deposed president of Zaire, has been given a new lease of life by the new government. His hopes for a return to power are based on the fact that the new government is not fully committed to the principle of a multiparty system.

The new government has given Mobutu hope by announcing that it will hold elections within six months. This has encouraged him to return to Zaire, where he is currently in exile. The Laurent Kabila government has also been criticized for its authoritarian rule and human rights abuses.

The new government has also been accused of corruption and nepotism, which has led to widespread discontent among the population. The opposition has called for new elections and for the ouster of Kabila, who is widely seen as a puppet of Mobutu.

The situation in Zaire remains tense, with opposition leaders calling for a general strike and protests against the new government. The international community has also expressed concern about the situation in Zaire, with the United Nations calling for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

In Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the new government has been welcomed with mixed reactions. Some have praised the new government for its commitment to democracy, while others have criticized its lack of progress in tackling poverty and corruption.

The new government has also announced plans to reform the country's economy and to attract foreign investment. However, many are skeptical about the government's ability to implement these reforms.

In conclusion, the situation in Zaire remains uncertain, with the new government facing significant challenges. The international community will be watching closely to see how the new government will handle the country's many problems.
Refugees, die like flies, in Zaire

INTERNATIONAL NEWS
Zaire refugees riot as aid food runs out

West seems helpless to stop tragedy

Goma, Zaire – Zairean Tutsi rebels fired into the air and beat back more than 1,000 hungry people trying to seize the last food in a United Nations refugee agency warehouse today.

Two people collapsed outside the gates as the mob stampeded and tried to break into the warehouse when trucks laden with the last food drove out to two hospitals in Goma.

Meanwhile it is reported from France that British Prime Minister John Major said today it was possible that British troops could be sent to Zaire to aid humanitarian relief.

Mr Major told BBC radio at an Anglo-French summit in Bordeaux that it was not certain that was the right thing to do “but I don’t rule it out”.

Britain has previously shown reluctance about a military commitment in proposed international efforts to aid victims of a conflict that has sent more than a million fleeing within Zaire.

France has proposed a multinational force to avert a humanitarian disaster among refugees displaced by fighting.

The French insist that all major nations must take part in the force, which would help to get relief to refugees in eastern Zaire left without food by the fighting between Zairean troops and Rwandan-backed Tutsi rebels.

In eastern Zaire, mortar and anti-aircraft fire were thundering again today, making worse the plight of a million Hutu refugees uprooted in the country to which they fled after bloodbaths in Rwanda and Burundi.

Zaireans scattered by the conflict face the same ordeals. Some of those seeking safety in the chaotic region have been reportedly dying of thirst in the jungle.

Yesterday’s clashes were the first substantial fighting since Tutsi rebels declared a truce at the start of the week.

Plans for an international rescue mission remained mired in what some diplomats call apathy, with France and Spain largely isolated in their proposal to secure humanitarian corridors.

At United Nations headquarters in New York, France yesterday asked the Security Council to approve an intervention force for two months. Other European Union governments and the United States are hesitant and the French plan is not expected to be adopted this week.

The ripple effects of the conflict in eastern Zaire again swept through the capital Kinshasa, more than 1,600 km away.

Students accusing the government of weakness briefly occupied parliament and paraded coffins of comrades killed in earlier clashes with security forces.

Witnesses said gunfire erupted at twilight yesterday north of the world’s largest refugee camp at Mugunga, near Goma. The fate of its more than 400,000 inmates has been unclear for days.

Fighting also raged along the frontlines between the army and Banyamulenge rebels, who effectively seized control of Zaire’s two eastern provinces before declaring a unilateral truce on Monday.

Zaireans fleeing the Tutsi offensive arrived weary and sick in the northeastern city of Kisangani, more than 500 km from their homes.

“We have no food, no medicine. It’s a catastrophe,” said an aid worker. – Reuter
Refugees stampeded for food in Zaire

Goma, Zaire - Zaïrean aid workers and rebels had to beat people back from a nearly bare relief food warehouse yesterday as they tried to distribute the remaining meagre rations left behind by international aid workers before they fled a week ago.

Rebel soldiers, who last week routed the Zaïrean army and Hutu militia from the town of 300,000 - but not from the surrounding region - fired into the air as hundreds of ravenous residents clawed their way towards packages of biscuits. Local employees of the UN refugee agency and the Red Cross have continued to carry out their duties of burying the dead and delivering water and the little food that remains.

Reports of overnight shelling and anti-aircraft fire on the outskirts of Goma could not be confirmed locally. The situation of the hundreds of thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees who fled their camps near Goma because of the fighting between the Zaïrean army and rebels was presumed to be even worse than that of townpeople. But aid agencies have not been able to contact any of them or get emergency food supplies into eastern Zaïre since two weeks ago.

A few refugees who straggled across the border into Rwanda on Thursday told of dozens dying of thirst and many being forced to eat roots to stay alive.

**Envoy**

As the plight of refugees and ordinary Zaïreans steadily worsened, two top UN envoys met in the Rwandan capital Kigali yesterday for talks with the Tutsi-dominated government on how to handle the crisis in eastern Zaïre.

The basic problem is how to get food and medical supplies to the refugees and local residents when aid agencies can't land planes or drive trucks into the area because of lack of security. "Of the very urgent issues I will also raise today with the government of Rwanda ... the need to bring food, medicine and humanitarian assistance to the refugees as soon as possible, not in the weeks to come," but in the hours and days to come, UN special envoy to the region Raymond Cretean said on arrival.

He was joined by the UN's special humanitarian co-ordinator for the region, Sergio Vieira de Mello.

The UN Security Council was scheduled later yesterday to discuss a proposal by France for an international force to move into the area to patrol humanitarian corridors through which food could be distributed and refugees could return home to Rwanda.

International response to the idea has been lukewarm. But British Prime Minister John Major yesterday raised the possibility of British involvement.

"I have no doubt the British may be involved, whether it is logistic support, whether it is financial support, whether possibly it is even troop support," Major said during a Franco-British summit in Bordeaux, France.

Rwanda has been given mixed
Refugees raid aid warehouses

Conflict spreads in Zaire

Goma, (Zaire) - War in eastern Zaire is threatening to spill over into the rest of the country as more and more people flee and greater numbers go hungry, aid workers said.

Food riots hit this town in eastern Zaire yesterday as armed rebels fired into the air to beat back more than 1,000 hungry people who were trying to seize the last food in a United Nations' warehouse.

"I have had nothing to eat today and nothing but water yesterday," said 60-year-old Fessu Mahkenya.

No food has entered Goma, which has an estimated population of about 200,000, since rebel forces seized the city late last week. Virtually all its shops and hotels have been looted.

An emergency health committee in Goma appealed for international aid agencies to intervene and supply the lakeside city with medicine and medical equipment.

Goma's last foreign aid workers fled to Rwanda last Saturday after fierce battles which killed more than 400 people.

"The whole international community is called to immediate action at the highest level before it is too late," said Jean Nicholas Kasereka Busara, who heads the city's health committee.

"This tragedy will become far worse unless urgent measures are taken," said the committee, adding that 300,000 Zaireans had been hit by the conflict, which entered its fourth week yesterday.

A complex multi-sided war in eastern Zaire has cut off more than one million Rwandan refugees from the outside world and also driven more and more Zaireans to hunger.

A Spanish aid worker who fled Zaire this week told a meeting in Nairobi of virtual mayhem in the east as some 175,000 refugees fled two camps after looting aid agency warehouses.

UN officials quoted him as saying competing armed groups of Zairean soldiers, Rwandan Hutu militiamen and refugees were rampaging in the region, looting camps and Zairean villages.

He said 175,000 refugees who fled Kahindo and Katala camps headed west through wide lava fields, which emit dangerous gases, and some died from lack of food and water.

"We were amazed to see some of them even climb up mountains," he said.

"We could see the campfires at night," said the aid worker, twice threatened with execution by former Rwandan troops.

Weeks of hand-wringing by governments and aid agencies have so far produced no international consensus on what can be done to avert an even greater humanitarian disaster.

But, diplomatic efforts yesterday concentrated on Rwandan refugees, seen as a key player in the crisis because of its backing for the rebels in Zaire.

UN special envoy Raymond Chrétien held talks in the Rwandan capital Kigali with the country's two leaders to try to secure their support for the deployment of a UN force in eastern Zaire.

"The main issue in the talks with the Rwandans is to seek their support, their blessings for the deployment of a UN humanitarian force in Zaire," a UN diplomat said.

The Rwandan Hutu refugees, half of whom are under 16, include tens of thousands of former Rwandan army troops and militiamen who fled their homeland in 1994 after the genocide of up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Armed Hutus, who fear death if they return to Rwanda, now guard what is left of the refugee camps in Zaire and have denied access to outsiders ever since an insurrection involving Tutsis and other Zaireans cut them off from foreign aid.

Zairean villagers near the huge Mugunga camp west of Goma said Rwandan Hutu fighters had seized about 100 local children to use as human shields in the event of any rebel advance on the refugee camp.

In the rebel-held town of Bukavu, Zaireans said Rwandan Hutu refugees fleeing Tutsi rebels were looting villages.

The food riots were a vivid illustration that Zaireans, and not only the Rwandan refugees, are caught up in a tragedy of growing proportions in a country plagued by secessionary moves since it gained independence from Belgium in 1960.
In a Vale of Tears

Righting for the Life

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31/10/16

by G. O. Donnan

ELEVEN FEET... This, says Grant, is the water level near the rock-cut entrance to a tunnel at Tanami Station. The rocks that make up the wall above the water are the same, in part, as those used by K. B. Watson-Watt, and its high station on the Tanami Range, near the northern end of the station, is his by right. The rocks on the north side of the river are used to show the extent of the station. The rock-cut entrance to the tunnel is the same as that at Tanami Station, and the rocks above the water are the same, in part, as those used by K. B. Watson-Watt, and its high station on the Tanami Range, near the northern end of the station, is his by right.
EU ministers ask UN to send troops to Zaire

Need for urgent action while OAU conflict prevention body works out plans and develops proposals for African force.

Reuters, AFP

European Union aid ministers called on the UN Security Council yesterday to reconvene urgently and agree to send soldiers to help more than a million refugees dying in eastern Zaire.

Speaking after a hectic round of talks with Zairian leaders, they said they were shocked at the Security Council's decision in New York on Saturday not to make a firm decision on a multinational force until November 20.

That is when it will receive a report on the practicalities of sending troops to embattled eastern Zaire to secure the region and to protect humanitarian workers trying to get aid to the stranded refugees.

"November 20 is too late. We believe that there is a possibility of mounting within a very short period of time an operation which will save many lives," Irish Development Minister Joan Burton said.

"The Security Council 'should reconvene to put the mechanisms in place for an emergency operation which is provided with appropriate security,' she said.

The four-strong EU delegation, led by the European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, Emma Bonino, spent a day of talks with Zaire's Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo and its foreign, interior and defence ministers.

Top of the agenda was to get Zaire to agree to allow urgent aid to be sent to refugees in North and South Kivu, who are said to be "dying like flies" after fleeing fighting between mainly Hutu rebels and government forces.

"We have the gravest of humanitarian crises," said Burton, president of the Council of European Development Ministers.

"We think that it will be necessary to mount an actual humanitarian operation in Zaire itself, possibly in the central town of Kisangani, where many of the refugees were beheaded," she said.

Foreign ministers from 17 African nations are to meet in Addis Ababa today to seek an urgent solution to the crisis in eastern Zaire, with differing African and French plans for a multinational force high on the agenda.

The Organisation of African Unity's top conflict prevention body, meeting for the first time on the crisis, is due to work out plans for intervention in the war-torn region and develop proposals on the composition of a "neutral force" which the OAU last week called on the United Nations to establish.

The OAU said the force should set up temporary sanctuaries for the more than one million mainly Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi fleeing their camps in Zaire to escape fighting between Tutsi rebels and Zairian troops.

France has also been pushing the UN to deploy a 5,000-strong emergency force made up of troops from Africa, Europe and the United States. The Security Council has approved the idea in principle, but US, British, Russian and Chinese doubts over the proposal have delayed authorisation.

Confident Mobutu to return before end of month

BY JAMES TOMLINSON

Star Foreign Service

Cap-Martin, French Riviera—President Mobutu, 66, said yesterday he would return to Kinshasa before the end of this month.

"I will reorganise the state and army and end the rebel movement," he said in an interview.

He said: "I do not have generalised cancer ... I am recovering well from a prostate cancer operation in August."

He accused Rwanda of invading eastern Zaire with the complicity of Banyamulenge Tutsis.

Western criticism of his wealth and corruption have been set aside by the Zairian masses.

Journalists posted outside Mobutu's villa in France have noted that his few visitors include "barry Europeans who look like mercenaries."

These hints credit to reports that secret recruitment has started to provide Mobutu with a strike force independent of a United Nations' action.
Zaire govt uses refugees as shields, rebels claim

GOMA, ZAIRE: As the crisis deepens in eastern Zaire where more than a million refugees are stranded, the West's response to the disaster has stalled.

Rebels in control of eastern Zaire accused their government of using refugees and displaced Zaireans as "human shields" as Western aid ministers arrived in Kinshasa for talks on the crisis.

Members of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, the rebel group that has seized control of key cities in the east, said they had not responded to the rebels were abiding by a unilateral ceasefire declared last Monday.

Shells fired from the west of the city landed on Goma on Saturday night, killing a young girl and wounding one other person. One hit a private house and the other a military camp.

The rebels, mostly Tutsis of Rwandan origin, say that the shells are being fired by former Rwandan Hutu soldiers and militiamen, in refugee in Zaire since the ethnic genocide of 1994 and now holed up around the Mugunga refugee camp, 15km west of Goma.

The camp housed 400,000 refugees at its peak and some civilians remain there. Others, who fled the camp amid fighting between Zairean government troops and the rebels, are close by at Sake, slightly to the west.

In total more than one million people, both Rwandan refugees and local Zaireans, are stranded in eastern Zaire without access to humanitarian aid as a result of over a month of fighting between the rebels and the government.

Thousands are reported to be dying of hunger, thirst and disease.

The West's response to the disaster has stalled, with the UN Security Council deciding at the weekend to delay authorisation for a multinational force to protect the refugees pending clarification of French proposals.

Mr Xavier Emmanuelli, French secretary of state for emergency humanitarian action, blasted the inaction yesterday, calling on the Security Council to move rapidly to help the displaced people.

Speaking on the French LCI cable news television channel, Emmanuelli called for the "presence of an international army with a UN mandate" to "secure" the refugees and humanitarian aid.

Accusing the international community of paralysis, he warned: "We are heading for the biggest humanitarian disaster ever."

African nations are pushing ahead with their own initiative for a multinational force and are due to meet for a summit in Addis Ababa today to fine-tune the proposal.

Western officials are criss-crossing the area for talks on the crisis.

EU humanitarian aid commissioner Ms Emma Bonino arrived in Kinshasa with a delegation of about 30 officials yesterday as UN special envoy Mr Raymond Cher- tiem prepared to leave the capital for Uganda and Rwanda.

Chretien was leaving after talks with Rwandan and Zairean officials on plans to supply aid to the refugees that he said at the weekend had "met as many obstacles as solutions."

Bonino is also due to meet Zairean leader Mr Kengo Wa Dondo for talks on the crisis.

Amid the discussions, a German non-governmental organisation reported yesterday that it had managed to deliver two shipments of medicine and medical equipment to Goma in the past four days.

The Christoffel-Blinden mission in Bonn said that it had managed to send five lorries filled with supplies across the border into Goma on Thursday and Saturday.

The aid was the first to reach the city in two weeks.

Relief agency reconnaissance teams were also standing by in Rwanda early yesterday for a green light to go into Goma and the town of Bukavu to assess the risk of trucking in food for starving refugees later in the day, a UN spokesman said.

UN World Food Programme spokeswoman Ms Brenda Barton said the trucks would take up to 15 tons of food to Goma from the Rwandan border town of Gisenyi, and a similar amount to Bukavu from Cyangugu. — Sapa-AFP
OAU wants all-African neutral force for Zaire

ADDIS ABABA — The neutral force African leaders have urged should be deployed in eastern Zaire should be drawn from neutral countries, possibly only African states, OAU officials suggested on Saturday.

Chris Bakwesika, head of the OAU's division for preventing conflict, did not rule out the possibility that only African forces could make up this neutral force, which he said should consist of countries not involved in any way in the Great Lakes crisis.

A senior OAU official told AFP that setting up a pan-African force, called for last week at a regional summit meeting in Nairobi, could mean excluding French and Belgian troops.

African ministers from the OAU's central decision-making body would meet in the Ethiopian capital today to discuss the crisis in the Great Lakes region, and in eastern Zaire in particular, Bakwesika said.

The ministers will examine more closely the Nairobi proposal that the force should be set up to establish temporary sanctuaries and safe repatriation corridors for the more than a million Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi who had fled their camps to escape fighting between Tutsi rebels and Zairean troops.

East African peace mediator Julius Nyerere asked President Nelson Mandela on Saturday to contribute to a Zaire peace force, but Mandela said he needed more information.

"Clearly we can't envisage a force — basically an African force, seeking assistance from the outside world — that does not have SA," Nyerere, former president of Tanzania, said after meeting Mandela in Johannesburg.

Mandela said: "We want to be part of Africa, not only geographically and politically but from the point of view of our commitment.

"I am waiting for specific information from (Nyerere). As soon as we get that information, we will be able to take a decision."

The UN security council called on members on Saturday to lay the groundwork to help feed the hungry in eastern Zaire. — Sapa-AFP, Reuters.
Aid to Zaire: drop of water in desert of need

Food and medicine have finally arrived in Goma, but only enough to feed a fraction of the remaining refugees

BY TONY SMITH
Goma

A
fter long delays at the Zaire-Rwanda border, 16 trucks and jeeps packed with food and medicine arrived at Goma’s soccer stadium, but without military protection there was no hope of getting aid to the hundreds of thousands of refugees who fled into the countryside without food or water.

The aid arriving yesterday was enough to feed 2,500 people for a week, a fraction of Goma’s 80,000 remaining residents, many of whom have had no access to fresh food for 10 days.

A wide array of UN agencies and international aid organisations have flown supplies into the region, but delivery has been stalled by lack of access to the area and security problems. Many foreign aid workers fled more than a week ago.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila agreed over the weekend to allow aid agencies into eastern Zaire, where fighting between Tutsi rebels and Zairian troops has uprooted more than 1.1 million Rwandan Hutu refugees, nearly 150,000 Burundian Hutu refugees and an unknown number of Zairians.

Complicating the situation in Zaire is the presence among the refugees of armed Burundian and Rwandan militants who oppose the Tutsi-led governments in their home countries. The militants don’t want to return to their home countries, which UN officials say is the key to solving the refugee crisis.

The fighting has rekindled international concern about the region since Hutus in Rwanda massacred a half million people, mostly minority Tutsis, in 1994.

When Tutsi rebels overthrew Rwanda’s Hutu government, Hutus fearing retaliation for the genocide fled to Zaire and other neighbouring countries. The militants in the camps have prevented genuine refugees from returning home.

African foreign ministers meeting yesterday in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, said that the United Nations should pay for Africans to join the proposed force. Several African countries, including Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal, Chad and Congo, have offered troops.

Zaire has agreed to allow foreign troops to enter the country to protect aid deliveries, and a UN spokesman urged the Security Council yesterday to authorise such a force as soon as possible.

The Security Council urged UN members on Saturday to prepare to send a force in, but delayed authorising deployment after the United States balked at immediate intervention. US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said yesterday the United States was holding off until the scope and mission were more clearly defined.

Extremist Hutu refugees murdered Zairian hostages and slaughtered villages in a fit of revenge before abandoning a vast eastern Zaire camp ahead of a rebel advance.

Hundreds of children and thousands of other civilians have been kidnapped by the Interahamwe to act as a human shield inside Mugunga camp, where they are now concentrated.

These scenes explain why the rebels called a ceasefire to allow aid into Mugunga five days ago. The closer to defeat the Hutu extremists are, the more murderous they become.

Tembo Vyande joined about 2,000 Zairian peasants in collecting plastic sheeting and the pots and pans left behind when the refugees fled. “It is better for us now that the refugees have gone. They were getting the food while we were going hungry. They were very nasty to us,” he said.

Many of the Rwandan Hutus now fleeing as far as Zambia, Tanzania, and to Kisangani, further into Zaire’s interior, are innocent. Some escaped the grip of the militia, who had insisted they head to Mugunga and flee into the dense Virunga forest.

Over the weekend a few hundred shuffled into Goma. “Where are you going?” they were asked.

With a smile of relief one man replied: “To Rwanda, of course, where else? I’m going home.” — Sipa-AP, Times News Service.
Relief on Way to Trapped Refugees

Associated Press

Under the gun, a Rwandan soldier guards Hutu refugees who fled across the border from Eastern Zaire.

Cape 4

And Comidor for Refugees

(See) Relief on Way to Trapped Refugees
Thousands of refugees dying in Zaire

GOMA, Zaire: Foreign aid workers took supplies into the eastern Zairean city of Goma yesterday, but more than a million refugees remained beyond reach and were reported to be dying in their thousands.

Vehicles and workers from the United Nations Children’s Fund and other aid organisations drove into Goma from Rwanda.

"They got thoroughly searched by rebel forces at the border, and they only took in emergency food supplies for patients in hospitals and enough drugs to treat them,” said an aid organisation spokeswoman.

The aid vehicles and about 70 foreign journalists were taken to a sports stadium in Goma, from where the supplies will be distributed.

The UN World Food Programme said an assessment team and two eight-ton trucks carrying maize meal and beans also crossed to Goma and headed for the stadium.

But most refugee camps in eastern Zaire have been emptied — the result of former Rwandan Hutu troops and militia men herding refugees deeper into Zaire, on the opposite side of the frontline to Goma.

The Rwandan government, which supports the Tutsi revolt in Zaire, agreed on Sunday to allow food and medicine into Goma.

Rwandan Health Minister Mr Joseph Kalema said permission had been given for the aid vehicles to cross, but that most aid should be delivered into Rwanda and not into Zaire.

And in Addis Ababa, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi hit out at the UN for calling on African nations to pay for their participation in any peace force for eastern Zaire.

"The UN Security Council decision that the cost of the operation (of any Zaire force) should be borne by the participating countries would naturally make it difficult for African countries to take part in this effort," said Zenawi.

Last week a summit of regional leaders in Nairobi called for a "neutral force" to be set up and funded by the Security Council.

The UN Security Council gave secretary-general Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali until November 20 to report on the force’s framework and operations.

Boutros-Ghali said on Sunday thousands were dying each hour.

"Two years ago the international community was confronted by a genocide of the Tutsis, by arms. Today we are confronted by a genocide of the Hutus by famine," he said. — Reuters
SA troops for Zaire - Mandela

We’re ready to help

Johannesburg - President Mandela says he has agreed to commit South African troops to an international peace effort in Central Africa.

In a television interview marking the halfway point of his five-year presidency, Mr Mandela said he had given the undertaking to former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere last week.

"I indicated that I am prepared to send troops to that region, but there is certain specific information which I want before I can decide what size of military unit I should send," he said.

Mr Mandela said he would send officials to the region to gather the information, but he added: "In principle I am prepared to contribute troops."

Mr Nyerere briefed Mr Mandela on a summit of East and Central African leaders, who decided last week that a neutral force should be created to provide safe corridors for aid to more than a million refugees from ethnic violence in Rwanda and Burundi.

The force would help Rwandan refugees now in eastern Zaire to return to their home country and escape fighting between rebels and Zairean government forces.

Last week South Africa suspended an R57-million arms contract with the Rwandan government because of the fighting in the region.

Mr Mandela had previously refused to take part in military operations abroad, saying democracy in South Africa was too young and the newly-integrated army too inexperienced.

His comments came as the international community was grappling with how to create an intervention force to ensure extra assistance can reach the refugees.

Canada offered yesterday to lead a multinational force to help end the crisis in eastern Zaire, according to senior sources at the United Nations.

They said, however, that while Canada had offered to make a substantial contribution, its troops and those offered by France and South would not be enough.

In Kinshasa, Zairean Information Minister Lucien Muteba announced that the United States, Britain and France would send "ascertainment teams" to the mine fields and settlements around the town of Sake.

"This constitutes a violation of our territorial integrity," he said. "Aid for the refugees should be distributed in Central Africa by neutral partners of the United Nations, not by the Rwandan government."

Rwanda's refugees should be distributed in Central Africa by neutral partners of the United Nations, not by the Rwandan government, said senior officials of the UN as they waited for a new refugee accord to be signed in London.

More than a million Hutus fled from Rwanda to Zaire in fear of Hutu political opponents in 1994.

In this joint television interview with CNN and SABC, Mr Mandela also commented that, even though his was a "people's war", international intervention was needed to bring peace.

"This is not a war of democracy against autocracy. It is a war of the weak against the strong. The US, Europe and Africa have a responsibility to show the world that this is not another African civil war."

The US and European Union nations have already imposed sanctions against the Zaire government.

But Mr Mandela said such sanctions were not enough.

"The US government is not showing the moral authority and leadership that we need to bring an end to this conflict."

To page 3
OAU countries discuss refugee help
CANADA, SA LEAD WAY

UN to send 12 000 peacekeepers to Zaire

NEW YORK: The first troops to be dispatched by the UN to Zaire could arrive there by the weekend.

The United Nations Security Council will approve today the immediate dispatch to Zaire of up to 12 000 troops following a Canadian offer to lead a multinational intervention force.

There was furious diplomatic activity in New York yesterday as the UN and Canadian officials tried to get Italy, France and Spain to join South Africa in committing troops, with America and Britain likely to supply transportation and logistical back-up.

Britain is ready to join the operation, though the extent of its involvement was still being discussed in London yesterday and was considered likely to involve, at most, sending support personnel.

The Security Council was expected to meet early today to mandate the dispatch of the force to eastern Zaire.

UN sources said yesterday it was hoped the first contingent of troops would arrive by the weekend. Their initial task would be to secure airports and landing strips, protect aid workers and secure a buffer zone between the rebels and refugees.

UN secretary-general Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali has warned that tens of thousands would die unless the organisation took swift, effective action and, after discussions with Prime Minister Jean Chrétien on Monday, announced yesterday that Canada had agreed to lead such a force.

Supplies held up in Goma

GOMA, Zaire: Aid workers returned to rebel-held Goma in eastern Zaire yesterday, but distribution of food and medical supplies was delayed by long talks between aid agency officials and rebel leaders.

The Food and Medical Aid, which reached Goma from Rwanda on Monday, remained under rebel guard at Goma's main football stadium.

"With this level of co-operation it is going to be very difficult to save thousands of lives," said Ms Michelle Quintaglio, a spokesman for the UN World Food Programme.

"It has been waiting for 24 hours and no one has moved."

But a diplomat and an aid worker blamed the delays on rebel inexperience in dealing with large numbers of aid agency representatives keen for publicity for their organisations.

Some medical supplies from Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) - Doctors without Frontieres - reached Virunga Hospital in Goma on Monday night.

"I hope in the next few days we will be able to have these multinational forces and that we will have a mandate from the Security Council," he said.

Expressing his gratitude to Canada, Boutros-Ghali said he had already received a commitment from President Nelson Mandela to provide troops from South Africa and said he was hoping for logistic support from the Americans.

The Clinton administration, however, continues to have misgivings about what a UN force should seek to achieve. Although it looks set, reluctantly, to provide at least transportation to supply the peace-keeping force in Zaire, it fears the volatile situation could degenerate into another Bosnian and has been agonising for a long-term solution that would see refugees returned to Rwanda from the camps, which it considers a breeding ground for unrest.

Britain has adopted a similar cautious approach, agreeing that action is needed but fearing a precipitous approach could jeopardise hopes of finding a long-term solution.

However, other European nations, particularly France and Spain, have said the priority is to provide immediate relief to the 1.2 million Hutu refugees.

At the weekend, European hopes of sending a force were stymied by the Security Council amid not only American and British doubts, but the reservations of Russia and China, too. Now that Canada, regarded as a suitably neutral country, has offered to take the lead, UN approval of a force is regarded as automatic. — The Telegraph plc, London
Canada calls Zaire force countries to meeting

Ottawa – Canada has asked countries willing to contribute troops to a multinational force for assisting refugees in eastern Zaire to meet in New York later today, the foreign ministry said here.

Canada has offered to lead the force which is on its way today to eastern Zaire to assess the situation on the ground. At the United Nations in New York, Western diplomats said Canada had received pledges of between 8,000 and 11,000 troops from various countries, including Britain, France and the United States “as well as key aid donors”.

Meanwhile, a South African delegation led by cabinet secretaryJakie Cerwel is flying to Tanzania to start its own assessment of how to contribute assistance. President Mandela has promised aid for the refugees and troops to maintain peace in the Great Lakes region of central Africa.

In London, John Major spoke to President Clinton last night about the size of the effort needed after a 90-minute cabinet meeting agreed on an urgent response.

The maximum British contribution would be 3,500 troops from 5 Airborne Brigade, the rapid deployment unit trained to go anywhere at short notice.

The United States has announced the deployment of more than 3,000 American troops as part of a multinational rescue mission that could total 15,000 troops from 12 countries.

In what was described as a tentative agreement, American soldiers would provide logistical support while securing the airport at Goma in eastern Zaire to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief to the refugees in need of food and shelter. America would send up to 1,000 ground troops to Zaire and a further 2,000 in a support capacity outside Zaire.

Mike McCurry, the White House press secretary, said: “The United States has been increasingly concerned that the humanitarian situation is deteriorating. The US is willing in principle to participate in a limited fashion.”

Britain’s involvement came after weeks in which ministers have shown extreme reluctance to send British troops. Downing Street said that Britain would contribute “constructively” to a multinational force, provided a satisfactory plan could be worked out.

