ZAIRE — GENERAL

1997

Muted reaction to Zaire's new prime minister

(358)

Etienne Tshisekedi, Mobutu's arch-foe, could be tested to breaking point

Star 3/4/97

REUTERS
Kinshasa

The confirmation of President Mobutu Sese Seko's long-time political enemy Etienne Tshisekedi as prime minister was greeted with surprisingly little celebration in the streets of Kinshasa today.

Although he commands huge popular support in the capital and is widely viewed as the one political leader who has consistently stood up to Mobutu since 1965, Tshisekedi could be tested to breaking point by the widening civil war and the bankrupt state.

Parliament nominated Tshisekedi as prime minister this morning after Mobutu agreed to reinstate his arch-foe to the post he sacked him from in 1993.

Constitutionally, Mobutu was simply charged with signing an endorsement after an overwhelming majority of the opposition and some of Mobutu's camp adopted Tshisekedi as prime minister to replace Kengo wa Dondo, who was ousted two weeks ago.

Aside from attempting to halt the advance by Laurent Kabila's rebel forces who have seized a quarter of Zaire's territory and are now targeting its mining centres, Tshisekedi will inherit all the problems of a nation in economic ruin.

The prospects of him paying huge civil service salary arrears and keeping up payments to the army look slim.

"He is a man of the people, he acts for the well being of the people and not to fill his own pocket," said Papa Masamba, a refrigerator repairman.

But many supporters believe he will be accepting a poisoned chalice if he takes on the post.

"First of all we want Mobutu to resign. Mobutu has violated all the laws of the land.

"He will make sure that Kabila continues to fight against Tshisekedi," said Jean Pierre Mbambu, a militant Tshi-sekedi follower.

Radical opposition politicians who staunchly support the rebellion believe that if Tshisekedi accepts the post it will slow down the demise of the Mobutu era.

Meanwhile, Mobutu has named a seven-member commission to attend weekend negotiations in South Africa with the rebel movement.

► **More reports**
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he come to Washington next week?

Mobutu falling out of favour in fashion as well as political stakes

(355) Star 3/4/97

Kinshasa – Some shopkeepers respond with a sneer, others with a shrug of the shoulders, but a few simply pull out their wares – lengths of cloth emblazoned with the presidential portrait – when asked for *le tissu de Mobutu*.

It's still "very sought after" by supporters of President Mobutu Sese Seko's political party, said Giselle Jatsu, who sells cloth of all kinds from her wooden stall in Kinshasa's main market.

But another vendor said wrapping a few lengths of Mobutu cloth around your waist or head doesn't necessarily mean backing Zaire's embattled, ailing president.

"If you wear it, it means you hope someday to be as rich as Mobutu," said Didier Boasa, who had no presidential cloth among the bolts displayed in his booth, folded on tables, or hanging on racks to create a mosaic of rich colours and bold patterns.

Zairians are accusing their president of doing little for his impoverished country but amassing a personal fortune during a dictatorship of nearly 32 years. The end of his reign seems near, with Mobutu stricken with cancer and a rebel army led by longtime foe Laurent Kabila gaining ground in the east.

Demonstrators shouting "Kabila! Kabila!" have taken to Kinshasa's streets to show their support for the rebels and contempt for Mobutu.

Just a few months ago, the capital was ablaze with Mobutu skirts, shirts and head wraps donned by Kinshasans who, prodded by party officials, turned out to welcome him home after months of treatment in Europe for prostate cancer.

Now hardly anyone wears Mobutu in public, perhaps for fear of drawing insults or protests.

In this clothes-conscious capital every other shop seems to sell the three- or six-metre lengths of cloths known as *pagnes*, which women wrap around their hips and tie just so, or take to their seamstress to be fashioned into chic suits and dresses.

Jatsu, the market vendor, had two styles of Mobutu cloth, each selling for about $20 (around R85) – the preferred currency with Zaire so battered by inflation it's difficult to keep track of its value from day to day.

On one bolt, delicate flowers twined around a sketch of Mobutu's face; on the other, the portrait was surrounded by swirls of purple and yellow.

Zaire's biggest cloth supplier, Utexafrica, churns out a new Mobutu pattern every three or four months, Jatsu said.

Utexafrica also prints cloth with drawings of dollar bills, Jesus Christ and other African leaders like Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi.

So far, no *tissu de Kabila* has appeared. – Sapa-AP.

Morale in Zaire ebbs away as Mobutu dithers

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Sowetan 3/4/97

TO arrive in the Zairean capital Kinshasa from abroad is to be pestered for money from just about everyone you meet, including troops guarding the airport.

And it's not as if they're threatening. They present themselves as unpaid and hungry.

"Please, Sir, a little something for the soldiers protecting you," the white-helmeted, camouflage-uniformed gendarme supervising security just outside the main terminal said on Sunday to a just-arrived foreigner.

He quickly walked off only to be replaced by three more woeful-looking paratroopers who hung around the new arrival as his fixer ducked back into the terminal to take care of the necessary bribes with authorities there.

Frustration

Pure unadulterated frustration with where their political system has left them seems to be the basis of the Zairean conflict, the legacy of a country that has made little social progress since becoming independent in 1960.

The army has done little to oppose rebels advancing from the east. For instance, its troops fled after looting Kisangani earlier this month.

As the soldiers' desperation is reflected in their unwillingness to fight and readiness to loot, the mood in Kinshasa is as rundown as the capital's faded colonial buildings and potholed roads.

"I can't do anything to make things better," said businessman Faustin

"The mood in Kinshasa is as rundown as the capital's faded colonial buildings and potholed roads"

Mukena, a Zairean who returned to Kinshasa on Sunday after a trip abroad.

Mukena, a personable, well-spoken man of about 30, seemed just the sort of young, modern-minded person Zaire would need to build up its economy and middle class.

But Mukena described himself as one of a lucky few with enough money to travel and develop his business. The more unlucky ones included "a lot of educated people, with Western diplomas, but they can't find work".

"There's simply no way to live," said a civil servant in Kinshasa, explaining that his monthly salary was 50 000 new Zaires, the equivalent of just over R4.

A taxi driver said: "I want a change. I look for a change. But things are just getting worse."

Ailing leader must leave

A pop singer, Makonko-Mvumbi, said while visiting a friend at an afternoon show at a hotel, that he accepted Mobutu Sese Seko as head of the country but the time had come for the ailing leader to leave.

"In Zaire, the president is like the head of the family, that's our way. But when the chief is tired, he must step aside and let someone else lead.

"Mobutu's mistake is that he is not leaving that way," Makonko-Mvumbi said.

Mobutu, now one of Africa's perennial figures, seized power in 1965, after independence had been followed by civil war. The then army commander abolished political parties and finally established a single party, the Popular Movement for the Revolution (MPR).

His one-party rule was bolstered by prosperity from the rise in the price of copper, one of the many valuable minerals abundant in the Central African state.

In 1975, however, copper prices collapsed, leading to massive foreign debt in Zaire that had a major impact on both domestic and foreign policy. The situation also suffered from the government's corruption and a doctrinaire nationalistic effort to "Zaireanise" the economy.

In 1990, Mobutu yielded to international pressure and announced a transition to a multiparty system.

But this is precisely the system that has failed to create the accountability and debate that would lead to reforms, spawning instead a rebellion that people here seem to be favouring as much out of weariness as political conviction.–*Sapa-AFP.*

Kabila threatens to storm Kinshasa

M+G 16-22/5/97 (358)

Stefaans Brümmer

THE world was waiting this week for Laurent Kabila's rebels to carry out their threat to storm Kinshasa after the second round of talks aboard the South African navy ship *Outeniqua* failed to materialise. Kabila refused on Wednesday to board the *Outeniqua* at Pointe Noire, citing security concerns.

President Nelson Mandela, in a final attempt to revive the peace effort, invited him to South Africa.

But the rebel leader, knowing he had little to lose, said on rebel radio that he was continuing his "inexorable advance" to Kinshasa.

Kabila had promised during the previous round of *Outeniqua* talks on May 4 that he would halt his advance pending this week's talks.

But the rebels broke the pledge and fought their way to the outskirts of the capital this week, saying that Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko had used the lull to seek military assistance from friendly countries.

Should Kabila take Kinshasa by force, there would be little to stop him from forming a transitional government on his own terms.

This is what the South African mediation effort, closely shadowed by the United States, the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity, has been trying to prevent.

Getting Mobutu to give up without a fight would have forced Kabila to negotiate a more inclusive government, incorporating people like Etienne Tshisekedi, the most prominent non-violent opposition leader.

For Kabila, a negotiated settlement may be too high a price to pay, especially if Mobutu's troops, like elsewhere in the vast Central African country, decide a fight is not worth the effort.

But one wild card remains: the US has warned Kabila that he could run into resistance from foreign soldiers should his troops enter Kinshasa by force.

The threat is not an idle one. Thousands of American and European troops are massed in Brazzaville, across the Zaire River from Kinshasa.

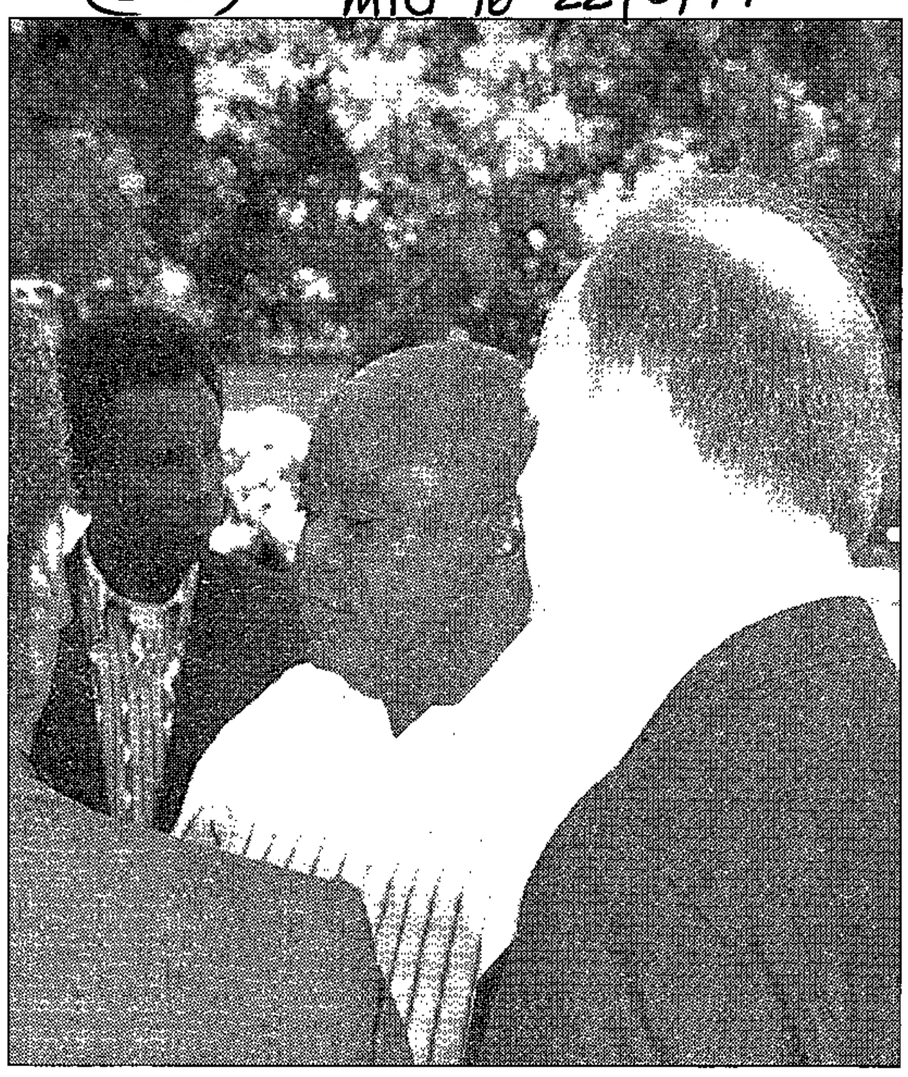
They are there officially to evacuate their citizens in the event of a fight, but, said a US diplomat: "If our troops are shot at, they will shoot back."

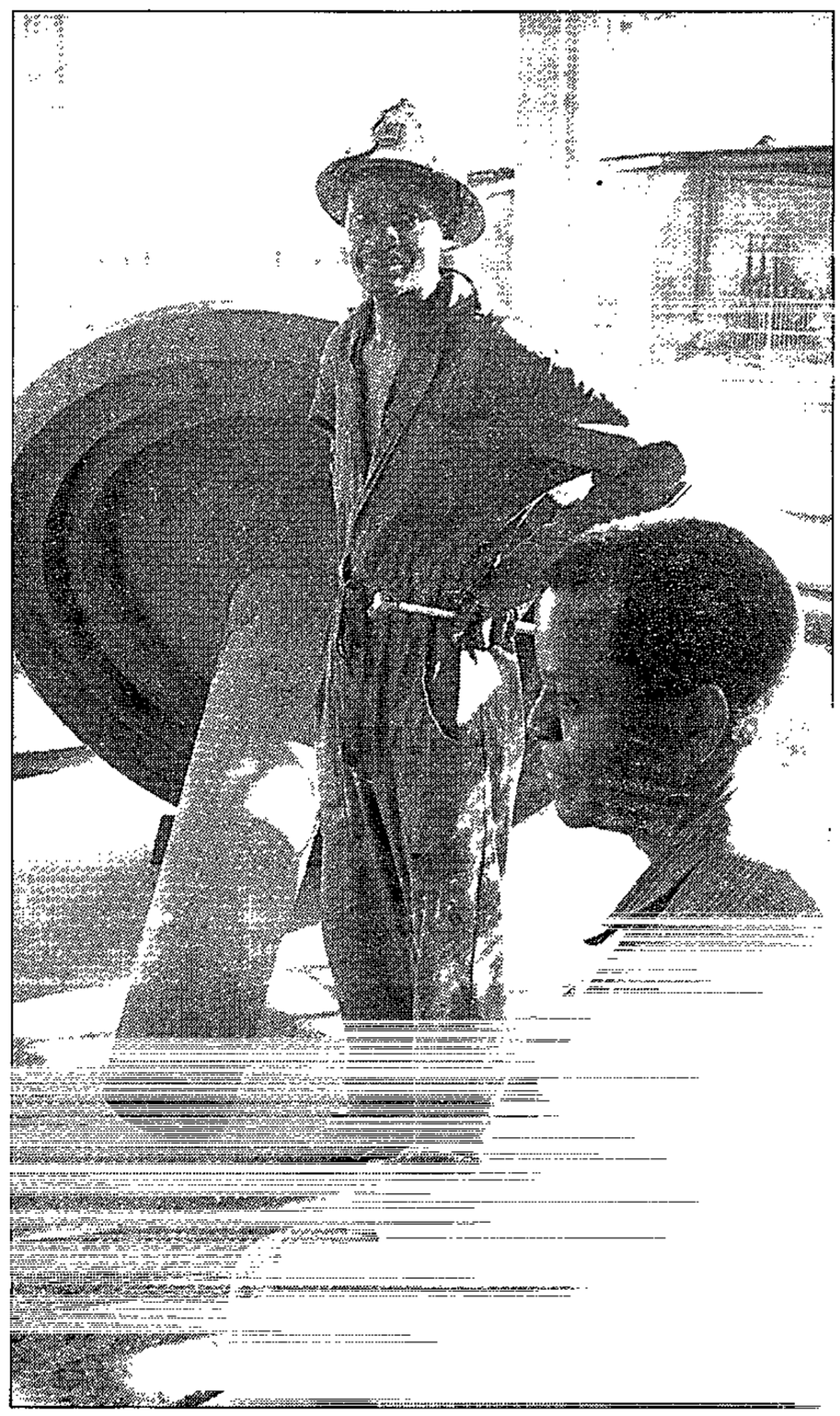
Zaire's rustle of money, PAGE 11
Kabila's $4-bn rip-off, PAGE 15
Payback time for Mobutu, PAGE 22

Guns of war fade to the rustle of money

(358) MtG 16-22/5/97

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila is making economic decisions that could impoverish Zaire further. Stefaans Brümmer reports from Lubumbashi





Heads you win: Investors willing to try their luck meet Kabila in Lubumbashi (above), while miners at the dilapidated Kipushi copper mine (right) wait for work PHOTOGRAPHS: STEFAANS BRÜMMER

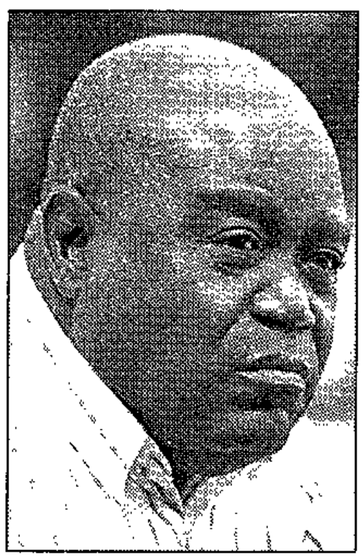
LAURENT KABILA'S alliance has shown itself adept at waging war, but signs are it has a lot to learn about managing the peace. Erratic decisions by the rebel leader's young "government" have eroded outsider confidence. His actions may strangle the goose that lays the golden eggs, in a manner reminiscent of Mobutu Sese Seko.

There are some hopeful developments. Last Saturday Kabila's mining minister, former language teacher Florent Kambale, was treated to his first underground mine visit by the Zairean state mining company Gecamines, and America Mineral Fields, a Canadian mining venture company. In tow they had a group of 20-plus North American and European analysts and investors, weighing the risks of betting on Kabila's liberated "Congo".

What Kambale saw at Kipushi, near the rebel provisional capital of Lubumbashi, was a copper and zinc mine that once counted among the richest in the world, but stopped production in 1993 because Mobutu and his cronies siphoned so much off Gecamines that reinvestment was not enough to keep the mine going. Zaire's total copper output plunged from 476 000 tons in 1986 to a low of about 31 000 tons in 1994.

The rebel government has moved fast to reverse the trend. On April 16, soon after the fall of Lubumbashi clinched the rebel conquest of mineral-rich Shaba province, Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Libération of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) signed an estimated $1-billion deal with America Mineral, which includes joint ventures with Gecamines for the rehabilitation of Kipushi and the reprocessing of fabulously rich copper and cobalt tailings at nearby Kolwezi.

South Africa's Anglo American, which also tendered for Kolwezi, has challenged the legitimacy of the rebel government's early tender award, but to many the deal was a sign the ADFL is earnest about rejuvenating a newly liberalised economy. Said a Toronto-based investor, one of the group jetted in by America Mineral, during a face-to-face meeting with Kabila earlier the same day: "We are excited about the possibilities ... We are looking forward to rebuilding this great country with you."



Peace: New phase for Kabila

But there are notes of discord, in particular, around the May 5 "nationalisation" of Sizarail, a South African, Belgian and Zairean joint venture that managed the Zaire rail system. Justifying his decision, Kabila told the investors: "We should move out all these people who were related to Mobutu and who were pillaging the country."

Whether Sizarail had "pillaged" the country is a moot point. When the company commenced a five-year contract to manage the rails in July 1995, workers were paid again — some for the first time in three years — and transport times were cut from as long as six months for a 1 000-km stretch to about four days. Sizarail made $1-million in profit last year. But, said Patrick Claes, the Lubumbashi-based manager of Sizarail: "All these profits were ploughed back into the company for reinvestment."

Claes, who was ordered out of his offices by ADFL troops on May 5, added: "They have closed something that worked with private capital. Before, it didn't work with public capital ... It's crazy."

When Sizarail — whose South African stake is owned by Spoornet — was given the boot, the rail system ground to a halt again. The result: Lubumbashi, the rebels' command centre, ran out of aircraft fuel, an essential for rebel troop movements, and other supplies.

But perhaps most disturbing to the investors looking for signs of confidence in the new economy was that Gecamines, heavily reliant on the rails, was again hamstrung by a political decision. Michel Haubert, financial director of Gecamines, said at the weekend: "The decision should be reconsidered. Private shareholders were not consulted."

He said Gecamines — which owed part of an old Zairean railways debt of $22-million to Spoornet — was concerned its minerals, if exported through South Africa, could be attached by Spoornet. The rail standstill meant Gecamines's stocks of 100 tons of copper and 200 tons of cobalt could not be exported by rail. To exploit favourable world prices, the cobalt would be airlifted to Brussels.

The "nationalisation" has also damaged relations between the ADFL and South Africa. Apart from the debt to Spoornet, which would have been covered by Sizarail profits, at least $20-million in South African rolling stock and another $20-million in other investments are at stake. A representative of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs has confirmed the threat to nationalise was discussed with Kabila's delegation during the first round of negotiations aboard the *SS Outeniqua* on May 4, a day before it was carried out regardless.

Those sympathetic to Kabila point out that there are bound to be initial mistakes, and say the Sizarail issue may be resolved soon. Said Joe Martin, acting chief executive of America Mineral: "It was a mistake of a young government." Martin, whose company has provided Kabila with the use of a private jet, said his information was the ADFL was keen to renegotiate the Sizarail deal, but without losing face.

Yet there are more signs the ADFL, for now at least, is more interested in early military victory than a stable economy. Mawampanga Mwana, Kabila's finance minister, confirmed to the *Wall Street Journal* this week that Gecamines had been ordered last week to inject $2,5-million into the local economy at the rebel-ordered exchange rate of 140 000 Zaires to the dollar, less than a third of the old dollar value. Another $5-million was to be injected at the unfavourable rate by cash-strapped Gecamines this week.

He also said the better part of a $50-million payment by Canada's Tenke Mining Corporation to Gecamines in another joint venture would go to the war effort. Asked Mawampanga: "What good is investing in the mines if we don't win the war?"

There is no evidence the rebels have, like Mobutu, used the Gecamines piggy-bank for personal enrichment, but it has threatened the goose that lays the golden eggs. At independence in 1960, the parastatal contributed as much as 70% of state revenue and 80% of export earnings.

South African policy towards Kabila appeared this week to take into account questions about Kabila's fitness to rule. The thrust of the South African effort, closely mirrored by US initiatives, has been to get Mobutu to relinquish power freely — thereby averting a bloody battle for Kinshasa. The intended spin-off, though, was that Kabila would be tied into a negotiated and broad-based transitional authority, of which his ADFL would be but one constituent — and not able to call all the shots.

But the ADFL has made it clear it sees Kabila as head of any transitional authority, and that it may not allow free political activity until elections are held in about a year.

Said a South African insider this week: "A pure replacement of Mobutu by Kabila is not a solution."

Standard



Grahamstown

PJs on the hill

3-13 July 19

Sparks to light fire under TV news

Ferial Haffajee

VETERAN journalist and SABC board member Allister Sparks is to be hired to revamp the corporation's television news and current affairs programming. But Sparks is unlikely to be welcomed by journalists brought in to do just that a few years ago.

Last week, the current editor-in-chief of the television news division, Joe Thloloe, is said to have threatened to resign when he got wind of the plan, but was persuaded not to do so by the SABC's chief executive, Zwelakhe Sisulu.

This week, Thloloe put out a message on the SABC's internal mail system refuting rumours of his pending departure, but it has been confirmed that Sparks will still be brought in to help run news for the next year.

This week, too, television news's senior management team sent a memo to Sisulu confirming their support of Thloloe and objecting to a new caretaker team being brought in. Some apparently even threatened to resign.

But it is understood that Sisulu will press ahead. There has been widespread dissatisfaction with lack of change at television news and many influential staffers feel the old guard is still firmly in control in this crucial division.

And the current affairs section responsible for programmes like *Focus*, the *Truth Commission Special Report* and *Two Way* has been plagued by infighting and allegations of racial discrimination.

"There is a feeling that a major shake-up is needed," said a senior staff member. Staff point to the effective control of television news bulletins by those from the old school like Dave Viljoen (responsible for the news that SABC chooses to cover), Izak Minnaar (head of regions) and Rob Stevenson (head of television production who often deputises for Thloloe).

"There is a preponderance of old mindsets at TV news," said another insider.

But some wonder whether Sparks alone will manage the changes which need to be made. In addition, as he is an SABC board member, his appointment could create a conflict of interest. It is thought that Sparks will come in and choose a team who will help make the changes which top management feels is necessary.

"We're talking to a number of people who can assist in getting our news to the quality we require," said SABC spokesman Enoch Sithole this week. He confirmed that Sparks was among those people.

Sparks himself was not available for comment.

No action on rape courts angers Kahn

Marion Edmunds

"I WANT my rape courts," bellowed the exasperated attorney general of the Western Cape, Frank Kahn, down the phone line this week. "We've been waiting for four years and nothing has been done."

Earlier this week, Kahn hit out at the Department of Justice in his annual report tabled in Parliament for its failure to act, particularly in setting up special courts for sexual offenders.

He has been crusading for special courts for rape victims since 1994, and despite having set up a successful pilot court in Wynberg and carried out in-depth research and consultation on the relevant issues, his requests for more rape courts in the Western Cape appear to have been ignored.

Kahn said in his report: "It is obvious that there is a critical need for more special courts. Some preliminary work with regard to arranging suitable accommodation has already been done in Mitchells Plain, Paarl, Parow and Athlone.

"My pleas have been ignored for so long that I have become cynical about the department's commitment in this regard. Promises only appear to surface when it becomes expedient to do so."

The Western Cape is the rape capital of the country: it has 6 000 rapes a year, 180 of which were dealt with last year by the Wynberg court, which provides special facilities for rape victims whose trauma is usually ignored or compounded by the judicial system.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Justice said special rape courts were in the pipeline but the department was obliged to await further funding before setting them up.

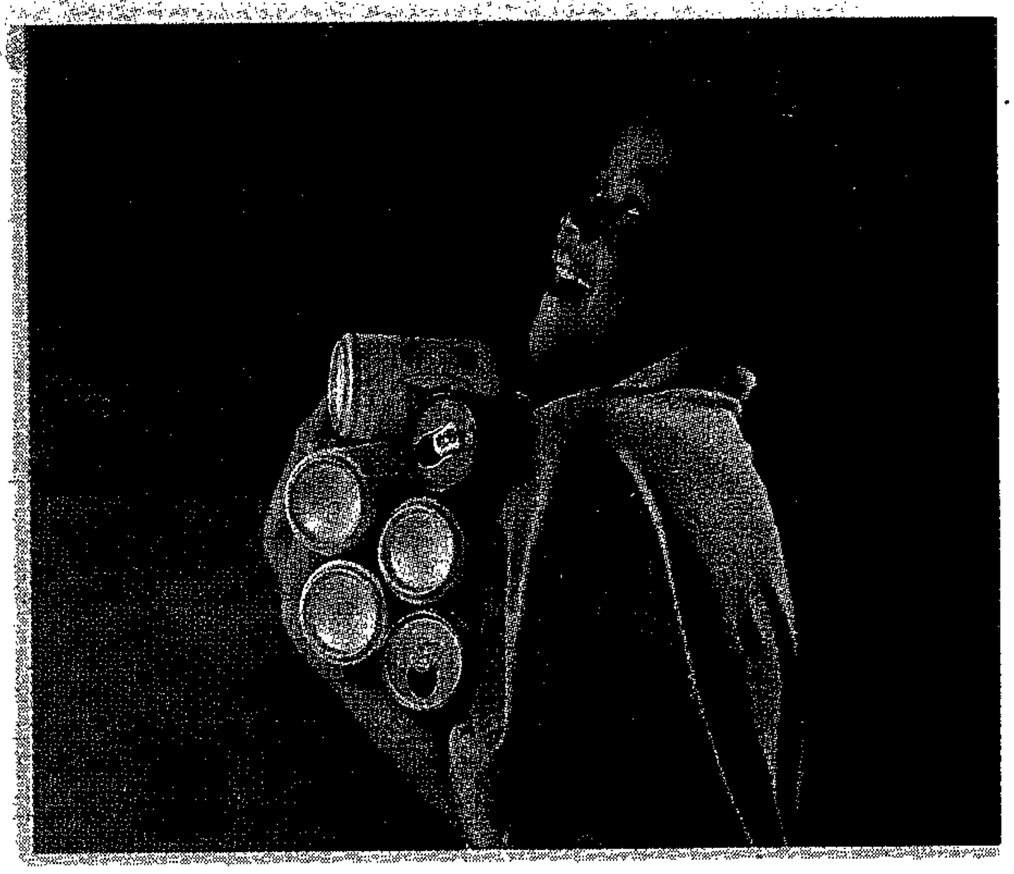
He could not say whether the department had budgeted for special rape courts or whether donations were expected from sources beyond government.

Kahn's report is the most hard-hitting of the reports tabled by the provincial attorneys general this week, directly criticising the state's failure to streamline and improve the judicial system. In his conclusion, he said: "Human rights without effective law enforcement is as bad as law and order without human rights ...

"Whereas strategic planning is essential for change, the government should guard against ignoring the basic needs and tools of a good criminal justice system in the pursuit of a new vision. Until affordability makes greater changes possible, government should perhaps heed the American saying: 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.'"

Kahn was the only attorney general to call for special rape courts. He was also the only one to suggest that "gay-bashing cases" should be given more prominence in a bid to clamp down on this sort of assault.

People think our kids will inherit a mess. But we know 850 000 who are clearing it up.



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Kabila meets Mandela at Tuynhuys

BD 16/6/97 (358)

Stephen Laufer

CAPE TOWN — Zairean rebel alliance leader Laurent Kabila met President Nelson Mandela at Tuynhuys last night as SA made further attempts to head off a bloody climax to the crisis in the central African country.

The meeting followed unsuccessful attempts to coax Kabila aboard the SAS Outeniqua on Wednesday for face-to-face talks with Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko which Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said could be the last chance for a peaceful solution.

Mandela was expected to meet Kabila before a plenary session including Mbeki and United Nations and Organsation for African Unity special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun. Sources said he would try to hammer out the terms of an agreement whereby Kabila would accept certain terms for Mobutu's departure from office.

Sources confirmed the existence of a draft agreement which it was hoped would be signed by Kabila and Mobutu calling for a transitional authority to take control of government and the military until democratic elections. The body would include Kabila's alliance and other political forces.

Mobutu would stand down and relinquish all authority within 24 hours of the signing of the document, and hostilities would be terminated. State power would be transferred to the leader of the majority party in the transitonal authority — in fact Kabila as leader of the rebel alliance. Elections would follow "a reasonable period".

In return for a readiness to step down, Mobutu was understood to be asking for assurances for himself, his wife and family. These include the right to remain in Zaire with the status and privileges of a former head of state.

The major sticking point for Kabila is understood to be the transitional arrangements, particularly the manner in which power is to be ceded by Mobutu. Mediators are understood to be proposing that Mobutu hand power to a still-to-be-elected speaker of parliament, who would then pass it to a transitional authority headed by Kabila or one of his associates.

The advantage to Mobutu of this arrangement is that he would not be forced to acknowledge the leader of an armed insurrection as his immediate successor. But Kabila is understood to want a direct handover as visible proof that he has defeated Mobutu.

Kabila is understood not to have accepted proposals on the make-up of the transitional authority yet. Mediators believe the body should be as broadly based as possible, including members of the so-called nonmilitary opposition who have participated in parliaments sanctioned by Mobutu.

MOBUTU SURRENDERS

A dictator's demise

FP/21F (358)
ARG 17/5/97

ROSS HERBERT
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

Kinshasa – President Mobutu Sese Seko has relinquished power leaving his impoverished capital and beleaguered ministers to deal with the rebel forces who are poised to enter the capital.

Without fanfare, Mr Mobutu flew out of Kinshasa yesterday to his palace at Gbadolite, in northern Zaire, from where diplomatic sources expect he will go into exile.

There is widespread speculation he will head for Morocco, a long-time ally that sent troops to help the dictator suppress a 1977 secessionist war in south-eastern Zaire.

"The president ... has ceased all intervention in the affairs of the state," Information Minister Kin-Kiey Mulumba announced, after a cabinet meeting on the transition of power.

Mr Mobutu's decision came after 32 years of dictatorial rule that fostered epic corruption and economic collapse.

His decision to step down came only after he was visited by his prime minister, defence minister and the head of his presidential guard late on Thursday. The trio told him they could no longer guarantee his personal safety or defend the capital from rebel forces, now about 50km away.

While Mr Mobutu has surrendered power, who now actually holds it remains unclear.

Mr Kin-Kiey said the government was in the hands of the military prime minister Likulia Bolongo and the archbishop of Kisangani, Laurent Monsengwo.

Mr Kin-Kiey said Mr Mobutu had transferred his powers to the government, but retained the title of president.

Mr Monsengwo, who was elected speaker of parliament a week ago, will apparently continue to negotiate with rebel leader Laurent Desiré Kabila.

Mr Monsengwo is the designated successor as president. Yesterday, however, he said he was still consulting with advisors.

"I have not yet made the final decision; I have set some conditions and I am waiting for them to be fulfilled," said Mr Monsengwo.

He would not spell out his reservations, but last week said he wanted unspecified international guarantees before accepting the speaker's job.

Not only has Mr Kabila firmly rejected Mr Monsengwo as head of any transitional government, but he has also rejected Etienne Tshisekedi, the leader of Mr Mobutu's political opposition.

Mr Kabila has long insisted that the only point he would negotiate was Mr Mobutu's surrender of power. The question Kinshasa is pondering is whether Mr Kabila will still insist on conquering the capital militarily.

As news of Mr Mobutu's departure spread, Kinshasa residents began preparing flags to welcome Mr Kabila.

Mr Mobutu's presidential guard moved several ageing tanks, which had been brought out to the airport, back to guard headquarters at Camp Tshatshi.

United States President Bill Clinton, commenting on the news of Mr Mobutu's departure, commended President Nelson Mandela.

"We want to see a transition to a genuine democracy; President Mandela has done a superb job and I want the world to get behind the leadership (he) has shown," Mr Clinton said yesterday.

For Mr Mobutu, departure has come painfully and in contrast to repeated vows that he would never cede power to Mr Kabila. In his three decades on the political stage, Mr Mobutu has increasingly taken on the role of king rather than politician.



I quit: Zaire's fallen president Mobutu

At one point in the South African mediated negotiations, Mr Mobutu gathered reporters to his residence to insist that he would only entertain a face-to-face meeting with Mr Kabila if he were ask politely.

Since the civil war broke out in eastern Zaire seven months ago, Mr Mobutu and his government have consistently refused to acknowledge Mr Kabila's movement was anything other than a foreign invasion.

Protected by three armies and five secret police forces, Mr Mobutu and his allies never believed a small band of rebels could trounce Zairian government troops.

Starved and weakened by the same epic corruption that has destroyed Zaire's economy and tarnished the country's reputation, Mr Mobutu's army fled quickly in the face of Mr Kabila's well-disciplined troops.

The Zairian public, which expressed support for Mr Mobutu, turned harshly against him in recent months as the army raped and looted its way west.

Mobutu cedes power, heads for jungle but retains title of president

(358)

Star 17/5/97

By DOUGLAS HAMILTON

Kinshasa – Zaire's ailing president, Mobutu Sese Seko, gave up power yesterday, ending more than three decades of highly personalised rule over Africa's third largest nation.

But a government statement said the veteran leader, fighting cancer and seven months of civil war, would retain the title of president.

Laurent Kabila's rebels, who control three-quarters of the shattered, corruption-plagued nation, had yet to comment.

Government spokesman Kin-Kiey Mulumba announced the news after Mobutu left for his northern jungle palace at Gbadolite, triggering intense speculation that he was going into exile.

"The president ... has ceased all intervention in the affairs of the state," Kin-Kiey told a news conference.

Speaking after a cabinet meeting, he said Mobutu's emergency-rule prime minister, General Likulia Bolongo, was in charge.

Kisangani Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo, a key player early in Zaire's democratic transition, would negotiate with Kabila's rebels on a new transitional government and elections.

Zaire's transitional constitution, he said, permitted Mobutu to step aside without actually resigning as president.

Sources in South Africa, whose President Nelson Mandela has been trying to broker a peaceful handover of power in Zaire, expressed initial surprise at Mobutu's handover of power.

Government sources said Mobutu had not discussed the move with Mandela, and a source close to the South African negotiating team said the announcement "does not fit any of the proposals on the table".

Zaire state television said Mobutu had gone to his stronghold home region of Gbadolite on doctors' orders to take a few days' rest.

Political and diplomatic sources said earlier that army chiefs had told him they could not defend the capital against the rebels and that he should leave for his own safety.

A Western diplomat in Morocco said Mobutu was expected there in the next 48 hours. "It seems that he has chosen Morocco as a place for exile," the diplomat said.

"I am hearing that Morocco is a likely first stop, with France as a final destination," one Western diplomat in Paris said.

Prior to the statement on the handover of power, one source close to Mandela's negotiating team said reports that Mobutu was heading for France were more in line with expectations. "We don't have any clarity on whether he is leaving for good. He has not said that to us."

Mandela's plan for a peaceful constitutional transition depended on Mobutu resigning formally, he added.

A Mobutu relative said members of his entourage were told on Thursday to pack bags and be ready to leave Kinshasa within hours.

Kabila left for rebel headquarters in the southern city of Lubumbashi after talks on Thursday in South Africa with Mandela.

Kabila agreed to a request from Mandela to give Mobutu until Monday to study proposals for a peaceful handover of power. Asked earlier if he would halt the rebel advance on Kinshasa, Kabila replied: "I have nothing to say about it."

Mobutu (66), who is reputed to have amassed a huge personal fortune over the years, seized power in 1965. Western powers supported him as a Cold War bastion against Soviet communism.

Kabila (56) and his rebels took up arms in October in a dispute over Zairean nationality for ethnic Tutsis.

Kinshasa, a teeming city of 5 million people, spent its third night under curfew. Mandela has been trying to avert a battle for Kinshasa but many residents were more afraid of a looting rampage by soldiers of Mobutu's notoriously ill-disciplined army.

As reports of Mobutu's departure spread through the streets, opponents expressed cautious satisfaction. "We hope there has been an agreement to avoid bloodshed," said Blaise Bomba, a member of the unofficial opposition "street parliament". – Reuters

Kinshasa falls

Shouts of joy resound among Zaireans in SA and Kinshasa

CP 18/5/97 (358)

By CP REPORTERS and Sapa/DPA/AFP

ZAIREAN rebel leader Laurent Kabila declared himself head of state of Zaire yesterday and said the country would henceforth be called the Democratic Republic of Congo.

And in Johannesburg's flatlands of Hillbrow, Yeoville and Berea, knots of Zaireans burst into song and dance on learning about the end of Mobutu Sese Seko's three decades of tyranny.

As reports of looting and pillaging by the defeated army began to filter through, a Belgian radio report said Mobutu's son, Captain Mobutu Kongolu, had personally killed Mahele Lieko Bokungu, the army's chief of staff and minister of defence.

Earlier reports had said he was killed by disgruntled pro-Mobutu troops dismayed by his plans to surrender the capital peacefully.

According to the radio report, an army officer said Kongolu – who commanded a section of the presidential guard made up of Mobutu loyalists – personally killed Mahele.

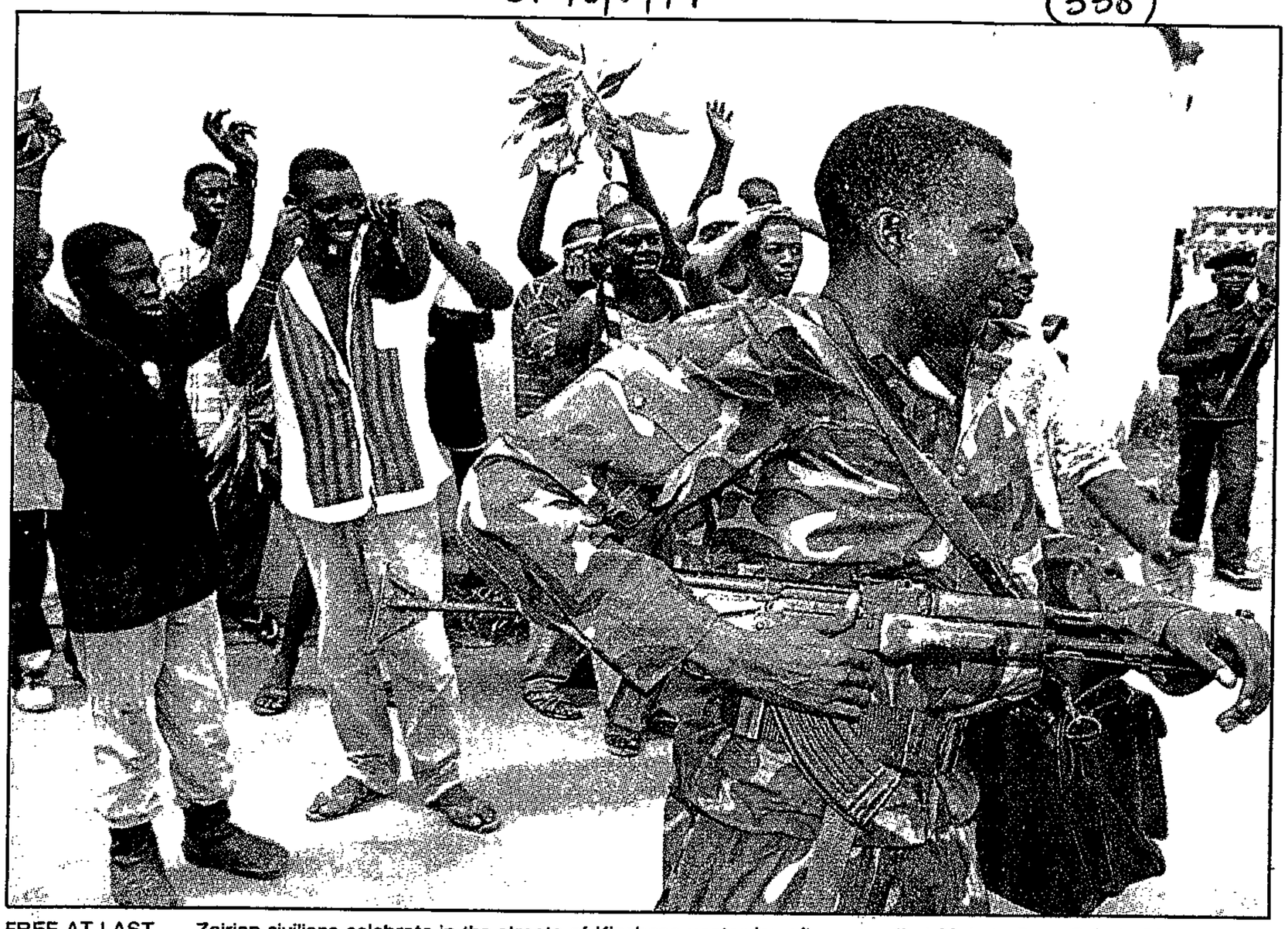
Presidential guards were also reported to be searching for Mahele's children at the Inter-Continental hotel where most of Mobutu's ministers were holed up.

"Down with Mobutu! Down!" many patrons at La Rumba dance chanted.

"We are very excited about the changes in the country. I spent the whole day watching the news on the French channel," said Jean-Marie Muamba.

Jean Claude Kalambi said the overthrow of Mobutu was a victory for all of Africa. He said Zaireans' major task was now to rebuild a country which had the potential of being the economic giant of the continent.

Zibo Mokonzi, a 28-year-old engineer who has been in South Africa for seven years, said he hoped he could help clean the mess left by Mobutu.



FREE AT LAST . . . Zairian civilians celebrate in the streets of Kinshasa yesterday after news that Mobutu Sese Seko's 32-year-long reign has ended at last as Civil Guard soldiers who support the rebel alliance patrol the downtown area. Rebel leader Laurent Kabila has declared himself head of the new Democratic Republic of Congo. ■ Pic: AP

☐ Rebel troops marched almost unopposed into the heart of the Zairean capital yesterday, after the prime minister ordered armed forces back to barracks and then left for neighbouring Congo.

A column of 200 rebel soldiers marched into the centre of Kinshasa, while others took over the parliament building and other centres, a day after ousted president Mobutu Sese Seko, fled his former base and was believed to have headed for exile abroad.

Earlier residents cheered wildly and held out palm leaves and white flags in a gesture of peace for the rebels as they walked ahead of armoured vehicles and heavily armed jeeps through outlying districts of the city.

A group of journalists also saw scores of rebel soldiers guarding the entrances to the seat of Zaire's transitional parliament in the city centre and the main radio and television station.

☐ Zairean national radio, the Voice of Zaire, controlled by rebels since midday, denounced looters operating in several areas of the capital yesterday.

The radio's presenter condemned "armed elements giving themselves over whole-heartedly to looting from peaceful citizens".

Meanwhile, the new rebel regime late yesterday ordered all Zairean army troops to hand their weapons in to the rebel forces by this morning, in a message broadcast over national radio.

☐ The US government yesterday gave guarded approval to rebel leader Laurent Kabila's takeover of Zaire, welcoming the "minimal disorder and unrest" it incurred.

General Likulia Bolongo, the last prime minister of Zaire under Mobutu, arrived in the Congolese capital of Brazzaville Saturday, a military source said.

Likulia, who was evacuated across with four other Zaireans by French soldiers, crossed the river in military speed boats from Kinshasa and then they boarded a military helicopter in Brazzaville which took them to an unknown destination, the source said.

In his stronghold at Lubumbashi, southern Zaire, Kabila earlier assumed power as head of state and ordered soldiers loyal to Mobutu to surrender.

Kabila said he was assuming power and would form a government of national salvation within 72 hours and call a constituent assembly within 60 days.

Foreign minister of Belgium, the former colonial power, called for elections to be held in a "reasonable delay," warning against over-hasty polls.

☐ President Nelson Mandela's spokesman Parks Mankahlana told AFP the government would continue the mediation efforts to establish transitional authorities, despite Kabila's assumption of power.

According to Parks, who said the talks were continuing at the rebel leader's request, a South African delegation could travel to Zaire today at the earliest.

Mobutu fled Kinshasa early on Friday in the face of a rebel ultimatum to quit or be removed by force.

Sources close to him said that he had flown to Gbadolite, near the border of the Central African Republic. Diplomats have suggested, however, that he may be about to go into exile in Morocco.

☐ The Swiss government froze assets of Mobutu's family administered from Switzerland with immediate effect, the foreign and finance ministries said in a joint statement yesterday.

Zairean rebels plan to launch a worldwide operation to hunt down the assets that Mobutu and his families and friends are said to have amassed abroad, claiming that they were the fruits of massive-scale embezzlement.

Run foryo



CRAIG DOONAN

Sunday Times man-on-the-spot reports on the fall of Kinshasa

Sharing the lift with me was a member of the once-elite Presidential Guard, shaking with fear from head to foot



LET'S GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE! Soldiers of Mobutu's Presidential Guard fle

SHORTLY before noon yesterday, as I rode down 18 floors in the hotel lift, I realised the battle for Kinshasa had already been won.

Sharing the ride with me was a member of the once-elite Presidential Guard, the troops who had sworn to defend ousted President Mobutu Sese Seko to the end. His one arm bandaged, the man was dressed in nondescript civilian clothes, and he was shaking with fear from head to foot.

I knew then that rebel leader Laurent Kabila, 56, would meet little or no resistance as his troops, already on the outskirts of Zaire's capital, entered the city.

The frightened guard was one of a large contingent which had arrived at the hotel just 30 minutes earlier, wearing full camouflage uniform, flak jackets and berets and wielding their AK-47 rifles.

Led by Mobutu's son, Kongolu, they had stormed into the hotel, sealed off all the exits and swept through rooms on the 21 floors as a tank and an armoured car took up a menacing position at the main entrance.

Not long afterwards, a fleet of cars pulled up, disgorging women and children carrying whatever luggage they could manage. Within minutes, the civilians — including members of Mobutu's large, extended family — had been checked into hotel rooms, from which the men soon emerged in civilian clothes and carrying small bags.

They left the hotel in a flurry, firing wildly from the windows of their vehicles as they sped to the Congo River some 500m away, boarded a flotilla of small boats, and fled to the safety of Brazzaville in Congo, abandoning their loved ones to whatever fate awaited them. On arrival, Mobutu's son was met by an old friend, the son of former Congolese prime minister Jean-Jacques Yhombi Opango, who whisked him off to an undisclosed destination.

Less than 12 hours earlier, Kongolu Mobutu had reportedly assassinated the army chief of staff, General Mahele Lieko Bokungu, when the general indicated he would not order troops to take up arms against Kabila's rebels.

From about 7.30am yesterday, we heard sporadic gunfire from the centre of Kinshasa, and at one point a volley of artillery fire was heard from the direction of the river.

The tension was palpable as Kinshasa waited to see if there was going to be a fight for the capital. On a Saturday morning the streets usually teem with bustling shoppers and hawkers, but yesterday the markets were deserted, the usually long string of taxis nowhere to be found and, here and there, people were loading their possessions on their heads as though preparing to take flight.

It seemed that everyone, including the foreigners still in the city, was cautiously waiting behind closed doors. Diplomatic staff had taken refuge in the embassies, and contingency plans for their evacuation were in place. Near the main market, two young men who ventured out to loot were shot dead by soldiers. They lay sprawled on the pavement, blood congealed around them.

By mid-afternoon, the Presidential Guard had fled to Brazzaville, as had the prime minister, General Likulia Bolongo, after ordering members of the armed forces to return to their barracks — and Kinshasa was poised to welcome the rebels with open arms.

A UN observer was injured when a soldier took a pot-shot at his car.