More reports

Pages 18 and 21
Magic of Mobutu may still save Zaire from chaos

On a lakeshore outside this once pleasant resort town lies a ruined palace, testimony to the opulent lifestyle of President Mobutu Sese Seko and the violence that is pushing his country into the annals of African suffering.

Soldiers for one of several rebel armies now guard the sprawling mansion where Mobutu used to sit on an ornate chair with lions thrusting their gilded heads from the armrests. Above him was his own portrait, hammered out of local copper. In one of the bathrooms, there is still a gallon-size jar of French cologne with the label "Je Reviens." "I am coming back."

Perhaps Mobutu will indeed come back, and somehow rescue Zaire from joining Rwanda as a humanitarian nightmare. The U.S. and the nations of central Africa are waiting to see whether Mobutu—seriously ill with prostate cancer—will leave his villa in southern France for Zaire and whether he has the strength to stop his country’s collapse.

Mobutu has much to answer for—a 34-year grip on absolute power, a willful failure to prepare for a smooth succession, his amassing of a personal fortune now estimated in the billions, and a policy of divide and rule that has left the country all but ungovernable. He has made an awful prediction come nearly true—that Zaire and central Africa face a choice between Mobutu and chaos.

There is some measure of the anarchy that still surrounds Joseph Desire Mobutu, a former journalist and army sergeant-major who seized power in a CIA-backed military coup in 1960 and assumed the name Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa za Banga. His assumed name translates: "The all powerful warrior, who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, shall go from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake."

"The Zairians have a very clear sense of what Mobutu is—he is magic," says Jan Vanhina, who established the African Studies Programme at the University of Wisconsin in 1965 after Mobutu expelled him from Zaire.

Mobutu's power has its roots in the 1960 independence of the Congo—later renamed Zaire—from Belgian colonial rule. Under the Belgians, Mobutu rose to sergeant-major. After independence he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and then appointed army chief of staff.

It took him three months to stage the CIA-backed coup to counter post-independence anarchy. Mobutu ousted President Joseph Kasavubu and pro-Soviet prime minister Patrice Lumumba.

He relinquished power to Kasavubu within a few months and engineered the arrest of Lumumba, who was later killed while apparently trying to escape.

Kasavubu rewarded Mobutu with promotion to major-general and then as commander-in-chief of all armed forces. Five years later, in 1965, Mobutu ousted Kasavubu and declared himself president.

It was not long before he began using the central bank as his personal savings account. Zaire became best known for corruption and its president’s greed. And Mobutu has one continuing source of strength—diamonds, the richest of all Zaire’s natural blessings.


His army has been overrun by rebels in eastern Zaire, but three or four of its generals in Kinshasa retain the sort of military power bases that could allow any one of them to try to become Mobutu’s eventual successor.

But serendipity might again be at hand in Zaire, according to Zartman. Mobutu formally ended one-party rule in 1990, and preparations have been underway for elections.

Zartman sees in Mobutu’s illness—not only the prospect of chaos but also the possibility of new leadership:

"I think we are extraordinarily God-given lucky to have this electoral process in place now, at a time when Mobutu seems to be on his last legs," Zartman says.

"So whether we have a government that is there by default, or a government that comes in and seizes power, they should be kept to the schedule of the elections."

"It is as if you have an appointment to see a doctor next week, and over the weekend you suddenly feel heart tremors," Zartman could use such luck.
Marauding soldiers loot, shoot as town cuts off

Journalists' nightmarish in Zaire

NEWS

Cape Arg
Can Mobutu magic still work?
Zaire is poised for elections, but disaster looms large

As South Africa and other countries prepare to send peacekeeping troops to Central Africa, all eyes are focused on Mobutu Sese Seko, the omnipresent dictator of Zaire, who holds the fate of the region in his hands. Gilbert Lewthwaite and Michael Hill of the Baltimore Sun report from Cona in Zaire.

On a lakeshore outside this once pleasant resort town lies a ruined palace, testimony to the opulent lifestyle of President Mobutu Sese Seko and the violence that is pushing his country into the annals of African suffering.

Soldiers for several rebel armies now guard the sprawling mansion where President Mobutu used to sit on ornate chairs with long-thrusting their gilded heads from the armrests.

Above him was his own portrait, hammered out of local copper.

In one of the bathrooms, there is still a gallon-size jar of French cologne with the label "Je Reviens." I am coming back."

Perhaps President Mobutu will indeed come back and somehow rescue Zaire from joining Rwanda as a humanitarian nightmare.

The United States and the nations of Central Africa are waiting to see whether President Mobutu - seriously ill with prostate cancer - will leave his villa in southern France for Zaire and either heal the physical and political strength to stop his country's collapse.

President Mobutu has much to answer for: a 13-year grip on absolute power, a willful failure to prepare for a smooth succession, his amassing of a personal fortune now estimated in the billions of dollars, and a policy of divide and rule that has left the country all but ungovernable.

He has made an awful prediction come nearly true - that Zaire and Central Africa face a choice between President Mobutu and chaos.

He is a leader who likes the grand entrance.

At the height of his rule, Zairian TV viewers were treated almost nightly to the image of heavenly clouds metamorphosing into the man they have long been indoctrinated to accept as their one and only saviour.

And if ever there was a moment in this country's turbulent history when dramatic intervention was needed, it is now.

William Zartman, director of African Studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, says: "President Mobutu could come back, appearing out of the clouds as he does on TV, and set this right in a moment.

This is some measure of the aura that still surrounds Joseph Desire Mobutu, a former police chief and army sergeant major who seized power in a CIA-backed military coup in 1960 and assumed the name Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbudu wa za Banga.

His assumed name translates: "The all powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, shall go from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake."

Clearly not short on self-esteem, President Mobutu, now 66, has also imbued his people with a sense of his all-mightiness.

"The Zairians have a very clear sense of what Mobutu is - he is magic," says Jan Vansina, who established the African Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin in 1965 after President Mobutu expelled him from Zaire.

"He is superhuman in a sense. And those who are his enemies as well as his friends feel that," says Mr. Vansina.

"He has some sort of supernatural power which has enabled him to fall on his feet through all the crises so far. The thing they are wondering about now is whether he still has that power."

In recent years, President Mobutu has abandoned Kinshasa, the capital, for a palace in his native village of Chilolire. He has kept control of central power through a loyal palace guard, but allowed regional chieftains and warlords to establish their own fiefdoms in many of the 21 provinces of the country, the size of Western Europe.

And this decentralization is turning out to be a recipe for disaster.

"You have a situation where those who have might will rule," says Karl Austin, an analyst with Washington's Institute for Policy Studies who recently returned from Zaire.

"It's very similar to Somalia. It's the same old story - of a state created by colonial powers fracturing into small, mutually hostile parts."

President Mobutu's power has its roots in the 1969 independence of the Congo from Belgian colonial rule.

Under the Belgians, he rose to the highest military rank open to a native-born soldier, sergeant major. After independence he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and then appointed army chief of staff.

It took him just three months to stage the CIA-backed coup to counter post-independence anarchy.

General Mobutu ousted President Joseph Kasavubu and the pro-Soviet Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, President Mobutu relinquished power to Mr. Kasavubu within a few months and engineered the arrest of Mr. Lumumba, who was later killed while reportedly attempting to escape. Mr. Lumumba's death was widely viewed as a political assassination.

This did not stop President Mobutu for declaring Mr. Lumumba a national hero one year later.

Mr. Kasavubu rewarded General Mobutu with a promotion to major general and then as commander in chief of all armed forces. Five years later, in 1965, General Mobutu ousted Mr. Kasavubu and declared himself president.

Since then President Mobutu has been Zaire's strongman.

Initially courted by Washington as a bulwark against communism, he quickly expelled Soviet-bloc diplomats and technicians.

He became a friend of American presidents and a welcome guest in the state rooms of Europe.

Zaire became a staging post for covert operations in Central Africa, serving the same purpose for French military adventures in former French colonies.

It was not long before President Mobutu began using the central bank as his personal savings account.

Zaire is now known for corruption and its president's greed. And President Mobutu has one continuing source of strength - diamonds, the richest of all Zaire's natural blessings.

"Diamonds are doing very well. That's what makes Mobutu," says Mr. Zartman of the Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

"You should never forget he has $6 billion behind him," says Mr. Vansina of the University of Wisconsin. "If he makes a comeback, he has a schedule to have to commit a good chunk of that into getting his army into shape."

His reign has been overrun by rebels in eastern Zaire, but three or four of its generals in Kinshasa retain the sort of military power bases that could allow any one of them to try to become President Mobutu's eventual successor.

But serendipity might be at hand in Zaire, according to Mr. Zartman.

President Mobutu formally ended one-party rule in 1990, and preparations have been under way for elections.

President Mobutu has used a facade of democracy to try to protect his own power, even financing his own opposition parties to overwhelm the real opposition.

But Mr. Zartman remains optimistic, seeing in President Mobutu's illness not only the prospect of chaos, but also the possibility of a new leadership.

"I think we have extraordinary luck. God-given lucky to have this electoral process in place now, at a time when President Mobutu seems to be on his last legs."

"We have a schedule. We have preparations in place. I think the elections can still be pulled off. So, whether we have a government that is there by default, or a government that comes in and seizes power, they should be kept to the schedule of the elections."

"It is as if you have an appointment to see a doctor next week, and over the weekend you suddenly feel heart tremors."
Continued on next page.

Zaire

SA and Zaire find common ground on approach to peacekeeping

**STOP**
‘Sea of refugees’ heading for Rwanda from Zaire

Hundreds of thousands leave camps

Goma, Zaire - Hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees today trudged through this eastern Zaire town heading for the Rwandan border after abandoning besieged Mugunga camp. “There is a sea of people to the horizon,” said Reuters photographer Peter Andrews. “There could easily be 100,000 of them walking back to Rwanda,” he said.

The Hutu refugees are part of more than 1.2 million scattered around eastern Zaire by a one-month rebellion.

Zairian rebels checked them for weapons and allowed them to walk the few kilometres to the border at Gisenyi.

The exodus from Mugunga came after six hours of shelling yesterday.

Thousands of armed Hutus in and around Mugunga – ex-Rwandan soldiers and militiamen – appeared to have lost their grip over the refugees.

The fighters, blamed for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda which targeted minority Tutsis, have tried to forcibly prevent ordinary refugees from returning to Rwanda.

But the effort seemed to be failing, judging by the human tide heading to Rwanda this morning.

Refugees told reporters the Rwandan fighters in the camps were fleeing after yesterday’s bombardments and moving into the bush with their weapons.

“The armed elements face execution or many years of imprisonment if they return to Rwanda and are found guilty of genocide or crimes against humanity in 1994.”

“The refugees don’t look too bad but are obviously tired. There are many men among the women, children and old people,” Andrews said by telephone from Goma.

United Nations Security Council members hope to vote today on a resolution to send a multinational force to ease the plight of the estimated one million starving refugees in eastern Zaire.

The international community signalled it was wary of the hazards ahead after the fighting yesterday when armed Hutus among the refugees put up a last stand against the Tutsi rebels.

The United States said it would demand at least an informal ceasefire among the factions fighting around Goma before committing troops to a humanitarian aid force.

At the UN in New York, the Canadian commander of the force intended to deliver humanitarian aid, ruled out disarming militia members who were mingling with the refugees in the camps or separating them from civilians.

Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril told a news conference that his multinational troops, which are estimated to eventually exceed 10,000, would not use force unless they were attacked.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said in Brussels yesterday that the international military force must have a limited mandate and a limited number of troops.

Mr Mbeki said South Africa was ready and willing to take part in the multinational force.

However, it would take a final decision only once the mandate and tasks of the troops were fully established.

“We will not be sending soldiers to fight,” he emphasised.

“We would prefer a limited number of people – ideally this should be a limited force.” – Reuters-Sapa-DPA
SA will not send troops to fight in Zaire — Mbeki
Stop Rwanda arms sales, SA urged

BY ROSS HERBERT
Star Foreign Service with Sapa-DPA.

Kisasha - War fever spread through Kisasha at the weekend when Tutsie fled the capital as students looted their homes, and a bitter rift between the army and civilian government broke into the open.

The conflict has focused new attention on South Africa's role as an arms supplier to Rwanda, and Kenyan's president, Daniel arap Moi, is reported to have told President Mandela on the telephone yesterday that it would be "prudent" for him to suspend all arms sales to Rwanda.

In addition, a delegation from Amnesty International arrives in SA today to try to put pressure on the Government to do so.

Moi is to host a regional crisis summit tomorrow on the situation in Zaire, and is quoted in Kenyan news reports as telling Mandela that a halt in arms shipment to Rwanda could help stop the escalation of fighting between Zairean Tutsis and their army's troops in eastern Zaire.

The shipments should stop "until Rwandan troops withdraw from eastern Zairean territory".

Revenge ... General Aundu.

On Saturday, Zaire's Armed Forces Chief of Staff, General Eluki Mongo Aundu, bitterly criticised the government of prime minister Kengo wa Dondo for the defeat his army has suffered at the hands of Banyamulenge Tutsi rebels in eastern Zaire.

"We regret that the government is moving too slowly and has not given the necessary means," Eluki said.

He promised revenge against Rwanda, but his criticism more directly threatened to fuel the collapse of Kengo's government.

As the Zairean army and Tutsi rebels fought for control of the strategic Goma airport in eastern Zaire (it was not clear whether rebels have fully taken Goma), hundreds of students stole vehicles from "Tutsi-looking" drivers, and attacked Tutsi homes and businesses and the Rwandan embassy.

Parliament has called for the ousting of all Tutsis from government jobs and the expulsion of Rwandan refugees.

Kengo, who is half Polish and half Tutsi, has seen his already weak hold on political power further damaged by the rising anti-Tutsi sentiment in Zaire.

"I expected a lot more emotion against South Africa because of arms sales. I attribute it to one thing only and that is the image of President Mandela. My opinion is, I think, that no arms should be supplied to this whole region," said Jan van Deventer, the South African ambassador to Zaire.

US ambassador, Daniel Simpson, acknowledged the White House was pressing hard to curb the Zaire military to the country's transition to democracy.

Aid workers evacuated:
Page 4.
Anarchy rules the day i
You’ll be able to land here, but you’ll

Ross Herbert
Fileman Sour

Kisangani (Zaire) - As the world prepares to send thousands of troops to rescue hordes of starving people in eastern Zaire, one preposterous but critical question remains unanswered: Where are all the refugees?

Three weeks ago there were more than one million Rwandan refugees clustered in about 40 camps in eastern Zaire. As fighting broke out, they simply packed up and left.

It is as if all the people of Durban or Pretoria vanished one day without a trace. The United States, reputed to have facilities able to read a car’s registration number from space, has shared satellite intelligence with the United Nations. However, the UN says it does not know where the refugees are.

Dozens of journalists and international aid agencies have searched from Uganda, Rwanda and Zaire with little success. From Rwanda, one can enter as far as Goma, but Tutsi-led forces have blocked access deeper into Zaire.

And from Zaire, access to the area is also blocked.

Visitors are greeted at the airport by a throng of surly men in civilian clothes, each of whom will demand that you hand over your passport, which may cost $20 (about £10) or $30 to recover.

Travel to most cities, particularly mining towns, requires a permit. This week the head of Medicins sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders), who hoped to investigate the plight of refugees, was physically removed from a commercial aircraft because authorities said he did not have the right permission.

As one journalist quipped, covering Zaire is like standing at a top a tall building and throwing off money.

After obtaining the $250 (R500) ministry of information permit and the $500 (R1 000) interior ministry permit (priced higher if you are desperate), I landed with four other refugee-hunting journalists in Kisangani - the starting point most people have used to search for the refugees.

Kisangani, formerly known as Stanleyville when Zaire was the Belgian Congo and scene of the Simba uprising against the newly independent Congo government in 1961 - is connected to Goma and Bukavu by a 600-kilometre stretch of nearly impassable road.

A group of journalists arrived in a cargo aircraft to find about 150 Zairian soldiers from the east waiting on the tarmac replete with assorted machine guns, gold-rimmed sunglasses, wild hats, portable tape recorders and overstuffed gym bags. Two were dressed in matching blue basketball uniforms and combat boots.

A news agency driver was killed the day we arrived by this same group.

Secret police hovered around the hotels. The phones did not work and taxis were non-existent. Church workers say Zairians and Rwandans alike run in terror at any sign of military from either side of the conflict.

So far only small groups of Zairians have straggled into Kisangani to escape soldiers who have been looting their way back from the front.

On the ground fighting has stopped and anarchy rules. Soldiers escaping from the east hijack any available vehicle, including aircraft.

We never found our refugees or the airplane we had arranged to meet us. As one church worker put it, "you might be able to land in eastern Zaire, but you will never take off again".

A cautious retreat behind military escort seemed the best plan, but the question remains, how do a million people simply disappear?

Associated Press, meanwhile, reports from eastern Zaire that an estimated 100 000 Rwandan refugees and displaced Zairians are flocking towards home as a rebel offensive appears to have freed them from the control of Hutu militiamen.

Clutching ragged bundles and rolled mattresses, Rwandans said the militiamen were treasuring westward into Zaire, making it possible for refugees to head for the border - some for the first time in two years.

But at least 30 Rwandan Hutu women and children were killed in a Tutsi rebel attack on Mugunga.

The victims, who were separated from the men, pleaded for mercy but were killed when a soldier threw a grenade into the huddled crowd. Before he killed them he said: "You have killed so many of our people, why should we spare you now?"
Cholera epidemic among refugees feared as 14 display symptoms

Geneva – Cholera has broken out among refugees in eastern Zaire, confirming fears that the disease would result from recent turmoil in the area, said the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Dr Maria Neira, WHO's co-ordinator for the Global Task Force on Cholera Control, said she didn't know the number of confirmed cases, but said there were 14 patients with cholera-like symptoms in the central hospital in Goma.

The confirmation was reliable and came from a competent laboratory in Kigali, Rwanda, she said.

Experts fear there will be an epidemic if there isn't an urgent international campaign to provide medical assistance to the hundreds of thousands of people displaced by recent fighting between rebels and Zairian forces.

Cholera killed 50,000 Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire in 1994. Outbreaks during the rainy season, which is just beginning in eastern Zaire, are common in many African countries.

Dr Neira said conditions in Zaire are perfect for an outbreak of cholera that result from poor sanitation, lack of food and clean drinking water. – Sena, AP
Dar es Salaam - South Africa will not be sending peacekeeping troops to the conflict-torn central African Great Lakes region, but will lend technical assistance to the international peace initiative, Foreign Affairs Director-General Rusty Evans said in the Tanzanian capital.

Mr Evans is part of a South African technical task team that was dispatched to Dar es Salaam by President Mandela on Thursday. The team, headed by Jakes Gerwel, Director-General in the President's Office, reported back yesterday.

Mr Evans said the team felt that a political initiative, addressing the underlying political causes of the strife on Zaire's borders with Rwanda and Burundi, was the correct action for South Africa to take.

Zaire yesterday asked South Africa to take a leading role in the planned international force to secure the safety of aid supplies to Africa's worst refugee disaster.

About one million refugees have been uprooted by fighting between Zaire troops and rebels on the border with Rwanda.

Mr Evans said South Africa was willing to act in the context of its membership in the Southern African Development Community and the conflict resolution organ established in Addis Ababa.

He said the Government would be guided by the decisions of other African countries. - Sapa

UK sends UN troops to Zaire, page 3
‘Why won’t the UN disarm extremists?’

Aid groups criticise ‘temporary operation’

WITHOUT a mandate to disarm militias, the multinational operation being set up to intervene in the conflict in Zaire risks bringing “just temporary assistance” to the refugees and displaced persons, aid groups say.

Humanitarian groups, while relieved over forthcoming international intervention to aid civilians trapped by the fighting in Zaire, insist that “disarming the extremists is imperative”.

The United Nations is expected to send a multinational force to provide security to humanitarian organisations handling out relief assistance to starving refugees and other displaced people, after a hesitant US finally decided to join the effort.

The force is expected to be composed of mainly US, French and Canadian troops under the command of Canada, the international intervention, however, is not likely to have as mandate the disarming of armed groups.

“Disarming the militias is indispensable. It is not just a matter of security for humanitarian organisations, but a question of protection of the refugees,” said Marie-Ange Lotito, in charge of operations for Zaire at the Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders).

“We know about the existence of Rwandan Hutu extremists who have been taking the refugees hostage. If these extremists are not separated from the refugees, we will find ourselves in the same situation that led to the current conflict in Zaire,” she added.

Rwandan Hutu refugees and local Zairean populations fled as fighting intensified in the past weeks between the Rusesabagina Tutsi rebels and Zairean armed forces.

The Rusesabagina took up arms after being stripped of their Zairean identity, reportedly backed militarily by the Tutsi-dominated regime in neighboring Rwanda.

The rebels also dispersed the Hutu refugees in the camps in the Kivu region along the borders between Zaire and Rwanda set up in the aftermath of the genocide of Tutsi and moderate Hutu in Rwanda from April to July in 1994.

To the consternation of humanitarian groups and to the exasperation of the new Rwandan authorities, the refugee camps have served as bases for the defeated government Rwandan army, as well as other Hutu militias preparing to re-conquer the power they had lost to the then rebel movement Rwanda Patriotic Front (FPR).

A similar international intervention in Somalia in 1992 turned into a disaster as a result of a division within the multinational force that proceeded towards a disarming of the various armed groups, said Christian Capiter, in charge of preparations for emergencies at the Action Against Hunger (ACF).

“The difference between Somalia and Zaire was that the force intervening in Somalia under US command had the mandate to disarm the militias,” said Capiter. “But once there, there were two conflicting points of view.”

“In Zaire, if the intervention will not decide on a policy of disarming, the problem will erupt anew once the multinational forces have left,” he said.

“The armed groups will continue to dispose of their arms, with the potential for destabilisation intu.”

The plans of the international community to restrict its intervention in Zaire to providing security to humanitarian organisations follow what experts call the prevailing doctrines of the United Nations.

While the Geneva Conventions oblige states to respect non-combatants, the new UN doctrine introduces a new principle: “It is the assistance, and not men, who are seen as the object of international protection,” noted William Shawcross, an expert on humanitarian issues, in a contribution to the newly released MSF report World in Crisis 1996.

Indeed, humanitarian organisations need a certain amount of security to conduct relief operations, Shawcross wrote. In Liberia, relief organisations could not do much without a minimum of protection.

Shawcross believes the military-humanitarian logic leads to open confrontations with local militias. But conducted under “zero death” instructions, intervention forces are unable to use military means to stop the plunder of relief goods.

The contradiction in doing the job of a soldier while not exposing the civilian population to the failure of the intervention in Somalia, he wrote.

“We know that there has been a lack of policy from among the people responsible for the past genocide in Rwanda,” said Richard Paterson, a researcher at the School for Peace in Grenoble in eastern France. “And there is the sentiment that, as far as they are not tried and judged, there will always be this desire for revenge or fear of seeing the same tragedy happen all over again.”

“In such a context, it is regrettable that the current efforts of the international community are not sufficient,” he said. “What is in doing to prevent the armed groups, which had been supported by certain powers and given the military means to pursue their plans, from holding the hostages and using them as bargaining leverage?” — Sapa-IPS
SA TO REVIEW ITS ROLE

Zaire exodus lessens need for peace force

NAIROBI: At least 40% of Hutu refugees in eastern Zaire will have returned to Rwanda by next week, but Canada argues there is still a need for the international mission.

SIMPLE arithmetic suggests that the mass migration of Hutu refugees back to Rwanda has lessened and perhaps ended the need for a costly multinational force with a confused mission.

It is likely that by the time the first foreign troops are ready to be deployed, possibly next week, more than half the 1.1 million Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire will have returned home.

The US contingent is almost certain to have nothing to do in the northern Goma sector where it reluctantly has accepted minimum and almost risk-free duties.

The trickier and more dangerous job remains in the southern Bukavu and Uvira sectors, where as many as 500,000 refugees probably need urgent help. The key volunteer is France, which Rwanda and the rebels do not want to be in control on the ground.

Canada, designated leader of the military task force, which has a humanitarian mandate, will have to decide if last week's plans still make sense.

An advance party of 34 Canadian soldiers arrived at Kigali, capital of Zaire's eastern neighbour and foe Rwanda, yesterday to set up headquarters for the force.

"The situation is fluid and the movement of the refugees has had a big impact on what is happening, but we have just to carry on with our plan to recce sites," Major Rod Babik said.

Rwanda, so far the big winner in a month of dramatic changes in eastern Zaire, no longer wants the force.

"Our position is that the force was coming to create a corridor for the refugees to come home. Now they are coming home, we don't see any need for the force to come," said presidential spokesman Mr Joseph Bideri.

Washington and South Africa, sceptics from the outset, must be hoping the Hutus make haste in heading back to the homeland they left in panic in 1994.

"If this trend continues, it will change substantially the nature of the humanitarian problem in Zaire," US Defence Secretary Mr William Perry said yesterday.

The force of up to 10,000 soldiers was authorised by the UN Security Council on Friday to bring aid to refugees stranded in eastern Zaire. Yet hours before the vote, the problem was already diminishing with the Hutu exodus.

Initially, 1.1 million Rwandan Hutus and 100,000 Burundian Hutus were trapped in Zaire's North and South Kivu provinces by a month-long rebellion. By yesterday morning, the figure had been reduced by at least 20% as Rwandan Hutus in North Kivu's Goma area crossed the border and returned home.

A similar number were peacefully following in their footsteps. Some aid agencies believe almost all the 750,000 Rwandans in North Kivu will cross.

The UN special envoy on the Zaire crisis, Canadian Mr Raymond Chrétien, argued yesterday a force was still needed.

South Africa's Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki disclosed in Rome that countries due to send troops would review the mission. However, Mbeki said the situation would not be reviewed until Wednesday.

— Reuters
Gisenyi, Rwanda - And still they came.
For the third day, through drenching
rain and blinding sun, all day long and
through the cold night, refugees
returning from Zaire cascaded
through this border town yesterday
and poured into western Rwanda in an
unbroken stream that stretched as far
e as the eye could see.
For 70km inside Rwanda, the solemn
column clogged the single, narrow road
that snakes up steep hills, past cloud-
shrouded volcanoes and through lush
green farms.
A few buses and trucks were pressed
into service, with people clinging to the
roofs, but the vast majority walked.
Those too exhausted to continue
stopped on the roadside, and at midday
cooking fires pumped a choking blue haze
into the air. The crush was endless, the
crushing intense.
Parents bundled sleeping infants fore
and aft, carried crying toddlers on their
shoulders and tied torn rags to the wrists of
small children, dragging them along in the
crowds.
Gnarled men and haggard women hob-
bled with canes. A few were pushed - or
propelled themselves - in ancient battered
wheelchairs.
Anyone old enough to walk carried a
plastic pull, a burlap sack, a rolled foam
mattress, a blackened pot, usually perched
on a coil of cloth atop the head.
Some slipped into farmers' fields and
local gardens to forage for food. They dug
for sweet potatoes, plucked ears of corn or
striped bunches of bananas from trees.
Local villagers pulled out chairs and sat
chatting, pointing at the passing parade.
Except for crying children, the loudest
sound was the drumming of thousands of
shuffling feet.
And still they came ... Ray Wilkinson,
spokesman for the office of the United
Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,
estimated that 350,000 to 400,000 Hutus had
returned to Rwanda since early Friday,
with an additional 100,000 or so still
trafficking toward Rwanda’s border yester-
day afternoon. The UNHCR sent several

River of misery: a Zairian rebel soldier directs the flow of refugees near Goma as they pour back to Rwanda at the weekend.
HUGH ROBERTSON
Political Editor

President Mandela spoke to world leaders over the weekend in a bid to speed up international intervention in the huge refugee crisis in Central Africa — and assured them South Africa remained committed to a role in a multinational peacekeeping force.

He spoke by telephone to President Bill Clinton of the US, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, French President Jacques Chirac, and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien.

But as Mr. Mandela embarked on his phone shuttle, the continuing return home of half-a-million Rwandan Hutu refugees raised doubts among half-hearted members of the multinational peace force about the need for intervention.

Canada, which is set to lead the force, is insisting the mission should go ahead in spite of the return of refugees.

The US now has a high-level military team in Zaire to assess the situation and to advise Mr. Clinton on the scale of intervention that will be necessary.

Senior advisers in Mr. Mandela’s office said the president had told world leaders South Africa remained committed to joining an international force, but that two aspects of the impending operation were causing difficulties.

One was the role of the peacekeeping force — and the other was the size of South Africa’s contribution.

Initially it had been visualised that the force would operate largely in Zaire, to protect refugees in camps in the east, but after the mass movement of refugees from those camps back to Rwanda, the deployment and role of the peacekeeping force had to be urgently redefined.

South African officials said South Africa would attend a summit on the situation in Central Africa in Stuttgart, Germany, on Wednesday, at which a final decision was expected on the relief effort. By then the US military team was expected to have reported to Mr. Clinton.

US Defence Secretary William Perry said Washington had yet to make a firm decision on participation. At one point during an NBC television interview, he said: “We are not the Salvation Army.”

Several other countries called for a rethink on the mission’s goal and size, and Eritrea pulled out, saying in a statement that the force was no longer necessary.

“Now is not the time to pause and reflect. We still have to have very direct action,” said Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy.

He said large numbers of refugees were in eastern Zaire, and their weakened condition and other factors might make it hard for them to join the exodus.

The United Nations refugee agency UNHCR said today 500 000 refugees had now crossed back into Rwanda.

UNHCR spokesman Ray Wilkinson said there were still pockets of refugees on the road west from Goma and several thousands still appeared to be on the way to the border.

There are around 215 000 refugees from the area unaccounted for after the fierce fighting of recent weeks, plus 500 000 in the Bukavu area of eastern Zaire. Thousands of Zairians have also been displaced.

The Stuttgart meeting was announced at the World Food Summit in Rome by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

Meanwhile the refugee crisis has diverted leaders’ attention from a UN report accusing South African arms dealers of violating a UN arms embargo imposed soon after the 1994 outbreak of ethnic massacres in Rwanda, by selling arms to Hutu rebels in eastern Zaire.