At the hotel, room service had been halted at 9am and the popular al fresco restaurant closed to diners. By 3pm, I was met by the incongruous sight of guests sunbathing at the pool as I returned after a brief foray into the city with a group of UN observers.

We found groups of youths dancing in the streets, deserted for much of the morning, and joyfully shouting: "*Liberté! Liberté!*" Elsewhere, excited residents waved palm fronds and donned white headbands to show support for Kabila.

Soldiers who were not in full retreat hastily dressed in civilian clothes, or pushed their feet into Wellington boots to show their solidarity with the rebel forces, who have fought their campaign in this footwear.

An hour later, a large group of rebel troops were guarding the seat of the country's transitional parliament, the Palais du Peuple, and the main radio and television station, Voix du Zaire. The soldiers, who were heavily armed, looked exhausted and said they were "too tired and have too much work" to talk.

Journalists said that nearby, at the entrance to the main city stadium, they saw the bodies of three government soldiers lying beside a bullet-riddled car.

A man dressed in civilian clothes was also reportedly killed.

All around the radio station, hundreds of people celebrated the arrival of the rebels, shouting: "We are Free!" and "Kabila is coming". Crudely drawn banners welcoming the rebels were strung from trees and buildings, but Kinshasa's main boulevard remained deserted.

Joseph Kabila, the son Laurent Kabila, led the first group of rebel soldiers into the city yesterday afternoon. He claimed there were 1 500 rebels massed in a nearby sports stadium.

Last night groups of rebels began moving through the city centre, some walking in columns of up to 30, others jogging in camouflage uniforms and urging residents to stay off the streets.

They were cheered as they moved along inner-city streets.

Gunfire continued to ring out sporadically from parts of the city.

The curfew imposed this week remained in force. A UN source said the bulk of the rebel force was expected in the city this morning.

Shortly after noon yesterday, Kabila declared himself the new head of state, renaming Zaire the Democratic Republic of the Congo and ordered any troops still loyal to Mobutu to surrender as his forces entered the city.

Mobutu left the capital on Friday, ending three decades of despotic rule. He went to Gbadolite, north of Kinshasa, before leaving for Morocco, where he was expected to arrive last night.

● See Page 16

(358) ST 18/6/97

Switzerland launches attack on Mobutu's fortune

ASSETS owned in Switzerland by the family of ousted Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko had been frozen with immediate effect, officials in Bern said yesterday.

People holding or administering his funds should contact the finance ministry, the foreign and finance ministries said in a joint statement.

On Friday, Swiss authorities said they were impounding a $5,6-million (about R25,2-million) villa in Switzerland that was owned by Mobutu.

The Swiss federal justice and police and foreign affairs departments said the order to impound the villa, in Savigny near Lausanne, followed a request from the public prosecutor in the rebel power base of Lubumbashi in southern Zaire.

Meanwhile, France, which for decades helped prop up Mobutu's regime, remained silent yesterday on the rapidly unfolding developments in Zaire.

A foreign ministry spokesman would say only that the security of French and other foreigners in Zaire "isn't threatened at the moment", and that no decision had been taken on the evacuation of its citizens.

Mobutu has a villa on the French Riviera, but it was not clear if he would be going to France to live in exile. Diplomats in Rabat, Morocco, where Mobutu also has a lavish home, have said they expect him to arrive there soon. Aides said he was now in his hometown, Gbadolite, in the north.

Asked on Friday whether France would receive Mobutu, French foreign ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt would say only: "It is speculation since we don't know the intentions of Mr Mobutu."

A military source said that French soldiers had helped to evacuate to Brazzaville General Likulia Bolongo, the last prime minister of Zaire under Mobutu.

According to the source, who cited members of Likulia's family, the soldiers evacuated the official with four other Zairians.

They crossed the river in military speedboats from Kinshasa and then boarded a military helicopter, which took them to an unknown destination.

In Brazzaville, a French officer on standby confirmed that four speedboats had crossed to Kinshasa early yesterday to take special forces there to guard the French embassy in the city.

The boats later returned to Brazzaville, but the officer refused to comment on the claim that Likulia had been on board one of them as they returned to Congo.

Before leaving Zaire, Likulia had ordered armed forces back to barracks and urged rebel soldiers to stop fighting, in an address read out by a radio presenter after rebels had marched into the capital.

The body of General Mahele Liyoko, the Zairian defence minister who was assassinated overnight by troops of the special presidential unit, was also transported to Brazzaville yesterday. It was immediately taken to a mortuary.

In Washington, the US administration gave guarded approval to rebel leader Laurent Kabila's takeover of Zaire, welcoming the "minimal disorder and unrest" that it had incurred.

"We urge all parties to refrain from further violence during this final stage in the change of government," said state department spokesman Nicholas Burn.

Other countries, including the US and France, said that Kabila would first have to prove his credentials as a democratic leader before he could be recognised.

Tanzania was the first country to announce yesterday its willingness to recognise Kabila's Zairian government.

Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa told reporters in Dar es Salaam that Kabila was the new head of state and that "we will get along with him". — *Sapa-AP-AFP-DPA*

ST 18/5/97

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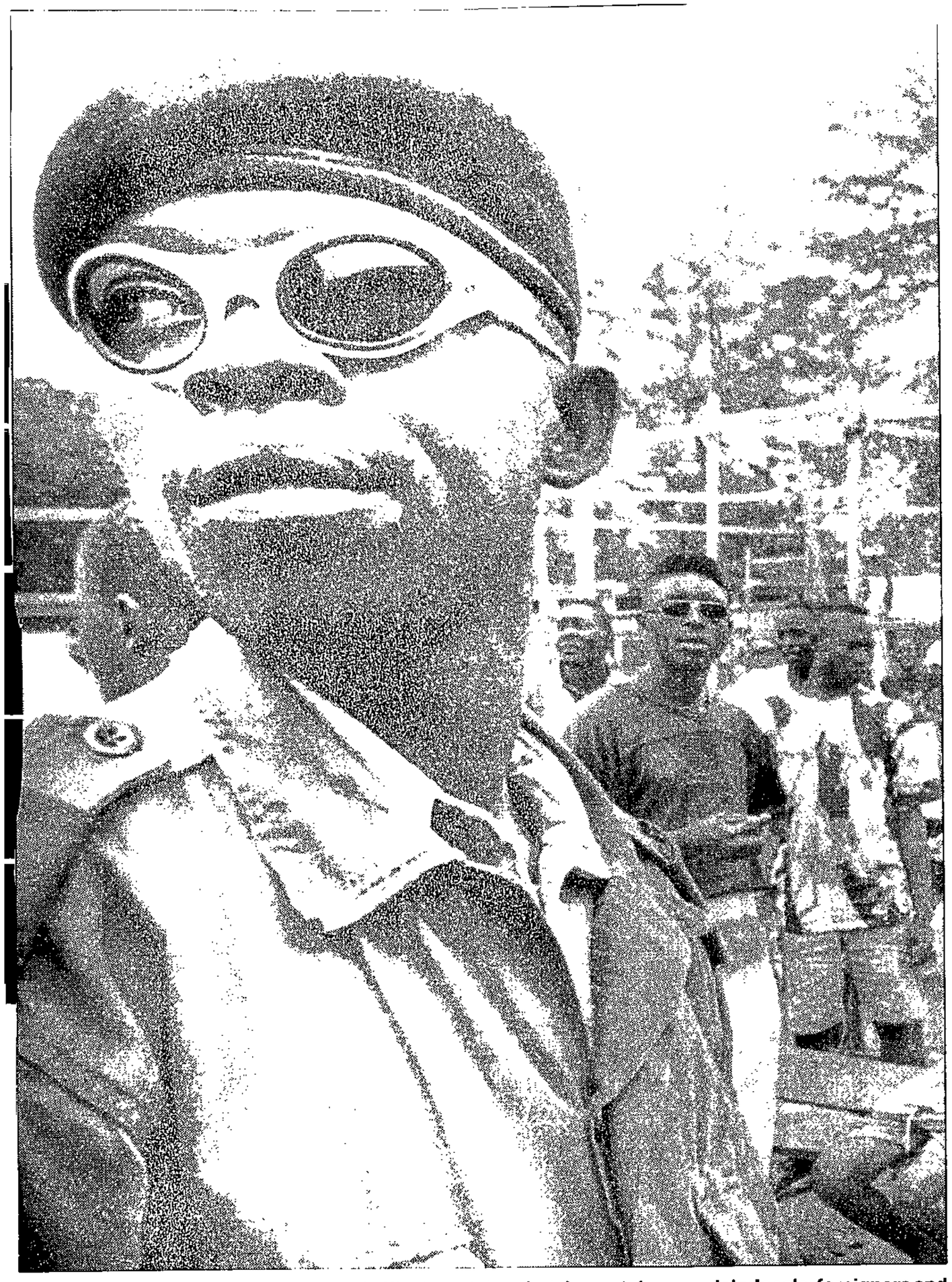


DAYLIGHT ROBBERY: Zairian soldiers in Kinshasa take what they can from panicky locals, foreigners and ourn[illegible] the city's market Picture: AP

Rumour gains currency as rebels take Kinshasa

(358)

Mobutu makes his final appearance on an over-inflated banknote

ST 18/5/97

CRAIG DOONAN: Kinshasa

EVEN in the scariest of times Zairians haven't lost their sense of humour: they are calling their new one-million zaire banknote the "Outeniqua".

A few years ago they named the note the "prostate", a mocking reference to President Mobutu Sese Seko's cancerous gland. The orange-coloured "prostate" is not accepted in Kinshasa in protest against rocketing inflation and frequently released new banknotes — but the Outeniqua is.

The blue Outeniqua, which is worth about 50 US cents (about R2,20), is not, in fact, a derogatory reference to the South African ship on which the abortive peace talks were held, but a name adopted because of the frequent references to the vessel in the media.

This is just one of many oddities that make up life in the steamy equatorial capital, which was once a booming metropolis but is today devastated and desperately poor.

Despite the squalor in which its population of five million live, Kinshasa is reputed to be the world's second most expensive city.

It is also a centre of rumours, which reached new heights this week as rebel leader Laurent Kabila's forces closed in.

"They're approaching the airport. We've heard Zairian soldiers have started looting and fleeing," exclaimed one foreigner holed up in a city centre hotel.

This time, like the daily reports of rebels on Kinshasa's doorstep, it proved to be untrue.

Among the more bizarre rumours were claims that Mobutu had sent for his squadron of fighter jets, hidden in his home town of Gbadolite in the north of the country, to bomb the rebel advance, and that he planned to release radioactive material should the rebels arrive in the city.

Journalists have had to tread carefully to find the truth, which lies somewhere between rebel radio's broadcasts of victorious forays into Kinshasa and the Zairian army's claims to have driven their foes more than 200km from the capital.

The only certain thing this week was that Kinshasa had become a dangerous place, a powder keg on the verge of explosion.

Zairian soldiers, notoriously undisciplined and a law unto themselves, did what they do best in these times — vented their frustration on locals and foreigners by robbing them.

Even embassy staff were not spared. One official was robbed by a group of soldiers outside army barracks.

Journalists became daily targets, some getting off lightly by parting with all the money on them, others losing bags and equipment before being threatened with death and sometimes being beaten up.

Journalists flying into Kinshasa's chaotic airport were easy prey. After pushing through throngs of desperate locals begging for money, and dodging soldiers demanding cash, they were lectured by immigration officials in a dingy back room on objective reporting. They then had to hand over anything from $50 to $500 (up to R2 200) to be allowed to go.

Getting to the city was as hazardous, with pot-holed roads and scant regard for traffic regulations adding to the growing panic.

Foreigners are generally safe in the city's two up-market hotels where, unlike in the ghettos, there is running water, electricity and food.

But on the streets, life has become dangerous.

The tension that preceded the fall of the country's second-largest city, Lubumbashi, a few weeks ago and Kisangani before that, enveloped Kinshasa this week.

Nervous residents whispered to reporters: "We hear Kabila is coming today," while those on the outskirts of the city packed their belongings and fled to the centre.

The few remaining authorities desperately tried to maintain a semblance of control in Kinshasa.

A curfew was imposed, strangling the city's vibrant night life and causing great suffering to Kinshasa's hundreds of prostitutes.

In the sprawling shantytown, residents mostly heeded the curfew, weary of years of harassment and robbery at the hands of the army.

"We don't care about the curfew but we'll stay indoors to escape the soldiers," said Ben Maas, a civil servant.

Like most of the rest of the civil service, he hadn't been paid for more than six months.

This week, however, some were paid in bundles of "Outeniquas".

"We'll use these notes but they must be the last," said Maas who, like many other locals, has piles of "prostates" that will never be used stashed away in his house.

"I am going to buy supplies with these Outeniquas in case of war when Kabila comes," he said. "After the rebels come, Mobutu's face on this money must be the last we see of him."

CAPE TIMES
TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 1997 ★

'GIVE HOLIDAY OFFER TO VICTIMS'

Severance package angers TRC staff

CT 1/4/97

A PROPOSED all-expenses-paid, week-long holiday in Norway and a planned severance package for TRC commissioners has angered staff members of the body.

STAFF employed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) have again voiced their dissatisfaction over the planned payment of a four- month salary package to the TRC's 17 commissioners when their contracts expire in December.

And anger over the severance deal was heightened recently by the disclosure of details of an invitation to the commissioners to enjoy an all-expenses-paid, week-long holiday in Norway once their work for the commission is complete.

In an anonymous letter, staff called on the TRC commissioners not to take up the holiday offer extended to them by the Norwegian Council of Churches.

Tensions within the TRC surfaced last September with the news that commissioners would receive four times their monthly salaries at the end of the TRC's mandate — which expires in March 1998.

Sources said TRC commissioners earned a monthly salary of R23 750, which was equivalent to the salary of a High Court judge. Commissioner Ms Mary Burton also said last night that commissioners received annual leave equivalent to the package received by High Court judges.

When their contracts expire they will each receive a package equivalent to three months' pay, on top of their March salaries.

Staff said that while the commissioners "will be laughing all the way to the bank", they would be left with nothing to show for their efforts.

Fuelling the anger further is the invitation extended to the TRC commissioners by the NCC for a "one-week retreat" in Norway, which has been accepted by the commissioners.

In a strongly worded letter, staff said the commissioners "have ignored the appeal from staff members to forego the trip and negotiate with the NCC to channel the funds where they are most needed — to the poor and destitute of our country".

"The trip represents a broader pattern in our society — more privileges for those who already have and more constant calls to the poor to tighten their belts. A central thrust of our struggle was aimed at fundamentally altering these power relations. Yet the culture continues, only today the custodians are a new set of beneficiaries ...

"However, if commissioners still feel compelled to take up the invitation, why not put together a group of victims of gross human rights violations from around the country who could embark on the trip?" the letter asks.

The staff letter says the trip could be the opportunity of a lifetime for victims "because as we know, some victims have rarely been outside the borders of their own township or province".

Victims could also tell their stories to the Norwegian public, the letter says.

TRC spokesman Mr John Allen said that because of the staff's dissatisfaction over the proposed holiday in Norway, the TRC had decided to leave the matter to each individual's discretion.

"Because of unhappiness expressed by the staff, it was decided at a meeting that each commissioner will decide whether to take a visit or not."

Last night Allen said: "The regulations promulgated by the government laying down conditions of service for the commissioners include provision for severance packages for them."

Allen said the commissioners had asked for the same benefits to be extended to other TRC staff, but the government had refused.

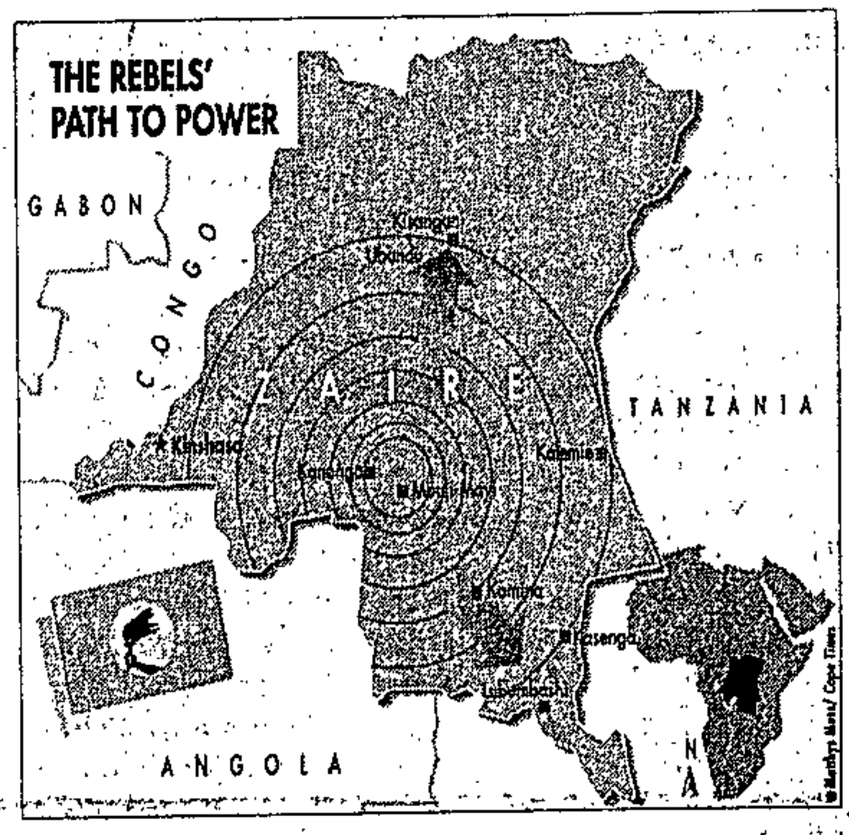
He rejected the idea that the Norway trip was a holiday, saying it was "a retreat". — Own Correspondent, Staff Writer



Zairian forces cut off by latest victory

(358)

CT 7/4/97



LUBUMBASHI, Zaire: The capture yesterday of Kamina by rebel forces testifies to their consistent progress which has set the stage for peace talks expected to take place in South Africa this week.

REBELS took Zaire's southern rail town Kamina yesterday, effectively cutting off the copperbelt province of Shaba and hundreds of troops there from the rest of the country, expatriate and other sources said.

The sources said that in a familiar pattern in Zaire's five-month-old civil war, Zairian troops had fled three hours before the rebels arrived in what used to be the army's main southern garrison town and air base.

Some 150 soldiers — possibly the only ones defending Kamina — commandeered trains to Shaba's capital Lubumbashi, 600km to the south-east. Traders and businessmen confirmed the fall of the town.

Traditional chiefs set out as a late-night welcoming committee to greet Mr Laurent Kabila's forces, the sources added.

"The rebels arrived at about two in the morning," said one expatriate in Lubumbashi.

Shaba's pro-autonomy governor Mr Kyungu wa Kumwanza, appointed only four days ago, said there had been fighting in Kamina but could not confirm it had fallen to the rebels.

"As far as I know both sides have retired to their respective bases," he said.

Rebels or sympathisers also reportedly control Kasenga, which is only 220km north-east of Lubumbashi.

The sources said the rebels had approached Kamina from the north-east, following a branch railway line on foot from the inland port of Kalemie, in north Shaba, which they took in February.

Yesterday's news sent a shiver of apprehension round Lubumbashi.

The Shaban capital of about one million people, Zaire's biggest city after the capital Kinshasa and potentially its richest, is still in government hands — but its people say they are waiting for the rebels.

Much looted in past unrest, the city fears more of the same from soldiers based here or from the retreating newcomers, some of whom were only hours away by rail.

There were no reports of major looting in Kamina, though some soldiers stole cars from a convent and roughed up a Belgian expatriate in the town.

Traders and businessmen in Lubumbashi confirmed the fall of Kamina, located on the railway that is the sole reliable route to bring much-needed supplies up from Southern Africa to the diamond-mining Kasai province and its capital Mbuji-Mayi.

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ɔm student to 'finance minister'

CT 1/4/97 (368)

A few months ago, Mr Awana Nanga was doing search at an American ıd would have found it ve that he was about to ance minister" of a rebel nning a quarter of Zaire. most of the senior mem- ɔel movement were living deciding to join the "war " against the 31-year-old sident Mobutu Sese Seko. 5, is a typical member of US "network" within the ɛt up by Mobutu's veteran r Laurent-Desire Kabila. rom Lower-Zaire province first at the University of in the east, then at the ıstitute, 100km to the west, btained an engineering degree in agronomy.

In 1978, Nanga went to the George Washington University in Washington DC on a study grant provided by USAID. He spent two years there studying for a master's degree in statistics.

On returning to Zaire, he got a job at the ministry of agriculture in Kinshasa, where he worked until 1987. With a student grant, he then returned to the US to do a degree in economics at Pennsylvania State University.

In 1989, on yet another grant, Nanga enrolled at the University of Kentucky for a five-year course to obtain a doctorate in agricultural economics. Since 1994, he had been a "researcher" in the university's agricultural department.

In the meantime, he had become a member of a Zairian opposition movement calling itself the All North America Conference on Zaire (Anacoza).

"We started on the Internet," Nanga said last week. "We did not all know each other. We used to campaign for Mobutu to be denied a visa to visit the United States.

"We tried to get in touch with the opposition led by Tshisekedi," he said referring to Mobutu's long-time political foe Mr Etienne Tshisekedi. "But he was acting as if he were already cock of the roost and we got fed up," he added.

"Then the people (the rebels) attacked (in September last year). The people of the RPF (the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front now in power in Rwanda) had studied with us in the USA. We asked them if they were interested in attacking Zaire.

"They said, 'No, there is a man from your country, he is your leader'."

The man was Kabila.

"Kabila even called me personally ... A leader had never called us before, and we talked. Before that, we had never had any contact with him. He replied calmly to our questions. He is a serious man, more serious than the others in Kinshasa," Nanga said.

"When Mobutu wanted to return to Zaire in December, we sent a delegation to Kabila to support him. I arrived on December 25 with Mwenze" (Mr Kongolo Mwenze, the rebels' "minister of justice", a former Anacoza member.

"We had between four and five meetings with Mr Kabila. He said he needed us. We replied, 'Why not?' " said Nanga, who is married to a Zairian living in the United States and has three children. — Sapa-AFP

What makes rebel leader Kabila run?

CT 1/4/97 (368)

KINSHASA: Late last year it was difficult to believe that Mr Laurent -Desire Kabila, the English-speaking Tutsi from Rwanda, and a graduate of Belgrade University, could have been comrade-in-arms of the legendary Che Guevara.

Is Kabila, who now controls a third of Zaire and may topple President Mobutu, a puppet of Rwanda's, Uganda's, and their allies in Washington? Is he just a frontman for Rwanda's clean-up operation against Hutu extremists in refugee camps inside east Zaire?

Or is he using the Tutsis as stalking-horses for a genuine rebellion against dictatorship?

Five months later, the answer is "yes" to all three questions. And, so far, "no" to suggestions that he is planning to turn Zaire into a base for a pan-African communist revolution that will spread chaos across an already wrecked continent.

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Although suspicion of kidnapping three American workers at Jane Goodall's chimpanzee sanctuary at Gombe in Tanzania hangs over him, Kabila is now the darling of the diplomatic crowd in Washington and European capitals, though not in Paris, where he is seen as a marionette of American plans to eclipse French influence in the region.

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LEARNED: Laurent Kabila

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In 1960, he fought for Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba against Katangese secessionists, and had taken part in uprisings in North and South Kivu, holding several "government" portfolios there.

By the mid-60s he had fled to exile in Kenya and Tanzania after the rebel "governments" he helped to set up were routed by Mobutu's army with the help of mercenaries and Belgian paratroopers.

Kabila resurfaced in 1977 to take part in an uprising against Mobutu in Kisangani, but was once again ejected by foreigners, this time, French and Moroccan troops.

He does not intend taking part in government beyond a one-year transitional period, after which he would retire, he says. — The Times



poster of Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko, set alight by rebels during rioting and looting in Goma last year, e main street. **TOP LEFT:** Villagers cheer a rebel convoy of recruits heading for the frontline.

PICTURES: THE STAR

Locals are prisoners of circumstance

(358) CT 1/4/97

KINSHASA: To arrive in this Zairian capital from abroad is to be pestered for money by just about everyone you meet, including troops guarding the airport.

It's not as if they're threatening. They present themselves as unpaid and hungry.

"Please, Sir, a little something for the soldiers protecting you," the gendarme supervising security outside the main terminal pleaded with a foreigner on Sunday.

When he walked off, his place was taken by three more woeful-looking paratroopers who hung around as the newcomer's fixer ducked back into the terminal to attend to the necessary bribes with the authorities.

They are frustrated with where their political system has left them. The country has made little progress since becoming independent in 1960.

The frustration seems to be the basis for the conflict. The army has done little to oppose rebels advancing from the east. Its troops fled Kisangani after staying long enough only to loot it.

In Kinshasa, the atmosphere is as rundown as the faded colonial buildings and potholed roads.

"I can't do anything to make things better," said businessman Mr Faustin Mukena.

Personable and well-spoken, Mukena seemed just the sort of young, modern-minded person Zaire would need to build up its economy and middle class.

"There's simply no way to live," said a civil servant, whose monthly salary was 50 000 new Zaires, the equivalent of one US dollar.

A taxi-driver said: "I want a change. I look for a change. But things are just getting worse."

A pop singer, Makonko-Mvumbi, said the time had come for President Mobutu Sese Seku to step down. "In Zaire, the president is like the head of the family, that's our way. But when the chief is tired, he must step aside and let someone else lead." — Sapa-AFP



on a sumptuous wedding.
"I have planned this wedding for a long time and I am trying to celebrate my retenchment on a high note with this marriage," he

Nyanga to the Nico Opera House on Saturday, where he hired a salon. He also hired three tuxedos for his wedding party, a dance

and yesterday he had [illegible] traditional ceremony, when he will slaughter a sheep.
Msutu, whose highpoint with

And after all these weddings? I will definitely be married," he chuckled.

JOHANNESBURG: Slain ANC and Communist Party leader Chris Hani will be honoured three times in the renaming of 19 Gauteng health institutions, which offical-

Decades of triumph recede like a film

PARIS: President Mobutu Sese Seko must have been mortified, slinking into his collapsing capital to jeers and whistles to watch three decades of triumph recede like a film running in rapid rewind.

In hilltop seclusion, with an army of dissipating loyalty, he awaits a coming judgment. Will virulent prostate cancer cut him down before his enemy Mr Laurent Kabila drives him from power?

Or will the convoluted politics of Zaire deliver some other fate entirely?

Rebels who daily gain more of the mineral-laced east hold the upper hand, refusing to cease fire against a crumbling army until Mobutu takes a step backward.

Humbling comeuppance is an amazing sight to those who knew him when ... But no one who has dealt with Mobutu, a master at reversing bad fortune, believes it is over until it is over.

Mobutu's strength is his ability to pit factions against one another while he hovers above the fray. For this he needs little real power. He only has to stay alive.

His rabble of an army may not be able to defend his capital, but the jungle might. Long neglect of the interior has left Zaire with no roads between Kinshasa and the rebels' widening territory.

Now a haggard 66, Mobutu winces when he walks, a sharp contrast to the fire-eater who inflamed followers in his early years.

CIA operatives were quick to see leadership in the young colonel with hollow cheeks and hungry eyes. In 1965 they helped him seize control of the chaotic Congo.

Mobutu imposed his power the old way: He betrayed friends, co-opted enemies, and made pacts he did not keep.

He used white mercenaries to crush rebels and then discreet American help to quell a revolt by the mercenaries. Outside help put down repeated assaults on Katanga province (now Shaba), Kabila's next target.

He excoriated white South Africans with rhetoric that enhanced his standing at summits, but accepted their secret support.

"We must isolate them," Mobutu thundered to a young reporter. "Buy nothing! Sell nothing!" The journalist then noticed what the president had offered him to drink: South African grape juice.

Mobutu pardoned rebel leader Pierre Mulele and embraced him when he came home. Mulele then faced a long secret trial, with regular news bulletins on its progress. In fact, he was shot before it began.

Year after year, more opponents were murdered, and the amounts diplomats said Mobutu stole rose to billions of dollars. Yet US officials privately insisted only he could hold Zaire together.

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film in rapid rewind

(368) CT 1/4/97

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From independence in 1960 until Mobutu ended a string of coups and rebellions — from the short reign of the martyred Patrice Lumumba to Moise Tshombe's Katanga war with the UN — Congo was a five-letter synopsis of Africa's worst nightmares.

Mobutu simply made sure that leaders of each power faction had a share of the riches, while he skimmed off the top.

Ordinary people have fallen below any measurable poverty line, and most families survive by a blend of barter, theft and suffering.

Kinshasa erupts on occasion, but time and again France and Belgium sent troops to rescue Mobutu. When the going gets tough, he takes the high road to safety.

In a push for authenticity, he renamed the country and its majestic river, illogically replacing the African name Congo with an old Portuguese name, Zaire. Along with everyone else's, he changed his own name.

In the end, it may be the title he chose that spells his final humiliation.

Mobutu's full name translates as: "The all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, will go from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake."

Nothing is yet clear about the future of such a wily survivor. But with every passing day, those who know him say the glorious epithet could come back to haunt him. — Sapa-AP



Locals are prisoners of circumstance

(368) CT 1/4/97



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Easter weekend.

Animal welfare agencies said many domestic pets were left to their own devices during holidays — especially Christmas and Easter. "We get a tremendous number of calls about abandoned animals," said Ms Margaret Serraz of the AWS.

However, the AWS said last night that an inspector had visited the flat yesterday morning and found a domestic worker there.

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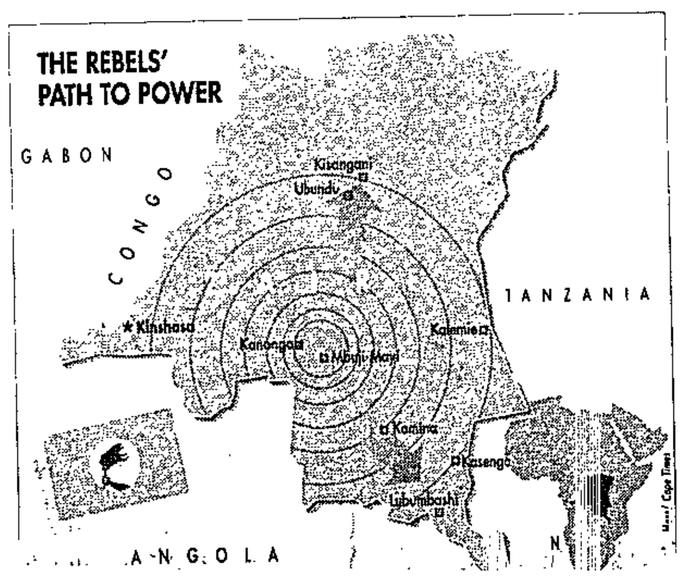
Zairian forces cut off by latest victory

(358) CT 1/4/97





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They are frustrated with where their political system has left them. The country has made little progress since becoming independent in 1960.

The frustration seems to be the basis for the conflict. The army has done little to oppose rebels advancing from the east. Its troops fled Kisangani after staying long enough only to loot it.

In Kinshasa, the atmosphere is as rundown as the faded colonial buildings and potholed roads.

"I can't do anything to make things better," said businessman Mr Faustin Mukena.

LUBUMBASHI, Zaire: The capture yesterday of Kamina by rebel forces testifies to their consistent progress which has set the stage for peace talks expected to take place in South Africa this week.

REBELS took Zaire's southern rail town Kamina yesterday, effectively cutting off the copperbelt province of Shaba and hundreds of troops there from the rest of the country, expatriate and other sources said.

The sources said that in a familiar pattern in Zaire's five-month-old civil war, Zairian troops had fled three hours before the rebels arrived in what used to be the army's main southern garrison town and air base.

Some 150 soldiers — possibly the only ones defending Kamina — commandeered trains to Shaba's capital Lubumbashi, 600km to the south-east. Traders and businessmen confirmed the fall of the town.

Traditional chiefs set out as a late-night welcoming committee to greet Mr Laurent Kabila's forces, the sources added.

"The rebels arrived at about two in the morning," said one expatriate in Lubumbashi.

Shaba's pro-autonomy governor Mr Kyungu wa Kumwanza, appointed only four days ago, said there had been fighting in Kamina but could not confirm it had fallen to the rebels.

"As far as I know both sides have retired to their respective bases," he said.

Rebels or sympathisers also reportedly control Kasenga, which is only 220km north-east of Lubumbashi.

The sources said the rebels had approached Kamina from the north-east, following a branch railway line on foot from the inland port of Kalemie, in north Shaba, which they took in February.

Yesterday's news sent a shiver of apprehension round Lubumbashi.

The Shaban capital of about one million people, Zaire's biggest city after the capital Kinshasa and potentially its richest, is still in government hands — but its people say they are waiting for the rebels.

Much looted in past unrest, the city fears more of the same from soldiers based here or from the retreating newcomers, some of whom were only hours away by rail.

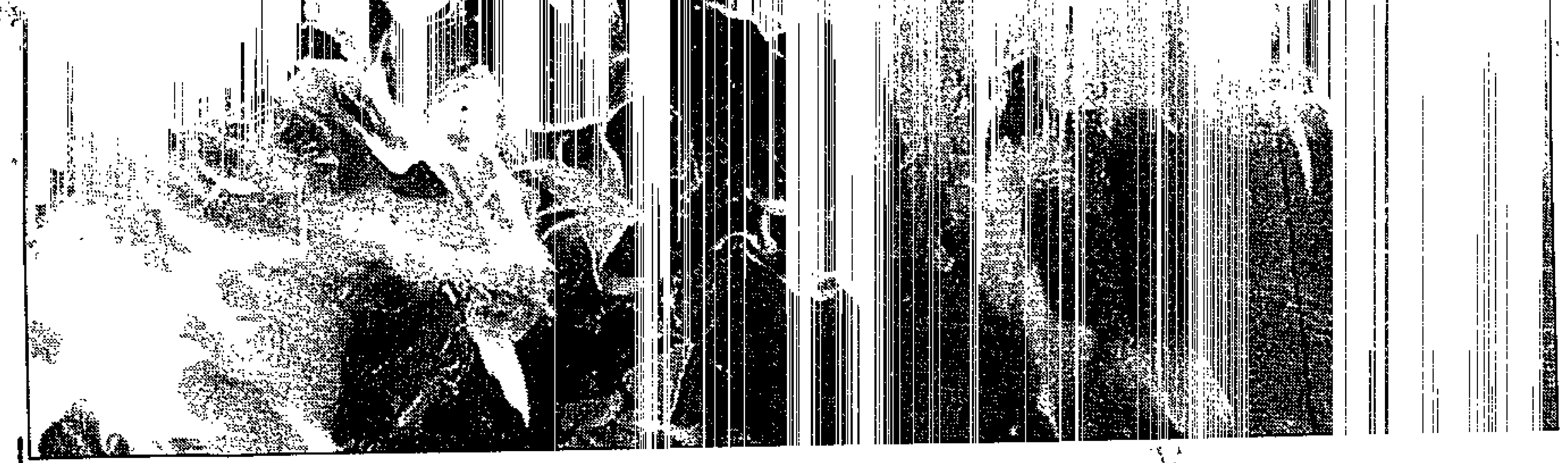
There were no reports of major looting in Kamina, though some soldiers stole cars from a convent and roughed up a Belgian expatriate in the town.

Traders and businessmen in Lubumbashi confirmed the fall of Kamina, located on the railway that is the sole reliable route to bring much-needed supplies up from Southern Africa to the diamond-mining Kasai province and its capital Mbuji-Mayi.

Government forces in Shaba are now virtually cut off. Their only escape routes are a tortuous trek along the Angolan border, planes to Kinshasa 1 800km to the west, or escape to Zambia or Angola.

Rebel leaders, seeking to overthrow President Mobutu Sese Seko, now hold a quarter of the Central African country which is the size of Western Europe.

They say they hope to start peace talks with the government later this week. In the meantime, they march on. — Reuter



ABOVE: A poster of Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko, set alight by rebels during rioting and looting in Goma last year, burns in the main street. **TOP LEFT:** Villagers cheer a rebel convoy of recruits heading for the frontline.

PICTURES: THE STAR

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From student to 'finance minister'

CT 1/4/97 (358)

KISANGANI: A few months ago, Mr Mawapanga Mwana Nanga was doing agronomy research at an American university and would have found it hard to believe that he was about to become "finance minister" of a rebel movement running a quarter of Zaire.

Like him, most of the senior members of the rebel movement were living abroad before deciding to join the "war of liberation" against the 31-year-old regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Nanga, 45, is a typical member of the so-called US "network" within the movement set up by Mobutu's veteran opponent, Mr Laurent-Desire Kabila.

He hails from Lower-Zaire province and studied first at the University of Kisangani in the east, then at the Yangambi Institute, 100km to the west, where he obtained an engineering degree in agronomy.

In 1978, Nanga went to the George Washington University in Washington DC on a study grant provided by USAID. He spent two years there studying for a master's degree in statistics.

On returning to Zaire, he got a job at the ministry of agriculture in Kinshasa, where he worked until 1987. With a student grant, he then returned to the US to do a degree in economics at Pennsylvania State University.

In 1989, on yet another grant, Nanga enrolled at the University of Kentucky for a five-year course to obtain a doctorate in agricultural economics. Since 1994, he had been a "researcher" in the university's agricultural department.

In the meantime, he had become a member of a Zairian opposition movement calling itself the All North America Conference on Zaire (Anacoza).

"We started on the Internet," Nanga said last week. "We did not all know each other. We used to campaign for Mobutu to be denied a visa to visit the United States.

"We tried to get in touch with the opposition led by Tshisekedi," he said referring to Mobutu's long-time political foe Mr Etienne Tshisekedi. "But he was acting as if he were already cock of the roost and we got fed up," he added.

"Then the people (the rebels) attacked (in September last year). The people of the RPF (the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front now in power in Rwanda) had studied with us in the USA. We asked them if they were interested in attacking Zaire.

"They said, 'No, there is a man from your country, he is your leader'."

The man was Kabila.

"Kabila even called me personally ... A leader had never called us before, and we talked. Before that, we had never had any contact with him. He replied calmly to our questions. He is a serious man, more serious than the others in Kinshasa," Nanga said.

"When Mobutu wanted to return to Zaire in December, we sent a delegation to Kabila to support him. I arrived on December 25 with Mwenze" (Mr Kongolo Mwenze, the rebels' "minister of justice", a former Anacoza member.

"We had between four and five meetings with Mr Kabila. He said he needed us. We replied, 'Why not?'" said Nanga, who is married to a Zairian living in the United States and has three children. — Sapa-AFP

What makes rebel leader Kabila run?

CT 1/4/97 (358)

KINSHASA: Late last year it was difficult to believe that Mr Laurent-Desire Kabila, the English-speaking Tutsi from Rwanda, and a graduate of Belgrade University, could have been comrade-in-arms of the legendary Che Guevara.

Is Kabila, who now controls a third of Zaire and may topple President Mobutu, a puppet of Rwanda's, Uganda's, and their allies in Washington? Is he just a frontman for Rwanda's clean-up operation against Hutu extremists in refugee camps inside east Zaire?

Or is he using the Tutsis as stalking-horses for a genuine rebellion against dictatorship?

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URGENT NOTICE TO ALL SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPAL WORKERS UNION (SAMWU) MEDICAL BENEFIT FUND MEMBERS

A serious division has occurred between the Fund and Doctors serving the Fund in the Western Cape.

The Fund has unilaterally drawn up a new contract without consulting the doctors. This is unacceptable.

Requests by a representative group of doctors to meet the Fund Managers have thus far been unsuccessful.

As from 1 April 1997 the doctors will not be accepting the SAMWU Medical Benefit Card. Patients will have to pay cash for services provided.

It is in your interest that these problems be resolved. We urge you to voice your protest and insist that the Fund:

1. recognise the rights of doctors to negotiate with the Fund as a group.
2. recognise the rights of doctors to negotiate a mutually acceptable contract with the Fund.

Doctors apologise for the inconvenience caused by this action but however urge you to contact the SAMWU Medical Benefit Fund offices on Tel (021) 697 1750 or to speak to your shop steward to resolve this problem.

Issued by the Doctors Liaison Committee P O Box 33, Gatesville.

44042

'GIVE HOLIDAY OFFER TO VICTIMS'

Severance package angers TRC staff

CT 1/4/97

A PROPOSED all-expenses-paid, week-long holiday in Norway and a planned severance package for TRC commissioners has angered staff members of the body.

STAFF employed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) have again voiced their dissatisfaction over the planned payment of a four- month salary package to the TRC's 17 commissioners when their contracts expire in December.

And anger over the severance deal was heightened recently by the disclosure of details of an invitation to the commissioners to enjoy an all-expenses-paid, week-long holiday in Norway once their work for the commission is complete.

In an anonymous letter, staff called on the TRC commissioners not to take up the holiday offer extended to them by the Norwegian Council of Churches.

Tensions within the TRC surfaced last September with the news that commissioners would receive four times their monthly salaries at the end of the TRC's mandate — which expires in March 1998.

Sources said TRC commissioners earned a monthly salary of R23 750, which was equivalent to the salary of a High Court judge. Commissioner Ms Mary Burton also said last night that commissioners received annual leave equivalent to the package received by High Court judges.

When their contracts expire they will each receive a package equivalent to three months' pay, on top of their March salaries.

Staff said that while the commissioners "will be laughing all the way to the bank", they would be left with nothing to show for their efforts.

Fuelling the anger further is the invitation extended to the TRC commissioners by the NCC for a "one-week retreat" in Norway, which has been accepted by the commissioners.

In a strongly worded letter, staff said the commissioners "have ignored the appeal from staff members to forego the trip and negotiate with the NCC to channel the funds where they are most needed — to the poor and destitute of our country".

"The trip represents a broader pattern in our society — more privileges for those who already have and more constant calls to the poor to tighten their belts. A central thrust of our struggle was aimed at fundamentally altering these power relations. Yet the culture continues, only today the custodians are a new set of beneficiaries ...

"However, if commissioners still feel compelled to take up the invitation, why not put together a group of victims of gross human rights violations from around the country who could embark on the trip?" the letter asks.

The staff letter says the trip could be the opportunity of a lifetime for victims "because as we know, some victims have rarely been outside the borders of their own township or province".

Victims could also tell their stories to the Norwegian public, the letter says.

TRC spokesman Mr John Allen said that because of the staff's dissatisfaction over the proposed holiday in Norway, the TRC had decided to leave the matter to each individual's discretion.

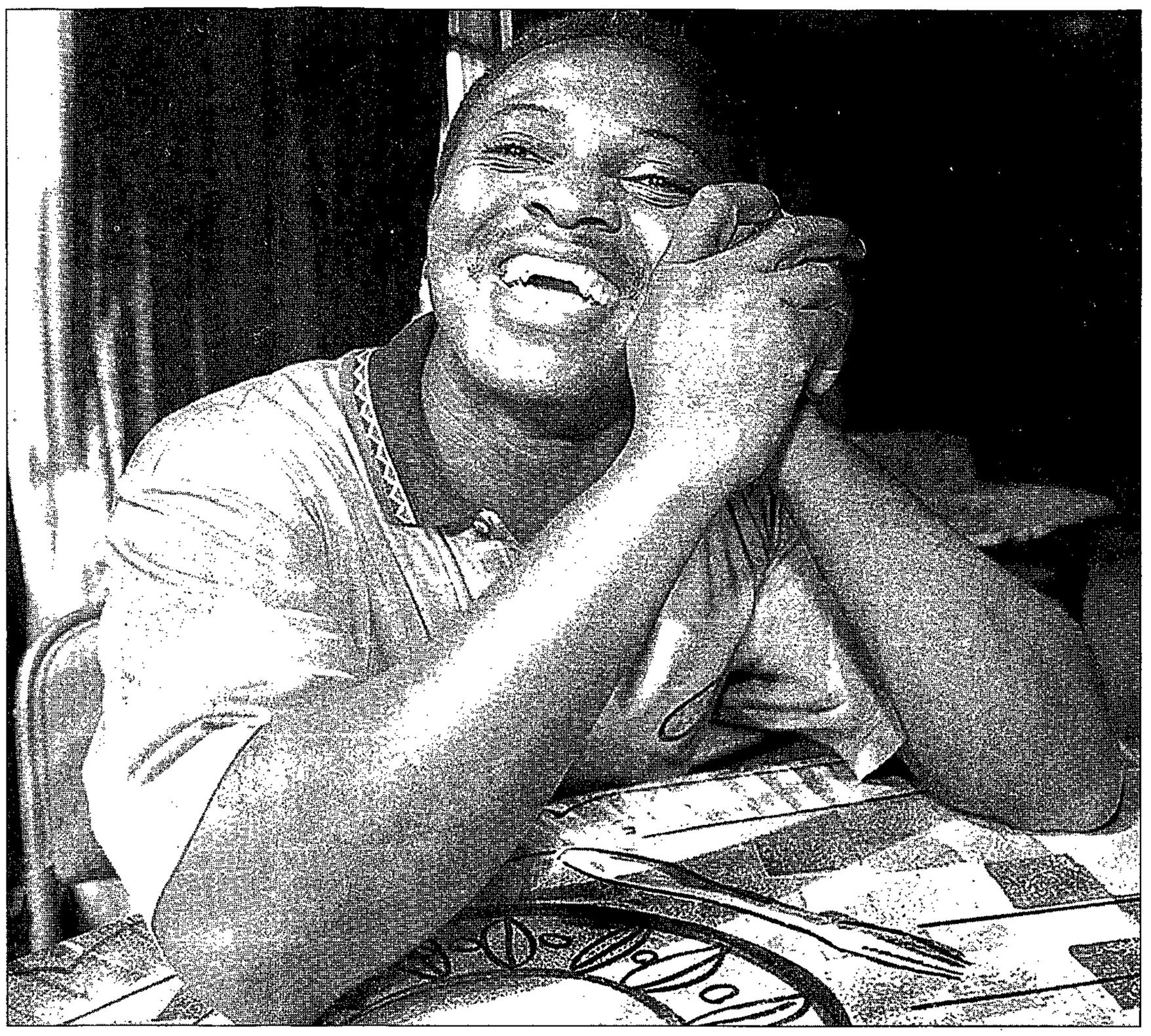
"Because of unhappiness expressed by the staff, it was decided at a meeting that each commissioner will decide whether to take a visit or not."

Last night Allen said: "The regulations promulgated by the government laying down conditions of service for the commissioners include provision for severance packages for them."

Allen said the commissioners had asked for the same benefits to be extended to other TRC staff, but the government had refused.

He rejected the idea that the Norway trip was a holiday, saying it was "a retreat". — Own Correspondent, Staff Writer

For richer and poorer ...



BLISSFULLY BROKE: Capab actor Sizwe Msutu has blown his retrenchment payment on his wedding, an event he couldn't contemplate on his salary. He was married on Saturday and hired a salon at the Nico Malan Opera House for the reception. ***PICTURE: GARTH STEAD***

I do, I do, I do — a vow in three acts

LISA TEMPLETON

WHO says retrenchment is supposed to be a bad thing? Talented Capab actor Sizwe Msutu overcame this traumatic event by splashing out his retrenchment package on a grinned.

Retrenchment meant a golden opportunity as he couldn't afford a big wedding on his meagre actor's salary. Msutu would not disclose the exact amount of the package, which is comprised of one week's

troupe and a choir and the guests were treated to champagne, a finger lunch and a hot dinner.

And this is not the first time, or the last, that he is marrying Port Elizabeth resident Ms Onica Louw.

"Under Sotho tradition you

Capab was starring in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* and who was very involved in their community programme, said he was not very sad to be leaving Capab.

"They don't want to change — but I am sad to be leavin the com-

Kitten's owners to be warned

Hoop and glory

BRIEFS

Driver hijacked in Mowbray

CAR hijackerS forced motorist Mr Wellington Mazibuko, 24,of Rondebosch, off the road in Mowbray on Saturday, ordered him at gunpoint to hand over his car keys, then fled, said police.

They said a passenger in a car pointed an AK-47 rifle at Mazibuko. He was not harmed.

Vrygrond shack fire kills man

A 37-YEAR-OLD man was burnt to death at the Vrygrond informal settlement after his shack caught fire, police said yesterday.

They said Mr De Velias Nogaga, 37, was overcome by smoke and flames when his informal dwelling caught fire while has was alseep on Friday.

He later died, police said.

The cause of the fire is thought to be a gas stove that was left burning.

Top black police officer dies

FORMER Gauteng police regional commissioner Mr Magabole Simon Tsoka, of Atteridgeville has died.

He was 61-years-old.

Tsoka collapsed outside the Walton Jameson Primary School last Wednesday at about 7.30pm.

Tsoka, who served in the police for 39 years, and was one of the first black police brigadiers in South Africa.

He served as commanding officer in Protea, Soweto and Mamelodi and also as chief of the CID in Atteridgeville for a long period until he was promoted to regional commissioner of the Gauteng province. He retired in 1995.

Makeba: ANC demands action

THE African National Congress Oudshoorn branch has condemned the attack on internationally acclaimed singer Miriam Makeba, when missiles were hurled at her during a performance at the Little Karoo National Arts

The Animal Welfare Society (AWS) will today visit the owners of a kitten that was apparently abandoned in an Oranjezicht flat for the Easter weekend.

Animal welfare agencies said many domestic pets were left to their own devices during holidays — especially Christmas and Easter. "We get a tremendous number of calls about abandoned animals," said Ms Margaret Serraz of the AWS.

However, the AWS said last night that an inspector had visited the flat yesterday morning and found a domestic worker there, who said she had fed the kitten while the owners were away.