Rich Mkhondo of the Washington Bureau reports that the United Nations inquiry was completed 10 days ago, as the Government suspended, temporarily, its R37-million consignment of arms to the rebels’ foes, the Tutsi-led Rwandan government.

“Highly reliable sources in Belgium, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and the United Kingdom painted a coherent picture of huge, loose, overlapping webs of more-or-less illicit arms deals, arms flights and arms deliveries spanning the continent from South Africa as far as Europe, particularly Eastern Europe.”
The tide of refugees flows to Rwanda

support waivers on refugees as

Zule: Mandera on nothing as

From page 1
Qualified support for great lakes relief plan

Ingrid Salgado

SA had received a positive response from some Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states to a request for joint participation in resolving the great lakes crisis, a foreign affairs department spokesman said yesterday.

Although there was a "general political desire" to be involved, some member countries were awaiting a decision on whether money from an international trust to fund participation of African countries would be forthcoming. At least one country, Botswana, has pledged troops for a multinational peacekeeping force in eastern Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi.

This comes as foreign affairs indicated at the weekend that SA would send troops to central Africa for humanitarian relief under the Canadian-led multinational force.

Foreign affairs spokesman Marco Boni said yesterday there had been contact between SA and the Canadian military — which is due to lead a potential peacekeeping force — but he had no details.

The nature of SA's technical contribution was being finalised and depended on a mandate from the UN, which had not yet been established, Boni said. "Our immediate concern is not to get involved in a fighting situation."

A technical task team dispatched to the region by President Nelson Mandela reported late last week that SA should immediately consult its SADC partners to explore Africa's involvement in the multinational force. The formation of an African peacekeeping force would have to entail extensive deliberations with the Organisation for African Unity, the team reported.

However, immediate humanitarian relief efforts would not address the underlying causes of the crisis which were political.

SA was expected to play a role in resolving the differences between conflicting parties in the region.

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said at the world food summit in Rome yesterday that countries participating in the multinational force would meet on Wednesday to review the situation after a mass return of refugees to Rwanda from Zaire.

Boni said the return of the refugees would change the original aim of the force — to create safe corridors for refugees to return home.

An SANDF spokesman said yesterday the military was awaiting instructions from government before acting. SA is reportedly offering between 500 and 1 000 SANDF members to the multinational force as well as logistical support.

See Page 9.
Major, Mbeki agree on troops, but will monitor situation

London - British Prime Minister John Major and South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki agreed in principle yesterday that troops should be sent to central Africa but a final decision would depend on developments there, a Foreign Office spokesman said.

The two leaders also discussed trade relations between the European Union and South Africa and the situation in Nigeria.

A Commonwealth mission arrived in Nigeria yesterday to assess the human rights situation, just days after its military regime quietly celebrated the third anniversary of its seizure of power. The Commonwealth suspended Nigeria following the regime's execution, a year ago, of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and other human rights activists.

Major and Mbeki agreed that relations between London and Pretoria were excellent and should be pursued, notably in defence. Mbeki is currently on a tour of eight European capitals to prepare negotiations with the European Union on a free trade agreement (FTA) by the end of this year.

South Africa is urging EU governments not to renege on their promise to open their markets to the post-apartheid republic.

The EU outlined its stance on an FTA in March. But the start of detailed negotiations has been repeatedly delayed as concern has grown in South Africa that accepting a deal on the EU's terms would destroy jobs and have a devastating impact on neighbouring states.

- AFP.
Troops still needed, say aid workers

The crisis far from over as countries waver over plans to send peace force and thousands starve

BY PETER SMERDON
Kisenyi, Rwanda

With some countries wavering over plans to send a peace force to Zaire, aid agencies insist the crisis is far from over and would welcome an armed force to help them in their relief work.

Canada, tipped to lead the UN's newest emergency force, joined the think-again brigade on Monday as the world struggled to assess how hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees streaming home from Zaire altered a crisis which last week had seemed to threaten well over a million people.

Defence Minister Doug Young told reporters in Ottawa that, if conditions in the heart of Africa continued to improve, the force could be scaled back to humanitarian relief units.

"If we get the results hoped for and people can return to their countries, and humanitarian organisations can do their work without being in danger, then the mission becomes unnecessary," Young said.

"No one wants to go to Zaire or Rwanda for Christmas."

The United States has put its commitment to the force on hold and some countries have been lukewarm from the start about the force, which was intended to get food to refugees in eastern Zaire and perhaps clear a route for them to go home.

But France and Spain, the first and strongest advocates of intervention, said yesterday they still wanted to go.

"For the moment I think it's still necessary," Xavier Emmanuelu, French secretary of state for emergency humanitarian action, told a French television channel from the Zairian capital Kinshasa.

Aid agencies estimate there are still some 700,000 Rwandan and Burundian Hutu refugees in eastern Zaire, scattered by a foreclosed conflict among Zairian Tutsi rebels, refugee Hutu extremists and the Zairian army.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, hundreds of thousands of Zairians uprooted by the fighting also need help.

Red Cross spokeswoman Nina Winquist told Reuters an ICRC medical team pushed 35km south of Goma yesterday and discovered a hospital at Kiroshi which was crammed to capacity with 75 patients, including 60 war wounded.

Ray Wilkinson, spokesman for the UN's refugee agency, said UNHCR was still focusing on the mass exodus and its implications for Rwanda.

"This is a new beginning for Rwanda," he said. "For the past two years Rwanda has been a country waiting for its soul to return — now it can start rebuilding."

However, some aid workers, who asked for anonymity, said the UNHCR was colluding with the Rwandan government in seeking to speed all the refugees, to their home villages.

The Rwandan government yesterday started to clear refugee camps away from the border with Zaire, forcing 350 sick people out of a camp run by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies inside the 35km camp, 4km from the border.

The 350 were taken away in trucks. No violence was used, but the Red Cross is to protest to the Rwandan government.

The flow of refugees out of Zaire into Rwanda slowed yesterday but could pick up again if Zaire's Tutsi rebels, who have close links with Kigali, open a corridor to the Bukavu region so tens of thousands of refugees further south can also go home.

UNHCR spokesman Fernando del Mundo said in Geneva the rebels told UN agencies that the corridor from Bukavu, south of Lake Kivu, to Rwanda's south-western Nyungwe border crossing could be opened today.

If those refugees start to return home, in addition to the 500,000 already estimated by UNHCR to have returned, the argument in favour of the peace force will be weakened again.

Perhaps reflecting the lack of urgency now felt by the countries that had agreed to help, a revised meeting planned for tomorrow in Stuttgart, Germany, was postponed. No explanation was given.

Switzerland yesterday denied a visa to Zaire's ailing ruler Mobutu Sese Seko in a calculated snub.

A foreign ministry spokesman said in Geneva that Mobutu (66) who underwent more than two months of cancer treatment in Lausanne and left on November 3 for the Riviera where he has a villa, had applied for a new visa but his request had been rejected.

Reuters
Rubona, Rwanda — After two years' exile in a sprawling Zairian refugee camp, Max Tulinabo and his five children are among those who have returned to this tiny hillside village to find their homes occupied.

Others among the estimated 500,000 refugees who flooded out of Zaire over the past four days have found their property has been occupied or ransacked. The roofs have been stolen and the dry mud bricks have failed to withstand the rains.

A woman sitting on the porch of a mud house with her two young children glared at him as he declared: "This is my parents' house. My father will return. You're in our home.

Nearby, Tulinabo found his own home occupied as well. Accompanied by scores of other refugees, Tulinabo traced up the twisting path to his village, buried in the hillsides in the Gisenyi district near the Zairian border.

"I do not know what we are going to do. My mother died in the Mugunga camp, but my father is somewhere on his way and he is going to come back," Tulinabo said.

Tulinabo worked in a medical dispensary until 1994, when Rwanda's genocidal war, which saw the slaughter of at least 500,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus, led to a mass exodus.

He weaved a hand at the house next door. "That's my elder brother's home. He will soon be here with his family. There are people inside."

Higher up the hillside, Tulinabo's home is firmly shut.

"I have been told that there is someone in there, too. Apparently the authorities will take care of the problem, but I don't know when."

The village grocer, Sylvester Bitwegezi, who had just arrived from Zaire with his family, looked despairingly at his devastated store.

"They have put a cow in my office," he said.

The building has been taken over by Celestin Mupendzi, an agricultural worker who came from Masisi in Zaire, together with his wife and five children, in 1994.

"I don't know what to do. I cannot ask them to leave. They are refugees, too. I know how they feel. I have been a refugee for two years," Bitwegezi said.

Standing in front of the property, he began speaking in kinyarwanda, the local language, with the new occupant.

In a charged atmosphere, everyone watched each other, but no one uttered the words "Tutsi" or "Hutu." All the returning villagers appeared anxious to avoid giving cause for conflict at any price.

Only one young farmer, who returned early yesterday with his three children and his pregnant wife, expressed resentment.

"They have taken my fields. I asked them for something to eat. They told me not to touch their crops," he said. - Sapa-AFP.
Zaire rescue plan on hold as clarity sought

Politicians meet in New York and the military in Stuttgart to get clearer picture of 'a fluid and fragmented' situation

Reuters
Ottawa

T he international rescue mission for eastern Zaire was on hold until meetings this week clarified the situation in the region, Canada said yesterday.

"Decisions are not being made until those evaluations are finished," Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy said.

He said a political meeting on the issue would be held in New York today, and noted that a military meeting had been rescheduled for Stuttgart on Friday.

Axworthy and Defence Minister Doug Young told reporters after a cabinet meeting that the situation was so fluid and information so fragmented that Canada, as mission leader, and other participants were kept to get a clearer picture.

"You don't start making a judgment until you have the right information. We know some of the major objectives have been obtained," Axworthy said. "But we're still not sure no one is sure, because you're getting different points of view as to what the situations of refugees are in eastern Zaire."

Earlier, International Co-operation Minister Don Boudria said hundreds of thousands of refugees remained in Zaire, following a flood of refugees back to Rwanda.

Axworthy said yesterday South Africa would contribute troops to the proposed force only if they were led by an officer from the region.

"I am not prepared to put my troops under any other commander except a commander from the Great Lakes," Mandela told reporters.

"I don't want a commander even from the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region. I want a commander from the Great Lakes because they know that area very well," Mandela said.

Rwanda again denied that the force was needed because 500,000 Hutus had left rebel-held eastern Zaire and walked home in the past four days.

But French President Jacques Chirac said the UN refugee agency UNHCR said the UN-backed force still had a vital job because 60% of the Rwandan Hutus were still in Zaire.

Thousands of returning refugees demanding food blocked the streets of Nkamira, 20km from the border.

A spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross accused Rwandan soldiers of commandeering trucks to ferry refugees out of the crammed border area.

The UNHCR says there were 1,1 million Rwandan Hutus and 150,000 Burundian Hutus in camps in eastern Zaire before the start of the rebellion last month.

Based on that arithmetic, those arguing the force still has a vital mission say 600,000 refugees are scattered in Zaire, in desperate need of food, water and medicine.

Local commander is a must for SA troops

The force would not be effective without a local commander, Mandela said yesterday. Axworthy said it would take a while for a commander to be in place.

The resolution was not a mandate, which authorised a mission to help get aid to refugees and help get them home.

The New York meeting will examine what is required to help the refugees, while the Stuttgart talks will review the military's role.

Huge bottlenecks of exhausted Hutu returnees built up inside Zaire yesterday and the United States signalled it no longer planned to send troops for the planned multinational force. In Washington, the Pentagon said the US had tentatively decided not to send troops to Zaire and would instead use its cargo planes to fly humanitarian aid to Rwanda.

And President Nelson Mandela said yesterday South Africa would contribute troops to the proposed force only if they were led by an officer from the region.

"I am not prepared to put my troops under any other commander except a commander from the Great Lakes," Mandela told reporters.

Burundi on brink of collapse

Another setback for aid bid to refugees

The decision could hinder efforts to feed the millions of internally displaced Burundians who have taken refuge in Tanzania, according to the UNHCR. The agency said that it had not received any financial aid from any international donor since the outbreak of the conflict in Burundi two years ago.

The agency has been calling for an international conference to be held in November to discuss the issue of Burundian refugees. The conference should be used to raise funds for the aid agencies working in Burundi, the agency said.

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Troops still needed in Zaire — UN

GENEVA: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) yesterday urged Western powers not to abandon plans to deploy a military force in east Zaire, saying troops were needed urgently to reach 500,000 Rwandian Hutu refugees scattered around Bukavu.

"There's a big job for a multinational force to be done in eastern Zaire and its priority should now be Bukavu, where there are still half-a-million refugees," said UNHCR spokeswoman Ms Christiane Berthiaume.

Many countries have urged a rethink on plans for the Canadian-led multinational task force after 500,000 Hutus returned home from the Goma region, about 100km north-east of Bukavu.

The United States and South Africa were reluctant volunteers and have seized on the mass migration as a sign that the force should be radically reduced, or even scrapped.

But French President Mr Jacques Chirac said during a visit to Japan that Paris still believed a multinational intervention was needed. Britain, expressing concern about Bukavu, has also said it still expects at least part of the force to be deployed.

Until last week, the focus of relief efforts was on securing humanitarian corridors in eastern Zaire. Now agencies are scrambling to cope with an unprecedented number of returnees.

The Washington Post newspaper said yesterday that senior US officials had concluded the 10,000-strong force was no longer needed.

Canada's Defence Minister, Mr Don Young, was reported to be edging towards the same view.

Rwanda also says the force is no longer needed because 40% of its refugees in Zaire have returned voluntarily.

But Berthiaume said the UNHCR had been denied access to Bukavu by Tutsi rebels who control the area and the multinational force was needed to open the border and provide access.

She said the UNHCR was relieved the refugees in Goma had gone home, but that the problems were not over yet.

The refugees in Bukavu are scattered along a 300km strip. Some are known to have walked 200km westward, into Zaire's interior.

The refugees were caught up in a month-long conflict between the Zairean Tutsi rebels, refugee Hutu extremists, and Zaire's army.

Berthiaume said the UNHCR had no reports of movement in Bukavu, although Western aid sources said refugees were moving north.

The exodus could pick up again if the rebels — who have close links with Kigali — open a corridor in the Bukavu region so tens of thousands of refugees further south can also go home.

In Goma, Berthiaume said, the exodus out of Zaire had slowed down to 1,000 an hour, from a peak of 15,000 at the weekend.

She said 200,000 people — mainly Hutu militia and their families — had fled to the hills near Goma.

"We can assume the majority of these people will not go home."

• Zaire issued an arrest warrant yesterday for Mr Laurent Kabila, the leader of the Tutsi rebel group that has taken over the eastern border area. — Reuters
US hangs fire on plan to put combat troops in Zaire

Washington - The United States has postponed plans to send combat troops to Zaire and prepared instead for a military air relief operation into Rwanda to help a half-million refugees there.

Defence Secretary William Perry said yesterday that the return of about 500,000 people from Zaire to Rwanda had changed the situation and that fewer than a thousand U.S. "logistical" personnel were now needed for a military operation in Rwanda led by Canada.

Under the new plan, about 200 US Air Force personnel would be sent to Kigali airport in Rwanda, 500 to Entebbe in Uganda and about 100 to Mombasa in Kenya to prepare for the air relief.

Canada, which is leading the multi-national military effort to ease the plight of the Rwandan refugees, has put the international military relief operation on hold pending meetings with other countries involved.

The Pentagon stressed that President Bill Clinton, while agreeing to US participation in principle, had still not given final approval for an actual mission, which could change in response to circumstances on the ground.

A senior administration official termed the situation "very fluid" and said that by today about 600,000 people would have returned to Rwanda from Zaire.

A final decision on the shape of the assistance should be taken by early next week, the official said, adding: "Obviously we need the consent of the Rwandan government."

Relief agencies were able to care for the refugees for the moment as they had adequate stocks of food and other supplies, the official said.

Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said that the US Air Force had about 30 military cargo aircraft waiting in Europe to carry equipment to Kigali, Entebbe and Mombasa to facilitate relief operations.

The Pentagon and State Department said that several hundred thousand Rwandan refugees were still in eastern Zaire, and that Washington remained ready to send troops to Zaire if needed.

"More than 500,000 refugees have returned to Rwanda in the past few days. This is a very positive development and we are modifying our plans," said Mr Perry. - Reuters
...Hawarden players win wood first time outside English in hundreds of thousands turn to their homes after a two-year exile in Spain.

Canada says options being discussed are convoys and air support that might not require ground troops.
Options to end refugee crisis in Zaire agreed

Aid agencies agree on framework for resettlement of hundreds of thousands uprooted by strife

APF
Stuttgart, Germany

After a weekend of talks, military planners agreed yesterday on a series of "options" for an intervention force to aid refugees in eastern Zaire, handing a final decision to their national capitals.

Canada's Lieutenant-General Maurice Baril, due to head the proposed force, said "the scene now shifts" to the capitals concerned "to choose in response to the situation in the region if they decide that a multinational force is necessary".

On Saturday in Geneva the main refugee and aid agencies agreed to what they termed a "framework on the resettlement of the refugees" from the crisis in the entire troubled region.

Rwanda, where the cash-starved government is having to cope with the return of more than half a million refugees this month, requested donors to provide more than $740 million ($3.4 billion) to fund resettlement operations.

The concern of the main aid agencies, however, was access to the desperate refugees and displaced people still trapped in eastern Zaire.

Speaking in Stuttgart, a Canadian spokesman said more than 25 nations had taken part in the talks, including Australia, Belgium, Britain, Canada, France, Italy, Spain, the United States, and the peacekeeping department of the United Nations.

Neither Zaire nor Rwanda were represented in the talks, but Cameroun, Egypt, South Africa and Senegal all sent someone. Baril said he hoped African countries would participate in the force and called for involvement of an African officer in a command position.

He said: "We have estimated that about 575,000 refugees have returned to Rwanda as of today."

"As a result of work done by humanitarian agencies and the military, our estimate is that there may be as many as 250,000 refugees in known locations in eastern Zaire."

"Our experts agree that there might be as many as 300,000 more refugees in Zaire, but their existence has not been confirmed by reconnaissance efforts."

Baril said they also presumed that there was a large number of Zairians displaced by the fighting.

The military support envisaged would range from general assistance to protection and security for humanitarian assistance operations, he added.

In Bukavu, eastern Zaire, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees met with other aid agencies and Zairian rebels to prepare for an urgently needed relief operation.

Discussions among the more than 30 aid officials lasted less than an hour and the officials then broke up into groups to discuss technical issues.

The talks focused on aid to Bukavu and the plight of refugees who are "out there somewhere", spokesman Mans Nyberg said.

North of Bukavu, thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees, some bearing knife wounds, started arriving in Goma after trekking for three weeks through old lava fields and forests.

The refugees, who described how they had defied the stranglehold of the feared Hutu militia to get back home, were fed nutritious biscuits and then evacuated to the Zairian-Rwandan border.
War may reverse efforts to liberalise Zaire's economy

MATTHEW TOSSTEVEN

KINSHASA—War in eastern Zaire, where rebels hold key towns near Rwanda and Burundi, is threatening free-market economic reforms designed to restore stability and boost foreign investment in this mineral-rich nation.

"We are in a very fragile position and could easily come off the rails. We have to maintain what we have achieved, (the war) could affect management of the economy in a very large way," Luboya Dipoka, the director of the influential employers' association, said.

Since coming to office in 1984, Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo has tried to implement Western-backed economic reforms aimed at liberalising markets and stamping out corruption.

Government spending has been reduced, but faces an added drain as the army prepares to attack the territory occupied by Rwandan-backed Tutsi and other rebels and prevent the chaos spreading further into the country.

"Financing a war is no easy matter and it would be too easy to resort to the printing presses to raise enough money," he said.

The army, which earlier this month accused Kengo's government of not doing enough for the war effort, has used the necessary funds. It is not clear where the money has come from.

Substantial reserves of copper and cobalt, as well as gold, diamonds, largely unfelled forests, huge farming and hydroelectricity generating potential mean that Zaire should be one of Africa's richest countries.

Instead it is one of the world's poorest after decades of mismanagement, corruption and sporadic political crises.

As democratic changes swept Africa in 1990, President Mobutu Sese Seko, who seized power in 1965, bowed to the trend and began his own reforms.

But the first four years of the transition, with seven prime ministers, two rounds of army-led looting, and ethnic violence in some of the most economically productive regions, were disastrous for the economy.

There have been marked macroeconomic improvements after two years of Kengo's government, though political pressures on spending have meant prospects for this year are not looking as bright as they did last year.

Predictions for annual consumer price inflation this year stood at 74.3 per cent. Last year it was 82 per cent, and in 1994, the year Kengo took office, it reached 610 per cent.

Growth last year was minus 0.6 per cent, from minus 3.9 per cent in 1986 and minus 10.5 per cent in 1993, according to central bank figures.

Mineral exports had increased and there was renewed interest from foreign investors who turned their backs on Zaire during the early years of chaos. The fighting has still not threatened the capital, 1,500km away, or the main economically productive areas of diamond-rich Kasai and the copper and cobalt mines of Shaba.

But the renewed interest could easily be forgotten with the renewed instability.

"In the first half-year of 1995, private foreign investors were looking at bringing $700 million for investments in mining, agriculture and services, with the bulk in the mining sector," said Luboya. "With the war, it is a matter of wait and see from the point of view of the outside world.

Investors from South Africa, the US, Canada, Romania and France had all expressed significant interest, Luboya said.

Copper production averaged 3,116 tons a month by September, against an average of 2,913 tons for the whole of last year and 2,553 tons in 1994.

Cobalt averaged 421 tons a month to September, against 330 tons last year and 273 tons in 1994.

Diamond exports averaged 1,380 million carats to September against 1,455 million carats last year and 1,355 million carats in 1994.

Production from Zaire's small reserves of heavy crude oil averaged 29,000 barrels a day this year against 28,000 barrels a day last year and 26,000 in 1994.

Kengo's government is also trying to increase revenues by decreasing import duties to between 5 and 30 percent and insisting that payments be made by commercial banks rather than the corruption-riddled customs office.

Luboya said that "1995 and 1996 were years when the seeds of economic recovery were sown and we simply cannot afford to lose that." — Reuters
Leonard Schach: actor and man of the theatre

Leonard Schach's death in Jaffa, Israel, this week has left South Africa's theatre world considerably poorer. Schach, who had a stroke two months ago, was 90.

The veteran actor, producer and man of the theatre, was born in Cape Town, educated at SACCS and the University of Cape Town, where he studied law and drama - and served in the SA Navy during World War 2. He was a founder member of the International Theatre Institute.

Among the many awards he received during a lifetime of devotion to theatre was the Queen's Coronation Medal for his service to South African theatre in 1952. As a boy, he wasn't interested in the theatre and only started acting later to cure a stutter.

Way back in the early to mid-1920s he'd begun to make his name with the University Dramatic Society and Little Theatre producers.

It was during the war that he produced his first play.

In 1936 he celebrated his first West End opening night, as co-producer for a production of Pirandello's 'The Rules Of The Game'.

It marked the start of a distinguished career in the theatre, both on and off the stage, and his name was linked with the Hofmeyr Theatre in Cape Town, the Playhouse in Johannesburg, the Cockpit Players and the National Theatre Company.

He was also well known for his productions at Maynardville, at the Baxter Theatre and for Pieter Toerien.

His enthusiasm and love for theatre never dimmed in all the years he was involved with the performing arts.

Schach's credits include directing and producing more than 300 productions, not only in South Africa, but also in Israel, America, Europe and Britain.

He was once described, fairly so, as South Africa's ambassador-director.

Although Schach had wide ranging talents, a consistency of quality and a solid, traditional directorial style distinguished whatever production to which he turned his hand.

Only recently, his personal history of South African Theatre in the Old South Africa, 'The Flag Is Flying', was published.
The choices on Zaire cannot avoid getting involved, but...

While Deputy Minister of Defence Ronnie Kasrils reportedly speaks of the need to accelerate training for a 10,000-strong future peacekeeping force, it is no secret that Pretoria remains sensitive to involvement in African conflicts. There are many dangers in willy-nilly accepting the mandate given by the United Nations for the multinational force in the Great Lakes.

For example, the humanitarian mission's purpose may be expanded in scope or extended in time. The force could become sucked into trying to settle a wider conflict in Zaire which, potentially, could have at its heart the fundamental impracticability of the highly diverse and already fragmented Zairean state.

Or perhaps, worse still, the humanitarian force could become a political pawn in the hands of those who have less than altruistic motives in the mission.

In this regard, it is clearly important to divorce present humanitarian needs from the refugees for a longer-term solution to the crisis. The mandate to ensure the provision of humanitarian aid with the need to bring peace to the region. The latter requires far more than the envisaged 15,000 to 20,000 troops.

It will demand, first, concerted behind-the-scenes diplomacy to ensure that Hutu refugees can be brought back permanently to Rwanda and Burundi. In this, it will not be enough simply to take refuge behind the positions adopted by the OAU and SADC.

It will probably require ingenious and patient diplomacy where South Africa, given both President Mandela's status and its continental punch, could play a constructive role.

This is more so, given that the OAU still today strikes by the 1964 Cairo resolution on the sanctity of colonial boundaries and is seemingly not prepared to take a fresh look at this inherently divisive and problematic legacy. But it is clear, too, that the situation in the Great Lakes is complicated and one in which there are many unstated agendas.

It is a complex kaleidoscope of military forces, all of whose consent is required for the humanitarian mission unless it is to move from peacekeeping to peace enforcement.

There are at least four "armies" operating from Zaire about 60,000 badly led and trained Zairean government troops (divided themselves into four independently-commanded wings), the Interahamwe and FDD Hutu militias launching attacks into Rwanda and Burundi respectively, and the largely Tutsi Banyamulenge group of Zaireans fighting Kinshasa's control.

Added to this is the 45,000-strong battle-hardened Arme Populaire Rwandaise (APR) of the Rwandan government as well as Burundi's 28,000 troops.

At this stage, it is not apparent what exactly the governments in Kigali and Bujumbura expect from their support of Tutsi brethren in Zaire beyond just the need to move the armed Hutu militiamen away from their borders further into Zaire: could there be another agenda for the establishment of separate Hutu and Tutsi homelands?

The recent acceptance of Hutu refugees back into Rwanda would appear to militate against this.

Moreover, what is the role of General Yoweri Museveni's Uganda, known to be more than sympathetic to the Tutsi, in all this?

Not only are there many difficulties in implementing a truly representative government in Zaire where President Mobutu Sese Seko has ruled for 31 years through corruption, repression and division of the opposition. It also could exacerbate ethnic tensions through entrenched domination by Hutu of the less numerous Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi.

The genocide in Rwanda in 1994 is hardly likely, also, to inspire Majors Pierre Buyoya's Tutsi military junta in Burundi to consider this option seriously.

South Africa politicians thus have two clear issues to consider before becoming involved in the Great Lakes: what is it that they expect their soldiers to achieve, and does it serve a larger purpose?
KINSHASA: Zaire denounced yesterday delays in sending an international force to help Zairean civilians and Hutu refugees displaced by a Tutsi-led revolt in the east.

"We are astonished by this lengthy piece of theatre which has terrible consequences for the lives of hundreds of thousands of human beings," government spokesman Mr Bogou Makeli said.

Support for a Canadian-led mission, authorised by the UN, has waned as some 600,000 Hutu refugees have returned home to Rwanda since mid-November.

Western and African military officials who met in Stuttgart at the weekend agreed on scenarios to help feed refugees in Zaire but showed no real urgency.

Zaire says the international force is needed because over a million displaced Zaireans and refugees are unaccounted for since the revolt began on October 18.

Relief organisations in Zaire are still trying to locate hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees, as well as the displaced Zaireans. Aid workers who flew over the area last week saw only a tiny proportion of those thought to be in the conflict zone.

"It is incredible. We just don't know where they have gone," said a senior aid official, who did not want to be named.

Attempts last week by groups including the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN Children's Fund to truck food and medicine to the east through Zaire in a convoy from the town of Kisangani had little success.

"Only one of the four trucks reached the town of Lubu. The rest were stuck 47km from Kisangani," the aid official said.

Aid agencies say they cannot work in the troubled zone without security from foreign troops.

A senior Western diplomat said there were too many organisations and countries with different agendas trying to co-ordinate the relief operation. — Reuters
Calm in Zaire's Shaba mining region may presage real storm

By Matthew Tostevin

Lubumbashi, Zaire — Fighting linked to a Tutsi-led revolt in the east poses no direct threat to Zaire's copper and cobalt mines in Shaba, but spreading chaos or delays in promised elections may erode separatist desires.

Southern Zaire has been spared the fighting and political disturbances which erupted across much of the huge central African state after the revolt began on October 18.

"Security has been tightened, particularly with possible mining deals in the offing, but we have found no threat," said one regional government official.

"When students planned to demonstrate against the government, we just told them it would not look good and they stopped."

Rebels led by Shaba-born Laurent Kabila drove the army back from a strip along the border with Rwanda and Burundi, capturing the towns of Goma and Bukavu.

But though the rebels are close to Shaba's northern boundary they are still at least 1,000km from the mining centres. Given the state of Zaire's roads, that is a truck journey of at least a week, or even a month.

Shaba, which is known as Katanga by those of its people who want more autonomy, does not have a recent history of stability. Isolated from the capital by 500km, there is much resentment at the drain on mining receipts which leaves little for locals but a few poorly paid jobs at state-run Gecamines.

"Everyone knows they would be much better off if Katanga were autonomous, but we have not opted for violence, we have opted for elections," said Lukonde Kyenge, the regional leader of the Union of Federalists and Independent Republicans.

"There is a threat from the fighting, but not directly. The same causes have the same effects and if you do not look after the provinces then this is what you get."

The union and Kyungu wa Kumwanza, its outspoken leader, have much support in Shaba, though it is not as visible since Kyungu was suspended as governor last year after being accused of importing arms for a secession bid.

An attempt to secede just after independence in 1960 was put down by the central government after years of bloody war in which Mobutu Sese Seko, the president since 1965, played a central role.

Fighting erupted again in the 1970s and was only put down with the help of French, Belgian and Moroccan troops.

In 1989 ethnic violence targeting migrants from neighbouring Kasai region caused many to flee and was almost the death knell for Gecamines in 1993 as 10,000 workers fled and production slumped.

The new rebel leader's Shaba roots have raised fears that instability might once again spread to the region.

Lukonde said the regional ties had already caused some of the authorities to point fingers at the union.

"We are not directly concerned. Kabila left here over 30 years ago and we don't know him," he said.

"Elections will give us the federalism we want and if they are not held across the country next year, we will hold them by ourselves and go our own way."

Mobutu bowed to foreign and internal pressure for reform in 1990 but Zaire's democratic transition has dragged. The oft-postponed election deadline is now next July.

Shaba already has substantial autonomy as a result of the collapse of national infrastructures through years of corruption and mismanagement. In trade terms, it looks more to Zambia and South Africa than to Kinshasa.

Foreign miners are showing serious interest in exploiting Shaba's huge resources for the first time in decades, after the near collapse of Gecamines forced it to look for outside help and coincided with a general liberalising trend.

This year's estimated copper production of 42,000 tons is under one-tenth its peak in the 1980s, but analysts say Shaba could produce even more than it used to, given investments in new technology. — Reuters
Ultimatum for aid workers

Rebels want final say over how resources are allocated in Eastern Zaire

Bukavu — A HANDFUL of international aid workers assessing the scale of the humanitarian disaster in Eastern Zaire have been given 10 days to report to rebel authorities before deciding on how resources are to be allocated.

“They are claiming the final right to decide on what needs to be done,” a UN children’s fund (Unicef) official said.

The relief community in the South Kivu capital of Bukavu — including UN officials required by UN security to monitor events across the Rwandan border in Cyangugu — comprises a few dozen international delegates supported by local workers whose numbers are difficult to evaluate.

Their efforts are being broadly coordinated by officials of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

About 20 representatives from UN agencies and non-governmental organisations have reached Bukavu in the past few days, the most prominent being the UNHCR itself, with nine delegates, Unicef with six officials covering both Bukavu and Cyangugu, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with four and the World Food Programme (WFP) with three.

Save the Children, Medecins sans Frontieres, Concern International and other bodies have a skeletal staff on the spot but official personnel are a five-hour drive away in Kigali or in other regional capitals.

They are operating with minimal resources, in some cases out of hotel rooms, in conditions rendered hazardous by poor communications, treacherous roads and a precarious military situation.

All are working in tandem with local officials, though conscious that this chaperoning imposes restraints, notably a ban on travel outside a 30 kilometre radius of Bukavu. — Sapa-AFP.
In Zaire, refugees' rubbish is prized

The refugees may be going, but the suffering continues. Chris McGreal reports from Mugunga.

It might be that in the distant future someone will find a treasure trove in Mugunga and wonder if they are referring to the site of some lost civilization.

Only a mass of waist-high litter cleared from the barren expanse of endless fields of maize, millet and sorghum families or a million people. Goma's desperate residents are seeing that.

Where Rwandans laboured clearing the roads as they shuffled home a few days ago, thousands of refugees of Zaire's new nation. They spilt over the roads which marked out the path into which 30,000 refugees separated themselves in this refugee camp.

Mugunga is one of a handful of desolate areas scattered around Goma. A month after they flourished with shops, hospitals, businesses and 200,000 people. But Mugunga was left with the burnt-out skeleton.

Eventually the refugees were cleared home after what associated with a burnt-out town, and Mugunga was left a sprawling dumpsite. In 132 km, the camp is seen with abandoned fields, clothing, furniture and plastic sheeting mounted by the United Nations food. Goma's residents are seen over the green whipped skeletons of former humans.

The dead bodies were then in many more ways privi-

TROUBLE BREW AT VENDA UNIVERSITY

MAIL AND GUARDIAN, 22 NOVEMBER 1996

Y

Extract from minutes of Council Meeting of 22 November 1996

The Chairperson of the Staff Association informed Council that the Executive of the Staff Association met with Cassisa representative on the evening of 20 November 1996 where it was agreed that the allega-

property searches, and no one would have to be done to rectify the situation.

The writing of the University of Venda Private Bill

The revision of the Act aimed at making the Act more relevant and realistic in the current situation. Whether all professors are in full agreement on the

In Rwanda, Hutus are shut out of own homes

Chris McGreal In Rubavu

DONNA LIBERSHAW is proud of the camp. But it is the
topic he points out about the mud-and-stone house halfway up the hill in a banana grove.

But he cannot pass through them. Students claim the front door to his face and so Libershaw is confined to an old servant camp.

The Hutu cobbler is back in Rwanda for the first time for two years after fleeing the exodus of about 500,000 refugees driven from their homes in Zaire last week.

"I went straight to my house and found others in it," he said. "They refused to let us in. They told me I should have to walk and I should go to the authorities. I don't even know who they are in my house. I've never seen them before."

The Hutu cobbler, who left Mugunga a month ago, said he was so attached to his home that he was going to build another house there.

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"We're not angry and we're not hatred towards anyone," he said.

For his part, Libershaw is not perturbed by the refugees, or by the Hutu. He sees that the Hutu have his land and the refugees are not going to be allowed in.

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"We're not angry and we're not hatred towards anyone," he said.
When the beer finally runs out at Bukavu

Bukavu, Zaire — Napoleon said an army marches on its stomach, but for fighters in Africa's latest conflict it is beer that fuels their victories, and their defeats.

It is therefore understandable that officials at the largest brewery in Kivu province are somewhat reluctant to talk about what their factory has undergone in the past month. Who knows which forces will arrive to demand "wages" next?

"Times are very hard at the moment," said an official at Bukavu Brewery. The brewery is the dominating and only operating industry of this sleepy lakeside town.

"We will run out of supplies soon, December 15 will be the last day of beer," he said.

It is surprising that any business at all is being done.

Twice looted, once by Zairean government troops and former Rwandan army soldiers and then by the conquering Zairean Banyamulenge rebels, the brewery is nevertheless a hive of activity.

The brewery is one of four, in Zaire, owned by Heineken, the Dutch brewer, officials said. At capacity it employed more than 400 people and produced some 30,000 hectolitres of Primus brand beer a month.

Today there are just 100 staff left, mainly involved in bottling the beer remaining in the vast vats. With no hops, malt or yeast, officials say they cannot produce any more.

"This was a profitable factory that was well run," said one official. "It is a pity to see it going down." He said money made from sales of remaining beer was going towards paying wages and bills.

The problems faced by Bukavu brewery are shared by other traders and businessmen in eastern Zaire. They used to rely on Rwandan for supplies, but now that rebels control a vast sweep of the province lines have been cut.

Small traders rely on frequent visits to Rwanda for supplies, but for a big company like the brewery, with interests in government-controlled Zaire such a step would be political suicide.

Elsewhere in Bukavu, there are signs that life is returning to normal. The town, taken by the rebels on October 23, can now accommodate much of the street-to-street fighting witnessed in Goma.

Aid organisations estimate three-quarters of the population died, but in the past two days there have been pouring back to town.

The streets are in appalling condition and a four-wheel drive vehicle is more necessary to transport the countryside. Furniture repair shops have sprung up on every corner.

Roadside beauty salons have reopened, vendors sell petrol through drums brought from Rwanda, and curio sellers scramble for the attention of any vehicle carrying a foreigner.

There is no shortage of food. The countryside is lush and the outskirts of town are packed with vendors selling pineapples, avocados and bananas. Pigs wallow in the mud outside small butchers' and chickens peck hopefully at the dusty pavements.

But only two small general stores are open, selling toothpaste, soap and powdered milk from Rwanda and there seem to be no customers.

At night the town is deserted. Locals say there is an unofficial curfew but this is ignored by off-duty rebel officials who drink in the bar of the splendid but faded Residence Hotel.

A few local good-time girls sit for the attention of the handful of journalists still in town. They sip their Primus and plan their departures, preferably before the beer runs out. — Reuters
New Swiss role in Zaire

Kinshasa — Gecamines, Zaire’s state-owned copper company yesterday signed its first major joint venture with a foreign company, the Swiss-based Groupe Lundin, despite a spreading civil war in the east of the country.

“This is the rebirth of Zaire’s mining industry,” said Adolph Lundin, the chairman of Groupe Lundin.

Groupe Lundin, representing the Canadian company Eurocan Consolidated Ventures, on Friday won agreement from the Zaire government to mine vast resources of copper and cobalt at Tenke Fungurume in the southern Shaba province.

Charlie Pettifer, a Lundin official, said the final accord with Gecamines was delayed until the early hours of yesterday morning as four government ministers had to initial about 2,000 pages of contract documents in French and English.

Before the signing ceremony in Kinshasa, Lundin brushed aside the risk of investing in Zaire.

“If you are in resource business, you have to work in the countries that give results. Taking risks too much into account is like competing in a marathon with a broken leg,” he said.

Shaba borders the province of South Kivu, large parts of which have been captured in the past two months by Rwanda-backed rebels.

In Zaire’s turbulent post-independence history the mineral-rich province has tried to secede several times.

President Mobutu Sese Seko has often claimed to be the one person holding together the vast central African country of over 300 ethnic groups.

For more than three months Mobutu has been absent from Zaire, receiving treatment for cancer in Europe. Regional analysts fear that if he were to die, Zaire’s future as a state would be threatened in the succession struggle that could ensue.

But Lundin remains unperturbed. “We have an international agreement that would prevail,” he said.

The group said it would organise security for the mines in co-ordination with Gecamines.

Gecamines already employs South African security guards to prevent theft and smuggling from its copper and cobalt mines in the Kolwezi and Likasi areas of Shaba province.

Under the terms of yesterday’s accord Consolidated Eurocan Ventures, in which Lundin is a major shareholder, will own 55 percent of Tenke Fungurume project, and Gecamines 45 percent.

The deal could lead to further foreign investments in the huge, scarcely tapped mineral potential of Zaire.

“We know already that there were 10 other companies queuing up behind us in this venture,” said Lundin.

According to studies undertaken on site, Tenke Fungurume could become one of the world’s largest open-cast copper mines.

“We expect the first phase of production to start by 2000. In that phase we hope to produce 100,000 tons of copper and 9,000 tons of cobalt a year,” said Lundin.

By 2010 the mine could produce as much as 400,000 tons of copper a year with resources lasting for up to 100 years, he said. Feasibility studies for the project will begin in the first quarter of next year. — Reuters
The Ugandans celebrate capture of towns

AFRICA

GO 4/13/76

Ugandans celebrate capture of towns

The Ugandan authorities have announced that the Ugandan army has captured several towns in the northern part of the country. The town of Gulu has been taken, and the Ugandan military is advancing towards the town of Lira. The Ugandan army has also captured the town of Pader, which has been a stronghold of the rebel group.</altenative_language_1>
SA mining houses deny rebels’ claims

ANGLO American and De Beers have denied claims by Zairean rebels that the SA groups had active operations in the strife-torn central African country.

The rebels, who have been gaining territory in recent weeks, reassured foreign companies that they would honour established mining concessions.

Jean Kabongo, special security adviser to rebel leader Laurent Kabila, said the rebels would try to open up new areas to mining, especially in the central region of Kasai. He said both De Beers and Anglo had mining operations in areas now under rebel control.

The rebels said they had already captured the mining centre of Kamituga, where they claimed Anglo had been operating.

Sources could only confirm that Canada’s Banrow Resources was involved in mining activities in Kamituga. Anglo said it had no operations or even exploration teams on the ground in Zaire.

Anglo chairman Julian Ogilvie-Thompson said last week that the company, which has spearheaded SA mining houses’ move into Africa, would proceed warily in Zaire and had only submitted a bid to develop the Kolwezi Copper Tailings project.

De Beers, which controls the world’s rough diamond market through its London-based Central Selling Organisation, said yesterday that it had no mines in Zaire but maintained about five buying offices in the country.

De Beers spokesman Tom Tweedy said mining activities were under the control of the state-owned Société Minière de Bakwanga (MIBA), which exploited Zaire’s diamond deposits.

“De Beers has no diamond mines in Zaire, we don’t even have technical guys going up to the MIBA mine. It is a totally separate company run by Zaire and Sibeka in Belgium, of which Sibeka only has a 20% interest.”

He said De Beers had a small stake in Sibeka but no interest or involvement in the Zairean operations. — Reuters.
Zaire rebels move into De Beers territory

Chris McGreal in Kigali

ZAIREDAN rebels say they have launched an assault against the main diamond-mining region, threatening a major source of the elite’s wealth and potentially providing the insurgents with an important means of funding their war against ailing President Mobutu’s regime.

The Rwandan-backed insurgents are headed toward the regional capital, Mbuji-Mayi, where the giant South African De Beers corporation has considerable investments.

The rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, has sent a 27-page letter to Mobutu, who is convalescing from cancer in the south of France, asking him to resign.

“It is impossible for Zaire to get itself out of the mess it is in, with no constitutional government, no independent judiciary, no constitution. The country’s leader is reigning unconstitutionally, placing himself above the law and holding his people hostage,” a summary of the letter said.

The rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaïre is attacking on at least two fronts after seizing a 650km stretch of territory on Zaire’s eastern borders. Beside targeting the mineral-rich Kasai region in the centre of the country, an alliance leader, Jean Kisangani, said his men are also pressing toward Kisangani, the largest city in the north.

A rebel seizure of Mbuji-Mayi and other diamond-mining areas might prove crippling to Mobutu’s regime. Even through the decades of economic collapse in Zaire, the diamond industry remained a lucrative source of funds for Mobutu and his cronies.

The rebels have assured mining companies — including De Beers, which buys most of Zaire’s diamonds — that they will be free to continue operating in “liberated” territory.

But Kabila said the mining firms will be expected to pay taxes to the rebel administration.
A million people expected to meet ailing leader

Mobutu tles 100 no crisis in Zaire
COUNTRY’S DISINTEGRATION FEARED

Zaire blames conflict on ‘Anglo-Saxons’

NAIROBI: President Mobutu Sese Seko returned to Zaire yesterday after four months abroad. While he was away rebels took control of the eastern strip of his country.

African leaders left Kenya yesterday after a low-key summit on the Zaire conflict that persuaded President Nelson Mandela to accept a more prominent role.

The summit chose Mandela and the presidents of Kenya, Zimbabwe and Cameroon to head peace efforts in eastern Zaire and the unstable Great Lakes region of Central Africa.

Zaire boycotted the Nairobi summit and its absence prevented any real breakthrough, delegates said.

Justifying its boycott, French-speaking Zaire said yesterday the Nairobi summit was a masquerade put together by an alliance of English-speaking countries that were seeking to destabilise it.

"There were an impressive number of countries at the summit who have nothing to do with the Great Lakes, giving it a falsely international character," Information Minister Mr Boguo Makele said in Kinshasa.

Delegates said the nine leaders present discussed the rebellion in eastern Zaire alone, without even inviting their ministers.

A final communiqué released yesterday noted that security had worsened in the region — roughly comprising Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi and parts of Uganda and Tanzania — since the leaders last met here on November 5.

The communiqué called again for a ceasefire in eastern Zaire and "called upon the parties to the conflict to commit themselves to a negotiated, peaceful settlement."

Zaire has rejected talks with Laurent Kabila’s rebels, who control key eastern towns two months after launching a well-planned offensive against Mobutu’s 31-year rule.

Mobutu returned to Kinshasa yesterday after four months abroad for medical treatment, during which he lost the eastern strip of his vast country to rebels.

The unstated background to the Nairobi summit was the fear that Mobutu’s reign is ending and that Zaire is heading for disintegration, threatening the borders inherited from colonial powers.

Zaire’s transitional parliament is opposed to any talks with Rwanda and Uganda, which it accuses of sponsoring the rebellion.

"After analysing documents in our possession it seems that the initiative for this meeting is not African and that in effect a foreign power directly implicated in the events in the east is the author of this masquerade," Makele said.

"We denounce this Anglo-Saxon coalition that is going about destabilising Zaire and the African continent."

Makele did not specify which non-African country Zaire was accusing but members of the government have accused the United States of backing Rwanda.

One delegate in Nairobi commented: "The Zairians really should have come. They had a chance to put their case."

The communiqué regretted that the international community had failed to send a military force to eastern Zaire to help more than a million stranded Rwandan Hutus refugees there, despite a UN Security Council resolution to that effect.

But since November at least 800,000 of the refugees have had to return from Zaire and Tanzania to Rwanda.

The summit urged the international community to help the refugees resettle in Rwanda and encourage the hundreds of thousands still in neighbouring countries to go home.

It appointed the four presidents "to take the necessary initiatives and steps aimed at assisting in ending the conflict in eastern Zaire and promoting peace, stability and security in the region and in the Great Lakes region."

Delegates said the ethnic conflict in Burundi, where at least 150,000 Hutus and Tutsis have been killed since 1993, was barely discussed.

Burundi’s military regime protested a statement on Monday that it was not invited to the summit. — Reuters
Mobutu brings back respect for the armed forces
Zaireans greet devil they know

Ruaridh Nicoll in Kinshasa reports on the return of President Mobutu Sese Seko after months of convalescence in France.

MERGING on to the steps of his chartered plane, Mobutu Sese Seko, in a leopard-skin hat, looked out happily on the country he has pillaged for 30 years. He was greeted by an enormous roar.

Thousands of Zaireans rushed under the jet that had flown him to the capital, Kinshasa, this week from exile in France as if they wanted to carry the plane on their shoulders. After nearly a year their "marshal" had come home. Now the people moved like a dark sea under the silver wings, the men held up a banner that read "Mobutu equals solution".

Mobutu (69) declared he had defied dictators' orders to return and promised not to flinch from the crisis facing the country in the wake of a rebel uprising in the east. "Each time that Zaire has been threatened in the past, I have never pulled back. I will never pull back."

The returning exile was followed by a fleet of planes loaded with washing machines, television sets and video recorders bought during his convalescence on the French Riviera.

Believed a public show of affection at Kinshasa is a vast land seething with resentment and unrest after three decades of corruption, misuse and now armed rebellion.

Geaian Kakudji, spokesman for Laurent Kabila, president of the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces, said Mobutu's return changed nothing. "We know he is preparing a counter-attack, but we are confident and prepared to respond. The regime of Mr Mobutu is a sick regime," he said speaking by telephone from Brussels. "We need a new man to reconstruct the country."

Zairean state radio had broadcast appeals for residents of Kinshasa to turn out in huge numbers to greet the president — and they responded in style.

Neglect does not breed contempt in this country and thousands waited to welcome him home and they streamed on to the tarmac of Africa's notoriously corrupt airport without hindrance from officials.

"Look how poor these people are," a foreign businessman in transit said, pointing out that Mobutu is reputed to be the richest man in Africa. "They have waited to come here for sure."

"It's happiness, total happiness," said Wabasa Gerenbo (38) from Kinshasa, as he waited for the plane. "We know he is living and walking and the joy is shared by all Africans."

For 30 years he has won wars, he has always won and he has kept the country together.

"What has happened in the east has happened because he is absent and now the enemy are in retreat."

Gerembo did not look as if he wanted contradiction on Africa's joy. One thing was obvious. The troops that now formed to protect Mobutu were not of the same kind as those who retreated in front of the rebels.

They were the presidential guard, smartly dressed, well armed and highly disciplined.

When the president's plane sank through the equatorial haze on to the tarmac, the army pushed back the hordes from the ramp in front of the camp's private lounge. Pictures of the president had been hung on the incongruously well-painted walls.

Brass bands pounded their way through the thick wall of humanity, happily dancing children crushed against the fences. The joy was real in the warm, summer-damp air.

Mobutu was met at the bottom of the ramp by two girls walking with elaborate bouquets of flowers. Wearing a flower-patterned tunica, black trousers and a smile, the president stepped on to the red carpet and made his way to a podium where he raised a black, silver-tipped cane above his head.

Angel N'Zorga (20) was beside herself. Her husband was fighting in the east, although she had heard from him the week before. "I came to welcome the president," she said. "He has become back because his health has improved and he's going to bring peace."

The murmurings of a potential coup were nowhere to be heard. Although later, a young man, surrounded by friends, said quietly: "He is a great man, a great man for the army, but a terrible president."

The Zaireans may see what they believe to be a competent soldier back in their midst. He had returned complaining that his recuperation had been interrupted, but promising damage to the rebels in the east. "I have decided to interrupt my stay in France," he said.

On the other side of the airport terminal, a Mercedes shuttled into position with armoured cars bristling with anti-aircraft guns.

Whatever anyone might say about paid crowds, it could not be repeated on the 30km drive into the centre of the city. Thousands of people lined the road, singing and shouting at the people driving by.

Beautifully and stylishly dressed people mingled with the poor in the rundown city.

Fears grow that Burundi will invade Tanzania

Chris McGreal in Johannesburg

FOREIGN envoys attempting to bring an end to the civil war in Burundi believe it may be about to invade Tanzania to hit Hutu rebel bases which have swollen with fighters driven from eastern Zaire.

Officials fear Burundi's overwhelmingly Tutsi army will strike into Tanzania before long in an attempt to prevent the largest rebel group — the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD) led by Burundi's former interior minister, Leonard Nyangoma — from re-establishing foothold after it was routed from Zaire. United Nations special envoy Raymond Chretien, EU envoy Aldo Ajjello and UN human rights commissioner Jose Ayala Lasso have all visited Burundi in recent weeks. Senior officials among the parties said they sensed a new bullishness with Burundi's army after it joined the Rwandan-led invasion to clear the Hutu refugee camps in Zaire.

"There are some very worrying signals that the army intends to strike against CNDD bases in Tanzania," a Burundi official said. "After the success against the refugee camps in eastern Zaire, the army doesn't want to let the rebels off the hook. But it wouldn't be like going into Zaire. The Tanzanian army will not stand by. I think there is a real possibility we will see the Burundian and Tanzanian armies fighting before long. The question is where it leads," one official said.

Burundi's military leader, Major Pierre Buyoya, has accused the Tanzanian government of turning a blind eye to the growing CNDD presence on its territory.

After a meeting last month with former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, who is attempting to mediate an end to Burundi's civil war, Buyoya said he was "concerned" about deteriorating relations.

Tanzania denies it is giving shelter to the CNDD. Tanzania's defence minister, Edgar Makanika Majogo, has warned that any incursion will cost the Burundian army dearly.

"Any nation or group which will threaten the lives of Tanzanians shall be met with the strongest reaction. We shall not tolerate any threat to our territory or security," he said.

Finally the convoy ground into a bottleneck at the gates of Camp Colonel Tshatshi, an army station where the president has one of his many mansions. For the lucky few letting through by the army, a vast bullet had been laid on beside the glorious rapids of the Congo River. There Mobutu stood on the patio and made a 10-minute speech to his people.

The people's greatest fear, it seemed, was the rebels and their leader aimed his message directly at it. "I'm not going to disappoint you. I know your expectations and your hopes," he said. "Every time our country has been threatened in the past I have never retreated and this time again I will not retreat."
Zairean politicians stalling over setting up government of unity

KINSHASA — Zairean politicians showed no sign yesterday of meeting an ultimatum from President Mobutu Sese Seko to set up a government of national unity to deal with ethnic strife and political chaos.

Mobutu, who recently returned to Zaire after four months’ convalescence from prostate surgery in Europe, asked his supporters and the opposition to present potential members of a “crisis government” by midday on Saturday.

They failed to do so and Mobutu, who has presided over Zaire’s economic and political decline for more than three decades, extended the deadline to yesterday. He also warned through his spokesman that he would otherwise “assume all his responsibilities”.

Political parties and the press have spent four days speculating about who might be called to take office, and about the possible sacking of Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo.

Meanwhile yesterday a Tutsi rebel alliance which has seized several key towns and a large part of eastern Zaire since October said that government troops on Saturday launched a counter-offensive in the Bunia region on the Ugandan border.

Several groups in the presidential movement and the radical opposition have said that Mobutu would appoint a new prime minister. They appear to be ignoring the law governing the transition to democracy, which says that only the transitional parliament may sack an incumbent premier.

According to the constitutional act, the prime minister’s successor should be proposed by a political grouping “other than that of the head of state”, which means the greatly fragmented opposition.

Mobutu’s opponents include former premier Etienne Tshisekedi, whom supporters still see as the legitimate leader. Kengo, however, benefits from western backing as a man thought capable of restoring some order to the economy. Former Tshisekedi aide and reformer Kibesa Maliba is another possibility. Amid such confusion, the replacement of the prime minister seemed unlikely yesterday, but Mobutu has called for a government capable of putting down the rebels, whom Kinshasa said were backed by neighbouring Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

All these countries deny helping the rebels.

A new government is also due to organise a constitutional referendum to bring in a democratic third republic. Elections are due to be held before July next year. — Sapa-AFP.
They were accorded Zairian nationality under the 1964 constitution. Mr Kabila is neither Tutsi nor Munyamulenge (singular for Banyamulenge), but comes from the Shaba province in southern Zaire.

The Banyamulenge were in the news in 1964, Mr Mobutu, then fighting a war of secession in the south led by the National Movement for the Congo (MNC), dubbed the Mulele rebellion, enlisted the tribespeople, armed them and used them to suppress the movement.

Mr Kabila fought against Mr Mobutu during that rebellion. When the mutiny was crushed, the Banyamulenge kept the guns Mr Mobutu had given them.

These, among others, are the very weapons they are now using against Mr Mobutu’s forces, since the Banyamulenge were first threatened in August.

A group of the Banyamulenge in Uvira was apparently attacked by a combined force of Zairean troops and armed Interhamwe about five months ago. This sparked the fighting. "They were no longer being pushed around but killed, displaced, raped, looted and told to go back to Rwanda," Eutice Gashugu Rutiba of Makerere University, Kampala, said.

"Some went back (to Rwanda) but others said ‘why don’t we defend ourselves,’" he said.

Mr Kabila later "injected intellectual fibre into the struggle," says Captains Gadi Gasatura, who, along with Mr Kabila, is directing the operation to liberate Zaire from Mr Mobutu’s "murderous and corrupt regime.

"People from Tutsi and Masai who joined in after they saw some hope of being delivered from the clutches of the tyrant Mobutu," says Captains Gadi Gasatura. "Now, almost all of the Zaireans who are tired of the Mr Mobutu regime are joining the Banyamulenge.

The area is not under the control of the Zairean forces nor is it ever likely to be," Dr Rutiba believes that the Banyamulenge are "not interested in forming a government because very few of them are educated... But they are likely to be joined by other groups who are tired of Mobutu.

However, he agrees that they are closely related to the Tutsis, as is the Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni.

As for the more than one million Hutu refugees, Tutsi hardliners quote the Bible: "They sowed the wind (the 1994 Tutsi genocide in Rwanda), and now they will most certainly reap the whirlwind." -

In Goma, in eastern Zaire, a Zairean aid worker and a businessman confirmed rebel held the key northeastern town of Bunia as reported by rebel leader Mr Kabila.

"I was in radio contact with Bunia last night and people there said the rebels are in town," said a Zairean aid worker in rebel-held Goma, 360km south of Bunia. "They are the only ones in town."

"I hear support from Uganda is critical in the capture of the town," said a businessman.

Both sources declined to be identified, but said Bunia fell as March 11.

Ugandan troops earlier this month thrust into Zaire on what they said was a "hot pursuit" operation against Sudanese-backed Ugandan rebels and rebel troops from two Zairean towns to rebel-held areas.

Mr Kabila said this week his forces controlled Bunia after killing 300 troops in a 12-hour battle and pushing the Zairean army three kilometres out of the town, 30km west of Lake Albert marking the border with Uganda.

The capture of Bunia helped reassure civilians in Goma concerned about the rebels' power to defeat a possible Zairean army counter-offensive following the return of Mr Mobutu to Zaire from Europe last month before being away for more than four months after prostate-cancer surgery.

The capture of Bunia is what people in Goma were waiting for to feel more secure. This may mean we can now make more long-term plans," said Antoinette Tarihe, coordinator of the Zaire aid agency Office.

Bunia is a major northeast junction with a tarmac airstrip, used by the Zairian government to send reinforcements.

Its fall was the first substantial advance in weeks by the Rwandan-backed rebels who launched their revolt in October.

Bunia is also close to gold mines, which the rebels could use to fund their campaign to capture the crumbling central African state.

But, Mr Kabila said the Kilo Moto gold mines near Bunia, a target of the operation, had not yet been captured.

Mr Kabila has ordered gold miners in 500km rebel-held swathes of the east to come forward and discuss the future of mining concessions by January 3 or risk losing their assets.

But Mr Mobutu also has his allies. Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi said yesterday only Mr Mobutu's hand at the helm of Zaire could guarantee that country's unity: "Keeping president Mobutu in power is the only way to save Zaire's unity," the Libyan colonel told the official Libyan news agency Jana.

"If Mobutu disappears, Zaire's fate will be the same as that of Scamalia's after Stalin Berre's departure and Yugoslavia's after Tito.

"The country will be a breeding ground of instability in Africa," he said. Colonel Gaddafi was referring to the war which devastated Somalia and which intensified after president Slad Berre's departure in 1990, and to the beginning of the disintegration of Yugoslavia after president Josep Broz Tito died in 1980.

Zaire has been torn by periodic conflict ever since acquiring independence for Belgium more than thirty years ago.

Sapa AFP
Zairean crisis poses new challenges for Africa

Redefining borders along ethnic lines could be part of the solution

In 1994 the RPF staged a successful invasion of Rwanda from the Zairean border. The Rwandan exiles from Uganda routed the Hutus and established an alternative government in Kigali. This operation created a situation where Hutu refugees in Zaire started plotting and training for a counter-offensive. To make matters worse, the Zairean security forces started picking on Zairian Tutsis who had been part of Zaire since before the partition of Africa in the 19th century.