"It seems provision was made for the kitten over the weekend," a spokeswoman said. However, an inspector would still visit the flat today, she added.

Last night the Cape Times visited the flat to speak to the cat's owners, but no one was home and the cat was mewing behind a closed front door.

Mr Greg Coleman and his wife Debbie had been upset by the constant crying of the kitten, which had spent a miserable Easter weekend on the balcony of a third-floor flat near them in Culver Street, Oranjezicht.

Coleman telephoned the SPCA and the AWS. He also climbed onto the roof and threw food down to the kitten.

He said early yesterday that an inspector had told him the kitten would not be rescued because it had the free run of the flat. There may have been water and food left for it inside.

"They said there was nothing they could do because if they did (rescue the kitten) it would be regarded as breaking and entering. They are just going to give the owners a warning."



CAT-TRICK: Circus animal trainer Anna Armand, of Latvia, holds the hoop while her trained cat Kroh jumps through it — only one of a range of feline tricks visitors to the Boswell Wilkie Circus will see. The circus is in town for the week, at the N1 City mall in Goodwood. Armand has 16 cats, which she has trained from when they were just over a month old. It takes about a year to train them properly, she said.
PICTURE: THEMBINKOSI DWAYISA

Msutu is one of hundreds of ballet, opera and drama artists who have lost their jobs with Capab due to budget cuts — but far from stashing his package away for a rainy day he decided to splash out on a sumptuous wedding.

"I have planned this wedding for a long time and I am trying to celebrate my retrenchment on a high note with this marriage," he said.

Msutu is spending about R12 000 on his wedding — after which he would be "broke".

No expense was spared. Msutu hired a bus to transfer guests from the Holy Cross Anglican Church in Nyanga to the Nico Opera House on Saturday, where he hired a salon. He also hired three tuxedos for his wedding party, a dance troupe, a choir and a band.

Despite his gloomy economic outlook he said he was optimistic. He is presently working for a small drama company, Shoestring Productions, and said he had put a proposal to the Eastern Cape government to establish an education drama company.

And after all these weddings? "I will definitely be married," he chuckled.

Arms suppliers vie for R14bn SA contract

LONDON: The world's largest defence suppliers are engaged in fierce battle to capture a South African deal believed to be worth up to R14 billion.

South Africa is in the market for trainer-fighter aircraft, frigates and radar systems and is reportedly prepared to fork out between R10bn and R14bn.

The deal is expected to be finalised later this year.

The Sunday Times here has quoted defence industry sources as saying South Africa is at this stage favouring British suppliers, the most significant among whom are British Aerospace (BAe) and General Electric Company (GEC).

If Britain were chosen, Rolls-Royce and a host of smaller subcontractors would benefit from the deal, which would entail GEC making frigates at its Yarrow dockyards.

The newspaper says SA companies would be drawn into the lucrative contract by helping to manufacture some of the hardware on home soil.

Britain is keenly contesting the deal as it wishes to add to the 25% share it gained in the world arms exports trade last year. In 1994, this share was 16%.

Britain is now second only to the United States, which is believed to be out of the running for the trainer-fighter and frigate contract.

Other major contenders are France and Germany.

BAe has earned a reputation for meeting importers' demand for investment in the local industry and most recently demonstrated this when it beat Italian competition for a R3,5bn order from Australia.

The company expects to meet South Africa's demand that the national arms industry be drawn into co-production.

Yarrow, once shortlisted by the South African defence ministry for the supply of corvettes, would welcome the contract not only for the obvious financial gain, but also because it will help retrieve some of the 1 000 jobs the company has shed in the past year. — IFS

...e Brandt...a ec...n...e secu-
rity forces to see to it that the perpetrators "of this disgusting behaviour" were brought to book immediately.

Bara renamed after Chris Hani

JOHANNESBURG: Slain ANC and Communist Party leader Chris Hani will be honoured three times in the renaming of 19 Gauteng health institutions, which officially assume their new names today.

Baragwanath has been renamed the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital and the Baragwanath Nursing College will be known as the Chris Hani Baragwanath Nursing College, Gauteng MEC for Health Mr Amos Masondo said.

From today the Ernest Bond Provincial Laundries from today is the Chris Hani Provincial Laundries.

The names of 28 health institutions are unchanged. The renaming of the institutions follows a resolution by the Gauteng cabinet.

Sapa

Easter road safety campaign 'working'

METRO WRITER

THE Easter road safety campaign is working, say top provincial traffic officials.

Project co-ordinator Mr Kenny Africa, who accompanied Western Cape provincial director-general Dr Niel Barnard on a flight in a military helicopter over the N1 at the Huguenot Tunnel tollgate yesterday, said many motorists were staggering their departure and return times to avoid peak traffic hours.

This was evident on the N1 yesterday afternoon, where traffic flow seemed almost normal.

On the N2, however, the traffic was heavy "all the way from George" by 6pm yesterday.

Most motorists driving long distances were heeding advice to travel with their headlights on during the day, said Africa. This had helped reduce the number of Easter weekend accidents in daylight hours in the Western Cape — even though there were more vehicles.

On the N1, nearly 15 000 cars passed through the Huguenot Tunnel toll booths on Thursday evening, compared with just over 11 000 at the same time last year.

Ms Mary Gratjios, of the traffic information centre at Karl Bremer Hospital, said the SA National Defence Force had provided aircraft for surveillance at peak times.

By last night, the SA Police Service had recorded 232 road fatalities in the country since the start of the weekend.

Space scientists keep eye on comet opera

WASHINGTON: Comet Hale-Bopp has given astronomers an eerie reminder of the danger of big rocks and other cosmic bodies on a collision course with Earth.

Once-secret military data has shown that our planet is struck by boulders much more often than has been acknowledged.

Astronomers estimate there are more than 2 000 objects of a kilometre wide and more whose orbits might one day cross the path of the Earth, but US space scientists are working on an early-warning system.

Experts estimate the chances of an object wider than one kilometre hitting the Earth in the next century at slightly less than 1 000 to one. — Sapa-DPA

Bejewelled skeletons found

ABU DHABI: An archaeological treasure of 180 human skeletons dating back 7 000 years has been unearthed at Al Bahie Mount in Sharjah, one of the sheikdoms of the United Arab Emirates, it was reported yesterday.

The discovery was the result of a month-long dig being jointly conducted by a German anthropological mission, headed by Dr Hans Irman, and local archaeologists, the Gulf News said.

The skeletons, all female, were found wearing hundreds of necklaces made of pearls and semi-precious stones, indicating that they had been buried in ceremonial finery. All the skeletons had been buried facing east.

"An equally important discovery is the remains of a settlement which appears to have been where the women lived," said Dr Sabah Gassem, chairman of the local team.

"Several fire stoves and animal remains of camels, goats and sheep were found inside the settlement ... one of the most important archaeological sites in the south eastern Arabian peninsula that goes back to the Stone Age," he added. — Sapa-DPA

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Zairean rebels say they are advancing on Kinshasa in face of talks

LUBUMBASHI — Laurent Kabila's rebels said yesterday they were resuming their march on Zaire's capital, abandoning a pledge to President Nelson Mandela to halt their advance to give diplomacy a chance.

Kabila's "foreign minister" Bizima Karaha announced the move at a news conference ahead of a second face-to-face meeting between Mandela, Kabila and embattled President Mobutu Sese Seko on a SA ship on Wednesday.

"Mobutu is a devil and a trickster and has used the talks to reinforce his troops, bring in elements from (former Angolan rebel movement) Unita and former Rwandan troops to consolidate his position in Kinshasa," Karaha said in the rebel-held city of Lubumbashi.

"Our response to this is that we are abandoning our pledge and we are now advancing and will continue to advance. We shall now talk and fight and fight and talk."

The rebels were last reported less than 200km from Kinshasa. Kabila has said his forces were only 50km from the teeming capital of 5-million.

Speaking in his stronghold of Lubumbashi, Kabila said his forces would have taken the city "but for interference".

The remnants of Mobutu's army are reported to be putting up a last-ditch stand between the Wamba and Kwango rivers east of the capital toward Kenge, 200km away.

Meanwhile, the rebels yesterday allegedly urged all foreigners to leave Kinshasa, saying Rwandans and Angolans fighting for Mobutu were planning to kill them to trigger foreign intervention.

Diplomatic and political manoeuvring has intensified ahead of Wednesday's meeting.

Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo, tipped as a key player in any peace deal, promised personal initiatives to promote a quick, consensus transition — after Mobutu supporters voted to give him back the job of speaker of Zaire's transitional parliament.

Karaha said the rebels might pull out of the SA peace initiative and storm Kinshasa if Monsengwo accepted the job of speaker — the constitutional successor to the president in the event of death or incapacity.

The rebels, who took up arms in October and control three quarters of Africa's third-largest country, insist that Mobutu step down and hand power to Kabila.

The opposition of Etienne Tshisekedi, the other main political force in parliament, walked out before Saturday's vote — raising doubts about whether it was binding.

Monsengwo, who is still popular in a country with a Catholic majority, held the job of speaker at the height of Zaire's promised transition to democracy.

Some diplomats and politicians said he could step in and provide Mobutu with a dignified exit. Others said Monsengwo could act as a national mediator, a role he played as speaker until ousted in July 1995.

"I will accept only if I have national and international guarantees," Monsengwo told a news conference in Belgium during a stopover on his way back to Kinshasa from the Vatican where he attended a conference. He did not elaborate.

The Vatican has yet to give blessing to the move but Monsengwo promised initiatives to find a peaceful settlement.

Mobutu supporters, fearing Monsengwo's popularity in the event of elections, joined forces with Tshisekedi supporters in 1995 to oust him. Tshisekedi supporters dismiss Monsengwo, archbishop of rebel-held Kisangani, as "Mobutist".

Mobutu returned to Kinshasa on Saturday after talks in Gabon with fellow central African leaders and SA Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

Mbeki said Mobutu and Kabila had agreed to attend fresh talks on Wednesday. The first such meeting, on May 4, ended with Mobutu offering to hand power to an elected successor and Kabila demanding he stand down immediately.

Mbeki said he expected the second meeting to conclude with negotiations on a peaceful transition of power.

Mbeki's spokesman, Ricky Naidoo, said Kabila earlier repeated assurances that his forces' advance on the Zairean capital Kinshasa had been halted pending the talks.

"We have no concrete information that he has gone back on this deal," he said. — Sapa-AFP, Reuter.

See page 11

Doubt over Mbeki's Zaire peace shuttle

ARG 13/5/97

PETER FABRICIUS
FOREIGN SERVICE

(358)

It was not clear today whether Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki would fly to Zaire later today for last-ditch diplomacy to try to end the civil war and secure a peaceful transfer of power.

Mr Mbeki said yesterday he would probably have to meet Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko in Kinshasa and rebel leader Laurent Kabila in Lubumbashi today to try to nail down a basic agreement before tomorrow's scheduled summit of the two leaders on the SA Navy ship SAS Outeniqua in Pointe Noire, Congo.

He said tomorrow's meeting was probably the last chance for a peaceful transition in Zaire and indicated that if the two leaders could not reach basic agreement today, the shipboard meeting would be called off.

But his spokesman Ricky Naidoo said at noon today that Mr Mbeki was still busy giving testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Mr Naidoo said that Deputy-Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad was busy on the Zaire issue and that if Mr Mbeki did not manage to fly to Zaire today he would speak to Mr Mobutu and Mr Kabila by telephone.

President Mandela said today he was still confident South Africa's peace efforts in Zaire would bear fruit.

"I hope tomorrow we will make some progress," Mr Mandela said in reference to the planned meeting between President Mobutu and Mr Kabila on the South African ship, which he is to attend.

■ Reports that Laurent Kabila's rebels have taken a key bridge on the road to Zaire's capital Kinshasa have reached the city, Reuter reported today.

Zaireans from the region, in contact with residents there by radio, said government forces yesterday pulled back from the Kwango River Bridge about 180km by road from the capital.

Information Minister Kin-Kiey Mulumba told Reuter he could make no immediate comment on the reports.

Yesterday he told reporters there was fierce fighting in the region of Kenge, 60km to the east.

"The FAZ (Armed Forces of Zaire) abandoned the Kwango Bridge. We heard about it yesterday.

The army fell back to Mbankana, about 150km from Kinshasa," a Zairean source in the region told Reuter.

Wild West traffickers strip Zaire of mineral wealth

(358) Star 13/5/97

South Africans are involved in gem-smuggling networks that have helped President Mobutu Sese Seko – and his inner circle – plunder Zaire's dazzling diamond fields. June Bearzi reports

Major foreign smuggling networks, whose tentacles have reached the very core of Zaire's corrupt and greedy power base, have maintained their stranglehold on the country's substantial mineral wealth for the last two decades.

The highly organised traffickers in precious stones, thought to be controlled by Lebanese, Israeli, Belgian and South African nationals, operate in Zaire's "Wild West" diamond regions. They are believed to be responsible for smuggling out 80% of the country's diamond wealth.

The racketeers are believed to include a multimillionaire, "Mr Big", who lives in Gauteng.

The traffickers are allegedly given carte blanche by President Mobutu Sese Seko, who claims to be the "second richest man in the world", and by his son Mobutu Kongolo as well as their close aides – provided they get a share of the loot.

The diamond smugglers also apparently bypass the customs authorities in Kinshasa with ease, but "for a price".

For many years, the operators have clandestinely sold their spoils, valued at about R173-million a month, in various countries, including South Africa and Belgium, StarLine has learnt.

President Mobutu is said to have made huge sums by giving his tacit approval to the smuggling networks.

A StarLine source explained: "Zaire is potentially one of Africa's richest countries but Mobutu, who has been in power for 32 years and is said to have amassed a personal fortune of R24-billion, treated the country as if it was his own private fiefdom and shamelessly pillaged it with the help of these syndicates."

Uncut alluvial diamonds, referred to as "the goods" by the smugglers, are traded "like tomatoes and mealies" between the informal diggers in



Mbuji-Mayi in Zaire's East Kasai region and the diamond merchants, who run shops known as *comptoirs*.

At least one of the gems found in the region weighed more than 700 carats and was sold in Europe for R3-million.

StarLine first learnt of the smuggling networks in 1988 when it was investigating the organised "carnage" kings, who were having a field day decimating Africa's rhino and elephant population.

South Africa was used as a pipeline to smuggle the horns and ivory to the Far East.

StarLine also uncovered the smuggling of diamonds, cobalt and copper in concealed compartments in huge pantechnicons and trailers from Zaire through Zambia and Botswana to South Africa.

A major breakthrough was made in the ivory and rhino horn smuggling in October 1988 when a truck and trailer from Lubumbashi in Zaire – laden with 94 rhino horn and 382 elephant tusks as well as large amounts of cobalt and diamonds – was stopped at the Kazungula border post between Botswana and Zambia.

The contraband was being transported by driver Patrick Mufambi on behalf of the Johannesburg owner of the vehicle.

The goods were destined for a "safe house" belonging to "Mr Big".

A well-informed StarLine source, George Amiridakis, said the contraband found on the pantechnicon was only "the tip of the iceberg".

StarLine has established that, although the crackdown on ivory and rhino horn smuggling has gone a long way to curb the illicit wildlife trade, the gem-smuggling rackets are still a free-for-all.

Zaire is blessed with fantastically rich deposits of diamonds, copper and cobalt. One of the richest sources of industrial diamonds in the world is found at the mostly alluvial Mbuji-Mayi diamond diggings. Here the illicit diamond merchants, who own large homes and shiny 4x4s, stand out in



stark contrast to the poverty-stricken Zairians.

In 1995, in an attempt to stop the gem smuggling to South Africa, two senior members of the South African police's diamond and gold branch visited Zaire's main diamond digging areas.

However, because of the lack of infrastructure and non-existent policing, they concluded it was impossible to curb the ungoverned illicit trade.

Another source has told StarLine: "Diamonds with a green colouring characteristic of those found in a new informal diamond area on the rivers in the central area around Kisangani are being sold in South Africa."

According to former Zairian prime minister Kengo wa Dondo, Zaire has one of the world's richest deposits of industrial diamonds. But only R47-million worth of diamonds are being formally exported legitimately each month. "If the fraud could be stopped we could export diamonds amounting to about R220-million a month," he said.



Researchers said that in the 1980s cobalt and copper, valued at "a king's ransom", was siphoned off from the cobalt- and copper-rich Shaba province (formerly Katanga) and Lubumbashi near Zaire's south-eastern border.

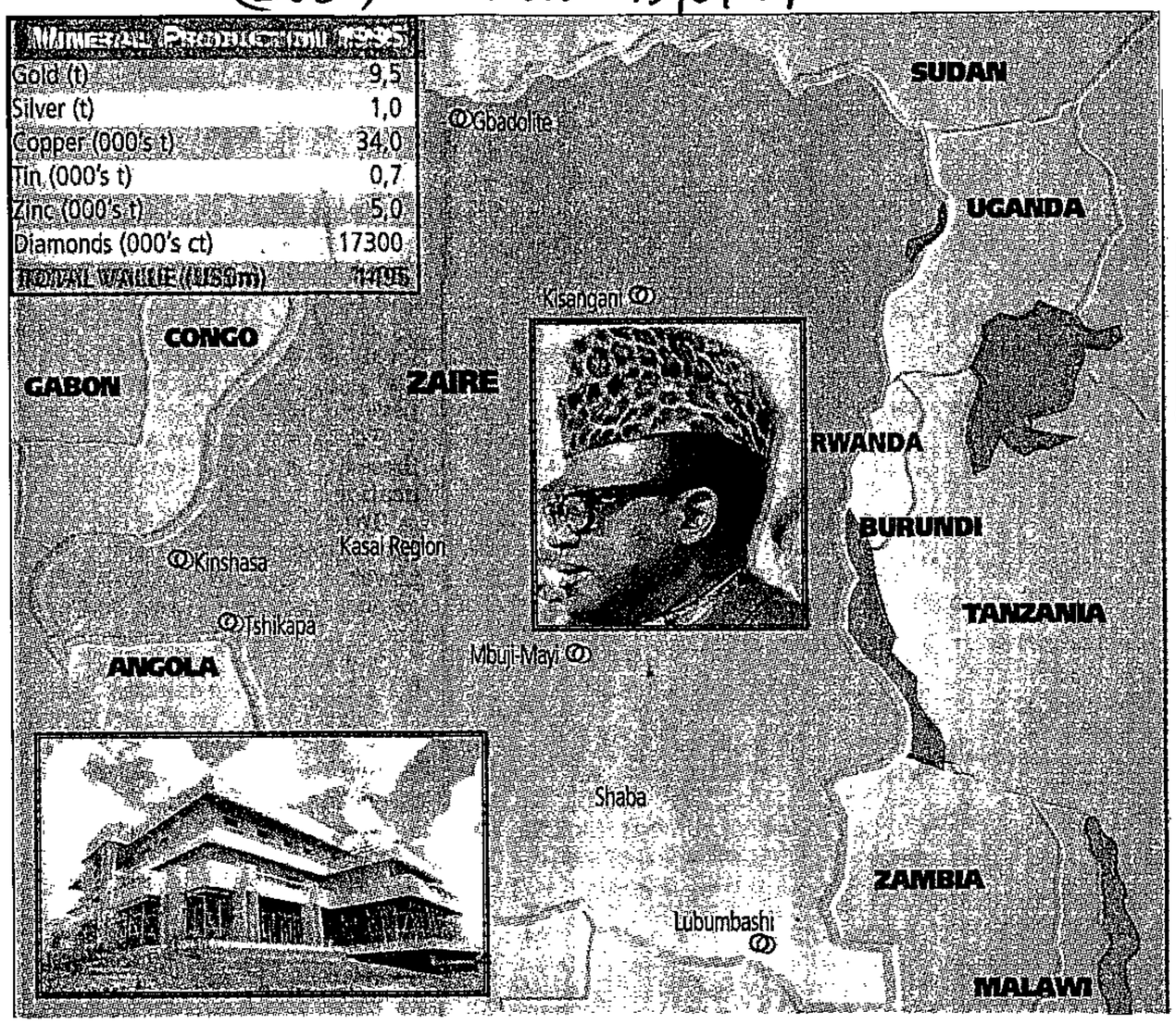
In 1979, Mobutu was involved in a major cobalt scandal. It was alleged that several million of rands, made from illicit dealings in the mineral, were stashed in one of his Swiss bank accounts.

Undaunted by the scandals that have swirled around him for years, Mobutu boasted on a 1984 American television show that he was "the second richest man in the world".

He maintained at the time he was worth R8-billion. Estimates have now risen to R24-billion.

According to one source: "The attitude among the well-to-do, but corrupt, army and political elite is to empty the country of everything and to put nothing back.

"Rich Zairians do not bank their money in their own country but in Europe, following the example of Mobutu."



Cash 'is not a payoff' to Zaire's rebels

Tenke's $50m in Gecamines joint venture

CT(BR)13/5/97 (358)

DAVID PARKINSON

Vancouver — Tenke Mining said its $50 million payment in Zaire last week for an interest in the Tenke Fungurume copper-cobalt concessions was part of a previous joint-venture agreement with Gecamines, the state-owned mining company, and does not represent a payoff to rebel forces under a new deal.

Sophia Shane, the corporate development manager for the Vancouver-based exploration concern, said the payment was the first installation under the joint-venture agreement signed last November with Gecamines. The payment was to have been made in December, but certain criteria under the agreement had not been met at that time.

She said the payment had now been made to Gecamines.

Shane said there is a fine distinction between dealing with Gecamines and with the rebel forces, who have installed one of their own at the controls of Gecamines. "It is a state-owned company," she said. It would change hands if someone else took control of the state, she said.

The rebels are widely expected to take over the government soon. President Mobutu Sese Seko told his military on Friday to prepare for elections, and said he will not stand for re-election.

Shane said the rebels have ratified Tenke Mining's previous deals with Gecamines, assuring that its pacts will remain in force if there is a change of government.

Assuming the rebels can gain access to Tenke Mining's $50 million payment, the funds could not have come at a better time. The rebels are reportedly low on cash to finance their war effort and have faced stiffer-than-expected resistance in recent days from military forces loyal to Mobutu.

Under the agreement, Tenke still must pay another $200 million by 2002, and must finance all capital costs, to earn a 55 percent interest in the Tenke Fungurume project. Its next payment is a $40 million installment due upon electing to place the property into commercial production. The final $160 million is due on December 11 2002.

Shane said the company financed last week's payment out of the proceeds of its equity issue last September, in which it raised $120 million.

> *Rebels have ratified Tenke's deals to ensure they remain in force if ruling powers change*

Besides the remaining payments, Tenke will need $300 million to build the first phase of the project and $350 million for the final phase.

Tenke will receive 100 percent of the mine's profit until it has earned back its entire capital investment, excluding the $250 million paid to Gecamines. After that, it will receive 55 percent of the profit. Gecamines will get the other 45 percent.

Shane said Tenke will fly North American investment bankers and analysts to Zaire on June 13 for a closer look at the property, which has estimated mineable reserves of 92,6 million tons grading 4,59 percent copper and 0,36 percent cobalt.

She said the company expects to begin production in about two years at an initial rate of 100 000 tons a year, and to reach full production of 500 000 tons a year by 2003. — AP-Dow Jones

ARGUS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 1997

Strike halts Zaire capital as talks begin

(358) ARG 14/5/97

Kinshasa – Markets were closed and streets deserted today as millions of Zairians observed a strike to demand President Mobutu Sese Seko resign when he meets the rebels at talks seen as a last chance to avert a battle for Kinshasa.

Mr Mobutu and Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader, were expected to meet around 11 a.m. (1000 GMT) on a South African naval ship off Pointe-Noire, Congo.

Mr Kabila and Mr Mobutu first met on May 4 on an SA naval ship off Pointe-Noire. Two major issues divided them: the composition of a transitional authority, and when Mobutu would step down.

Mr Mobutu, 66 and ailing with cancer, refused to quit immediately, saying he would give up the presidency only after elections. The rebels insist Mr Mobutu resign now and surrender power to a transitional authority led by Mr Kabila.

"We don't have much to discuss with Mobutu," rebel foreign minister Bizima Karaha told rebel Voice of the People radio "We've had enough time in the past to discuss everything ... We have heard enough from this guy."

President Mandela, a key mediator in the talks, was headed for Pointe-Noire to join his deputy president, Thabo Mbeki. Mr Kabila and Mr Mobutu were due later, and South Africa's Deputy Foreign Minister, Aziz Pahad, said early todday they had both promised to show up.

Zaire imposed an 8pm-6am curfew yesterday, a sign of its growing edginess here about exactly how close the rebels are and what effect their imminent arrival will have on civilians and soldiers.

After Mobutu, what will rebels bring?