When Zairean Tutsis were threatened with expulsion from their homeland by the armed forces, they decided to resist. They formed a resistance force (secretly supported by Rwanda) and turned out to be more than a match for the thoroughly inefficient Zairean security forces. A viable long-term solution is the federation of Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. The armies of Rwanda and Burundi would be pensioned off.

In this larger political community the Hutus and Tutsis would discover how much they have in common culturally, and may learn to co-exist on the same political side on many issues in the enlarged Tanzania (just as their ethnic cousins in Uganda, the Hima and the Twa, have often voted on the same side against other groups in the larger national context of Uganda).

Unless the Hutus and Tutsis are either partitioned into separate countries or federated into a larger, stable and democratic political community, they are likely to turn against each other in an endless frenzy every few years.

The re-drawing of colonial boundaries need not mean smaller and smaller African states. It could simply mean more rational and more viable political communities.

(A All A Mazrui is director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies and Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities at the New York State University.)
Report links SA mercenary group to Zaire
FOR a brief, heady period every-thing went its way.

The rebel movement that was born in the hills of east Zaire effortlessly routed the army, seized towns, dismantled refugee camps and sent thousands of recalcitrant Rwandans home. Nothing, it seemed for a year, could halt the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

Three months on, prospects seem a lot more daunting to Laurent Kabila, the professional revolutionary now in charge of a 6,000km strip of land bordering Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda.

He is discovering that winning the peace in the region he has ambitiously dubbed "Democratic Congo" will be a far trickier task than putting the chaotic Zairean army to flight.

At the same time his military hold may be about to be severely challenged for the first time. Foreign mercenaries are gathering in Kisangani, the biggest city in east Zaire. His forces, in danger of overextending themselves, have slowed their advance. And his multi-ethnic coalition is in danger of splintering.

"Over the next few months we are going to see what the rebel alliance is really made of and whether this Democratic Congo has any likelihood of surviving as a state," said a Western diplomat.

Having plundered the local banks, Kabila has appealed to civilian servants to work for nothing while he locates new resources. He is pinning his hopes on the gold mines in his grasp. Kamituga, southwest of Bukavu, is estimated to have reserves worth $1,5bn. The deposits around Bunia, north of Goma, were the source of much of Mobutu's personal wealth.

Kabila swiftly swore in new regional governors and civilian administrators and even managed to persuade deserting soldiers to defect. But if these men are not to go the same way as their predecessors, alienating a weary public with demands for hefty bribes, they will have to be paid.

Despite Zairean claims that Rwanda and Uganda are backing the rebel movement, diplomats say the Alliance of Democratic Forces appears to be on its own when it comes to funding.

Having plundered the local banks, Kabila has appealed to civil servants to work for nothing while he locates new resources. He is pinning his hopes on the gold mines in his grasp. Kamituga, southwest of Bukavu, is estimated to have reserves worth $1.5bn. The deposits around Bunia, north of Goma, were the source of much of Mobutu's personal wealth.

The companies involved - the Toronto-based exploration company Buroo Resource, a Belgian-Canadian consortium called Mindew and Barrick Gold, one of the world's largest gold companies - are in an unenviable position.

If they make a deal with the rebels, they risk angering Kinshasa and having the mines confiscated if the government recaptures the area. All this comes as Kabila is struggling to cement a crumbling alliance.

The alliance was a marriage of convenience between disciplined, Rwandan-trained Banyamulenge Tutsis, rebels from Shaba and Kasai provinces and local Mai-Mai warriors, who are traditionally hostile to Tutsis.

The coalition proved surprisingly strong at the outset. But recently the undisciplined Mai-Mai, many of them child soldiers, convinced of their supernatural powers, have been refusing to cede seized territory to the Banyamulenge and running amok.

Kabila is promising to disarm the Mai-Mai and send them to training camps. Now, he knows, would not be a good time for a mass defection. Zaire's army has a new, more professional chief of staff, Gen. Mahele Leko Bokungsou, appointed during Mobutu's brief return from France.

He is trying to discipline an army which has done the rebels' work for them by systematically looting, killing and raping across government-held territory.

But his hopes of pulling together a 6,000-strong elite force to stage the long-promised "devastating counteroffensive" are already being undermined by a lack of weapons, trained men and commitment on Mobutu's part.
In Zaire, you pay a high price for anarchy

Some call it bribery, others say it brings efficiency to a chaotic society

A month ago, every visitor who stepped onto the tarmac at Kinshasa's Ndjili airport was immediately greeted with a blast of damp, tropical heat and a throng of hostile men waving their arms and shouting "GIVE YOUR PASSPORT!"

A few travelers might step past the first shouting man only to confront another, again wearing no uniform or badge of authority. There was no immigration queue. The entrance to the dingy, urination-scented airport building was blocked by a pack of still more men shouting "PASSPORT! PASSPORT! PASSPORT!"

The heat and the shouts bring to faces a film of sweat that gathers in rivulets and trickles nervously down necks and spines. "GIVE YOUR PASSPORT! PASSPORT! PASSPORT!"

With no choice, passengers hand over their passports to men who immediately disappear into the crowd. Later they return to explain that it will cost money to recover the passport. Sometimes $20; sometimes $60.

Next immigration officials and customs officials demand fees. "In Zaire, we have a very high customs fee on imported computers. But I like journalists so I will waive the fee. But there will be a small gift."

After escaping the gauntlet of bribery, passengers step into the main airport hall, a scene that is a cross between street mar-
United Nations chief urges Zaire to halt counter-attack against rebels
Zairians see ‘direct tax’ as survival

BY ROSS HERBERT
Kinshasa

A month ago, every visitor who stepped on to the tarmac at Kinshasa’s Ndjili airport was immediately greeted with a blast of damp tropical heat and a throng of hostile men waving their arms and shouting, “Give your passport.”

A few travellers might step past the first shouting man only to confront another, again wearing no uniform or badge of authority. There was no immigration queue. The entrance to the dingy, urine-scented airport building was blocked by a pack of still more men shouting, “Passport, passport, passport.”

Given no choice, passengers hand over their passports to men who immediately disappear into the crowd. Later they return to explain that it will cost money to recover the passports.

Next, immigration officials and secret police and customs officials demand fees. “In Zaire, we have a very high customs fee on imported computers. But I like journalists so I will waive the fee. But there will be a small gift.” After escaping the gauntlet of bribery, passengers step into the main airport hall, a scene that is a cross between street market and prison riot.

All entrances to the airport building and several internal passages are barred by iron gates. Policemen beat back crowds of ragged people trying to push inside. Outside the airport, gun-toting soldiers occasionally jump into taxis with foreign visitors and demand still more money, for many travellers, Ndjili airport is the quintessential Zairian experience: loud, frenzied, unpredictable and inescapably corrupt.

But that unenviable scene is no more, at least for now. When I returned to Zaire after two months, I found no shouting passport snatchers. There was an orderly immigration queue, and no one demanded “gifts.” The change is a sign that a war is on. Not just against rebel forces that have captured a 600km swath of eastern Zaire, but against a system of corruption so pervasive it has rendered the country as ungovernable as any township in apartheid-era South Africa.

The army has cleared up the airport since President Mobutu Sese Seko resubmitted his cabinet and senior military ranks in December. Since then, dozens of military officers have been reassigned or arrested for corruption and looting.

When rumours spread that rebels would attack the eastern town of Kindu, the first reaction of soldiers was to loot the place and flee. Other army units retreated into the eastern fighting looted and raped their way 500km north-west from Goma to Kisangani, forcing hundreds of thousands of Zairians to flee into the bush. In Kisangani local businesses tried to stop the destruction by offering free food and later paying soldiers to leave town.

Desertion is said to be rife and some army units have been sent to fight not rebels but 400 soldiers who reportedly have gone on a looting rampage north of Kisangani, causing the government to declare the zone a disaster area. As anarchic as such behaviour might appear to outsiders, it is understandable to Zairians.

Many locals even resist the use of words like “bribery” and “corruption” to describe the country. There is, they say, a system to what foreigners see as simple larceny. Jose Bononge, president of the privately held airline, Zaire Express, explains that the airline only pays a $500 bribe to obtain the plane ticket as a tax for the use of the airport. “I actually think it is cheaper in Zaire,” he said.

Greg Stephenson, who works for MBU, a De Beers-affiliated diamond operation in Zaire, offered the example of the police: instead of paying taxes that go toward police salaries, Zairians pay the police directly when they have a robbery or automobile collision that they need police to sort out. “At first it seems strange, but you get used to the system,” he said. So routine have such transactions become that some Zairians say they do not understand why foreigners call it bribery.

Separating corruption from the Zaire economy is a bit of a chicken-and-egg question. The country has experienced hyper-inflation for years, and most government employees, including soldiers, go for months or years without getting paid.

As a result a compromise system has developed. Tom Tshibangu, a supervisor working for the government statistics department, officially earns 36,000 new zaires per month, which equals R1,94, or one beer, per month.

The lack of government services spells opportunity for some. For example, thousands of men earn a living pushing two-wheeled carts; a major source of income is rubbish that piles up on city streets until the stench motivates neighbours to pay a push-cart man to haul it away for about $2 (about R9) a load. Such hard economics drive every government worker to demand fees for any type of service rendered.

The men lining the tarmac at the airport are all airport workers, customs, immigration or police officials who come to meet every incoming flight, whether they are scheduled to work or not, in the hope of making a few dollars from a hapless visitor. To cope with the cash crunch, many Zairians are also forced to pay for electricity and water on a day-by-day basis. And when major water or electrical lines break, citizens must themselves organize to pay for and effect the repairs.

There is a joke in Kinshasa that says Article 15 of the Zaire constitution says “Get by”, which means Zairians must do whatever it takes to live. To “get by” many Zaire families rely on a system whereby half the family eats one day and half the next. In some families, each member eats only every third day.

I asked a man who makes a living helping people run the gauntlet of airport bribery whether the airport would take any pity on an old woman on crutches. “No... (her condition) would be a sign of weakness that they could use. But that is not a question of right and wrong. It is the belly talking,” he said. - Star Foreign Service.
Zaire fights back — at last

Chris McGreal in Kigali

The Zairian government this week finally ordered its much-threatened counter-offensive against Rwandan-backed rebels who have seized swathes of territory in the east.

But despite claiming it has Libyan support, there is little evidence that Zaire’s battered and ill-disciplined army is any more able to carry out the directive from the Prime Minister, Kengo wa Dondo, than it was to resist the original rebel onslaught.

"I have ordered our armed forces to conduct the war and recover regions currently under occupation and restore the authority of the state," Kengo said on state television.

The prime minister called on the Zairian people to be "in communion" with the army they so often fear.

The government has been threatening a counter-offensive for weeks. It is expected to come from Kisangani, the northern city under threat from the rebels. The army claims to have already launched small-scale raids, although the military has not claimed any success.

Three Soviet-built helicopter gunships, manned by white men, have arrived in Kisangani. Radio Zaire early this week claimed Tripoli had offered assistance for the offensive, without saying what kind, during a visit by the Libyan foreign minister.

Foreign mercenaries are reported to be gathering in the city.

The army chief of staff, General Muhle Leiko Bokungo, appointed last month with draconian powers, is in Kisangani to oversee the counter-offensive. The regional Governor, Lombeya Bosongo, told Reuters he expected it to be a swift campaign. "It won’t be long before this adventure is over," he said.

But there are few signs that the army is better able or more willing to fight than when government forces fled in terror—stopping only to loot and rape—in the face of the rebel offensive launched last October.

Discipline remains a serious problem which has undermined public support for the army. Earlier this month the government declared parts of the country a disaster area, not because of the rebel attacks but because its own military was responsible for widespread destruction and attacks on civilians. Military tribunals have begun to try offenders, including six senior officers, for desertion, rape, looting and selling weapons.

The rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaïre has been recruiting heavily in expectation of the counter-offensive.

It can also count on the continued support of the Rwandan army which invaded eastern Zaire in October to rout Hutu extremists and send home hundreds of thousands of refugees camped on its borders.

Rwanda is unlikely to want to see the buffer zone it has carved out reoccupied by a hostile Zairian army. While a well-organized counter-offensive may block further advances by the rebels, or push them back, it will be another matter for government forces to retake all the lost territory.
Mercenaries operating openly in Zaire conflict

Estimates regarding the number of foreign soldiers vary from 600 to 2,000. It is not known if South Africans are involved.

BY ROSS HERBERT
Kinshasa

Any doubts that foreign mercenaries are playing a major role in Zaire's civil war have disappeared in the past few days. Mercenaries are now moving freely through the town of Kisangani and openly acknowledging their military role, according to missionaries there.

Reports are rife that many South Africans are among the mercenaries and that several organisations have been recruiting in South Africa - some under the name of controversial SA mercenary/security company Executive Outcomes (EO). EO chief Eben Barlow has already denied EO has mercenaries in Zaire.

The presence of South Africans could not be confirmed in Kinshasa.

Most of the foreign soldiers sound French or Belgian, Jerry Selenke, who manages a non-denominational Christian relief depot in Kisangani, told me in a telephone interview.

Kisangani is the eastern port city on the Zaire River, east of Kinshasa where ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko has vowed his rag-tag army - assisted by mercenaries - will make a stand against the advance of rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

The diplomatic community in Kinshasa no longer expresses doubt about the presence of a sizeable mercenary force. A French diplomat said there was a force of some 300 mercenaries, which includes French, Belgian, British, Czech, Croatian and other nationalities.

"Estimates of the numbers of mercenaries go from about 600 to as high as a couple of thousand," said South African ambassador Jan van Deventer.

On Monday, Mobutu's Prime Minister, Kengo wa Dondo, announced on Zaire television that the military had been given orders to launch a long-discussed counter-offensive against Kabila's Rwandan-backed rebels who have captured a 600km strip along the border with Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

His announcement has been greeted with scepticism here where no one has much faith in the capabilities of the Zairian Army. Any credibility the planned offensive might have rests on the shoulders of mercenaries.

The planned counter-attack increases the pressure on the poor-performing Zaire army and significantly raises the political stakes for the present government.

The main reason is that Zaire continues to fight two wars: one against Rwandan- and Ugandan-backed rebels and a second against its own troops who have been looting, raping and terrorising Zaire as they retreated from battle zones.

Some diplomats report that these rogue units are making their way west towards Gbadolite, where president Mobutu Sese Seko has his palace home.

A key question is whether the mercenaries actually fight, or merely act as trainers. Most in Kinshasa believe that Zairian soldiers have so little discipline they cannot be galvanised into an effective fighting force.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appealed to the warring parties to hold back so that a UN-brokered peace effort can go ahead. And today the foreign ministers of South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Cameroon are expected to meet in Pretoria to try to pursue an Organisation for African Unity peace initiative - Star Foreign Service.
Zaire and its already poor people

Mercenary specie returns to haunt

COMMERCIAL COMBAT CAN STILL BE A PROFITABLE BUSINESS IN AFRICA, WHERE MILITARY WARS AND
War asphyxiates eastern Zaire

KISANGANI — War in eastern Zaire is destroying what is left of upper Zaire's jungle economy, forcing prices beyond the reach of its impoverished inhabitants and threatening to halt the region's trade in gems and gold.

At the head of the navigable part of the Zaire River, Kisangani was once considered Zaire's second port and the heart of the region's trade in agricultural, timber and textile products as well as gold and minerals.

But with the eastern Kivu provinces blocked off by rebel occupation since November, and river traders afraid to travel up the 1,500km from the capital to a war zone, the region is increasingly asphyxiated on all fronts.

"There is almost nothing left standing. It is more than a war situation here. The war has simply come to finish off what years of decline have already started. We literally have to reconstruct the country from zero," a leading Kisangani businessman said.

Given a lack of passable roads through Zaire's vast tracts of jungle and bush, the Zaire River and its many tributaries remain the principle arteries for the region's internal and external trade. At Kisangani's rusting port, officials estimate traffic, which should be peaking now with waters at a seasonal high, has declined by two thirds since fighting in the east broke out last October.

"Most of the shipping companies are afraid to bring their boats here. They are afraid they will lose their cargo," says Onatra state transport company local branch director Jean-Jacques Kine.

Sporadic bouts of army-led looting since the beginning of Zaire's transition to democracy in 1990 have sent most of the region's expatriate businesses elsewhere. Most recently, demoralised and hungry soldiers fleeing the rebel invasion in the Kivu provinces tore through the region looking and destroying the few remaining trading posts and stock depots in their path, and stealing hundreds of trucks.

"In almost every town with a sizeable population everything in sight was looted and demolished. It is a catastrophic situation as far as commerce is concerned. Even schools and hospitals do not exist anymore," said US missionary Father Jerry Selenke.

Kisangani is known as Zaire's third city. Its governor Lombeya Bosene estimates the population at close to half a million. But with only a few crumbling buildings at the town centre, it now resembles a series of forest villages.

Abandoned by the state during years of nationwide economic decline, inhabitants among them university graduates and professors have turned to planting vegetables around their mud houses to survive.

Even the trade in gold and diamonds, which aside from the city's bicycle taxis is one of the few remaining employment options for the young, has been hit hard by the latest crisis.

In the city centre, Lebanese-run diamond counters have been barred shut. "The diamonds come from the bush, but the guys who go to dig for them are now afraid because of the insecurity, and soldiers who steal their diamonds and money," said James Mbyamba, one of the few dealers left in town. "What we made before in the wink of an eye, we now make in week. And those who dig the diamonds ... are also earning nothing."

As supplies of food dwindle, prices rise. Market traders who once cycled miles into the surrounding bush to fetch produce now dare to pedal only within Kisangani's perimeters.

Tens of thousands of displaced Zaireans have added pressure to the dwindling supplies.

If inhabitants were not yet starving, it was because Zaireans, like many other states, are used to food subsidies. But where the state was once able to buy and transport food, today a businessman said — Reuters.

See Page 6
Ross Herbert

Khina --- In Zaire, where business tends towards the comically dysfunctional, most domestic flights are surprisingly graced with free-flowing South African wine, well-maintained, clean aircraft and first-rate service.

The root of that surprise is the stark contrast between flights that rival anything that SAA offers and the corruption, chaos and decay that is Zaire.

The catch is that 75 percent of passenger flights in the country are run by Zaire Express, an upstart privately owned airline, whose rapid success has helped drive the state-owned Air Zaire to bankruptcy.

Founded in 1984 with a single plane, Zaire Express has grown to R230 million in revenue while expanding its fleet to seven operating cargo and passenger planes, ranging from British Aircraft 111 to Boeing 727s, 727Fs and 737s.

All else being equal, airlines ought to do well in Zaire because of the woolly absence of passable roads. In sub-Saharan Africa's second-largest country, of 2.3 million km², just 2,500 km of roads are surfaced and then intermittently.

But all else is of course not equal. Infrastructure is disintegrating, corruption legendary and Zaire Express's rapid growth is a lesson in how business is done in these uniquely trying conditions. Chief among its assets is the belief, common in Zaire's business class, that Zaire is still a sort of wild west where fortunes can be made and anything can and does happen.

"Today Zaire seems to have nothing, but tomorrow it will have a lot. It is a great country to do business in," said Josse Bononge, who is the company president of Zaire Express and chairman of the Zairean Chamber of Commerce.

His swagger extends to other executives. Speaking of the ill-fated Air Zaire, Staurus Papaoannou, one of the top operating officers of Zaire Express, boasts: "We killed them. We are very proud of that."

One of the most daunting problems for Zaire Express and every Zairean company is the lack of credit. Every purchase, from jet fuel to stationery to employee salaries, must be in cash (US dollars, not Zairean currency).

Even aircraft must be purchased with cash because lending companies categorize Zaire as a high-risk location. The inability to lease or borrow for more aircraft has been the biggest limit to expansion, a problem crippling every capital-intensive industry in the country.

"Banks here have no credit facilities," said Papaoannou. "They are just post offices used to transfer money to other banks overseas."

The banks are so dysfunctional that if an important customer pays the airline with a check (minor customers don't have the option), the company, like many businesses, raises the price by 30 percent. The reason? More often than not, banks say they literally have no money when cheques are presented for payment.

The lack of an efficient credit card system hampers sales too; it keeps cash flow healthy. Like everything else in Zaire, one problem is linked to another.

Credit card purchases cannot be authorised by telephone because the telephone system doesn't work. There is a thriving private cellular telephone business but its analogue calls are easy for credit card thieves to intercept.

"Our biggest problem is the mindset. Zaire wants to be a modern state but our behaviour is still backward. All the other countries are working with the Internet and we are still 100 years back," Bononge complained.

Spare parts are another problem. Because spares usually come from Europe or the US, deliveries can take two weeks instead of the two hours that most American airlines enjoy. To speed the maintenance process, the company has purchased two complete aircraft that it cannibalises for spares while it waits for new spares to be delivered.

Because Zaire is considered a high-risk country, the company must self-insure its own aircraft. The state insurance company has collapsed and international insurers demand annual premiums equal to 12 percent of the value of each aircraft. That compares with 0.5 percent in some low-risk countries.

Corruption is a facet of economic life with which every Zairean must contend. For liability insurance, Zaire Express must turn to Lloyd's of London.

However, the day I arrived at Zaire Express headquarters, an executive of the collapsed national insurance company had presented himself, demanding that Zaire Express pay to the state company an amount equal to 10 percent of the Lloyd's premium. He did nothing to deserve it, but asserted himself (unsuccessfully) with all the bluster of a minor bureaucratic potentate.

As the only reliable regional carrier, the company can dismiss such demands from a position of strength. One reason is the government of late needs the company to move troops and war material around the country.

The war is a mixed blessing. Though it has boosted government business, it is ruining the Zairean economy.

Before the war, Zaire Express and its 78 smaller competitors shared a market of 20,000 passengers a month. Since the war, there have only been about half that number or less. Once-idiotic tourist towns on Lake Kivu, the eastern cities of Goma and Bukavu, accounted for half the nation's passenger traffic before the war.

Now both are in rebel hands and likely to be further damaged by the government counter-offensive.

"It is a chain reaction with Goma. All the activity in Mbuji Mayi, Kisangani and Lubumbashi is stopping, and it is affecting all the business in Zaire," Papaoannou said.

Despite the hard knocks brought by the war, Bononge holds onto his wild west confidence: "The future of Africa in the south will follow South Africa, and in Central Africa it will follow Zaire," he asserts. — Independent Foreign Service
Bid to gain foreign support to crush rebellion

Alling Moubtu returns to Zaire
Wicked dictator of Africa is about to fall.
Mandela and Mugabe plead with Zaire to call election

Rebel leader Kabila says he will negotiate for Mobutu's resignation

SAPA-AP and AFP

Harare

A rebel leader says he may have to attack the largest remaining refugee camp in eastern Zaire to drive out Rwandan Hutus allied with the government's army.

Laurent Desire Kabila said yesterday that his forces could quickly take Zaire's third-largest city, Kisangani. But he said he would prefer to negotiate for the resignation of ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Calls intensified yesterday to halt fighting in eastern Zaire as the Zairian military conceded the loss of the strategic north-eastern town of Lisro to advancing rebels.

President Nelson Mandela and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe called on regional leaders to act, and said they had exchanged views on an initiative by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni to persuade the two sides to start negotiations, declare a truce and prepare for general elections.

Kabila, who has given Prime Minister Leon Kengo wa Dondo's government until February 21 to get rid of Mobutu, said the rebels would step up their attacks against Zairian forces if Mobutu did not step down.

The Zairian president is holed up in his jungle hideaway in Gbadolite in north-western Zaire, recuperating from surgery for prostate cancer.

"He knows that the people of this country don't need him any more," Kabila said. "He has plunged the country into misery."

Kisangani has one of two major eastern airports controlled by the government. It is used by the Zairian military and international aid agencies helping hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire.

The Zairian government has used Kisangani to launch a largely ineffective counter-offensive against the rebels, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

The uprising began late last year when ethnic Hutus who had lived in eastern Zaire for decades were threatened with expulsion. It since has grown into a general rebellion.

Kabila said the rebels are advancing on the city from the north, east and south despite heavy air raids on Wednesday by government jets and helicopter gunships at Bafwasende, 240km to the east.

Kabila accused the Zairians, backed by mercenaries, of dropping napalm on his troops at Tingi-Tingi, 130km south-east of Kisangani. Two rebels were killed and 27 wounded in fighting near the Tingi-Tingi refugee camp, he said.

Kabila said rebels may attack Tingi-Tingi to drive out Rwandan Hutus allied with the Zairian government, apparently reneging on earlier promises not to do so. He accuses former Rwandan army members of using the camp as a base and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees of ignoring their presence.
African states essentially on their own in Zairean crisis.
Blackout on Zairian 'peace talks'

SOUTH AFRICAN government officials imposed a news blackout yesterday on exploratory talks between warring parties in the Zairian conflict, amid claims that President Nelson Mandela had announced the initiative prematurely.

His disclosure on Wednesday that representatives of the Zairian government would meet rebel leader Mr Laurent-Desire Kabila in South Africa had almost jeopardised the planned talks, diplomats said.

Ugandan deputy high commissioner Mr James Mugume said: "The information was not supposed to be made public."

This was echoed by a Zairian diplomat, who said Mandela's eagerness to broker peace talks had embarrassed President Mobutu Sese-Seko's government.

However, he confirmed that Sese-Seko's envoy, Mr Honore Nzambo, was in South Africa for "unofficial" exploratory talks.

Sources told Sapa that a Rwandan plane believed to be carrying Kabila or his envoy had landed at Ysterplaat Air Force base at 4:45am yesterday.

News agency reports from Zaire quoted Kabila's secretary, Mr Muse Muhizi, as saying the rebel leader had sent an unnamed envoy to Cape Town.

A Johannesburg daily newspaper quoted Foreign Affairs director-general Mr Rusty Evans as confirming that both Kabila and an envoy had arrived in Cape Town.

Attempts to clarify the situation were blocked by officials, who said they were not prepared to disclose "very sensitive" details.

According to unconfirmed reports, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki spent yesterday in separate meetings with the two factions.

Mandela's aide, Mr Parks Mankahlama, and Mbeki's spokesman, Mr Thami Mnteneni, refused to give details.

The Department of Foreign Affairs confined itself to a statement that said the government "has taken the opportunity to undertake talks with some of the key players."

Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo was expected to return to South Africa yesterday from Kinshasa, where he spent three days with five African counterparts exploring "with the Zairian government possible means to end the bloodshed in that country."

"Simultaneously the government of South Africa is engaged in delicate discussions with other key role players, all of which is hoped will contribute towards resolution to the conflict," the Foreign Affairs statement said. — Sapa
Mobutu on the defensive

Zaire's government and the rebels who have captured a large part of the country have agreed to talk peace in Cape Town, reports Chris McGreal.

President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire has agreed to peace talks with the growing rebel army in the east after he secretly dispatched a special envoy to seek South African mediation behind the back of his own government.

President Nelson Mandela said he hoped the negotiations — the first of the five-month civil war — would take place in Cape Town this week. The announcement came after a summit of African leaders in the city to discuss the Zaire crisis.

"Representatives of the contesting parties have made a request that they would like to meet in South Africa...to be able to discuss their problems," he said.

Mandela said South Africa would send a plane to collect the Zairian rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, from the Rwandan capital, Kigali. It was not revealed who will be negotiating on behalf of the Zairian government but diplomatic sources say the ground for the talks was laid by the arrival of Mobutu's special envoy in South Africa several days ago.

The envoy met Deputy President Thabo Mbeki to forward proposals for negotiations which were passed on to United States Vice-President Al Gore, who was visiting Cape Town. The two leaders contacted Kabila to encourage him to agree to talks.

Mandela said South Africa will play host to the negotiations but he will not become personally involved unless he is asked. Although South African officials say the agenda will be built around a plan for a ceasefire and elections put forward by Uganda, the rebels have previously insisted that talks centre on Mobutu's resignation and the immediate formation of a new government.

While Mobutu's envoy was in South Africa, the Zairian military stepped up pressure on the rebels with air raids against three towns in the east. But overall the government army has remained on the retreat despite launching what it promised would be a "devastating" counter-offensive last month.

The attack petered out in the face of stiff resistance by the rebels, who then continued their advances by seizing more towns and moving into the strategic, mineral-rich Shaba province. The rebels now control an area of eastern Zaire about 1,200km long.

Opposition parliamentarians, and even members of Mobutu's own party shaken by the rebel successes, added to the growing pressure on the Zairian

The announcement of the talks came after days of intense diplomatic pressure on the Zairians. On Tuesday, the United Nations Security Council rushed through a peace plan for Zaire while a delegation of African foreign ministers flew to Kinshasa. The next day Mandela hosted a snap summit of other African leaders in Cape Town to discuss the Zaire crisis.

A South African foreign ministry spokesman, Peter Swanepoel, described the promise of talks as the culmination of a series of initiatives by African nations to focus on negotiations rather than military intervention to contain the conflict.

"All of that is part of a more concerted African effort in trying to deal with the Great Lakes situation, not as an initiative on its own but par-

There's been a very definite increase in the focus on the region," Swanepoel said.

Mobutu's initiative apparently came without the knowledge of his own government. Earlier this week his Cabinet ruled out negotiations. Only hours before Mandela's announcement, the foreign minister, Kamanda wa Kamanda, rejected the UN Security Council peace plan.

He called for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Zaire, including mercenaries. It also laid out plans for negotiations and elections.

"This is a timely advance. We sincerely regret that this resolution does not condemn the aggressors. If the foreign troops do not pull out, we consider that there is no cessation of hos-

Zaire claims that Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Congo have invaded its territory in support of the rebels. The three governments deny involvement despite evidence that their soldiers crossed into Zaire at the beginning of the civil war five months ago and continued to assist the rebels.

But Mobutu is also relying on foreign forces, notably Serb mercenaries led by a Belgian commander. The Zairian leader has also acquired Russian-made fighter jets and helicopter gunships which flew air strikes against three towns in rebel-held areas this week. At least 21 people were killed.

Kabila denounced the air raids as "terrorism" and threatened retaliation. "It is a criminal act by the decon
dent government in Kinshasa which instead of attacking military targets chose to bomb the civilian popula-
Zaire Truce Denied as Peace Bid Falters
Zaire rebels advance as Cape summit stalls

As rebel troops made further huge advances in Zaire over the weekend, representatives of the warring groups left Cape Town to report back to their leaders on their peace talks in the city.

The "proximity talks", convened at the invitation of President Mandela last week and conducted through shuttle diplomacy by senior officials in Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office, were said to have been "inconclusive", although they continued into the weekend.

A senior African diplomat said today: "They reached a stage where neither side could go any further without reporting back and getting further instructions. That is what is now happening."

Meanwhile, officials were preparing for the arrival in Cape Town of Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir, who has been invited here by Mr Mandela for discussions on a possible South African-led peace initiative involving Sudan's mainly Christian SPLA rebels.

The civil war in Sudan has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and has threatened peace along the borders with almost all of its neighbours.

The United Nations was poised today to impose a ban on all international flights by Sudanese aircraft in reprisal for Khartoum's refusal to extradite three alleged terrorists wanted for the attempted assassination in Ethiopia of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak last year.

Meanwhile Associated Press reports from Kisangani in Zaire that President Mobutu sees Seko's son and official spokesman has denied any talks with the country's rebels.

"Our position remains the same from the start. We will not discuss or negotiate whatsoever," Nzanga Mobutu said from southern France yesterday.

Even as he spoke, government officials in the Zairian capital, Kinshasa, were conceding the rebels had advanced toward the north-east military headquarters in Kisangani, the third largest city.

The Defence Ministry said Kalina, a small mining town about 250km south of Kisangani, came under rebel control on Saturday.

The rebel advance prompted more than 25,000 refugees who had taken refuge in Kalina to flee into the forest.
Zaire rebels advance as Cape summit stalls

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The rebel advance prompted more than 25,000 refugees who had taken refuge in Kalima to flee into the forest.
Zairean govt rules out brokered talks, ending hopes for peace

KINSHASA — The Zairean government has ruled out talks with rebels advancing on the key eastern city of Kisangani, despite a statement by President Nelson Mandela yesterday that progress had been made towards ending the conflict.

The African states leading efforts towards peace in Zaire hoped to meet Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko on March 19, Mandela said in Stellenbosch, near Cape Town.

He said "a great deal of progress" had been made in the multinational efforts to end the bloody civil war in the great lakes region.

But recent efforts last week to organise a meeting in Cape Town between Zaire's government and rebels have elicited only hostility from Zaire.

The rebels announced in the past week they were suspending their advance on Kisangani for the peace talks, but the fall of a government town was announced at the weekend.

The efforts in Cape Town failed after Kinshasa rejected negotiations with the rebels after representatives of both sides met mediators separately for talks shrouded in secrecy.

Zairean rebel leader Laurent-Desire Kabila threatened on Sunday to raze the country to the ground if his arch enemy Mobutu did not pursue negotiations.

Kabila said on rebel radio in eastern Zaire he was "ready to go to Cape Town to meet political leaders of the same level".

The Zairean government, which considers the rebellion an act of aggression by its neighbours Rwanda, Uganda and to a lesser degree Burundi, has responded that such talks aimed to "transform the war of invasion into a civil war". In a statement from Zaire's council of ministers, the government said negotiations would legitimise Kabila and grant status not due to him.

Sources close to Mobutu, who is in France undergoing medical tests following prostate cancer, said at the weekend there had never been any question of sending a diplomat to the talks.

Mobutu's special adviser stayed in Cape Town last week, but has denied that his presence there was linked to talks.

Meanwhile, Zairean soldiers among 93,000 refugees fleeing to Tanzania have been rioting, and the government was considering moving them to another country, the home affairs ministry said yesterday. — Sapa-AFP.
Zaire rebels hint at peace

The two sides of Zaire's civil war have agreed tentatively to talk for the first time, reports Chris McGreal.

Zaire's rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, says direct negotiations with the government could soon be possible following his meeting with President Nelson Mandela this week. But Kabila ruled out an early ceasefire in the five-month civil war in which his rebel forces have made sweeping gains in eastern Zaire.

"We are not close to a ceasefire agreement, we are close to negotiations," he said.

After initially shrouding the two days of talks in secrecy, Mandela acknowledged the rebel leader's first meeting with a head of state.

"General Laurent Kabila came down here to brief me about the situation. We are discussing very sensitive matters where confidentiality is absolutely necessary," Mandela said.

Although South Africa is playing a crucial role in building confidence for talks, the United States is taking the lead in trying to bring the belligerents together. The US undersecretary of state for African affairs, George Moose, spent several hours with Kabila who also met the United Nations special envoy to the Great Lakes region, Mahomed Saidoun.

Zairean government representatives remain in South Africa, although President Mobutu Sese Seko's personal envoy has returned to Kinshasa and it is not expected the two sides will meet face to face for the time being.

On Wednesday, the Zairean army claimed its first significant victory, saying it had killed hundreds of rebels in repelling an attack on a strategic town by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

The military said it had ambushed rebels advancing on the town of Kinde, killing hundreds and driving the rest of the force back. Reuters quoted an unnamed senior defence official as saying the alliance was routed at the village of Muyengo.

"They were moving up the road calmly, apparently expecting no resistance. The Zairean army ambushed them at the junction between two roads leading north to Punka and west to Kinshasa," the official said. "There were hundreds killed and the rest were forced to retreat towards Kanuma in the early hours."

The claim could not be independently verified. The Zairean government has been frank in admitting its losses to date but it has previously made false claims of victories.

If true, it is the first real setback for the rebels in their sweeping success ful campaign against the government's ragged army backed by foreign mercenaries. The alliance has targeted Kinshasa as having one of only two airports in the east still in government hands.

In Belgium, the government said it is investigating reports of mass murders in rebel-held areas. Development and Co-operation Minister Reginald Momes told Het Laatste Nieuws newspaper he had received eyewitness reports of what he described as a new genocide underway in eastern Zaire where mass graves had been found.

Amnesty International and the United States have also expressed concern about human rights abuses by the rebels who are particularly hostile to Rwandan Hutu exiles still in Zaire.
Bridging Zaire's

Behind the tentative Zairian talks in Pretoria and a scramble for influence.

Meanwhile, Uganda has developed an independent military presence of its own. It is an open secret in diplomatic circles that the country's Yoweri Museveni, having secured Rwanda's allegiance, is now helping to arm and finance Kabila's incursion into eastern Zaire. Museveni jetted into Cape Town last week, apparently to assure Mandela of Kabila's commitment to peace talks — a move which paved the way for Mandela to announce the latest initiative.

Museveni's aim could be the partitioning of Zaire in such a way that the oilfields belong exclusively to Uganda, Kabila and Rwanda. Without wishing to take conjecture too far, this could, in turn, be the first step towards a new federal state covering the Great Lakes region, with Uganda acting as the main centrifugal force.

The oil and growing Ugandan presence would explain Kabila's willingness to negotiate with Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko for a partition of Zaire — and Mobutu's reluctance to give up part of his country.

With such heady geopolitics in the air, Kabila and Nkanda eyed each other warily in Pretoria this week. In an amazing feat of logistics on South Africa's part, they did not cross paths or find themselves in the same room during-ring troops in Zaire: the combination of the South African peacekeeping initiative with AU and UN peace efforts; and the role of external armed forces in finding a solution.

Pahad is said to have presented both sides with a sobering briefing on the military situation. According to one insider, his conclusion was that the forces lighting around Kinshasa in eastern Zaire were not fully under the control of either party.

The possibility of a "third force" of mercenaries being set up by a third party to the conflict appears to have surfaced both Kabila and Mobutu and may contribute to the dynamics for a settlement.

The week's diplomacy was the product of intense government messaging by Pahad and Mandela. Pahad, who had cut his international relations teeth as Deputy President Thabo Mbeki when they had fought as exiles to isolate South Africa, played a back-room role, meeting both parties separately on several occasions.

Mbeki telephoned Mobutu on Wednesday to keep him up to speed with the South African view of the talks process. Mandela took on a more public role, being seen with both parties by international audiences and making public pronouncements on the prospects for peace.
in this week lie heady tales of a huge oilfield
ice, writes RAY HARTLEY

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President Mobutu is committed to finding a peaceful solution.

On both occasions, Mandela did his best to sound a cautious but positive note.

Mandela then pleaded with the assembled journalists for confidentiality. “These are very sensitive matters,” he said.

His plea may have been the result of his own bitter experi-
ence the week before. He had announced the prospect of Zairian talks on the steps of Tuyuhuys, prompting a threatened withdrawal from the dialogue by Mobutu, who apparently had hoped that the talks would remain secret.

On Thursday, after Ngbanda’s meeting with Mandela, Mobutu once again showed discomfort with the peace initiative.

An unnamed spokesman speaking from Nice on the French Riviera, where his leader was convalescing after prostate surgery, told Reuters that Ngbanda had no authority to speak on Mobutu’s behalf.

Apparantly sensing Ngbanda’s dubious status, Mandela had telephoned Mobutu after having met the envoy on Thursday morning. Outside the Presidential guest house in Pretoria an hour later, he told the Sunday Times: “I think that this whole process is moving forward now. He is keen on a settlement.”

While Mandela’s personal relations with Mobutu appeared to be healthy, there was still no sign this week that the Zairian leader would attend an African summit under the auspices of the OAU at the end of March. The date for the meeting was finalised this weekend.

This meeting would seek to bring Mobutu himself into discussions on Zaire’s future for the first time since the rebel offensive swept through his country’s eastern regions.

By the weekend, Kabila and Ngbanda had come close to beginning the first substantive Zairian peace initiative.

But a ceasefire and a climate of direct dialogue between Kabila and Mobutu remained elusive. For South Africa’s diplomatic community, tense weeks lay ahead as their capacity to act as Africa’s peacemakers would be pushed to the limit.

And Mandela? “Well, they just invite me to these meetings because I’m an old man,” he said.

Picture: JON HRUSA

His Lower Houghton home for an hour on Wednesday night, Kabila became the first Zairian to break the ominous silence that had shrouded the talks.

Although vague, he sounded a conciliatory note: “We must assume that peace can be found with the regime of Mr Mobutu. “Let’s hope negotiations will start soon.”

A day later, on the steps of Mandela’s Pretoria residence, Ngbanda reincorporated with the equally vague: “President Mobutu is committed to finding a peaceful solution.”

Back in his garden in Johannesburg, he massaged Kabila’s ego by referring to his military rank. “General Laurent Kabila came down here to brief me about the situation.

“We are discussing very sensitive matters, where confidentiality is absolutely necessary.”

And, in Pretoria the next day, he put a few words in Ngbanda’s mouth: “He appreciates the importance of peace in Zaire and that this will only be brought about by negotiations with Kabila.”

But a ceasefire and a climate of direct dialogue between Kabila and Mobutu remained elusive. For South Africa’s diplomatic community, tense weeks lay ahead as their capacity to act as Africa’s peacemakers would be pushed to the limit.

And Mandela? “Well, they just invite me to these meetings because I’m an old man,” he said.

Picture: JON HRUSA
‘No ceasefire before Mobutu resigns’

GOMA — Zairean rebels preparing to seize Kisangani, the last government stronghold in the northeast, said yesterday that President Mobutu Sese Seko, who has been in power since 1965, would have to quit power before they would stop fighting.

“We demand direct negotiations with Mobutu to organise his departure in order to leave the management of the country to men of integrity,” rebel spokesman Gilles Ingala Gwamona said yesterday in Goma.

Mobutu is currently in Nice, southeastern France, following medical tests, and one of his aides said he was not expected to return to strife-torn country before the middle of next week.

Gwamona was a member of a rebel delegation which took part in initial peace talks in SA last month. He said those “who want a ceasefire before talks have the sole aim of weakening the (rebel) alliance”, which began its insurrection last October and has seized control of much of eastern Zaire.

At the weekend rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila said his forces were on the verge of taking Kisangani, after overrunning two other key towns — Lubutu and Kindu — and the last main camp for Rwandan Hutu refugees.

Kabila had repeatedly warned of an assault against Tshinga-Dzindzi, saying Rwandan former government troops and extremist Hutu militias were being armed by the Zairean army and torturing refugees.

A rebel foreign affairs official, Bizima Kabango, ruled out the idea of a national unity government and said: “We are fighting for the liberation of our country, not to obtain jobs as some malicious people suggest.”

He ruled out any partition of Zaire, but also said that retaining the territorial integrity of the country was “not a problem” for the alliance unless the Kinshasa regime remains in power.

Meanwhile, Zambian Finance Minister Ronald Penza said Zambia would beef up its defences in the north of the country as refugees continue to flee the civil war in neighbouring Zaire.

“The situation is fluid, especially if we have a lot of people coming with arms. They can conquer our country,” Penza said yesterday.

Zambia hosts about 6 000 Zairean refugees at Natende camp in the northern provincial capital of Kasama, most of them having arrived through Mupungu port on Lake Tanganyika.

The government is concerned about the possibility of increased insecurity in the area as a dozen Zairean soldiers were caught with guns as they arrived from their country three weeks ago.

Penza said after a visit to the area that more defence and security personnel would be deployed there.

The refugee issue had to be tackled immediately, Penza said, adding that he would present an assessment of the financial effect of the influx to parliament. — Sapa-AFP.
Hopes for peace in Zaire before crucial summits

BY JUSTICE MALALA AND SAPA-AFP

The South African Government is holding thumbs that a tentative peace agreement will have been reached between the Zairian government and rebel leader Laurent-Desire Kabila before two crucial summits called by the Organisation of African Unity at the end of March.

Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo said yesterday a report on the talks held between South Africa and Kabila last week would be tabled at a regional summit to be held in Nairobi on the 19th and 20th of this month. These talks would be the basis of the tentative agreement.

This meeting will be followed by a crucial extraordinary summit of the OAU's Central Organ for Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Management on March 25 to seek new ways to resolve the spiralling war in Zaire.

Nzo said the SA Government hoped Zairian President Mobutu would attend the Nairobi summit. An invitation is likely to be extended to him by Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi.

"Hopefully something will be signed there by Mobutu and Kabila," Nzo said.

He also announced that the OAU's Council of Ministers had decided at its meeting held in Tripoli, Libya, at the weekend that the extraordinary sitting of the High Organ be held to review further steps to resolve the crisis in Zaire.

The announcement yesterday came after Kabila flew to SA last week to hold talks with President Mandela on resolving the situation in the country.

On whether Kabila would agree to a ceasefire, Nzo said it would be a "very unfortunate thing" if he did not do so.

"We hope he will be prevailed upon, somehow. We urged foreign ministers to ask him to agree to a ceasefire. That is the only way we can help resolve the situation."

However, reports from Zaire yesterday indicated that rebel spokesmen were still saying there would be no ceasefire until Mobutu was removed completely.

On the council meeting itself, Nzo said the OAU's financial situation had shown a steady improvement in the past year.

He said the council had agreed to encourage those countries which had instituted sanctions on Burundi to review them. It called on the warring parties in the country to work towards ceasing hostilities.

Zairian rebels preparing to seize Kisangani, the last government stronghold in the north-east, said in Goma yesterday that Mobutu must quit power before they stopped fighting.

"We demand direct negotiations with Mobutu to organise his departure in order to leave the management of the country to men of integrity," said a rebel spokesman.

Mobutu is currently in Nice, south-eastern France, after medical tests, and one of his aides said he was not expected to return to his sprawling strife-torn country before the middle of next week.

Kabila said at the weekend his forces were on the verge of taking Kisangani.
BUKAVU — Zairian rebels are trying to revive economic activity in "liberated" areas in eastern Zaire and have told western companies to resume exports.

"Exports and imports are now permitted again," said Anatole Bishikwabo, the rebel governor of Kivu South province. "We can’t live in isolation."

Exports which formerly went through Kalambo on Lake Tanganyika, bound for Bukumbu in Burundi, are now redirected to the Rwandan capital, Kigali.

Financial losses from the war for this farming region, rich in coffee, tea, quinquina and precious metals, run into millions of dollars.

The region’s economy has been at a standstill since government troops left four months ago.

"The troops of President Mobutu (Sese Seko) looted everything when they left," said Dieter Griebler, who manages Pharmakina, a subsidiary of the German firm Boehringer, which handles 60% of quinquina exports.

"The people frequently ransacked our premises. Our losses are valued at $2.8m," he said.

Michel Gauthier, a Belgian who runs five plantations of coffee, quinquina and tea near Bukavu, said his firm, Sipref, had lost $3m in looting.

Together, the two men provide a livelihood for 60,000 people.

The rebel authorities did not have time to make economic arrangements in areas they occupied," a Belgian industrialist said.

To avoid an economic disaster, the rebels last month authorised imports and exports to resume and also took steps to facilitate trade by slashing levies 50% and reducing administrative red tape.

Banking sources said US banking experts would visit the region to establish a system of bank transfers.

Jesuit Father Didier de Failly, in charge of development in South Kivu, said he believed it would be easier to work with the new authorities than the "corruption under Mobutu."

Kenyan foreign ministry officials said yesterday a meeting sponsored by Cameroon, Kenya, SA and Zimbabwe to discuss the conflict in Zaire was expected to be held in Kenya’s capital, Nairobi, on March 19 and 20. The dates had yet to be confirmed.—Sapa-AFP.
Zaire approves UN plan to end conflict

BRUSSELS: Zaire has approved a United Nations plan to end the crisis in the African state, the Belgian foreign ministry said yesterday.

Belgian Foreign Minister Mr Erik Derycke had met his Zairian counterpart Mr Kamanda Wa Kamanda on Monday, ministry spokesman Mr André Querton told a weekly news briefing.

Zaire has accused the armies of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi of fomenting an almost five-month-old Tutsi-led rebellion in eastern Zaire and of taking part in fighting on Zairian soil. All three countries deny the allegations.

Querton said the UN plan called for an immediate end to hostilities and the withdrawal of all foreign troops, including mercenaries.

It also demanded a swift and peaceful solution to the crisis through dialogue, elections and an international peace conference, he said.

In addition to calling for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Zaire and other countries in the region to be respected and urged protection for all refugees and easy access for humanitarian actions.

Querton said a new African summit had been scheduled for March 18 and 19 in Nairobi with delegations from Kenya, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, South Africa, the Organisation of African Unity and other countries in the region.

Many African countries were interested in the initiative by UN secretary-general Mr Kofi Annan to try to set up an international humanitarian force,
Zaire accepts UN proposal

TINGI-TINGI, Zaire - Reeling from a series of battlefield losses, the government has accepted a United Nations ceasefire proposal, while rebels are closing in on a strategic river port that will give them control of the eastern third of Zaire.

The rebels, on the verge of capturing the provincial capital Kisangani, may not be ready to put down their arms right away.

"First we talk, then maybe a ceasefire," said rebel spokesman Kazadi Nyembwe. Refugees fleeing reported that scores of people were killed on Saturday when rebels took over a huge refugee camp in Tingle- Tingi. On Wednesday exhausted Rwandans lay dying in what was once Zaire's largest refugee camp.

Only rebel fighters were there to help, distributing small amounts of food. Aid workers fled last week.

Since September rebels wanting to overthrow president Mobutu Sese Seko have captured a 1,450km stretch in eastern Zaire. - Sapo-AFP.
Mobutu’s billion dollar nightmare

A S THE CONFLICT in Zaire intensifies, rebel commander Laurent Desire Kabila is emerging as the only credible leader who can save this massive land in the heart of Africa — potentially one of the richest on the continent from disintegration.

Laurent-Désire Kabila, a Luba, falls from northern Shaba and best known for his successful resistance against the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko.

Over the last years he has maintained the moral high ground over Mobutu and a host of other pretenders to the Zairian throne.

The spectacular entry of Kabila comes at a crucial time. An ill Mobutu has his back against the wall.

At the time of his recuperation abroad, his army was at the receiving end of a rebel military campaign which saw a big swathe of land in the east of the country fall under the control of the Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo-Zaïre (AFDL) — covertly backed by Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

Upon return home Mobutu sought to reassert his receding authority by appointing a new cabinet and naming General Marc Mahele Liieko Bokangu as Chief of Army Staff.

The appointment of Mahele was Mobutu’s last ditch effort of injecting some sort of urgency for a counter-offensive which has already fizzled out.

Mahele’s reputation is well known (past military assignments include Kolwezi 1978, Kinshasa mutinies of 1991 and 1992) but he has yet to deliver.

This has compelled Mobutu to request military assistance from the dogs of war — mercenaries.

But it is doubtful their presence will halt the rebels.

At present the theatre of war is in the dense forests of eastern Zaire (the ideal place for guerrilla warfare), but further into the hinterland, from Kisangani to the west, the terrain is better suited for conventional war and it is here where the rebels will be tested.

But given the advanced state of decay of the country’s infrastructure, more especially all-weather roads and communication systems, it seems the initiative will at all times remain with the rebels.

What is also standing rebel leader Kabila in good stead is that unlike other opposition leaders before him, he does not carry the baggage of having been a Mobutu stooge.

He has never been connected to Mobutu’s kleptocratic regime which has transformed what could have been one of the richest countries in Africa into poverty.

In plain terms, with no visible successor in Kinshasa, the impoverished, weary and disillusioned people of Zaire may rally to the cause of Kabila as they have chafed under for nearly four decades.

Mobutu was kept in power by Washington, Brussels and Paris because his country occupied a strategic place at the heart of Africa and he was seen as a bulwark against the expansionist designs of the old communist bloc.

With the collapse of communism Zaire and Mobutu are no longer of major strategic importance to the West. This is why Mobutu today is fighting the rebels without any outside help.

Given his legendary corruption, after looting Zaire to become one of the richest men in the world, Mobutu has now become a dispensable embarrassment to his former backers.

GETTING HIS RICH DESSERTS... In the good old days Zaire’s immensely wealthy President Mobutu, seen here flanked by former president F W de Klerk and former foreign minister Pik Botha, had the support of the West — but now he faces a rebel army fighting to topple him from 32 years in power.

With the rebels constantly routing his poorly trained and demoralised army — and with cancer exacting a heavy toll on his deteriorating health, the end is nigh for Mobutu. For the poor people of Zaire, it could not be a moment too soon.

And Laurent Desire Kabila seems to be the only man who can stop in his boots, keep the country together and perhaps put this potentially rich country on a sound economic footing. – Africa Insight.
Zaireans have resigned themselves to their nation's fall

IN KINSHASA, the Zairean capital, the political elite is abuzz with talk of a secret Pentagon paper. Those who claim to have read the paper, much discussed but never produced, says it envisages splitting the nation from north to south at the level of the town of Kananga.

The east side, including the diamond-producing province of Kasai, copper-producing Shaba and gold-rich Kivu, would go to the rebels who have been advancing across the country since October. The west side, holding President Mobutu Sese Seko's Equateur province and the underdeveloped rural areas, would remain in Kinshasa's control.

"America's aim, the elite claims, is to force Kinshasa to accept the east's secession and then flood the region with 4-million Rwandan Hutus, overضل from one of Africa's most populous countries. Zaire's ruling class, which for decades regarded Washington as its closest ally, is now convinced a hostile US is committed to the nation's fragmentation.

New friendships with Uganda and Rwanda, providing the rebel movement with its logistical backbone, have — Zairean officials believe — encouraged the US to forget its cold war alliances and abandon the cancer-stricken Mobutu once its African crusader against communism.

The conviction that the US has thrown in its hand with Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces in part accounts for the extraordinary resignation with which the country now awaits its collapse. But behind the passive acceptance of the approaching disintegration lies a profound weariness with the status quo.

Three decades of mismanagement and corruption have come home to roost.

"There is a deep desire for change," says a diamond dealer. "People listen to the radio and pass around letters from relatives in occupied areas. They hear that life there is good. Kabila's men are more disciplined than the Zairean army, and new administrative structures are being established."

Rebel victories in the east have coincided with a radical shift in public attitudes towards the fighters' cause. Last October, when the revolt by the Banyamulenge — Zairean Tutsis declared persons non grata by the government — first burst into life in South Kivu province, Kabila was generally regarded as a puppet of the neighbouring Rwandan government.

His uprising was viewed as a foreign invasion and for a short time normally cynical Zaireans were swept along on a wave of patriotic fervour. When Mobutu returned from months of treatment in Switzerland for prostate cancer, he was welcomed by thousands of cheering subjects.

The general expectation was the president would appoint Etienne Tshisekedi, the popular veteran opposition leader, as prime minister. Tshisekedi had then make a deal with the rebels and come up with a miracle cure to the country'sills.

When it became clear Mobutu was planning only to reshuffle the government, appoint a new army chief of staff and rap a few too-ambitious generals over the knuckles, the disappointment was immense. The president was later booted. Since then Kabila has been adopted as the people's hero.

In the east, advancing rebels often capture towns without a shot being fired. Villagers hide in the bush to avoid the desperate former Rwandan soldiers who are retreating westwards, leading a cowed population of exhausted refugees, then emerge to welcome the guerrillas as liberators.

"With the exception of the killing done between Rwandan Hutus and Tutsis, this has hardly been a war at all," says an aid worker. The fall of Kikungi, a psychological turning point, is now universally expected and civilians began fleeing the town at the weekend.

Many of the foreign mercenaries stationed in Kisangani have left, despairing of ever bolstering the resolve of the drunk and anarchic troops.

In Kinshasa, diplomats say central government is barely functioning. The recent acceptance by both the government and the presidency of a United Nations peace plan, previously rejected because it failed to condemn Zaire's aggressors, is a sign of the growing desperation over the rebels' refusal to accept a ceasefire.

Politicians and businessmen in the capital have been sending emissaries to the rebels to structure a deal to divide the country. Sources say a foreign team of officials and diplomats is due to leave shortly to try to secure such a deal. The rebel leadership is understood to have been given assurances that the regions they release will be secure.

Many analysts believe the fall of Kisangani will trigger a collapse of Kabila's government. But the rebels are not ready to make a deal, some say, because they fear that Kabila could renege.

Many other rebels believe that Kabila has given them a false sense of security, Sirou. Kabila has given the rebels a false sense of security. The rebels are not ready to make a deal, some say, because they fear that Kabila could renege. Many analysts believe that Kabila has given them a false sense of security, Sirou. Kabila has given the rebels a false sense of security.
World indifferent to Zaire's unfolding tragedy, says PM

Kinshasa – Zaire's prime minister, Kengo wa Dondo, has denounced foreign indifference to the tragedy unfolding in his country as international pressure builds for intervention.

With rebels suggesting that a showdown against the army over Zaire's third city, Kisangani, is imminent, the United Nations refugee agency said hunger and disease were killing frightened Hutu refugees hiding in the eastern rainforest.

But residents of Kisangani, the army headquarters in the war zone, reported an uneasy calm there, saying that any fighting between the army and advancing rebels was out of earshot.

"I find it regrettable that the international community through the United Nations, through the United States and Britain gives the impression that the tragedy unfolding in Zaire doesn't interest them," Mr Kengo said yesterday.

"Perhaps because it is a question of Africans."

He said the collapse of the country would rebound on the whole region, but if Zaire's sovereignty was respected a political solution was possible.

"Before going to elections, we can solve the nationality problems at the centre of this debate," he said.

The Tutsi-led rebels, who hold towns and territory in the east, took up arms in October accusing the authorities of denying them citizenship and planning to expel them to Rwanda.

They say they want to topple veteran President Mobutu Sese Seko, who is in Europe where he has spent most of his time since having surgery in August.

Zaire accuses Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi of invading in support of the rebels. – Reuters
The Rebels

Mobutu era, at an end in Zaire.

Rebel leader can be ignored, says Belgium.
Zaire’s demise sees Shaba locals yearning for autonomy

A NEW vehicle recently made an appearance in Lubumbashi, capital of Zaire’s southern Shaba province. Residents were startled by dark, green lorries, mounted with rocket launchers and helmeted soldiers, rolling through their colonised centre.

It was not immediately clear whether the new campaign was destined to oppose Laurent Kabila’s Alliance of Democratic Forces, whose soldiers seemed to have captured a turning point with the capture of Kisangani at the weekend, or whether it was an attempt to emphasise aimed at intimidating an increasingly hostile population.

In the aftermath of the elections on the streets of Zaire’s second largest city is palpable. The unemployed men throwing stones has streets no longer seem to care whether their fury and frustration is heard by the junta security police.

"When Kabila comes everyone, but everyone, will take up arms and join him," promises a student, one of the youths who danced the night away after Kisangani’s capture was announced.

"This is Kabila’s home province and he is one of us. We are waiting for him to free us from these thieves." When it comes to winning the hearts and minds of the population, Kabila has already triumphed in Shaba.

The refrain heard in Kinshasa, Kisangani and Mbuji-Mayi—"that the rebels are liberators putting a welcome end to an oppressive dictatorial system"—is repeated here.

Only in Shaba is the refrain amplified, backed by a history of revolt against the central government which stretches back nearly four decades.

Since 1969, when Moise Tshombe declared Katanga’s independence—an announcement that brought United Nations forces flying in to shore up Zaire’s territorial integrity—Shaba has seen itself as a subjugated province squeezed by a greedy capital.

The source of its grievance lies in the 300km concession running from Lubumbashi in the southeastern to Kolwezi in the northwest: the rusting installations of state-owned Gecamines, an organisation that should by rights be the most profitable copper and cobalt mining company in the world.

"If the Zairean economy has managed to continue at all, it is thanks to Gecamines," says Stephane Lukende Kyenge, head of the local branch of Uleri, the party that has consistently campaigned for autonomy.

"For thirty years, Gecamines provided 70% of the state budget and 80% of foreign earnings.

"We helped the government and in exchange we were colonised a second time. At least when the Belgians were here, we made some manure returned to the province. Now it all goes up to Kinshasa. Nothing has been built, no schools, no hospitals."