Caught almost napping, Kabila alliance 'planning on their feet'

ARG 14/5/97 (358)

DEPUTY PRESIDENT THABO MBEKI PRESIDES OVER ANOTHER SESSION OF ZAIRIAN PEACE TALKS ON BOARD THE SAS OUTENIQUA TODAY WHILE UNCERTAINTY MOUNTS OVER WHAT SORT OF COUNTRY MIGHT EMERGE FROM THE CONFLICT, REPORTS **JAMES RUPERT** OF THE WASHINGTON POST IN LUBUMBASHI

As Zaire lives out the final days of President Mobutu Sese Seko's 31-year autocratic reign, the rebel leaders trying to sweep him from power remain vague about details of the government they propose to install.

But their emerging plan for a tightly controlled regime clashes with demands by many Zairians for quick democracy – and promises an immediate political fight after President Mobutu's fall.

The rebel alliance, led by Laurent Kabila, declares that it alone is bringing down President Mobutu and so has earned the right to form Zaire's next government.

Amid a murky, shifting power struggle among Zairian political constituencies, a half-dozen armies and militias and several foreign governments, it is uncertain that Mr Kabila's rebels will get that chance.

But if they do, rebel leaders say, they intend to take all political power into their hands.

Mr Kabila says his alliance will run a transitional government for a year before holding elections.

Broadly, that fight is likely to pit the rebel alliance – well armed and led by men recently returned from exile – against a core of Zaire's older and better-rooted political elite, based in the capital, Kinshasa.

ial rule, Zaire in recent years has evolved a competitive range of political parties, an independent, often rowdy, printed press, and an active civil society of labour, human rights and church organisations.

Crispin Bakatuseka, publisher of l'Humanité, a small independent weekly in Lubumbashi, said: "A foundation for democracy has grown among the Zairian people in the years since 1990, when domestic and foreign pressures forced President Mobutu to abandon his one-party state."

But "the alliance doesn't recognise that any democracy-building took place in Zaire before their arrival", said a western diplomat based in Kinshasa.

While many Zairians press for democracy and elections as soon as possible after Mobutu falls, the rebel leaders emphasise their need to establish firm control over the fractious country.

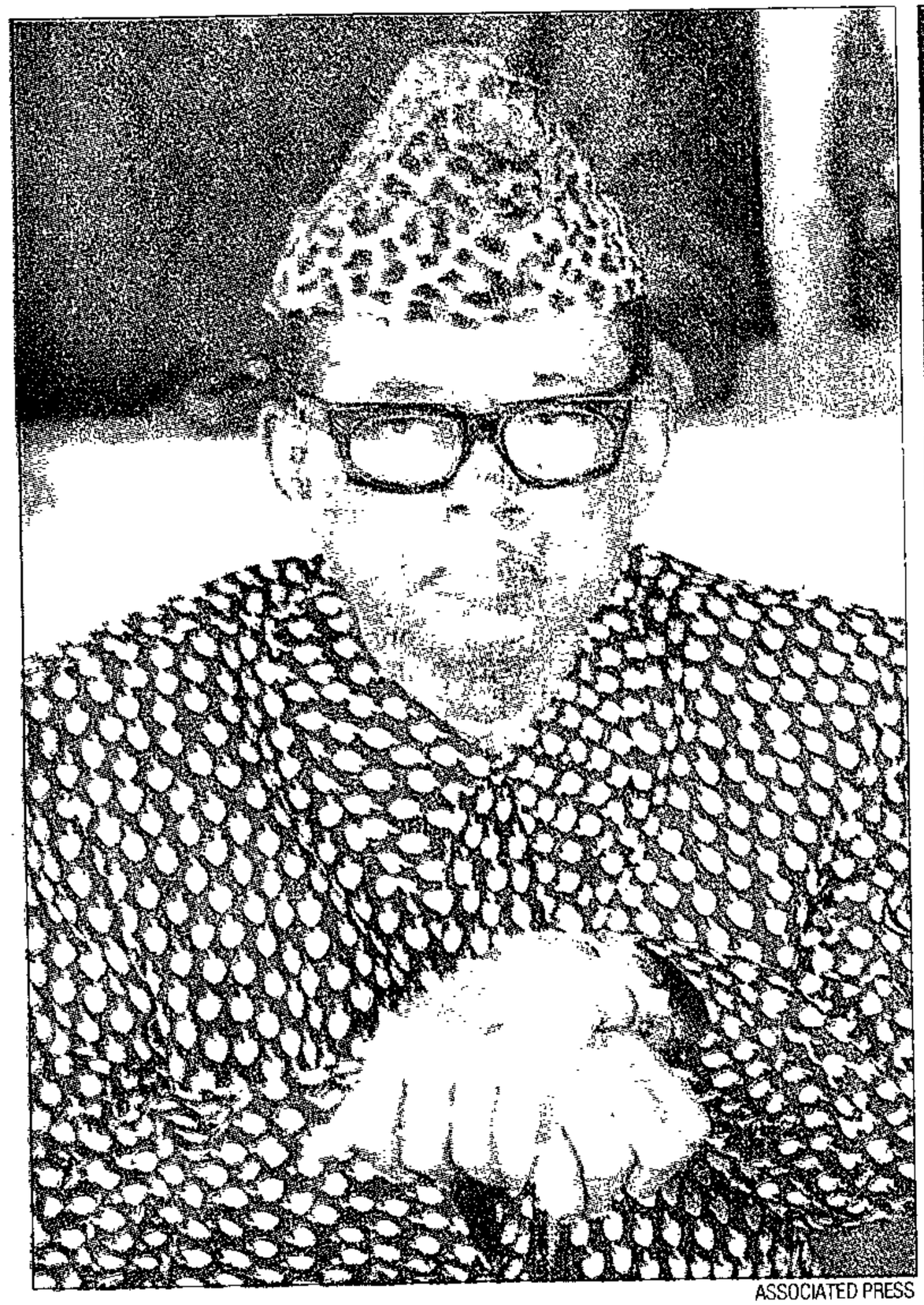
Despite appeals by Zairians – and by the Clinton administration, which has called on the rebels to be "inclusive" – the rebels have brusquely dismissed suggestions they include other parties in the post-Mobutu government.

"We want the alliance itself to lead during the transition," said Kongolo Mwenze, the rebels' commissioner of justice.

The alliance has shown some democratic intent.

In a public rally here last month, Mr Kabila promised an eventual democratisation that would permit even President Mobutu's political party to compete. When listeners hooted their objections, Mr Kabila lectured them on the need to exclude no one from a democracy.

In localities where it has not felt threatened, the alliance has offered public offices to leaders from other parties, including Zaire's most powerful anti-Mobutu



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ruler: President Mobutu Sese Seko, who faces the chop in Zaire



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rebel: Laurent Kabila, leader of the alliance seeking to take power

The rebel movement, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, was founded in October, and the speed with which President Mobutu's regime has collapsed has caught it ill-prepared to govern this country of 46 million people.

The rebels "are having to make up a lot as they go along", said a foreigner visiting Lubumbashi to see how the rebel administration was evolving in areas already under Kabila's control. "A lot is happening too fast to be planned."

In spite of President Mobutu's dictatorship, the Democratic Union for Social Progress, led by former prime minister Etienne Tshisekedi. ary 14/5/97

But where the alliance faces real competition, its line toughens.

Last month, when the alliance captured Lubumbashi, capital of the mineral-rich province of Shaba, it arrested the provincial governor, whose party demanded autonomy for the province.

The ex-governor, Kyungo wa Kamanza, re-emerged last week on rebel radio to declare his allegiance to Mr Kabila and the alliance.

Kinshasa is Zaire's political hotbed, a Tshisekedi stronghold – and an object of suspicion for the rebels. The alliance is considering moving the capital, perhaps to Lubumbashi, said Mr Mwenze.

"There are too many powerful people in Kinshasa with a lot of money, whereas we don't have any."

The biggest impetus for a fight after President Mobutu's departure is the alliance's pledge to maintain a ban on activity by other political parties.

Wherever it has taken control, the alliance has immediately shut down other parties, while gearing up its recruiting and organising drives.

"Zairians won't accept this kind of repression anymore," said an intellectual in Lubumbashi who asked not to be named.

"If (the rebels) don't leave a place for other parties, especially Tshisekedi's, they will fail."

According to Mr Mwenze, the ban on other parties will remain in effect beyond the transition period.

"There will be no campaigns for the first elections, which are to come a year after Mobutu's ousting," he said.

Bizima Karaha, the rebels' foreign affairs chief, disagreed, saying parties would be allowed to campaign before the elections.

Alliance leaders said they would select people from other political parties to serve in their transitional government.

"But they will be there as individuals, not as representatives of other parties," said Mr Karaha.

Such people would have to swear allegiance "not to the alliance, but to the ideals of the alliance".

A mistake to presume Kabila will lead Zaire

(358)

He may be at the head of rebel army, but does not have the broad following that will enable him to rebuild the country and at least 10 men could oppose him

Star 14/5/97

By Colin Legum

There is little reason for optimism about the immediate future of Zaire, even if the South African-led mediation effort should succeed in brokering a ceasefire and persuading General Mobutu Sese Seko to step down.

The most dangerous time in a country that lived for a long time under a tyranny is when it ends. Witness, for example, what happened in the USSR, Yugoslavia, Iran and Ethiopia.

It is still possible to avert a new disaster in Zaire provided

Disaster of 1960 must be avoided this time

the lessons are learned of what went wrong in 1960 when Belgian authoritarian rule over the then Congo was abruptly ended.

Some of the conditions that led to the chaos at the time are still present – three of them in particular:

- An indisciplined, mutinous army.
- The attempted secession of Katanga (now Shaba), the one, prized, mineral-rich province in the country.
- African and extra-continental intervention.

The most immediate risk is that the rump of Mobutu's demoralised army breaks rank and spreads fear as happened in 1961. That was the beginning of chaos that lasted over three years until the American-backed Mobutu established his virtual dictatorship.

It will be too late once mutinous soldiers have stormed out of their barracks to prevent their depredations. Therefore the present negotiations must seek a double role for an armed peacekeeping force: to monitor a cease-fire and to secure the gates of the military barracks to prevent the breakout of mutinous troops.

The role of external forces is different from what it was in the 1960s when the Cold War was at its height and when the two radical African governments were Nkrumah's Ghana and Sekou Toure's Guinea. De Gaulle's France was quietly encouraging the breakup of the Congo. Belgian and British big business were supportive of Tshombe's secession bid in Katanga, with Roy Welensky's government in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) backing them. The active African actors today are Museveni's Uganda and the Tutsi-dominated regimes of Rwanda and Burundi. These three have a common interest in supporting Laurent Kabila's rebel army since, initially at least, it comprised a majority of Zairian Tutsis.

The Americans, this time, have no favourites to succeed their former ally, but they would strongly oppose any attempts to break-up the Congo. Their interest now is the stability of the region. Of the Europeans, only the French show any serious interest in Zaire, but they have not yet indicated who they prefer as Mobutu's successor.

In my view the major mistake being made in reporting and analysing the situation in Zaire is the virtually exclusive focus on the role of Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader.

He is only one among some 42 party leaders, at least 10 of whom can be regarded as major political figures. Although he has acquired a strong position as a successful rebel leader, when it comes to negotiating a political settlement he will suffer from the lack of a national constituency.

There is also the question of Kabila's behaviour as a possible future leader. Even before gaining effective power he high-handedly made his own nominee the governor of Shaba despite strong local protests; already he had begun to negotiate new mining contracts

Mutinous army must be confined to barracks

with foreign firms, and has upset Anglo-American by wrongly accusing the company of enjoying a diamond monopoly in the country. Besides, does Zaire need another leader whose power derives from a gun?

The oldest established opponent of Mobutu is Etienne Tshisekedi who has courageously defied him since 1986, enduring imprisonment and internal exile. His Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UPDS) has survived a decade of repression. But like most of the other parties, its principal support is regional, mainly Kwango-Kwilu.

Other significant parties are the Front of the Community of Nationalities (FNC) led by Kamancha wa Kamanda, a former president of the Supreme Court; the Christian Democratic PDSE, inspired by Catholics but with some support from Protestants and the Kimbangists of an influential independent church; the small but influential Alliance of the Bakongo (ABAKO), the community established around the capital, Kinshasa; and of course Mobutu's ruling party, the Popular Movement for the Revolution (MPR), a major part of which has been unhappy with their leader for some time.

The critical political issue that will face Zaire when Mobutu finally goes is the chronic differences between the plethora of parties, most of them regionally based.

However, the hopeful factor is that the majority of these parties did succeed, after years of hard bargaining, to produce a new constitution.

So, the first task will be to get Kabila, Tshisekedi and the rest to form a representative interim national government.

Set against this background it is important that serious political analysts should stop presenting the present struggle as one between Kabila and Mobutu. The key forces that need to be involved to achieve a viable political settlement are unlikely to opt for Kabila as their leader.

Finally, the crunch question is what would happen if Kabila and other Shaba parties were outvoted in the setup of a new government. Will we then have a replay of Katanga (Shaba) secession supported by Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and possibly Zambia? Only preventive diplomacy by the OAU could prevent this from happening.

■ Colin Legum is the author of *Congo Disaster* and editor of Patrice Lumumba's autobiography, *My Country*.

Undaunted Mandela sends jet for Kabila

ARG 16/6/97 (358)

President Mandela, unbowed by his failure to broker Zairian peace talks in Congo, has scheduled talks with rebel leader Laurent Kabila on a South African proposal to avert a bloody civil war showdown.

Presidential spokesman Parks Mankahlana said Mr Mandela had sent a plane to the Angolan enclave of Cabinda today to bring Mr Kabila to Cape Town for an afternoon meeting.

He said Deputy President Thabo Mbeki would remain in Pointe Noire, Congo, where the talks were to have taken place yesterday, to maintain contact with President Mobutu Sese Seko's delegation.

"In our view the talks are not derailed. We think there is still a very large opening for them both to walk through to achieve peace in Zaire," Mr Mankahlana said.

South African Government spokesman Ricky Naidoo said President Mobutu had left Pointe Noire this morning to return to the Zairian capital Kinshasa.

Members of his delegation, headed by Foreign Minister Kamanda wa Kamanda, boarded the SAS Outeniqua, which was to have hosted the talks, to see Mr Mbeki.

Mr Mobutu and Mr Mandela arrived for the proposed shipboard meeting yesterday but Mr Kabila, citing security concerns, refused to fly from Cabinda to the ship unless it sailed into international waters.

Asked whether Mr Mandela, who refused to take the ship out to sea, was irritated by Mr Kabila's behaviour, Mr Mankahlana said: "The president was very calm. The humanitarian tragedy unfolding in Zaire is unprecedented. There is no amount of patience he cannot find. He is compelled to continue."

Mr Mankahlana said Mr Mandela, Mr Mbeki and United Nations envoy Mohamed Sahnoun spent an hour with Mr Mobutu late yesterday, discussing a South African proposal for a transition to democracy in Zaire after more than 30 years of autocratic rule by Mr Mobutu. – Reuter

Banks to block Mobutu assets

CT 15/6/97 (368)

BERN: The prosecutor of Zaire has asked Swiss officials to block all accounts and assets of President Mobutu Sese Seko in Switzerland, a government spokesman said.

The regulatory Federal Banking Commission, meanwhile, announced it would check by May 30 every commercial Swiss bank to see whether they have any accounts that belong to the Mobutu family.

Recent checks in Swiss banks have turned up little, but the government has asked the banks to check again, said ministry officials on condition of anonymity.

Mobutu owns a villa near Lausanne on Lake Geneva as part of extensive property holdings in different countries.

Swiss government spokesman Mr Achille Casanova said President Arnold Koller told the ruling Federal Council, or cabinet, yesterday that the Zairian prosecutor's office made the freezing request a day earlier.

The request, transmitted by a representative of the Zairian prosecutor in Switzerland, will undergo the usual review by the justice and foreign ministries, Casanova said.

The request must meet two main conditions to be approved. It must include a clear description of the case against Mobutu and it must be backed up by confirmation through diplomatic channels.

The usually secretive Swiss banks announced in April that they neither had nor wanted any assets linked to Mobutu, who has been kept at arm's distance by Swiss officials in recent years.

Mobutu had cancer surgery in Switzerland last year, but officials refused to allow him back in for follow-up treatment on the grounds that it wasn't medically urgent.

Mobutu is reputedly one of world's richest men thanks to years of plundering state coffers. Popular myth in Zaire puts his wealth at $7 billion (R31,22bn), equal to the Zairian national debt.

It has long been rumoured that up to $4bn (R17,84bn) of Mobutu's money has been hidden in Switzerland, but there has also been speculation that much of it was dissipated as Mobutu's hold on power has been increasingly challenged.

Critics are unconvinced, and officials disclosed yesterday that the cabinet asked the banking commission last week to check again. Under the new check, all 400 Swiss banks must report in writing by the May 30 deadline any assets they or their subsidiaries, in Switzerland and abroad, hold, directly or indirectly, for Mobutu, his family, close associates or corporations they control. — Sapa-AP

CAPE TIMES
THURSDAY, MAY 15, 1997 ★

REBELS NEAR KINSHASA

Kabila fails to pitch for talks

CT (368)

POINTE NOIRE, Congo: It appears as if Laurent Kabila may be using negotiations as a stalling tactic. **PETER FABRICIUS** reports.

LAST ditch hopes of a peaceful settlement of the Zairian civil war receded yesterday as rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila once again failed to pitch up for a summit meeting with Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko on board the South African navy ship SA Outeniqua here.

As he had before the first summit on the ship 10 days ago, Kabila offered weak excuses for not arriving aboard the ship docked in Pointe Noire.

Mandela was due to chair the summit designed to find a last-minute formula for Mobutu to transfer power peacefully in Zaire, but was once again left waiting.

Kabila's rebel army has now almost reached Kinshasa, casting grave doubt on the viability of the negotiations, although Deputy Foreign Minister Mr Aziz Pahad insisted last night that South Africa would continue the negotiation effort.

But even within the South African government, there is a growing belief that Kabila may be using the negotiations as a stalling tactic while marching on Kinshasa.

Ironically though, South African negotiators were suggesting that they were close to an agreement with Mobutu on how to manage the transfer of power in Zaire from him to Kabila, when Kabila's refusal to come to the ship upset plans.

First, Kabila went to the wrong place in Angola to be picked up by Defence Minister Mr Joe Modise and be ferried by helicopter to the ship for the talks . Modise flew to Soyo, a town in the far north of Angola, while Kabila was waiting in Kavinda, further north.

Aziz said Kabila had explained that his aircraft had run out of fuel on the flight from Luanda, although this did not make sense as Kavinda is further than Soyo.

Pahad said Kabila had also raised an old security concern which the SA government thought it had resolved at the first summit. He refused to come on board this ship in the Congo and had insisted he would only board in international waters.

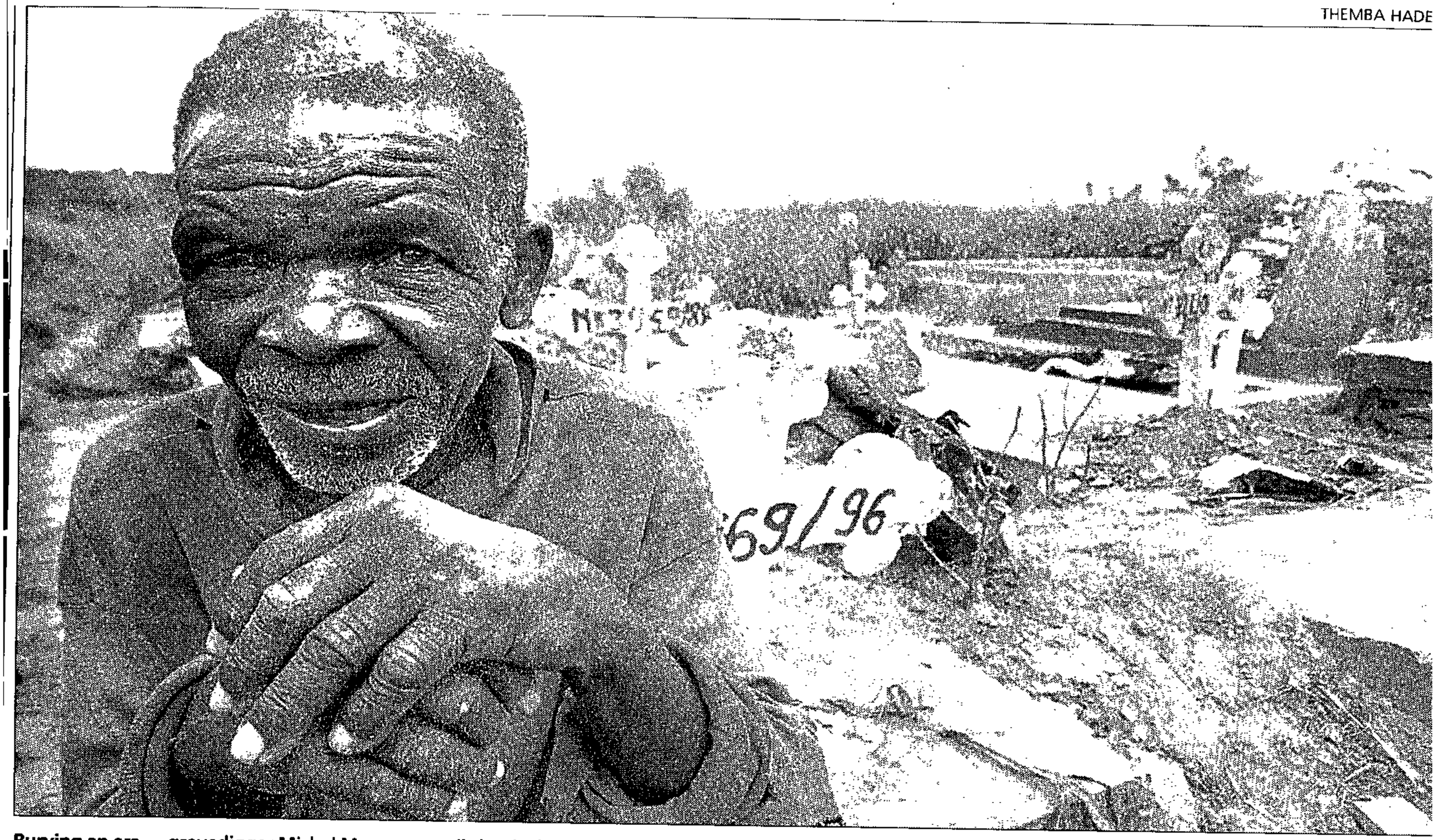
Pahad said the government did not consider this a valid objection, but was trying to resolve the problems and hoped the talks would take place today. It was later confirmed, however, that talks had not been rescheduled.

It is understood that Mandela was to telephone Kabila last night with a stern demand that he come to the talks.

While Kabila plays hard to get, SA negotiators, in tandem with UN and OAU special envoy Mr Mohamed Sahoun, were engaged in tough negotiations with Mobutu's delegation about a plan for Mobutu's departure from office.

Pahad said at a briefing for journalists late yesterday that the Zairian government had responded to the proposal with a document which had still to be translated from French and assessed by negotiators.

While it was clear that talks had been called off, Pahad said he refused to contemplate failure because success "was fundamentally important to Africa's future and to SA's perception of what must happen on the continent". He said he did not think Kabila was stalling, although that is the growing perception here.



Burying an era ... gravedigger Michel Manyanya toils in Kinshasa's once trim graveyards, now so overgrown with weeds that most graves cannot be found. The diggers are used to waiting. They wait for pay cheques that rarely come, for graves to dig or the rare mourner willing to pay to have a grave cleared of weeds that stanc 2m tall over much of the graveyard. Yesterday they, like many others, also waited for what they hoped would be the final days of President Mobutu's reign.

Spotlight on salted away billions of 'cash-strapped' Mobutu

Star 15/5/97 (358)

By Ross Herbert
in Kinshasa and
Tyrone Seale
in London

When rebel forces eventually walk into sprawling, destitute Kinshasa and begin rebuilding, one of the first questions will be: where are the legendary billions hidden away by President Mobutu?

The Swiss cabinet yesterday asked the regulatory Swiss Banking Commission to launch a comprehensive survey of the country's 400 banks to find any assets Mobutu might have.

The search, according to initial news reports, was sparked by a request from the Zairian government prosecutor. However, Tshibwabwa Ashila Pashi, the Zairian Minister of Justice, said the government had made no such request. It was a private group of Kinshasa lawyers who had appealed to the Swiss.

Rebel leaders called for a freeze on Mobutu's assets last month, but Swiss officials then rejected the idea.

For the poor and hungry in Zaire, the idea that Mobutu has billions of dollars salted away is of vital interest. For years, speculation in Zaire has held that Mobutu's fortune is roughly equal to Zaire's annual gross national product of $7-billion (R33-billion).

A 1992 report, compiled by a national corruption commission during the heady days when Zairians actually believed Mobutu would soon permit real democracy, gives some clues. According to the report, Mobutu family members routinely took large sums of cash and foreign currency from the national bank.