Even after Tshombe abandoned his attempt at secession, local animosity towards central government repeatedly brought Zaire to the brink of disintegration. In the late 1970s western and African forces flew in twice to put down revolts by Katangese fighters.

Since then the quest for independence has never been far from the surface. The former governor deliberately fomented a climate of xenophobia that led to the 1992 expulsion of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Katangans. He was suspended after declaring formal secession; President Mobutu Sese Seko decided he had gone too far.

Although to the visitor Shaba looks the least dilapidated of Zaire’s provinces, locals complain that nothing has been renewed since the Belgians pulled out.

They chafe over potholed roads, omnipresent corruption, army harassment and the failure to pay civil service salaries.

Inflation, an annual 200% in Zaire as a whole, is even higher in Shaba. This is because of a series of new Zaire bank notes—derisively nicknamed "prostitutes" after the cancer that is afflicting Mobutu—have been dumped on the local market after being rejected by traders in Kinshasa.

Local bitterness has only been rendered more acute by the steady collapse of Gecamines. Systematic theft of equipment and massive smuggling of stocks by the staff, crumbling levels of debt and the failure to reinvest earnings—funneled instead to the government and Mobutu—have brought the company to its knees.

In 1990 copper production was a miserable 58,000 tons, less than a tenth of its 670,000 ton capacity.

Output of the more valuable cobalt was 4,000 tons, compared with capacity of 14,000-16,000 tons. The Gecamines last turned a profit in 1989. Salaries have not been paid for months.

Despairing of full-scale privatisation, Gecamines started negotiating small-scale, quick-profit joint ventures with foreign companies already involved in the privatisation of Zambia’s copper industry across the border.

The first faint glimmerings of a possible mining recovery after decades of decline are lending new force to the battle for control between Shaba and Kinshasa.

"We support these new contracts," says Uleri’s Kyenge, "but they must not be discussed exclusively with Kinshasa. These resources are located here, so let Katanga be the main interlocutor." Once a strong supporter of Mobutu, the opportunistic Uleri now proclaims its neutrality, but is clearly ready to jump ship if Kabila’s men prove victorious.

The guerrillas are currently confined to the eastern and northern fringes of Shaba.

But humanitarian workers say that in a string of towns deeper inside the province, Kivutu’s government has scattered local army contingents to leave rather than en- dure an anticipated round of looting and are now waiting to welcome the rebels.

Shaba’s army is also reported to be crossing south into Zambia in order to re-enter Zaire in occupied territory, to which they can join the rebel movement.

With this kind of popular support, Kabila has little doubt that he can capture Shaba if he chooses to do so.

However, as a native of the province, he will be well aware that once the euphoria of Mobu- tu’s overthrow has passed, he will be dealing with a region whose longing for autonomy calls for recognition. —Financial Times.
Final chapter in war to control Zaire

PM’s sacking disputed

KINSHASA: The once all-powerful ruler of Zaire now hides out in France as his army crumbles.

THE word on the early subdued streets of this capital city was that Zaire’s longtime ruler, Mobutu Sese Seko, had died.

The rumour is not true, and yet its spread seemed to underscore the idea that the end of his reign is now just a question of details.

At the height of his 31-year-old rule, Sese Seko, 66, was one of those all-powerful African leaders who could spend weeks overseas with his huge entourage, secure in the knowledge that no one would dream of challenging his authority.

In recent weeks, however, he has remained holed up in his chateau in the south of France while his army and power steadily crumble. These days, no one really governs Zaire.

What seems certain is that when rebels of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo seized the important eastern city of Kisangani on Saturday, the six-month-old war for control of this huge country entered its final chapter.

Sese Seko managed to rule as long as he did by ruthlessly carrying out an updated version of what Zairians themselves freely call the law of the jungle.

But today, with the rebels of Mr. Laurent Kabila controlling a third of Zaire and advancing on all fronts, Sese Seko’s myth has been broken, and everyone who is anyone is scrambling to reach an accommodation with the rebel leader.

Kengo, in Nairobi to take part in informal talks on the turmoil in his country, made no comment yesterday, but in Kinshasa, acting prime minister Mr. Lambert Mende Omalanga said the vote was a “masquerade,” and that the government was continuing as normal.

“The government is an institution and there are procedures to follow. We are waiting for official notification which parliament must pass on to us—but something tells me it will never be passed on,” Mende said. The motion to remove Kengo was not in line with Zaire’s constitution, he said. — Sapa-AFP

In the clearest sign of this shift, unthinkable only a month ago, Mr. Jonas Mukamba, the head of Zaire’s largest diamond producer, source of much of Sese Seko’s fabulous wealth, said of Kabila: “If he arrives, and if he is the new boss, I will obey him.”

Sese Seko’s rule began with a coup d’état in 1965. — New York Times

KINSHASA: The sacking of Prime Minister Mr. Kengo wa Dondo further divides what remains of central authority in Zaire as it crumbles under a stunning series of rebel victories in the east of the country.

Zaire’s transitional parliament voted to sack Kengo and his government and replace him with someone prepared to negotiate with rebel leader Mr. Laurent Kabila, whose forces captured the country’s third largest city, Kisangani, on Saturday.

But only 470 of the 738 MPs were present—about a dozen of them abstained—and the prime minister’s supporters say the vote was unconstitutional.
Summit fails to offer new ideas as refugees stream out of Zaire

Nairobi – African leaders at the summit on Zaire have repeated calls for a truce and negotiated settlement between the government and rebels.

But the one-day talks, attended by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, offered no new ideas on how to end the conflict.

"The deteriorating situation in Zaire calls for all our energies to check it to avoid further bloodshed and human suffering," Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi said.

"It goes without saying that if the crisis in Zaire gets out of hand, the repercussions will be far and wide."

Meanwhile, Zairean rebels said today in Goma if the international community wanted to halt fighting it must press illing President Mobutu Sese Seko for direct negotiations.

Kakudji Gaeten, rebel commissioner for foreign affairs, said the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire insists a ceasefire can only follow direct talks.

"We are ready for negotiations at any time and we have always said so. If the rest of the world wants that, then they should put pressure on the other side, not just on us," Kakudji said.

In spite of his apparent sacking on Tuesday by the Zaire parliament, Prime Minister Leon Kengo wa Dondo represented his country at the talks, which were also attended by Congo, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Cameroon. The rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, stayed away.

Mr Kengo separately met US ambassador Prudence Bushnell and South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo. No details of the talks were available.

Meanwhile, as central authority crumbles, growing number of expatriates and Zairians are crossing the Congo River to escape worsening chaos in Zaire.

Several members of illing President Mobutu Sese Seko's family, including his son Kongolo Mobutu, have already crossed the river, which forms the border with the Congo Republic.

The younger Mobutu and the families of the political elite have so far kept a low profile and have not registered with the Red Cross, which is striving to keep track of the arrivals, officials say.

The Congolese Red Cross has announced plans for a processing centre for more than 500 people at Moukondo, a district in north-western Brazzaville.

"I have just managed to across the border, despite several incidents of police harassment, to take refuge momentarily in Brazzaville," said Elder Hogenson, a Canadian Mormon missionary who said he had lived in Kinshasa since 1987.

He and several other missionaries said they had been "warned by a Zairian officer that soldiers were preparing to ransack the capital".

A Portuguese trader, driving a van packed with foodstuffs, said he had decided to bring his family across the river as a precaution. – Sapa-AP-AFP-Reuters
Mobutu’s family joins flight from Zaire

KINSHASA — Members of Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko’s family have joined the flight of businessmen and politicians from the capital, Kinshasa, as speculation grows that his regime is about to collapse.

The exodus continued as African heads of state were holding informal talks in Nairobi yesterday on the turmoil in Zaire after the disputed sacking of Zairean Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo. Among those at the summit, hosted by Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi, are Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Congo’s President Pascal Lissouba and SA Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

A Red Cross official said a number of Mobutu’s relatives had crossed the Congo River to seek refuge in Brazzaville, the capital of Congo.

Travel agents reported that all flights to Europe and SA were sold out.

Rebel forces which captured Zaire’s third largest city, Kisangani, on Saturday are advancing through the interior as Kinshasa grows fearful that a military coup will plunge the country into worse turmoil, or that it will be looted by retreating Zairean soldiers.

Mobutu, whose health has been the subject of rumours for days, would leave a Monaco hospital today and return to Zaire by Saturday, his son, Nzanga Mobutu, said.

A senior government aide said army commander Lt-Gen Lekio Mahale had told ministers they were not allowed to leave the capital. Many had booked plane tickets under false names, he said. Businessman Robert Malamba said: “No one is in control. It is very frightening. Power is in the street and with those with a gun.”

Four western countries — the US, France, Belgium and Portugal — were considering plans to evacuate nationals, officials said. They had not yet ordered an evacuation, but contingency plans were being scrutinised.

US Defence Secretary William Cohen said on Tuesday that a Pentagon team had been dispatched to Brazzaville to assess contingency plans for the evacuation of Americans should it become necessary.

In another development, 25 Lebanese women and children were evacuated from Lubumbashi to SA as rebels closed in on the capital. Lebanon’s ambassador to SA, Charbel Stephan, said more nationals were expected to arrive at Johannesburg’s Lanseria Airport yesterday.

Immigration authorities had given the group until March 25 to stay in SA after which they would return either to Zaire or to Lebanon. © Telegraph plc, Reuters, Sapa-AP-AFP.
Rebel victory dooms Mobutu

With the relentless advance of the Zairean rebels, to negotiate or flee seem to be the only options open to the government.

Chris McGreal reports

A
d air of doom has settled on Zaire’s beleaguered regime after the lightning rebel seizure of Kisangani and the insurgents’ threat to go all the way to the capital unless the government negotiates itself into oblivion.

As if to reinforce the sense of the old system’s inevitable collapse, President Mobutu Sese Seko called off plans to fly home this week from France where he has spent most of the five-month civil war recuperating from cancer. Even some of his former allies say Mobutu’s greatest significance now lives in the timing of his death.

The government appears paralysed by the stunning loss of Zaire’s third-largest city, which had been the base for the army’s operations against the rebels. A cabinet meeting held as Kisangani fell decided nothing more significant than to dismiss the public works minister for daring to publicly criticise the misappropriation of government funds.

News of the rebel victory was generally greeted with quiet satisfaction on the capital’s streets. Few believe they will have to wait for the rebels to march into Kinshasa to see the regime tumble. Even senior politicians say something must give before long. Some privately speculate that unless the government takes a bold step, such as direct negotiations with the rebels, a military coup may be in the making.

The rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire now controls as much as one-quarter of Zaire. Its leader, Laurent Kabila, said that in the absence of talks he will send his forces on toward Kinshasa. "We are still advancing, we must liberate the whole country...we are going everywhere," he said.

The almost immediate collapse of resistance in Kisangani demonstrated more clearly than any other rebel victory that the alliance is unlikely to face any serious obstacles as it sweeps further west.

The government had thrown the best of its resources into defending the city. But the deployment of top generals — including the army chief of staff, tons of new weapons, Russian-made bombers and helmeted gurushias, and hundreds of foreign mercenaries in Kisangani — barely hindered the rebels once they decided to move on the city. Resistance collapsed almost immediately and the rebels seized control in less than a day.

Particularly worrying for the government are reports that some of its troops switched sides as the rebels approached the city. It may not have been a spontaneous decision. Rebel infiltrators are believed to have moved relatively freely among soldiers, persuading them it was not worth putting up a fight to defend a discredited regime.

Hostility between the army and government is increasingly open. Generals have complained publicly about the administration’s failure to give them the means to fight. The prime minister, Rengo wa Dondo, asked before the fall of Kisangani about the failure of government troops to resist

The rebels responded with the old axiom about there being no bad soldiers, only bad generals.

The near-complete collapse of the government’s military strategy leaves it with few battlefields options while Kabila has a variety of alternatives. The rebels could press on directly to Kinshasa, as Kabila threatened. But it is a 200km trek, much of it along dilapidated roads through thick rain forest. And there are juiciet targets to hand.

Rebel forces are pushing even closer to Mbuji-Mayi, the city at the heart of Zaire’s diamond industry. It would be a major prize, cutting off an important source of government revenue and, more importantly, the fountain of a lot of the cash in senior politicians’ and army officers’ pockets.

The alliance is also penetrating deeper into mineral-rich Shaba, Kabila’s home province. Although the rebel leader is not believed to be particularly popular in Shaba, anti-Mobutu sentiment runs deep and his men are sure of another welcome.

Kabila has also said he intends to target Mobutu’s home town, Bunumbwe, in the far northwestern corner of Zaire. It would be a largely symbolic victory as the town lies on a road to nowhere in particular. But it would deliver Mobutu’s extravagant gold and marble palace into rebel hands providing another important psychological blow against the doomed regime.

Whatever the rebels plans are, they have again rejected an early ceasefire and there appears little the Zairean government can do to pressure him into one. "Negotiations have to precede a cessation of hostilities,” Kabila said.

"If they don’t negotiate they will be forced with military action to negotiate or to flee."
Last bells tolling for

20/3/97

Mercenaries flee with the rest and Kisangani residents urge the fighters who freed

nation. Residents of Kisangani hope that the rebel force will press its military advantage and take all of the country rather than enter into peace talks that are being initiated by the international community.

"The rebels are strict but they seem fair," Jerry Selenke, an American missionary whose house was looted by the ill-disciplined army before they fled, said, "There's law and order, it's much easier working with the new guys than with the old regime."

On Tuesday Joseph Kabila, son of the rebel movement's leader and a regional commander, gave the residents in Kisangani 48 hours to return all goods looted from abandoned aid agency stores and depots.

More than 400 tons of material - food, medicine and electrical equipment - was looted by civilians and the retreating army.

If they do not comply, they have been told, they will be severely punished. As a result many of the stolen goods have already been returned.

- The Times, London.

By David Orr

They are wearing white strips of cloth around their heads in this jungle city of Kisangani, which last weekend became the greatest prize to fall to rebels advancing across Zaire.

The people say they will not remove the bandanas until the arrival of the rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, who is expected in coming days.

"The headbands symbolise victory and liberation," Paul-Marc Volakonga, a librarian at the local university, said. "The fighters who freed us from dictatorship are not rebels, they are liberators." Apart from a few looted shops in the town centre, there is little evidence of the fall of Kisangani to Kabila's Democratic Alliance of Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

The Zairian Army and its mercenary backers had been expected to resist the rebel assault, but instead they fled in panic.

The bulk of the army crossed the Zaire River in boats, residents say. Morocco and other mercenaries, who had been drafted in to protect the city, either escaped by aircraft westwards or disappeared into the jungle with the Zairian soldiers.

At the military airport an aircraft, its tyres shot out, bears testimony to a gun battle between the retreating mercenaries and soldiers desperate to prevent their allies' flight by air.

"Now all is calm," Volakonga said. "The curfew is over and we can move about the city again. The liberators behave well, they don't beat us as if we were snakes which is what the army did. The mercenaries were cruel, they would just shoot people in cold blood. Their motto was 'No Pity'".

Residents said they were waiting for the establishment of a new administration in Kisangani, Zaire's third largest city and the farthest point west of the rebels' advance. A decaying city in the depths of the equatorial rain forest, Kisangani has, in this virtually roadless country, a symbolic significance.

"It would be good if Mobutu dies," Evariste Lombe, a Kisangani medical student, said. "But it would be even better if he lives to witness his own downfall."

The rebels now control a fifth of this sprawling Central African
Mobutu's fiefdom

Jubilant ... Kisangani residents run through the streets on Tuesday during a march to show their support for the AFDL rebels who inched hundreds of metres into Kinshasa, capital of Zaire.
Thousands flock to the airport chanting, "Mubarak is dead!" while pledging loyalty to man they now call their "father".

DEFEATED: Syrian government troops gather to surrender to rebel forces who now control Damask.
The 37-year war

he battle for Zaire is the product of ethnic conflict since independence, writes RAY HARTLEY

Zaire's ruler, President Mobutu Sese Seko, is in trouble. Last September, clashes between rebel and government troops appeared to be yet another series of uncoordinated ethnic battles that would quickly be suppressed by his ruthless military machine.

But, as the weeks wore on, it became apparent that the clashes were part of an organized onslaught on the Zairian government by a coalition of opposition forces under the banner of Laurent-Désiré Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL). Leading Kabila's assault have been members of the 300,000-strong Banyamulenge group. Sharing Tutsi ethnic origins with residents of Rwanda and Burundi, the Banyamulenge migrated to eastern Zaire some 200 years ago.

Following the slaughter of Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994, some 700,000 Hutus fled to refugee camps in eastern Zaire, many of them located in the territory of the Banyamulenge.

Among those who sought refuge in the camps were Hutu militiamen who had started the Rwandan conflict with a campaign of genocide against all Tutsis.

In Zaire, apparently with the backing of the Zairian government, these militiamen began arming and organizing themselves for an assault on Rwanda.

In October last year, as tensions between the Hutu refugees and the Banyamulenge grew, a Zairian official told the Banyamulenge that they had one week to leave or they would be hunted down as rebels.

Fearing ethnic slaughter, the Banyamulenge went on the offensive against the Zairian army and their Hutu militiamen.

Within a month, they had seized the capitals of Zaire's North and South Kivu provinces, Goma and Bukavu, as well as a number of small towns.

At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees, anticipating attacks from the Banyamulenge, flooded back into Rwanda and the Hutu militiamen took to the central Zairian forests.

In Goma, Kabila emerged as the leader of the rebellion, turning Mobutu's abandoned palace into his headquarters and co-ordinating the ever-widening front on which his army was operating.

As Kabila by birth, Kabila had come from a province with a history of failed secessionist attempts.

He had forged an alliance with the Banyamulenge and other secessionist ethnic groups in the east into a reasonably well equipped and effective force.

With both Rwanda and Uganda as allies. Kabila was able to secure his position on the eastern frontier and press towards Zaire's more significant cities: Kindu and Kisangani, half of which he conquered this month.

Significantly, Kabila was able to proceed with his assault without the intervention of an international peacekeeping force as would have been the case had it not come up with a united response.

Like moths to a candle, world powers have been drawn into conflict in Zaire since it is an independent state under Patrice Lumumba in 1960.

Because of its size, it is the fourth largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa after Sudan and its location in the heart of Africa, with nine countries sharing its borders. Zaire has found itself at the forefront of global political contests.

Its prominence has been further exaggerated by its mineral wealth and its agricultural potential. Copper, tin, silver, cobalt, manganese, tungsten are mined in the Shaba province. To the west in Kasai province, diamonds are mined. The country also has unexploited reserves of iron ore.

Independence saw Belgium, the former colonizer, power, and France, which continued influence in Francophone countries, along with the US. As a de facto role in the fall of the nation, initially, they supported Mobutu's government against secessionist insurgencies, particularly in the
20th and east of the country.

In the 80s, as the Cold War turned the world map into spheres of eastern and western influence, the US took an interest in Zaire as a strategic bulwark against what was seen as a steady communist advance in Africa.

Not one to miss an opportunity, Mobutu transformed himself from an African nationalist to a Cold War

Not communist overlord and rapidly became a necessary evil in the eyes of US president Ronald Reagan in his battle against the evil empire.

From the Kamina airstrip in the Shaba province, the US is said to have provided support for Joseph Sav-

The US downscaled its support for Mobutu's East

Ambassador to Washington, Paul de Lassus, has said he is encouraged by the fall of communism.

Although it is hard to establish the facts of behind-the-scenes diplomacy, one theory being bandied about in diplomatic circles is that the US has now opted to back Youweri Museveni's Uganda in central Africa.

Uganda has influence over neighbouring Rwanda and Burundi to the south, with Sudanese guerrillas to the north and with Kabila in eastern Zaire.

This influence, along with Uganda's stable, rapidly growing economy, have made it an attractive partner, despite its failure to implement a full multiparty democracy.

**RELATIONS** between Zaire and Belgium had, meanwhile, suffered as the Belgian press began to publish accounts of Mobutu's domestic excesses and France had taken over as the major influence over Mobutu.

France twice helped out when armed insurrections threatened, sending troops to crush revolts in the Shaba province in the 70s.

The threat of similar uses of foreign force helped Mobutu's repressive regime to retain its grip on the large country.

But France has shown itself unwilling to use its troops to back Mobutu in his fight against Kabila.

This week, French troops were sent to neighbouring Congo, a possible launching pad for future operations in Zaire. However, they are more likely to be used to evacuate French nationals, should the country fall into further chaos, than as combat support for Mobutu.

Meanwhile, a group of African countries — South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Uganda and Zambia — has met three times to seek ways of implementing a cease-fire.

**E A R N E S T** activity by the UN and European Union, which have been trying to win support for a peace plan, have accompanied this initiative.

The UN's two-point peace plan includes a ceasefire, the withdrawal of foreign troops, talks, elections and an international peace conference.

Earlier this month, Zairian government officials and Kabila agreed to the plan — but Kabila said that his troops would fight on while it was under discussion.

In the absence of a military stalemate, Kabila seems happy to talk peace while pressing home his advantage on the battlefield.

After meeting with officials in South Africa for a week in February, he returned to his Goma headquarters to announce that he did not support a cease-fire.

Efforts by France and Canada to mobilise an international peacekeeping force have also floundered, with Britain and the US reluctant to commit their troops to an African mission.
Decision time for Mobutu

SA plan for Zaire ceasefire

Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko has promised to respond to President Mandela’s plan for a peace settlement in Zaire “within 48 hours”, senior South African officials said today as triumphant rebel forces in eastern Zaire continued their advance on Lubumbashi, the country’s second largest city.

Mr Mobutu is caught between accepting Mr Mandela’s plan - essentially a ceasefire followed by direct talks between the Mobutu government and the rebels - or facing the uncertain outcome of an Organisation of African Unity meeting on Zaire scheduled to begin in Lome, Togo, on Wednesday.

Mr Mobutu, 66, emerged from seclusion yesterday accompanied by South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki to meet the media at his riverside mansion outside Kinshasa. Wearing his leopard-skin cap and waving a wooden cane, he pledged himself to “the highest interest of Zaire”.

But the ruler of 31 years brushed aside questions about the rebel forces that have seized about a third of the country in his first public appearance since his return from Europe on Friday to face the rebellion that has been ravaging his country.

Replying to questions, the ailing president said: “I didn’t come back to busy myself with the interests of Mobutu, nor the fortunes of Mobutu, as you write from time to time.” He pledged himself to “the highest interest of Zaire - that is to say, our unity and our territorial integrity.”

Returning to Pretoria later yesterday, Mr Mbeki said Mr Mobutu was clearly ill, but appeared physically and mentally capable of dealing with talks on ending fighting in his country.

The rebels trying to end Mr Mobutu’s dictatorship control a vast swath of eastern Zaire. They claimed on Saturday that their forces were only 20kms from Lubumbashi.
Mbeki delivers Mandela's letter of peace to Mbeki in
Kwazulu Natal.
Life seeping back into
Zaire's heart of darkness

Kisangani - The jungle city of Kisangani, once prosperous by
diamonds and famous by books like Joseph Conrad's Heart of
Darkness, is coming to life after what residents call its liberation
by rebels.

Hardly a building was touched
when a motley crew of govern-
ment troops and white mercenar-
ies fled last weekend and the
rebels walked in to take over.

The mainly Serbian mercenaries
blazed a trail of terror in the
month before Kisangani - its
years of neglect reflected in the
weeds growing through half-
finished buildings - fell.

Formerly called Stanleyville, it
is a commercial centre situated at

Residents
hail fall of
'big man'

the last navigable point on the
Zaire River. But in the weeks that
preceded the fall of the city, the
mainstay diamond traders packed
up and left, fearing violence.

Residents say people feared the
Serb mercenaries, led by a
man they identified as Domenic
Yugo. Witnesses say he shot two
pastors in cold blood last month
while they held up their Bibles
and begged for mercy.

They equally feared President
Mobutu Sese Seko's secret service,
whose compound stands intact
but empty after the liberation.

In the 1960s, Kisangani was
the seat of another rebel govern-

ment, headed by Christophe
Gkenye, who fought the then Kin-
dshasa regime of Mobutu Sese
Seko.

But the city is also famous for
its portrayal in Conrad's novel,
which a century ago painted a pic-
ture of a town blighted by dark-
ness, savagery and irrational fear.

And actress Katharine Hepburn
stayed in the city during the mak-
ing of the film The African Queen.

More recently, V S Naipaul's
1979 novel A Bend in the River de-
scribed the experience of an Asian
trader washed up in the city in a
post-independence country, spell-
bound by the "big man's" role.

The fall of Kisangani has bro-
en the hold of Mobutu, Zaire's
"big man", reviled by many of his
own people.

In a bid to capitalise on the
expectations of the residents, the
rebels have stabilised the ex-
change rate for the US dollar and
halved the price of beer, water
and electricity. They have also or-
dganised the election of local and
regional leaders.

Some business and diamond
traders are back.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila is
now referred to as the city's pro-
tector, but he carefully resists the
accolade.

"I am not the liberator ... I par-
ticipated in the revolution, I don't
want to be president. I want my
people to be free and then I go
back to my private life," he said
on Saturday. - Reuters.
FEARS OF ARMY RAMPAGE

Tension mounts in Zaire as PM resigns

KINSHASA: Zairian soldiers fought would be deserters in Lubumbashi on Sunday as rebel troops advanced to within 250km of this country’s second largest city.

Zaire’s prime minister Mr Leon Kengo wa Dondo resigned yesterday, bowing to pressure from lawmakers who accused him of mishandling the rebellion sweeping the country.

“The prime minister met the president of the republic … and he was obliged to present his resignation,” said Mr Zola Kinhela, secretary general of the Union of Independent Democrats.

Zaire’s state TV said last night President Mobutu Sese Seko had accepted Kengo’s resignation and that of his government. A week ago, Zaire’s parliament voted to oust Kengo.

The TV report said Mobutu had called on Kengo to do what he could to allow a new transitional government to be put in place. Opposition lawmakers planned to meet today and urge all members of parliament to join them.

Kengo’s resignation highlighted the power struggle under way as the government struggles to unite and deal with an insurgency that has left much of eastern Zaire in rebel hands.

“We’ve always been ready to do anything that would lead to a resolution of the Zairian crisis,” said Kinhela.

The resignation came a day after Mobutu promised he would make clear, “within 48 hours”, his plans to reunite the country.

Lawmakers have accused Kengo of mishandling Zaire’s crisis and of being soft on the Tutsi-backed rebels because his mother is a Rwandan Tutsi.

The Mobutu regime had initially rejected last week’s vote to oust him, calling it unconstitutional because two-thirds of the members of parliament were not present.

Supporters of Mr Etienne Tshisekedi, a popular opposition leader and longtime Mobutu foe, said he should now take over as prime minister and begin talks with the rebels. Parliament elected Tshisekedi prime minister in 1992, but Mobutu refused to confirm him and instead backed Kengo for the job.

Tshisekedi has pledged to negotiate with rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila, form a coalition government, and prepare the country for its first multi-party elections.

Mobutu’s brief appearance on Sunday put an end to rumours that the 66-year-old leader, waging away from prostate cancer, was near death.

But his return did not ease tensions within his poorly paid army. Zairian soldiers in Lubumbashi fought on Sunday with would-be deserters, French radio said yesterday. It was not known if there were any casualties.

Kabila said on Saturday that his forces were just 250km from Lubumbashi, Zaire’s second-largest city. The rebels are trying to end Mobutu’s 31-year dictatorship. They accuse him of abusing the country’s vast mineral resources to make himself one of the world’s richest men, while ordinary Zairians struggle in poverty.

Just across the river in Brazzaville, in the Congo Republic, the first wave of United States troops arrived on Sunday to prepare for the possible evacuation of Americans from Zaire.

Though the rebels are still far from Kinshasa, many fear a rampage by Zairian soldiers if Mobutu dies or the rebels continue their advance. — Sapa-AP
Lubumbashi's residents eagerly await rebels' arrival and return to prosperity

RICHARD MEARES

Lubumbashi — The people of Shaba province, whose mineral wealth has helped keep President Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire aloft during three decades of chaos and decline, have high hopes for Laurent Kabila's rebellion.

Ordinary people complain that corruption and self-enrichment by officials have destroyed all hope of economic progress.

"He must go away, that crazy crook president," a waiter in a city-centre café said.

The region is better known locally by its traditional name, Katanga. It sits on ground said to contain some of the world's richest reserves of copper, cobalt and other precious minerals.

Previous challenges to Mobutu's rule have failed. But now rebels under Laurent Kabila, himself a Katangan, are putting up the most serious challenge to his rule to date. Mobutu is weakened by his fight against cancer.

Kabila's forces now control about 20 percent of Zaire. They claimed to be about 360km from Lubumbashi, the capital of Shaba and Zaire's second city.

The city's residents eagerly await their arrival.

They swap the tales they have heard of a better life in the east of the country which the rebels control. They say the rebels have imposed the rule of law there. Corrupt police and officials get their deserved rebuke or punishment, and money and wages once again have real value.

Assani Mandevu, a sociology student born in 1965, the year Mobutu seized power, hopes for a brighter future.

"I want him (Mobutu) to see the rebels take power by force and watch what a good job they do of running the country he has ruined," he said.

The prospect of a new government has come at a time when political changes across southern Africa and new economic realities are giving Shaba's economy fresh hope.

Two decades after nationalisation, state-owned Gecamines, which controls Shaba's mines and its economy, has embarked on a privatisation programme.

Late last year the programme bore fruit, attracting the first significant foreign investments to Zaire since the 1970s.

South African, Belgian and British mine experts in Lubumbashi did not expect the war between the government and the rebels to jeopardise their investments in the region.

South Africa's emergence from the isolation of apartheid has turned it into the regional power on which Shaba, and the whole region, depend for future trade and success. Lubumbashi, which is as close to Johannesburg as it is to Kinshasa, already looks south more than it looks north or west.

"Practically no goods arrive here from Kinshasa any more," said Patrick Claes, an official at Sizarail, a South African-Belgian railways company that moves goods in southern Zaire.

The shops are full of South African goods. Sizarail brings into the country with the coal and other supplies the mines need. The trains take the copper and cobalt out.

Geographically, Shaba is more southern than central African, with a dry climate and bush plains. The province is the same size as France.

Kinshasa is 1,700 km of jungle away as the crow flies. Transport by rail and river is slow and difficult. Reaching Zaire's Atlantic port at Matadi can take weeks.

Shaba has regularly tried to fight its way out of Zaire since the country won its independence from Belgium in 1960.

In 1978 Katangan separatists massacred Belgians in Kolwezi, a copper mining town. Memories of that event still send shudders down expatriates' spines during times of trouble.

Shabans resent the way the province's wealth flows out to Kinshasa or into the pockets of officials on the way.

They want change.

This time, however, local leaders shun talk of secession. What they want is autonomy, in the form of confederation. — Reuter
Rebels put Zaire's mining concessions up for grabs

ZAIREAN rebels were offering gold mining concessions in areas under their control to foreign companies, an investment analyst said yesterday.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire seized most of the country's gold mines - including President Mobutu Sese Seko's personal mine - in eastern Zaire in January.

Earlier this month the rebels said mines they held had resumed production and could fund their war effort.

Johannesburg-based investment analyst John Klemmow said the rebels were offering gold prospecting concessions. "They only liberated these places a week or two ago... it is pretty open for business already," Klemmow said.

The rebels have said Lubumbashi, hub of Zaire's copper and cobalt mining industry, will be their next target.

Meanwhile in Kinshasa, deputy prime minister and vice-president of the ruling Popular Movement of the Revolution party, Banza Mukalay, said the party was prepared to negotiate with the rebels.

As rebels, at the invitation of Togo's president, headed for a summit meeting in Lomé yesterday, Zairian Prime Minister Leon Kengo wa Mombo resigned. This followed a no-confidence vote in parliament last week.

Parliamentary secretary Mamweni Vangu said Mobutu would, at the summit meeting in Lomé tomorrow, announce what role he would assume in efforts to end the civil war.

The rebels were attending the meeting "because we have been invited by the president of Togo, but not to negotiate", one of the rebel alliance's two foreign affairs spokesmen, Bizimana Karaha, told journalists in Kisangani.

Meanwhile, rebel forces were edging towards Lubumbashi, Zaire's second-biggest city. There was fighting just north of the town on Sunday as state troops tried to impose discipline on runaway soldiers hoping to loot the city in the face of the rebel advance.

Sources said about 300 soldiers planning looting in Mbuji-Mayi, 600km northwest of Lubumbashi, were also arrested, disarmed and flown to Kinshasa at the weekend.

The opposition in Lubumbashi expressed its support for the rebels on Sunday, but in Kinshasa, opposition enthusiasm for Kabila appeared to be waning. Radical opposition leaders, hoping for partnership, were angered by Kabila's ban on political parties in territories under rebel control, accusing him of exhibiting "a dangerous totalitarian tendency".

A regional military source said the rebels were unlikely to agree to a ceasefire until they had broken the back of Mobutu's government. Kabila was under intense international pressure to agree to a ceasefire. SA had dispatched an envoy yesterday to sound him out on the latest proposals, the source said. - Cape-AFP, Reuters.
Kinshasa - Zaire's embattled prime minister bowed to pressure and resigned yesterday, apparently opening the way for officials to negotiate with rebels at a vital regional summit tomorrow.

President Mobutu Sese Seko accepted the resignation but asked his unpopular premier, Kengo wa Dongo, to continue in office until a new government could be put in place.

Kengo, slammed over the poor war effort and seen as an opponent of talks with the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, told AFP late yesterday that he had decided to step down rather than be forced out unconstitutionally and illegally.

The resignation was preceded by an announcement from Mobutu's former sole ruling party, the Popular Revolution Movement (MPR), that it was ready to open negotiations with the rebels.

Kengo said he had recalled Foreign Minister Gerard Kamanda wa Kamanda, en route to the Togolese capital Lome for the summit, for consultations on the line to take at the talks.

The move came the day after Mobutu said he would move the peace process forward at the Wednesday summit.

The international pressure for peace talks has been building and US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright urged Mobutu to back the negotiations.

The rebel movement, led by Laurent-Desire Kabila, has been kept out of previous summits since it is not a representative government but said it would send representatives to Lome.

The rebels are going to the summit but played down hope of direct negotiations and a ceasefire.

Kengo had hung on in power for a week after his supporters claimed moves to unseat him last week in parliament were unconstitutional, but sources close to Kengo said that, faced with growing hostility against him personally and his government, he had decided to step down.

The US and France are taking steps in 20 African countries to argue the case for a ceasefire ahead of the summit. - AFP.
Mobutu's star wanes as US prepares to cut ties

Dictator and his family rake in millions of dollars from arms smuggling as Zaire's army crumbles

**SAPA-IPS**

Washington

After 35 years of loyal - if embarrassing - support, the United States is preparing to bid adieu to its closest African ally of the cold war, Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mobutu, whose avaricious reign helped coin the word "kleptocracy", returned on Friday to Kinshasa for what may be his last days as president as US officials concede the wily leader had run out of tricks.

To the frustration of many African specialists, Washington is still not demanding publicly that he step down. Its hope is that he will bless a ceasefire and negotiations for a new government with Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader whose insurgents have swept across eastern Zaire since October and now hold sway over almost one-third of the country's vast territory.

Officials here also hope that he will bring a halt to the smuggling of tons of weapons to Unita, the Angolan rebel group with which, despite a peace accord, appears to be stockpiling weapons at the southern Zaire air base at Kamina.

Mobutu and his family are making millions of dollars from the smuggling, according to a Washington Post account confirmed by US officials on Friday.

"This is perfect," said one. "His army is disintegrating, and he's still making a buck by selling its arms to Unita. I think that says it all, doesn't it?"

Washington is worried that the arms supply operation has given Angola, which has already dispatched 5,000 ex-Katangan fighters to join the rebels in the east, a pretext for direct intervention. According to reports, Unita has sent 5,000 troops to guard Kamina.

"The last battle for Angola may be fought in Zaire," said one intelligence official here.

Kamina is a fitting symbol of the relationship which has kept successive US presidents locked into a sometimes reluctant embrace with Mobutu since 1960, when Colonel Joseph Mobutu, as he was known then, took control of the Congolese Army.

Originally a Belgian base, the Pentagon first used Kamina in 1964 to base a joint US-Belgian operation to evacuate missionaries from rebel-held Stanleyville, renamed Kisangani.

In 1977 and again in 1978, US military forces used Kamina to support French, Belgian, and Moroccan troops helping to recapture the Kolwezi mining centre in Shaba province from Katangan fighters who had infiltrated from Angola.

When Ronald Reagan embraced Savimbi as a "freedom fighter" in the 1980s, the Central Intelligence Agency built up the air base as its local headquarters.

By 1987, the Pentagon was pressing Reagan to invest millions of dollars in upgrading the base as part of an agreement with Mobutu that would make the base the major US facility.

As the Angola war wound down, however, the plan was quashed. Of course, Washington's relationship with Mobutu goes back even further than Kamina to the darkest days of the cold war.

A lowly sergeant in the Belgian colonial army, Mobutu found himself at the centre of the East-West struggle when the Congo joined its tumultuous independence in 1960. He rose swiftly through the ranks, becoming number two in the army as the young country faced its first secessionist challenges the same year.

With its fabulous mineral wealth and strategic location in the heart of Africa, the Congo was transformed overnight into the cold war's latest major battleground. The firebrand new prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, reminded US President Dwight Eisenhower far too much of Cuba's revolutionary leader, Fidel Castro.

"It is safe to go on the assumption," wrote then-CIA director Allen Dulles, "that Lumumba has been bought by the communists".

It was roughly at this moment that Washington bought Mobutu. He became the key link in a plan to replace Lumumba, who was later ousted in a CIA-backed coup led by Mobutu.

Mobutu ruled the Congo from behind the scenes until 1965 when he declared himself head of state. With Western support, he quelled several rebellions, nationalised foreign businesses, and began pillaging the country's economy in earnest.
'A CHANGE OF POLICY'

US pulls the plug on Mobutu's reign

WASHINGTON: After decades of providing Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko with millions of dollars a year in aid, with no strings attached, the United States appears to have had a change of heart.

AFTER having helped President Mobutu Sese Seko take power by force 31 years ago, enabling him to plunder a rich country and impoverish its people, the United States has dumped him and allowed the rebels seeking to topple him to capture more than one-fifth of Zaire, said political analysts.

Many African scholars here said it was surprising that the US was not getting involved, particularly after it had helped prop up Mobutu's regime for decades, through aid and logistical support, in exchange for helping Washington contain communism in Africa.

"Intervention began at the time of Zaire's independence in 1960, when the country was still called Congo," said Mr David Gibbs, a political science lecturer at the University of Arizona.

"American intelligence officers recruited Mobutu... and used him to mould pro-American governments."

"Mobutu rose to the rank of general and, supported by the Central Intelligence Agency, he seized full power in a 1965 coup.

"This US intervention, which is crucial for understanding the contemporary crisis in the country, has been extensively documented," said Gibbs.

Now, instead of intervening, the US has sent 300 soldiers and warships to western Africa to prepare for a possible evacuation of Americans from Zaire. The US government has warned its citizens to defer all travel to Zaire.

"We'd like to see the Zairian government agree to a reform process that would at some point lead to elections," said State Department spokesman Mr Nicholas Burns.

After being on Mobutu's side for three decades, US officials say they are neutral and want the unpopular Zairian leader to step down.

"We don't agree with... the attempt to overthrow a country through violent means, to put a whole region of Zaire into chaos, which is what rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila has done, and to endanger the lives of innocent refugees," said Burns.

American policymakers say Washington should have pressured Rwanda and Uganda, both US allies, to halt their support for Kabila. Instead, their hands-off approach has boosted the rebels' morale and allowed the rebellion to spread.

Since November last year, Zaire's anti-Mobutu forces have been sweeping the eastern region and have vowed to arrive in the capital Kinshasa by June.

The rebels took over Zaire's third largest city, Kisangani, almost a fortnight ago and are regarded as heroes by the region's residents.

Washington appears to have concluded that Mobutu is the biggest obstacle to political reform and that Zairians will not get the vote until he is out of the way.

To many African observers, the US stance appears to be a sudden change of policy, particularly after it supported Mobutu's rise to power through a military coup in 1965, and then gave his regime millions of dollars a year in aid without any strings attached.

US aid to Zaire was halted when Washington's priorities changed with the end of the Cold War.

Africa watchers here said if the US wanted to stop the current civil war, it could easily have pressured Rwanda and Uganda to stop supporting Kabila. — Independent Foreign Service
GOVERNMENTetz seeks to share power

INTERNATIONAL
FALL OF A TRAMPANT MUSICAL GROUP

NOT A NEWS PROFESSION LIBRARIAN, WED

OF 27/3/47 (35)

Rhythm of Villany nears its end

[Image of a musical score or a musical group with text overlay]
Peace talks on the cards as Zaire foes shake hands

Lome — The head of Zaire’s rebel delegation at an African summit said today the first talks with President Mobutu Sese Seko’s government will begin soon.

“We are very excited to learn that for the first time the people (authorities) of Kinshasa have decided to agree to a starting of the negotiations which are going to be in a very few days to come,” Bizima Karaha told a news conference here.

He said likely venues for the talks were South Africa and Togo. The rebels control about one quarter of Zaire.

He said rebel leader Laurent Kabila would not take part and he added a strong note of scepticism.

“We do not trust them much because they are known for giving so many promises but we shall wait for such a time for them to fulfil their commitment.”

Meanwhile delegates to the summit here on the crisis in Zaire have called for a cease-fire and negotiations between the warring sides, sources said today.

Zaire’s warring parties, brought together by Organisation of African Unity leaders in an attempt to broker peace, shook hands in a symbolic first step towards reconciliation, host country Togo reported.

The resolution, approved last night, mirrors a peace plan worked out by an envoy of the OAU and the United Nations, Mohamed Sa'ennoun.

It calls for “adherence to respect for the principle of territorial integrity and the unity of Zaire, and to the sanctity of borders as they existed at the time of independence.”

Afterwards Togo’s Foreign Minister, Pierre Koffi Panou, said the handshake between representatives of the two sides took place late yesterday on the sidelines of the OAU summit.

Meanwhile UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan added his voice at the meeting, attended by 14 African leaders including Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

“I urge the parties to move to the negotiating table,” Mr Annan said.

“The fighting must stop and the dialogue must begin,” he added. — Reuters
Mbanu

Historically, the image appears to be a page containing text in multiple languages, but it is largely illegible due to the quality of the scan and the angle of the page. The text seems to be a mix of English and another language, possibly Kikuyu or Swahili, given the writing style and context. The page contains paragraphs of text, some of which appear to be discussing historical or political topics.

Due to the poor quality and orientation of the page, a detailed transcription or interpretation is not possible. The text appears to be a mix of English and possibly a native language, with some paragraphs harder to decipher than others.

Additional observation: The page includes a title or heading at the top, which is not fully legible due to the angle and resolution of the scan.
Rebels set to reject Mobutu ploy

There is a possible breakthrough in negotiations between the weakening President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and rebel leader Laurent Kabila. Chris McGreal reports from Kinshasa.

Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko this week opened the door to negotiation with the rebel army advancing from the east, but on terms it is almost certain to reject.

Mobutu proposed the creation of a negotiating committee two days after South Africa's Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, flew to Kinshasa and predicted a breakthrough in trying to arrange a ceasefire and negotiations to end the six-month civil war.

But the calling Zairean leader's plan for a committee with undefined powers to negotiate an end to the conflict bares the hallmark's of his well-tested tactic of appearing to make concessions while sowing confusion.

In a loosely worded statement read on national television, Mobutu did not specify what the committee would be sanctioned to talk directly to the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

The alliance leader, Laurent Kabila, is in any case likely to reject the proposal because Mobutu plans to appoint a cross-section of Zairean political life to the committee. The rebels have demanded direct talks with the president or, if he is too sick from prostate cancer for prolonged meetings, an envoy with full powers to negotiate on his behalf.

The statement added to the sense of chaos within the government after Kabila, in a move to bolster his position, made a last-ditch effort to call a parliamentary vote of no confidence. Parliament opened meetings on Tuesday to try and select a new prime minister for Mobutu's approval.

The largest party is pushing the nomination of a former prime minister and long-time foe of the president, Etienne Tshisekedi, with a mandate to negotiate the formation of a new government with the rebels.

Expectations that Mobutu might agree to talks were raised by Mbeki's visit to Kinshasa on Sunday.

He carried a letter from Nelson Mandela saying the rebel alliance had backed off its demand for face-to-face talks between Kabila and the Zairean president if he appoints an envoy.

But Mandela's letter added that the rebels have also set new conditions.

Fearing that Mobutu is trying to buy time, Kabila is insisting that there can be only one round of negotiations and that the talks must be conclusive or abandoned. The key question of whether a ceasefire should precede negotiations is so far unresolved.

After the meeting with Zaire's president, Mbeki said he expected "immediate movement" on the key issues of a ceasefire and negotiations.

"We are convinced in the immediate future steps will be taken practically to move this process forward toward a resolution," he said.

Mbeki's visit offered the first public sighting of Mobutu after his mysterious clandestine return from cancer treatment in France last week.

Looking tired and thin, Zaire's ailing president stepped slowly out of his sprawling riverside palace in his favoured leopard-skin hat to dispel rumours of his demise. And in a voice robbed of its power, he made a last grasp at keeping alive the myth of his invincibility.

Leading man: Laurent Kabila shows off new recruits for his rebel army

power, and billions of dollars in the bank, that he is the man to save Zaire.

"I am called Mobutu. I came back not to look after Mobutu's interests or fortunes as you write from time to time. I came to look after the higher interests of Zaire, that is to say our unity and our territorial integrity," he told reporters.

It was the kind of declaration which once stirred Zaireans to believe in Mobutu's claim to be the father of the nation. But with his regime evidently powerless to stop rebels who confidently predict sweeping into the capital within three months, Mobutu would appear to have little control over the course of events beyond the choice of negotiating himself out of power or quitting immediately.

The Zairean leader flew home from Nice last week after his latest bout of treatment for prostate cancer. But he refused to leave his plane until the airport had been cleared of spectators, including his own Cabinet and military leaders on hand to welcome him. The bizarre arrival fuelled speculation that Mobutu was on the brink of death.

As a grand old man, Mobutu replied: "I am as you see me."

Mbeki met the Zairean president at Camp Tshatshi, one of Mobutu's sprawling residences in Kinshasa. The gates are decorated with young soldiers in shabby red colonial tunics and pillbox hats topped by plumes to match the peacocks wandering past the miniature golf course.

But the real security is provided by troops bristling with weaponry which might be the envy of soldiers on the front line if they cared to fight.

The army provokes little more than derision these days. But the men outside Mobutu's palace are not too shamed to don sunglasses and strut their stuff until the time comes to turn and run from the rebels.

Mobutu's options are not much better. There is no magical military solution for the regime.

The government is discredit and crumbling. Zaire's president can agree to negotiate, resign or wait until the rebels are at the gates — if his own army does not get rid of him first.

"His gravestone is our country"
Chris McGreal writes from Kinshasa on the machinations behind the chaos in Zaire

The gatekeeper shakes his head dejected at mention of the impasse of President Mobutu. "They are his friends," he says, until one by one they disappeared from their carriages along with the finery and riches. Yet only a few years ago Mobutu and his henchmen had built a Bukavu playground in his honour on the banks of the Congo River. Visitors were transported to a Japanese zoo and water theme parlour in a Chinese pagoda. And in the midst of the park sat the headquarters of the only political party ever permitted in Zaire.

But like all other tastes of Mobutu’s ailing autocracy it has fallen into ruin. Water to the slums dried up. The animals vanished, in the main, and the road to the zoo all impassable. The restaurant still opens its doors but there are few customers who want to be associated with Mobutu anymore.

And he, apparently, wants little to do with them. Zaire’s desperately poor ruler of 23 years flew home from cancer treatment in France last week and promptly gave Mobutu a free hand to come off the plane to meet his prime minister or tie the army chiefs. Helpless to stop the ceaseless advance of Laurent Kabila’s rebels across a country which the Zairian leader has turned into a vast war of his dysfunctional past.

Mobutu, once so feared and admired, is now derided and openly scorned. Yet when pressure on his regime mounts, as it does when the rebels advance, Mobutu sends a shocker through the population. Some among the masses of poor, like cobbler Germain Bokemer who works 18 hours a day on a Kinshasa street corner, believe they will never be ill. "Mobutu doesn’t just go to France and die, he keeps coming back to hunt us," he says, the rebels in our country like a ghost. Even if we bury him in the ground, if we burn him, if we bury it deep, Mobutu will never escape Mobutu. Every day we are losing Mobutu. He is the most talented for our job. We will remember Mobutu.

“His gravestone is in our destroyed country.”

Those holding on to power, those who have the power to wheel and deal, those who know the ways of the game, those who have the interests at heart. The war is not just about the rebels or the rebels. It is about the money and the power and the politics and the future of the country. It is about the future of the people who live in this country. It is about the future of the children who will grow up in this country. It is about the future of the continent. It is about the future of the world.

United against Mobutu: Zairians in Kinshasa give victory signs after hearing of the rebel capture of Zaire's third-largest city, Kinshasa.

"People don’t know what they want. Just a few years ago Mobutu was their idol. Suddenly he was a dictator and he should go. It doesn’t surprise me. Whoever the next president is, he will be in office one or two years and then they’ll all miss Mobutu. I know Zairians,” he said. "It’s easy to say Mobutu has to go. You Europeans say he is very rich but you’ve never known him where the money is. I’m black and in our village we have only one chief. When you have something you give half to the chief."

There was a time when Mobutu could call Zaire his own. He named the country, and the giant river coursing from its heart. He defined its policies and its own image, even to the extent of calling it Mobutization. Zaire’s leader styled himself the "Father of the Nation" and discarded the name he was given at birth in favour of a title. Joseph Destin Kabila Mobutu became Mobutu Sese Seko Mobutu. The all powerful warrior who, because of his role in the war, will go from conquest to conquest, conquering fire in his wake.

And then he ground his sprawling nation into the dirt. Zaire’s decline was not by product of a mis-guided policy, or elsewhere in Africa, it was the deliberate wrecking of a country to satisfy the greed of an elite, and a strategy to undermine any challenge to Mobutu’s rule.

His own personal fortune runs into billions. He owns 1.1 palaces in Zaïre alone, until the rebels started to seize them, and property from Cape Town to Paris. Yet the state projects to exist in the traditional sense. Bloated civil service, with more people than desks, are a common enough bone of African life. Not so in Zaïre. Most of the mineral buildings are deserted shells. At the Information Ministry, a sack shopper built in the post-independence boom, there is almost no sign of life until the 16th floor. The lift operator comes when called only by various hanging on the door. The ministry once a battleground.

"Even if we burn his body and grind it to nothing, we will never escape Mobutu!"

Then drop from the ceiling. In the minister’s conference room, the sun has faded Mobutu’s portrait to a ghostly image.

Few ministers administer the state. Some barely supervise their employees, who are mostly unpaid but unwilling to abandon a job in which they may be able to work cash from some unfortunate in desperate need of one piece of official paper or another. The Ministry of Social Secur-

ity has impressive offices in the centre of the city. No one can remember when it last paid out. The ministers, politicians and businessmen who became extraordinarily wealthy under Mobutu’s patronage have little but contempt for these less fortunate than themselves. Each day their Mercedeses sweep through poverty and the ships, unenviable because it is so common.

But Kinshasa, the former MPS general secretary, argues that whatever Zaïre’s problems, they are not the fault of Mobutu.

"The responsibility for our deterioration lies with those who want to use the army and who are not interested in the army."

shana was very, very nice. Now we have a minister of finance and a minister of planning so why blame Mobutu?" he argued.

Kihumba lives in the luxury inter-"Kihumba lives in the luxury international hotel. The city is full of shops in the hotel-cate of the desire to spend money as much as possible. Typically he eats breakfast of about R11 000 which could be had in London on a shoestring. He says he has never been so rich in his entire life.

The intercontinental is laying on a Rester to Kinshasa, which costs about a head, 10 times what most Zaïreans earn in a month.

So as to protect all this was the greatest illusion of all, Zaïre’s army. The military has a far from glo-

rious past. Within days of indepen-
dence in 1960 the “Force Publique”, as it was then known, began in the service of the country the first taste of the army on a man-

age of crowds and rape. Soldiers arrested their Belgian officers, and white colonists fled the country in their thousands.

The newly installed government attempted to calm the fears by proc-
moting every soldier. For a while, the Zaïrean army was the only one in the world without a single private.

Saddly for Zaïre, that time seems a relative golden age. To most people today the Zaïrean army is an occasional instrument of terror. More often it is an organised crime syndicate. Its sky-rocketing murder rates alarming even for diamond dealers and foreign businessmen, or their own smuggling operations.

Ordinary soldiers were given a uniform and a gun and told to protect the country they would. Robbery was the obvious method. The soldiers say they have little choice. Even those with pathetic wages of about R15 a month were paid about a third.

And when six years ago Mobutu moved to subscribe the transition to democracy, he ordered a total withdrawal of foreign pressure, the army was let-

loose to pillage and murder, another six months. But Zaïre’s army was never pre-
paid for war. Mobutu saw little threat from outside his country’s border and was happy to lose a few Americans or Belgians who would always be at hand to slave all.

Scattered and divided with Zaïre’s tiny neighbour, Rwanda. The government was defeated in 1984 and 1989, and its president was killed with the Hutu exiles. He allowed them to carry out the continuing repressive and to plot the rebirth of Rwanda. But Zaïre’s army would be the ultimate force to be feared.

Rwanda’s army is part of a no-

theatre of African nations of relatively disciplined troops, trained to fight and, most importantly, with a cause to fight for. Under the umbrella of a revolutionary philosophy contempla-
ted of the generation, it was a new force and their armies which were as often instrument-

for the liberation and their liberation. Uganda’s National Resistance Army was the first of the new breed in the 1970s. It gave birth to Rwanda’s FPR movement, turned-government, which in turn modelled Mobutu’s fight.
Nicky De Blois and cameraman Craig Donovan
Kingshaws in Zimbale
A Special Report from Lubumbashi

Terror Trail of Hired Hugs

ST 30/1974

Neverkus Lubumbashi gets set for the arrival of the Prince.
Zaire deal: Mandela hails SA role

New Delhi — President Nelson Mandela, reacting to yesterday's agreement-in-principle to a ceasefire between Zairean government leaders and rebels, said South Africa played a key role in organising the truce.

"South Africa played a key role," said Mr Mandela during his three-day visit to India. "The secretary general of the United Nations asked us for assistance and we have played our part."

The government of Zaire and the rebels agreed to the principle of a ceasefire and talks.

Meanwhile, Zairean rebels said yesterday that talks with representatives of President Mobutu Sese Seko would start in South Africa early next week.

"If nothing changes, then the talks will be in South Africa and will begin on either Monday or Tuesday," said rebel secretary-general Moise Nyarugabo. He said the talks would focus on the transfer of power from Mr Mobutu to a transitional government led by Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire. South African government sources have confirmed that preparations are being made to hold the talks. — Sapa-AFP-Reuters.

Kabila's rough and ready polls, page 22
The sorry state of the nation

A subdued mood of optimism is being felt for the first time in years in the rutted, litter-strewn streets of Zaire's capital, Kinshasa. The agreement by representatives of President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila to begin peace talks is being hailed as the crumbling central African country's most significant political development in decades.

Although the news was not met with jubilation among Kinshasa's impoverished masses, political observers and businessmen are hopeful.

They say the talks, which will probably be held in South Africa, are the first sign of hope in 30 years of corrupt government and a six-month rebel onslaught which threatened to plunge the destitute country further into chaos.

"Mobutu and Kabila ready to make peace," screamed a headline in the Le Soir newspaper after the agreement was reached at this week's summit of African foreign ministers in Lomé, Togo.

But most Kinshasans appeared apathetic.

"They aren't reacting because they keep hearing promises, yet nothing changes. But, if it is true, it's what we've been waiting for — we badly need peace, economic growth and a new government," says Ben Mbaas, 28, a Zairian civil servant.

Even the director general in Mobutu's office, Vundwawe Pamba, is optimistic. He predicts: "There will be a lot of good news soon."

Freddy Eloge, a Zairian-born businessman who lives in South Africa and sells industrial machinery in Central and West Africa, says the news has brought hope for Zaire'sailing economy.

"Businessmen are upbeat — we knew change was coming, but this is what we've been waiting for. Stability will bring economic growth which will benefit all of Central and Southern Africa."

 "But foreign trade is the furthest thing from the minds of the more than 40 million Zairians who mostly live in squalor amid some of the world's greatest mineral riches."

Most of the civil service has not been paid for months. State funds left over after corrupt officials and traders have been sapped by Mobutu's futile attempt to repel Kabila's advancing rebels.

Kinshasa's government buildings are an apt reflection of the state of the nation. Civil servants sit in empty offices chatting or drifting dejectedly through the dingy halls where they are adorned with faded portraits of Mobutu — who has amassed a staggering personal fortune abroad.

Zairian soldiers confirmed that they had been executed.

Residents have described regular search operations conducted by the "blancs", as the mercenaries are called.

Special targets were people whose identity cards showed they came from the east, or those with fine features possibly identifying them as Tutsis.

Ethnic Tutsis led the rebellion that saw the fall of the eastern towns of Uvira, Bukavu and Goma late last year.

However, even bolstered by mercenaries, the ill-disciplined Zairian army proved no match for the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

The rebels marched triumphantly into Kisangani 10 days ago.

Yugoslavia and its men fled by aircraft, along with senior Zairian army officers and the French military attaché. Others escaped by boat.

On his first visit to the liberated town last weekend, the rebel leader, Kabila, told crowds at a victory rally that France was one of the countries financing the mercenary troops in a last-ditch attempt to save the Mobutu regime.

"The rebels are now advancing on two fronts towards Lubumbashi, in the copper belt of southwestern Shaba province, and towards Mbuji-Mayi, capital of diamond-rich Kasai province, where the hired European soldiers are now based. — © The Telegraph, London
Zairian rebels push

ahead before talks

After 31 April
Mbeki hailed for Zaire peace bid

RAY HARTLEY
Political Correspondent

Representatives of Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila are expected in Pretoria this week for their first face-to-face peace talks. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Phahad, yesterday confirmed that the talks would take place in South Africa. Mobutu has begun preparing a delegation of up to nine negotiators for the discussions. "The delegation, which will exclude the leader himself for health reasons, is said to include representatives of the Zairian parliament, as well as the military and the judiciary."

One diplomat said: "This way, Kabila will know that he is dealing with the full Zairian government and not just one faction."

Kabila, who had originally insisted on meeting with Mobutu in person, has apparently realised that the leader's health makes such an encounter impossible.

Agreement on face-to-face peace talks followed intensive diplomatic shuttle by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

Mbeki held meetings with African heads of state and Kabila in Nairobi last week before he headed for Kinshasa to meet with Mobutu. "At the meeting, he is said to have handed Mobutu a peace proposal by Kabila, the first indirect exchange between the two leaders."

Breaking the government's two-month silence on the talks, Mbeki said yesterday: "They need to move with great speed to produce an agreement which must include a cease-fire and the political steps that must be taken to ensure they have a government that is popularly elected."

He said free and fair elections that would convince the Zairian people the election had been legitimate were needed. "Mbeki added that South Africa would limit its role to that of facilitator. "It is very important that the Zairian people themselves find a solution," he said."

South Africa had both parties' trust because "we do not have selfish national interests with regard to this matter."

Both Kabila and Mobutu are believed to have reached the conclusion that both sides will end up as losers if there is further bloodshed.\[\]