Some $10-million (R48-million), ostensibly to pay for scholarships for Zairian students, was transferred to accounts in the name of Belgian professor Arthur Doucy for use by Mobutu's children.

The report lists 14 luxury villas – including chateaux in France and Italy, three in Belgium and five in Switzerland – and many buildings in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Bangui (Central African Republic), Ndjamena (Chad), Mombasa (Kenya) and Dakar (Senegal).

Despite the lavish palaces Mobutu has built in Zaire and the fleets of luxury vehicles, Western diplomats say the signs are that Mobutu is relatively short of cash. Most of his money is tied up in real estate, or carefully hidden in the names of friends and family members.

When Mobutu recently sought to visit Switzerland to treat his prostate cancer, he was denied a visa for failure to pay the taxes on any of his five Swiss properties.

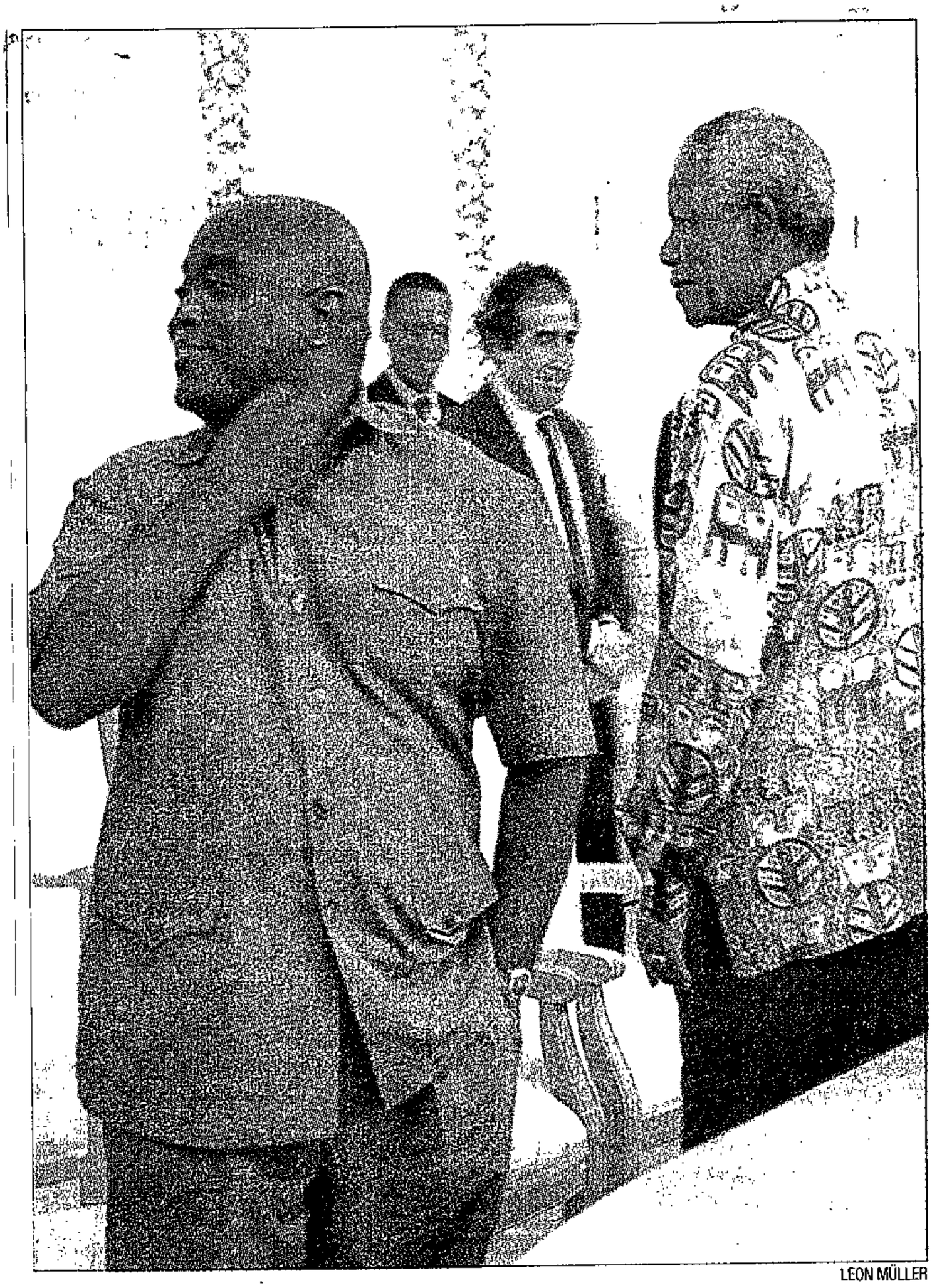
One reason for his cash crunch is the huge scale of corruption, which has crippled many of the businesses that once filled Mobutu's pockets.

The biggest income sources for Mobutu were the country's rich copper mines. Their output was sold in advance and in the 1980s, when copper prices rose, Mobutu and his allies pocketed the difference – nearly $400-million in one year.

Today Zaire produces a mere 40 000 tons of copper a year, compared to 450 000 tons through most of the 1980s.

The corruption report details Mobutu bank accounts in the Bank of Brussels, Deutsche Bank, and the Midland Bank in London. Officials were unwilling to disclose any details.

Zaire's poor, it seems likely, will never see Mobutu's billions.



LEON MÜLLER

Casual moment: Laurent Kabila and President Mandela arrive at a news conference after their talks



Burning the midnight oil: lights blaze at Tuynhuys as talks on a peace deal for Zaire continued last night

End near as Mobutu quits capital

ROSS HERBERT (358)
FOREIGN SERVICE ARG 16/5/97

Kinshasa – President Mobutu Sese Seko, after 32 years in power, today flew out of Zaire's capital after his military prime minister and top generals reportedly told him his safety could no longer be guaranteed or the capital defended.

Mr Mobutu left with little warning today and, according to airline industry sources and Mobutu advisers, his destination is Gbadolite, the town in the far north of Zaire where he has a palace and international airport for his personal use.

His flight suggests he has acquiesced to rebel demands that he surrender power, but top Mobutu officials in Kinshasa would not comment. His daughter Ngawali reportedly left for France yesterday.

If Mr Mobutu has chosen to flee rather than fight, something he has vowed he would never do, it will be a bitter end to his long career on the Zairian political stage, which he has dominated, intimidated and manipulated for 32 tumultuous years.

Late yesterday he was visited by Prime Minister Likulia Bolongo, Defence Minister Mahele Bokungu Liyeko, and General Nzimbi Ngbale, head of the presidential guard.

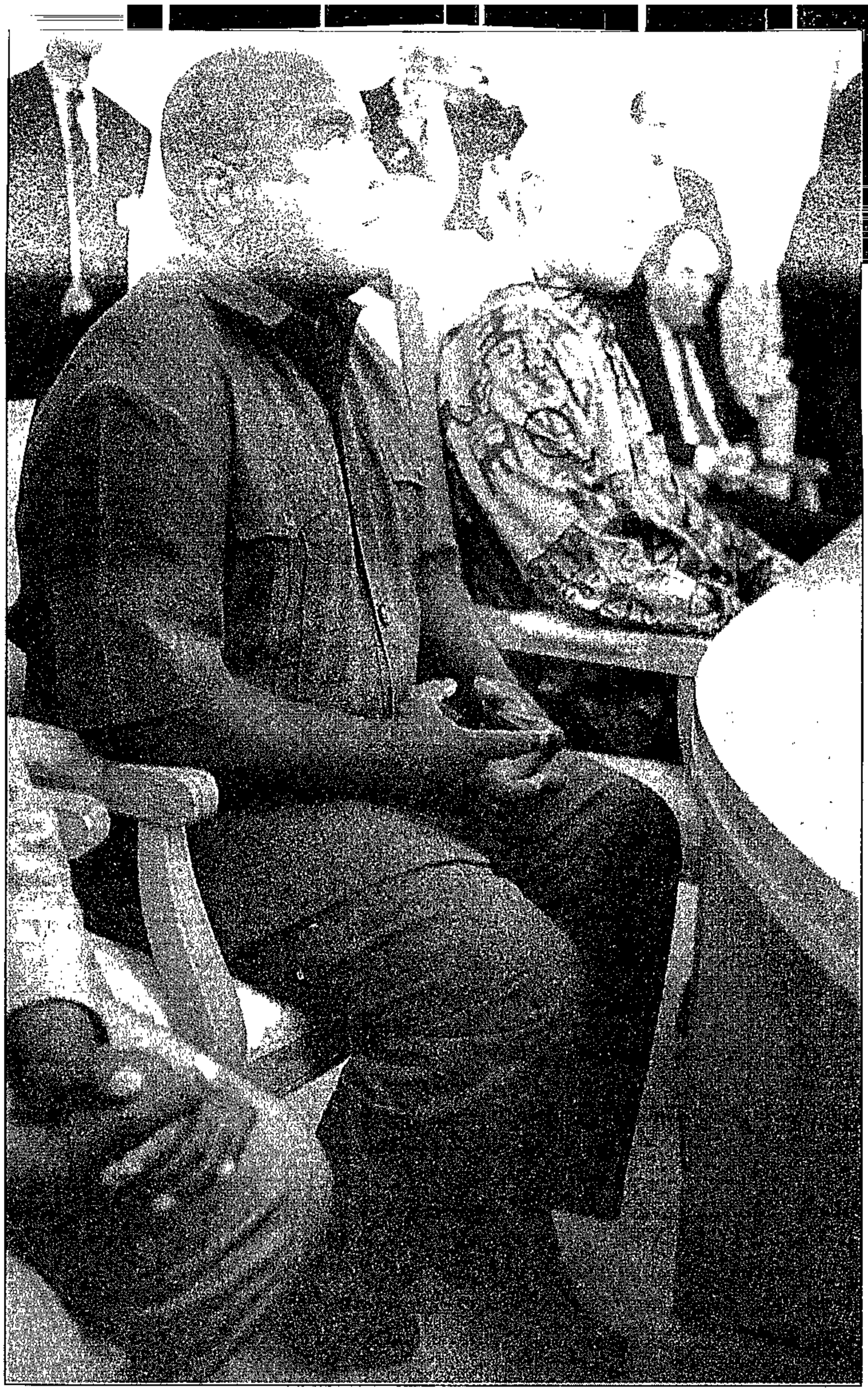
The exact location of rebel forces is difficult to determine, but ham radio operators and diplomats report they are between 50 and 100km from Kinshasa, within an hour's drive on good tarred roads.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila, who met President Mandela in Cape Town yesterday, would not comment when asked afterwards whether he would halt his military advance on Kinshasa while Mr Mobutu considers a last-ditch proposal by Mr Mandela to avert a fight for Kinshasa.

A dusk-to-dawn curfew remains in force in this sprawling city of 5 million. Yesterday soldiers said they feared reprisal killings by the presidential guard. At the airport and near military camps, soldiers engaged in sporadic theft from people on the streets and businesses near camps.

The two main international hotels did brisk business as government officials, military officers and the wealthy checked in to what they hope will be safe havens in the event of an attack on the city.

In spite of the long-running saga of Mr Mobutu's departure and rising tension as rebel forces advance, Kinshasa remained calm yesterday.



TOP BRIEFING: Rebel leader Laurent Kabila met President Nelson Mandela last night to be briefed on the discussion Mandela had with Mobutu Sese Seko on Wednesday. ***PICTURE: BENNY GOOL***

Mandela, Kabila meet at Tuynhuys

(368)

❑ From Page 1

CT 16/5/97

confident that a solution will be found because we are getting co-operation from both parties," he said.

Kabila said he had nothing to say except to wait for the answer on Monday on the proposals made to Mobutu. He declined to answer questions on whether the fighting would cease in Zaire.

Earlier, Dr Bizima Karaha, the rebel foreign minister, said: "We are fighting in Zaire and we are closer to Kinshasa; if we can't find peace, we have to make war."

The meeting, attended by the United Nations and Organisation of African Unity special envoy Mr Mohammed Sahoun, lasted over two hours.

Sapa reports yesterday said rebel forces were near the Kinshasa airport and were closing in on the Zairian capital.

Witnesses reported large numbers of rebel fighters near the airport and the security situation in Kinshasa was said to be deteriorating.

Estimates of the rebels' location varied drastically. Zaire's Information Minister Mr Kin-Kiey Mulumba said the rebels were as far back as the Kwango River, about 150km to the east.

But Western diplomats said the rebels could be as close as 60km from the city, in the area of Nsele, putting them in position to take Kinshasa's airport in the next day or two.

Diplomats warned that foreigners might no longer be safe from marauding government soldiers in the Zairian capital. They feared widespread plundering and killing by soldiers, similar to that which occurred in crisis situations in 1991 and 1993.

The rebel Voice of the People radio yesterday evening called on Mobutu to leave Kinshasa immediately to avoid a bloodbath. The radio said the rebel forces would be in Kinshasa by Saturday.

Mobutu was reportedly back in the presidential palace in Kinshasa yesterday.

Zaire peace plans 'on track' after Tuynhuys talks

(368)

CT 16/5/97

ERIC NTABAZALILA

THE Zairian peace deal is still on track, President Nelson Mandela said last night after a meeting at Tuynhuys with rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila, to brief him on Wednesday's discussions with President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mandela said Kabila came to see him and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki to give them an opportunity to brief the rebel leader on the discussions they had held with the ailing Zairian president.

"We met with President Mobutu and made certain proposals to him; he asked to take them back to consult with his government, and we are expecting an answer from him on Monday," said Mandela.

Mandela said they had been very open with the press, but added: "We are engaged in very sensitive and complicated negotiations and we don't want any party to hear about the discussions in the media, because that will further complicate our negotiations.

"All that I want to say is that matters are going according to plan and we are

❑ Turn to Page 5

phone call did it

Mandela's angry

MOBUTU AGREES TO STEP DOWN

POINTE-NOIRE, Congo: Zaire's rebel leader Laurent Kabila, his forces poised only 65km from the outskirts of Kinshasa, has agreed to halt his advance for eight to 10 days.

CT 5/5/97 (368)

A TERSE telephoned ultimatum by President Nelson Mandela finally got Zairian rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila to the negotiating table yesterday, when President Mobutu Sese Seko agreed in principle to relinquish power after 30 years of rule,

In turn, during yesterday's meeting presided over by Mandela on board a South African Navy vessel, Kabila agreed to halt his troops' military advance on Kinshasa for eight to 10 days.

An aide said that during this time Kabila and Mobutu would negotiate the terms of the transfer of power.

Sources said that during the hour-long meeting, held on board the SAS Outeniqua, the two sides had narrowed their differences to the question of whom power should be handed over to.

Yesterday's meeting took place after Mandela on Saturday shouted down the telephone at Kabila that he would leave if Kabila did not turn up at the peace talks, diplomatic sources said.

They said Kabila and his entourage put up so many reasons why they did not want to show for the encounter with Mobutu that a frustrated Mandela decided to get tough.

He picked up a satellite telephone to Kabila, who was in the Angolan capital of Luanda, and "shouted at him ... he was very angry".

The rebel leader finally arrived late on Saturday on board the Outeniqua, docked here in this Congolese port.

Mandela had been waiting since early Friday to chair the peace talks, but they were first delayed by Mobutu's refusal to fly onto the boat in a helicopter.

Then, later on Friday and after the vessel had already sailed into international waters for the face-to-face talks, Kabila failed to show, citing security concerns.

Once the talks got under way Mobutu firmly rejected the idea of handing over power directly to Kabila, as the latter had publicly demanded.

But it is understood that Kabila might accept power being handed over to a neutral chairman of a transitional authority, which will prepare the way for democratic elections in Zaire.

As Kabila's Alliance of Democratic forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire (AFDL) will hold most positions on the transitional authority, the identity of the chairman will not be so important.

Negotiators could not confirm reports that Mobutu had already sent United States President Mr Bill Clinton a letter saying he was ready to resign.

After the meeting, Mobutu and Kabila conducted their first joint media conference ever, with Mandela on board the vessel.

A joint statement was released announcing the rebel leader's decision to halt the military advance and to hold negotiations in the next eight to 10 days, before meeting again under Mandela's chairmanship to conclude final agreements.

Although both sides publicly stated their previously tough positions on how the transition should be handled, reliable sources disclosed that Mobutu had agreed in private to quit power.

The next meeting will probably also take place on board the Outeniqua. Officials will meet before then to try to finalise the details.

The sources admitted that South Africa would not be able to police the termination of Kabila's military advance, and South Africa would have to depend on his integrity.

Some analysts believe the South African government was being positive about the talks in order to pressure Mobutu.

At the press conference, Mandela stressed that Kabila's decision to halt his advance should not be seen as a ceasefire.

In Kinshasa, reaction to the news was mixed. Some people feared Mobutu's army would loot Kinshasa before handing over power.

But should talks fail in the next week, Kabila's forces — only 65km from the Kinshasa airport — are poised to strike.

● About 100 refugees in Zaire and were crushed to death yesterday after packing into a train that was taking them from the Biaro refugee camp to Kisangani, a United Nations refugee agency reported.

The dead were found after the train arrived at an unloading area.

— Independent Foreign Service

EXPORTS *Richards Bay company wins R20m Gotvil contract*

RME barges into Zaire timber deal

CT (BE) 5/6/97 (358)

SHIRLEY JONES
KWAZULU NATAL EDITOR

Durban — Rowley Morgan Engineering (RME), the Richards Bay-based firm, has secured a R20 million contract to supply 16 barges and eight tugs to the Gotvil Timber group which has been granted a concession to extract hardwoods from the Zaire forests.

Roy Hulton, the company's newly appointed managing director, said on Friday that this contract was the second granted by Gotvil to a Richards Bay company. The first will see Bell Equipment supply Gotvil with land-based timber extraction equipment.

The 16 barges to be supplied by RME would each be 46 metres long and weigh 150 tons. They would be manufactured in three-metre widths to facilitate transport from Richards Bay to Zaire by ship and further road transport from the port of Matadi to Kinshasa, 320 km away, Hulton said.

In total, 256 sections would be transported. RME would have completed the South African end of the barge contract by mid-June for export at the end of that month, he said.

The tugs would also be manufactured in Richards Bay. He said they would be exported as fully assembled units, but the bridge and superstructure would be installed in Kinshasa. This contract would be completed by mid-1998.

Hulton said RME had established itself as a notable marine manufacturer and looked forward to additional marine contracts. This boded well for the ship repair industry envisaged for Richards Bay.

Hulton is a strong supporter of the $106 million dry dock project which has been proposed for the port.

ZAIRE *Rebels change ownership rules in 'neo-colonialist' review*

Mining houses rush to sup with Kabila

ET(BR) 5/5/97 (358)

FROM THE ECONOMIST

Lubumbashi — The copper-refining plant at Likasi, in southern Zaire, still works — just. You can stand over a huge vat of gently churning sulphuric acid but you had better be careful where you put your feet: the iron walkway is rusted away in places and the handrail has disappeared. "There's been no maintenance on this place for years," says one manager.

Zaire is indeed the treasure-house it is proclaimed to be ; but the next owner — presumably the rebel leader, Laurent Kabila — will need to recut the key.

The mines, once heavy producers, have declined for more than 10 years. Copper production was over 500 000 tons a year in the 1980s, but only about 30 000 in 1996. Cobalt production dropped from 17 000 tons to about 3 000. The causes: lack of investment, high arbitrary taxes (ie, presidential pilfering), other theft and civil unrest, which drove out many managers and technicians.

With all the mining areas now in rebel hands, overseas mining companies have dashed to Zaire to get at some of the richest ores in the world: gold, manganese, zinc and cobalt as well as copper.

Half of the copper belt is in Zambia, which is privatising its mines. Zaire will almost certainly follow suit, opening an opportunity for cross-border mining co-operation. And peace in Angola could mean the Benguela railway, the shortest route from the mines to the sea, is restored.

Potentially, Zaire is the biggest prize since the new mining scramble for Africa started four years ago.

Disposing of their mineral bonanza presents the about-to-be rulers of Zaire with their biggest long-term decision. Land and minerals are sensitive issues in Africa. They can only be properly exploited by capital and technology from outside.

Zaire's ore could help create a world surplus of copper and cobalt

But foreign investment is associated in Zaire with a "neo-colonial" system that benefited only President Mobutu Sese Seko and his cronies.

Kabila has promised to change this. But he will inherit a bankrupt, indebted country. His only sensible options are joint ventures or selling off the mines. But his movement's recent statements suggest Kabila has other ideas.

On April 10 the rebel alliance announced it would return to the people "the control of production, distribution and consumption of their land and mineral resources". Mawampanga Mwana Nanga, the rebels' American-educated finance commissioner, warned that all contracts would be reviewed and possibly renegotiated.

In the meantime, the rebels needed cash, and men from the world's mining houses were lining up outside their headquarters in Goma. One of the first was Jean Ramon Boulle, Canadian head of American Mineral Fields and a former De Beers employee. Putting his jet at Kabila's disposal helped, and on April 16 his company signed a $1 billion deal to recycle the tailings of the Kolwezi copper mine and build a plant to produce 200 000 tons a year of zinc at Kipushi. The rebel alliance will have a 49 percent share — but, in theory, ultimate control — in the project.

De Beers has not fared so well. As soon as the diamond fields around Mbuji-Mayi were captured, De Beers' men hurried to Goma — only to be told by Mawampanga that he disapproves of monopolies. All diamonds from the MIBA diamond mine, once 80 percent state-owned, would no longer be sold at a guaranteed price to De Beers, said Mawampanga: output would be auctioned each month to the highest bidder.

Auctioning diamonds works well in good times, but the price of Zaire's stones has dropped recently and will go lower. Analysts believe Zaire's ore could help create a world surplus of copper by the end of the decade. The outlook for cobalt might be worse.

Peter Searle, an analyst with CRU, a mineral consultancy, says if Zaire's cobalt comes back on stream, the price could collapse from $25 a pound to about $7.

But that's commodities.

New banknotes to stop Zaire's economic rot

Star 5/5/97 (358)

By Ross Herbert
Star Foreign Service

Kinshasa – In a desperate attempt to pay the bills of the beleaguered Zairian government, Prime Minister Likulia Bolongo has announced that new Zairian banknotes will begin rolling off the printing presses this week.

The Zairian government is effectively bankrupt, and Bolongo openly declared the government cannot pay its bills without printing new money. Rebels, who are closing in on Kinshasa, have captured all the diamond, gold, copper and cobalt mines that once funded the regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko.

As rebels have advanced, the markets accessible from Kinshasa has shrunk and fears have grown that Mobutu's soldiers will loot the capital before surrendering to rebels. As a result, even revenue from import duties has dried up.

None of the commercial banks in the country will grant Mobutu's government credit, and business leaders have rejected recent requests for short-term loans.

War, desperation and an empty treasury are usually a perfect recipe for hyperinflation. Yet Mobutu's portion of Zaire is showing comparatively stable prices and maintained a stable exchange rate against the US dollar.

From 1992 to 1994, inflation ranged from 3 031% to 8 828% a year. Last year inflation was 741%, and it has been running at an annual rate of 493% so far this year.

However, last month prices jumped only a modest 5,8%, according to the economic section of the US embassy. (In Zaire, the central bank does not release inflation figures, but relies on surveys conducted at the US embassy.)

Such comparatively stable prices stem in part from a currency shortage. Everyone who can is holding on to cash or moving it out of the country. The cessation of imports has significantly cut demand for dollars, which has dampened the rise in the exchange rate.

The main reason behind the price stability is the public's refusal to accept high-denomination bank notes introduced by Mobutu's government in January.

The notes, in denominations of 100 000, 500 000 and 1 million zaires, were dubbed "prostates" because they appeared around the time that the severity of Mobutu's prostate cancer became known.

Mobutu has no cards to play

Star 5/6/97 (358)

Mandela-brokered talks bring hope, but despot wants to exit with dignity

By Peter Fabricius
aboard the SAS Outeniqua
and Ross Herbert
in Kinshasa, Zaire
Star Foreign Service

President Mandela used tough and nail-biting diplomacy yesterday to end a stalemate and finally bring together the president of Zaire and his rebel rival with international negotiators.

In three days of drama on the South African Navy vessel SAS Outeniqua the two Zaire leaders tried to outmanoeuvre each other about who should be present at their summit – and even where it should be held.

It was postponed on Friday and again on Saturday but finally took place on the vessel anchored inside the harbour of the Congolese port Pointe Noire, but only after Mandela issued a terse ultimatum to Kabila to be at the meeting yesterday or the president would fly home.

Kabila arrived by helicopter on the ship late on Saturday and



ACER / REUTERS

Peace maker ... President Mandela is flanked by President Mobutu of Zaire (left) and rebel leader Laurent Kabila whom he brought together aboard a South African navy vessel, the SAS Outeniqua, in Pointe Noire harbour, Congo, to negotiate ending the civil war which has torn apart the central African country.

Mobutu arrived at Mbam yesterday.

Wearing his trademark leopard-skin cap, and clutching a walking stick in one hand and his wife's hand in the other, Mobutu walked slowly towards the lift which would take him to the upper-deck captain's cabin where Mandela was to meet him.

Mobutu's expression was grim as he walked to face what was in effect a political firing squad after 30 years of rule.

It was clear that his days were numbered and the only point of negotiations was how, and how quickly, he would go.

After the meeting, Mobutu and Kabila conducted their first-ever joint media conference with Mandela on board the vessel. A joint statement was released announcing the rebel leader's decision to terminate the military advance and to hold negotiations before meeting again under Mandela's chairmanship.

Although both sides publicly stated their previously tough positions on how the transition should be handled, sources disclosed that in fact Mobutu had agreed to quit power.

The public positions reiterated by Kabila yesterday were that Mobutu should hand over power to his alliance as the transitional authority and that he (Kabila) should decide who else would be on that authority.

Mobutu has agreed in principle to relinquish power, a South African presidential aide said yesterday.

And in turn,Kabila agreed to halt his troops' advance on Kinshasa, Zaire's capital, for eight to 10 days. The aide said that during this time Kabila and Mobutu would negotiate the transfer of power.

Sources said that during the hour-long meeting on board the

Acting like man facing a political firing squad

SAS Outeniqua, the two sides had narrowed their differences to the question of to whom power should be handed over.

Mobutu firmly rejects the idea of handing over power directly to Kabila, as the rebel leader has apparently publicly demanded.

But it is understood that Kabila might accept power being handed over to a neutral chairman of a transitional authority which will prepare the way for democratic elections in Zaire.

Since Kabila's Alliance of Democratic forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire will hold most positions on the transitional authority, the identity of the chairman will not be very important.

Mobutu proposed instead to remain in power and only to hand over the reins to a new president elected in polls organised by the transitional authority.

But the sources said the two sides had restated these previous positions at the media conference because they had not yet agreed on the details of the new deal.

The next meeting under Mandela will probably also take place on board the Outeniqua.

Officials will meet before the to try to finalise the details.

Meanwhile, Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki will brief regional heads of state.

In Kinshasa, reaction to the news was mixed because of conflicting radio reports. When university students heard the news they began celebrating, saying they wished Mandela would take Mobutu "somewhere else".

Should talks fail in the next week, Kabila's forces are poised to strike.They are about 65km away from Kinshasa airport.

▶ **Refugees crushed to death in train**
Page 4



Zairean rebel leader Laurent Desire Kabila (third from right) arrives late on Saturday night aboard the SA Navy ship *SAS Outeniqua*, anchored off Pointe Noire in Congo, accompanied by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki. Negotiations between Kabila and embattled Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko (left) resulted in Mobutu stepping down from power. PIC: WALTER DLADLA

Curtain falls on Mobutu era

Sowetan 5/5/97 (358)

PONTE NOIRE – Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko has agreed to step down after 32 years in power in favour of a transitional authority in which members of rebel leader Laurent Kabila's alliance will have a majority.

The agreement caps months of international mediation to find a political settlement for Zaire, wracked by seven months of civil war.

The two rivals met face-to-face for the first time yesterday aboard the SA Navy ship *SAS Outeniqua* in the Congolese port of Ponte Noire under the chairmanship of President Nelson Mandela.

They spoke for 90 minutes and then issued a joint communique setting out their counter-proposals for a political settlement for strife-torn Zaire.

Officials said the substance of the agreement was not made public as both parties had yet to agree on the composition of the transitional authority.

However, Mobutu had agreed to quit on condition that he hand over power to a transitional authority and not to Kabila personally. This had been agreed to by Kabila, a reliable source said.

The majority of the authority's members would be drawn from Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo Zaire.

Mandela left the *Outeniqua* last night to brief Congolese President Pascal Lissouba. He was due to return to South Africa later.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki would in turn brief the presidents of Togo, Uganda, Angola, Rwanda and Gabon, a South African official said.

Details of the agreement would be thrashed out by representatives of the rival parties culminating in another Mobutu-Kabila meeting, probably aboard the *SAS Outeniqua* in eight to 10 days.

Although no ceasefire had been agreed to, Kabila had given Mandela the undertaking for the unilateral suspension of hostilities.

Earlier, in an official communique, the parties merely set out their hardline positions without any indication of an agreement being reached.

According to the communique, the two leaders had met "to discuss the crisis in Zaire and to address the situation".

Kabila had proposed that his alliance should assume power as a transitional authority, United Nations special envoy to Zaire Mohamed Sahnoun said at a media briefing. The alliance should decide who would head this authority, and Mobutu should cede his power. A cessation of hostilities would be a consequence of this process. Kabila had handed a document to Mobutu, containing his alliance's proposal.

As a gesture of goodwill, Kabila had ordered his troops to stop advancing on all fronts. – *Sapa*.



ZAIRE

Kabila on brink of capturing Kinshasa

fm 9/5/97 (368)

Diplomatic conundrum for SA as rebel chief reneges on gesture of goodwill, while Mobutu plans 'strategic' visit to Gabon

Despite signs of the imminent fall of the Zairean capital Kinshasa to Laurent Kabila's rebel forces, Pretoria says a second meeting between President Mobutu Sese Seko and Kabila "will go ahead" aboard the *SAS Outeniqua* next week.

Perhaps. But the drama unfolding in SA's vast near neighbour is hiding an even bigger one — the end of French influence over its former dominions. Mobutu is about to become the first French African leader to be deposed without French intervention. At last week's *Outeniqua* summit off the Congo coast, France's man in Brazzaville as well as two close French allies — Presidents Pascal Lissouba of Congo and Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo — were prevented from boarding the ship and had to wait at the Point Noire quayside for news.

French Africa policy expert Prof Guy Martin of UWC says the absence of Paris's involvement in the Zairean conflict "marks the decline of French presence and influence in Africa" and is the culmination of three key developments:

❑ The death in 1993 of Ivory Coast president Félix Houphouet-Boigny, the grand old man of French contact on the continent;

❑ The devaluation of the CFA franc by 50% in January 1994, for the first time since 1948, and soon after the death of Houphouet-Boigny who implacably opposed devaluation. Paris in effect sent out the message that it could not afford to bail out its clients and advised they'd have to seek relief from the World Bank and IMF in future; and

❑ The recent death of France's long-time African kingmaker, Jacques Foccart, who represented the "client" tradition in relations with Africa.

Paris's new approach is represented by Prime Minister Alain Juppe, who advocates relations based on economic self-interest, hence moves to strengthen ties with SA and Nigeria.

Mobutu and Kabila agreed at their historic first encounter on board the naval icebreaker last Sunday that a second meeting would be convened by President Nelson Mandela "within eight to 10 days."

The two sides "would, during this period, consider each other's proposals and communicate their conclusions to President Mandela."

Kabila seems to have drawn his conclusions overnight. A day after the May 4 joint communique — in which Kabila says he has "as a gesture of goodwill ordered his troops to stop their advance on all fronts" — he said in Lubumbashi: "If Mobutu hands over power before we enter Kinshasa, I will guarantee his safety and that of his biological family. But if he does not, we will chase him away."

Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFLC) was, he added, ready to enter the capital "within two or three days."

While the Department of Foreign Affairs was "evaluating" Kabila's apparent reneging on his goodwill gesture, it insists this does not spell the end to negotiations. The talks are aimed at "finding a long-term political solution to the Zaire crisis." Even if Kabila marched into Kinshasa "tomorrow," says an SA diplomat, it would not be the end of the international community's involvement.

"The talks are not just about replacing Mobutu with Kabila but involve a long-term process to restore democracy to Zaire."

Kabila's war talk could be merely tactical but the question remains: what incentive is there for him to continue talking?

According to a source close to the talks, Kabila will be under international pressure to agree to the establishment of a transitional authority, followed by elections, which would probably be internationally supervised.

SA, assisted by the US, has invested a great deal of effort in brokering a peaceful deal in Zaire, which may be seen as the first practical test of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's "African renaissance."

University of the Western Cape's Peter Vale says if the first round of Mobutu-Kabila talks was an effort to rein in Kabila, it failed. If it was, secondly, to prevent a battle for Kinshasa, then the situation was unclear. If the third aim was to focus on a smooth transition, then it has heightened people's anxieties that a deal cannot stick. "One can only hope good sense prevails," Vale says, adding that SA used its trump card — Mandela — to get the parties to the table, "but the outcome is uncertain."



SA and other countries assisting in the talks hope the second meeting will produce a "marriage" of the two sets of proposals put forward by Mobutu and Kabila last Sunday.

Kabila proposes:

❑ The ADFLC should assume power as the transitional authority;

❑ The ADFLC will decide who else should be part of this authority;

❑ Mobutu should cede power to such an authority; and

❑ The termination of hostilities will be a consequence of this process.

Mobutu proposes:

- A ceasefire should be agreed on;
- A transitional authority should be established to organise elections, including the election of a President; and
- He will hand over power to the elected President.

Mobutu realises the process cannot be completed unless he steps down. As the facilitators see it, there would then be a transitional period during which an interim head of State takes over and, in due course, Kabila would assume the reins — assuming the ADFLC triumphed at the polls.

Kabila would have to prove he has a mandate to rule Zaire, given that his alliance comprises four different parties and that there are contenders such as former Premier Etienne Tshisekedi.

SA Institute of International Affairs director Greg Mills says: "Kabila will be the key Zairean leader in a post-civil war, pre-election interregnum and the hope is that there will be sufficient encouragement, pressure and interest on his part for the setting up of a transitional authority even if he were to take Kinshasa by military means."

On Tuesday, CNN quoted Western diplomats in Kinshasa as saying Mobutu would fly to the Gabonese capital, Libreville, on Wednesday under the pretext of attending a Great Lakes summit, but added that the trip was apparently part of a deal to allow Kabila to take over power.

Other reports claimed Zairean soldiers had gone on the rampage and looted the village around Mobutu's northern jungle palace at Gbadolite — a sure sign that Mobutu's time is up.

The rebel radio station was broadcasting appeals "to all government soldiers in Kinshasa to leave and present themselves to ADFLC commanders at Kenge or at bases inside Kinshasa."

Amarnath Singh

ANC OUTCASTS

Richmond by-election test

Expelled Nkabinde and Holomisa plan to contest local polls first

The wisdom of the ANC's summary expulsion of KwaZulu-Natal Midlands leader Sifiso Nkabinde, allegedly because he was a police spy in the Eighties, will be put to an early test when voters go to the polls for a by-election in his home town of Richmond.

This follows the resignation of nine of the 13 Richmond local councillors in protest at the ANC's treatment of their regional chairman. The result, says the town's electoral officer, town clerk Mohem Sedhary, is that a by-election must be held within 90 days — something of an irony since the entire council was returned unopposed in last year's local government elections — and Nkabinde has already stated his intention to stand for election as a ward councillor. Though the councillors who resigned have not yet left the ANC, they have vowed to follow Nkabinde's lead.

Another probable defection to the Nkabinde camp appears to be provincial ANC executive committee member Emily Ntuli, who expects an "expulsion order" for showing support for Nkabinde at a weekend rally in Richmond.

The ANC may have anticipated some supporters following Nkabinde, but it must be dismayed at the level of haemorrhaging within party structures.

An indication of the intensity with which the election will be fought is that one of the ANC councillors who refused to resign, Rodney van der Byl, has been given police protection after allegedly receiving threatening phone calls.

An Nkabinde victory would be more than a face-slap for the ANC. Apart from dividing its primary rural stronghold it would also signal a reverse in its campaign to overturn the 1994 provincial election result, which handed Inkatha control of KwaZulu-Natal.

Adding salt to the wound, Nkabinde at the weekend announced his intention to throw in his lot with another ANC outcast, Bantu



Mobutu spells out terms to step down

BD 5/5/97 (358)

Stephen Laufer

SAS OUTENIQUA — Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko had agreed to hand over power to a transitional authority on the understanding that it would not be immediately headed by rebel leader Laurent Kabila, a senior SA presidential aide said yesterday.

The aide said this agreement, not mentioned in an official communique following talks between Mobutu and Kabila, would help Mobutu avoid the indignity of ceding power directly to the leader of a rebel insurrection, a condition he is believed to have tabled.

The talks, aboard the SA Navy ship the SAS Outeniqua, and chaired by President Nelson Mandela, lasted one hour and 22 minutes.

It was possible Kabila would take over as head of the transitional body soon after Mobutu's departure from office, the aide said.

A meeting of Zairean government and rebel officials, facilitated by SA, would meet within the next few days to establish the composition of the transitional authority, which would then be finally established at a meeting in eight to 10 days' time. Mandela, Mobutu and Kabila would participate in that meeting, probably also on board the Outeniqua, which appears set to remain moored in Pointe Noire, Congo.



Zairean rebel leader Laurent Kabila. Picture: AP

Mandela would in the meantime brief the heads of state of countries with an interest in the Zairean situation, including Uganda, Rwanda, Congo, Gabon, Togo, Angola and Zimbabwe. Mandela met President Pascal Lissouba of Congo last night.

The official communique said Kabila had ordered his troops to stop their advance on Kinshasa in what he termed a gesture of goodwill. Mobutu had agreed to substantive talks aimed at a transition to democracy.

Also attending the talks were Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, UN and Organisation of African Unity special representative Mahomed Sahnoun, and an interpreter from SA foreign affairs. Flanked by Mobutu, Kabila and Mandela, Sahnoun announced that after a long and frank discussion the two sides agreed they would consider each other's proposals, submitted on the ship, before meeting again in eight or 10 days' time for a final agreement.

Kabila had proposed that Mobutu step down immediately, ceding power

Continued on Page 2

Zaire

(358) BD 5/5/97

Continued from Page 1

to a transitional authority headed by his rebel alliance. He would then decide who else would join the transitional authority. Mobutu had proposed an immediate ceasefire and a transitional authority to organise elections, including elections for a new president. He would remain in power until the new president was elected.

The meeting was held in Mandela's suite on the ship, normally the quarters of the executive officer or deputy commander.

In a gesture, Mandela made the two larger cabins available to the two Zairean adversaries.

Sahnoun and Mandela said they welcomed the agreement and hoped it would open the way to a solution.

Mandela said the agreement had confirmed his confidence in both Zairean leaders. Mobutu realised as head of state that responsibility for the next steps rested primarily on him. He said he was also impressed by the contribution of "comrade" Kabila.

Asked whether there was a possibility that Mabuto would run again for president, Mandela said: " Let's wait and see." Neither Mobutu nor Kabila were prepared to answer questions.

Mobutu emerged from the cabin at 2.17pm looking frail and assisted by the interpreter. Sources familiar with Mobutu's health say he is unlikely to see the year out.

After Mbeki and Sahnoun had left, Mandela asked for two cups of tea — for himself and Kabila.

The agreement came at the end of a three-day cat and mouse game which saw Mandela cancelling all appointments at home in order to remain on board to chair the face to face encounter. Mandela is understood to have spoken sternly to Kabila on Saturday night after he raised a new set of preconditions to travel to the ship from Soyo in Angola.

It is understood he told Kabila that if he was not on board by 9am yesterday, SA was pulling out of the negotiations and going home.

Kabila immediately set out for the ship, where he spent the night.

The agreement represents a major diplomatic victory for the SA government and will significantly boost internationally Mbeki's conception of an African renaissance.

For the United States, it signals an apparent loss of influence in central Africa, if only temporarily.

US ambassador to the UN Bill Richardson did not take part in the talks after Kabila on Friday refused to go aboard unless the US was excluded.

See Page 4

THE BIG STORY

Kabila scores with 'instant democracy'

'We have to have someone in charge before we can carry on the fight'

ZAIRIAN REBEL LEADER LAURENT KABILA HAS INTRODUCED A SIMPLE FORM OF DEMOCRACY TO THE AREAS OF THE COUNTRY WHICH HIS ARMY HAS CAPTURED, REPORTS **ROSS HERBERT** OF THE INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE FROM KISANGANI. BUT IT IS DEMOCRACY THAT COULD WELL SPELL TROUBLE FOR ANY PEACE SETTLEMENT THAT IS NEGOTIATED

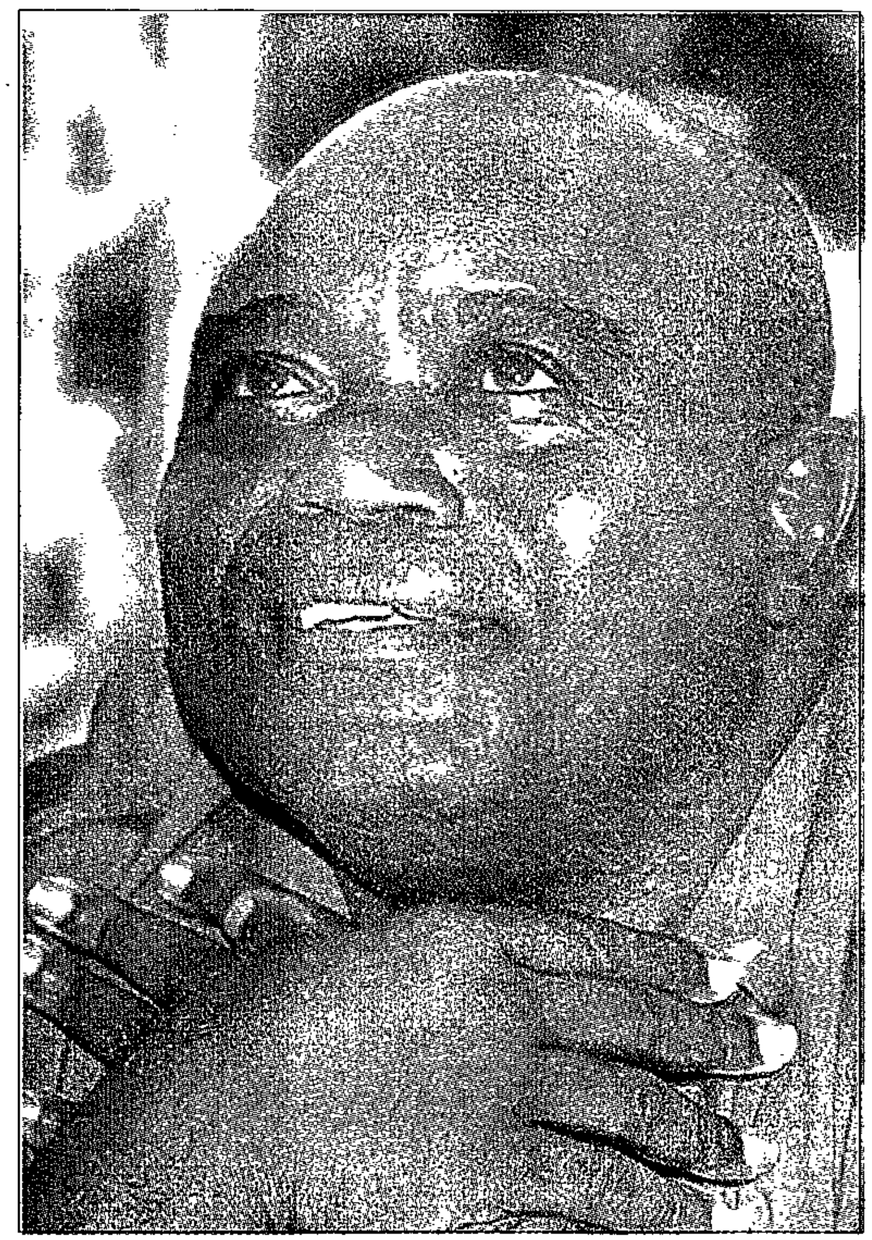
While talks on a peace settlement in Zaire continue, rebel leader Laurent Desiré Kabila has introduced an extraordinary third force that has the potential to upset any negotiated settlement: instant democracy, which Mr Kabila promises to bring to every captured city.

Mr Kabila's high-speed elections are astounding both for the simplicity of their method and for the contrast they offer with previous African liberation movements that have often promised democracy, but taken years to deliver elections.

Under intense international pressure, President Mobutu Sese Seko allowed opposition political parties only in 1990. Since then, for seven years, he has successfully resisted scheduling free elections.

Just six days after Mr Kabila's army captured Kisangani (formerly Stanleyville), Zaire's third-largest city, Mr Kabila and his advisors swept into the city to set up a government. Six hours later, the first elections were completed for the commissars for each of Kisangani's six administrative zones. The next day a provincial governor, vice-governor and mayor were elected.

How does one organise elections in six hours? The process began when representatives from Mr Kabila's Alliance of Demo- [illegible] "Oooooooo" sounds [illegible] plained Mr [illegible] vice-com- [illegible] of Mobutu [illegible] favour of duration of the war. Clearly [illegible]



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Answer to a prayer? rebel leader Laurent Desire Kabila talks to the media



On the move: Zairian rebels wave their weapons in jubilation at the progress they've made so far into Mr Mobutu Sese Seko's country

ARG 5/15/97 (358)

fanned out to the six municipal zones.

Hundreds of people gathered around humble meeting halls and administrative buildings. Earlier in the week, alliance officials announced the elections would be held, but no schedule was announced. Most who joined the crowds of voters heard by word of mouth or simply saw a crowd forming.

In Tshopo, the most populous city zone, alliance justice minister Nkongolo Mwenze conducted the elections with a few aides and a single soldier. A chair and two tables were set in front of a crowd of about 400 people. Mr Mwenze climbed atop a table and began explaining, in a loud bellow, the unusual procedure that was to follow.

The first stage was the campaign: each of 25 Tshopo candidates got a chance to climb atop the table and present himself to the crowd (there are no female candidates and few women in the crowd). The first candidate, Honoré Myango, tried to explain that he is not a member of the party of Mr Mobutu, although his brother is a Mobutist. His speech was drowned out by a cacophony of shouts in the crowd that gradually coalesced around a chant of "Mouvancier, Mouvancier," the name for Mr Mobutu's political family that has become an epithet in Kisangani.

Mr Myango stepped down and a new candidate's name was bellowed out. He stepped up and shouted: "I have never worked before, but I want to now." Thunleapt from the increasingly excited crowd.

The third candidate faced raucous cries that he shouldn't run because he drinks too much. A fourth candidate simply held forth a Red Cross business card. "Mouvancier, Mouvancier!" the crowd replied.

Poye Poyo, a 33-year-old assistant professor, stepped on the table and, without a word, tied a white strip of cloth around his head, a symbol of support for the rebel alliance. The crowd went wild with cheers and chants of support.

After all the candidates were presented, the list was winnowed down to four. Voting was by show of hands: each candidate climbed onto the table and members of the crowd were asked to raise a hand if they supported keeping the candidate on the short list. Then the crowd was asked to raise a hand if they opposed the candidate remaining on the list. If more hands opposed, the candidate is eliminated.

One by one, candidates were cut until only two remained. Mr Poyo, the Kabila supporter, was the overwhelming favourite. A 28-year-old university student was elected his vice-commissar.

In Tshopo and other zones, greater age was tantamount to complicity with Mr Mobutu. Virtually every candidate over 40 was greeted with the familiar derisive chants.

"We reject this system because it is undemocratic. The university is very near and there are many students here," commissar for Tshopo.

His comments were drowned with bitter shouts. "Old people have spoiled this country. They have eaten for a long time and must leave the place to young people," one young man screamed.

Across Kisangani the results were similar: young opposition candidates captured all six commissar posts.

However, one Mobutu official, considered an honest man, was elected vice-commissar. The next day, thousands of residents gathered at the city soccer stadium to repeat the process to elect a provincial governor, vice-governor and mayor.

'Old people have spoiled this country. They have eaten for a long time and must leave the place to young people'

Such a crude voting system is far from perfect. Lack of advance notice kept many from voting or standing for office. Because voting took place at a single location, rural voters were effectively excluded.

Still, mob democracy, no matter how flawed, was preferable to no democracy to most Kisangani residents.

There were squabbles over whether voters could raise one hand or two. At times it was difficult to determine which candidate had more votes. In most cases, public opinion was overwhelmingly the most hard-core opposition figures. However, when results were close, the crowds had a clear sense of fair play.

Although he had broad support, Obotela Rashidi, a history professor, was eliminated as a candidate for governor and returned to his position in the heart of a crowd of thousands.

A separate list of candidates for vice-governor had been prepared without his name and none of Mr Kabila's advisors had thought of allowing unsuccessful candidates to run again for lower office.

After sustained protest from the crowd, Professor Rashidi was bodily lifted and passed hand over hand over the crowd and to the stage, and elected vice-governor.

Despite the flaws, no alliance candidates stood for office while many Mobutists tried and failed to win.

The leader of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, the main national opposition party, was elected governor while UDPS candidates won in four of six zones.

The Kisangani elections came the same day that Mr Kabila announced he was banning all political party activity for the

hugely popular in Kisangani, in part because disdain for Mr Mobutu and his army runs so deep.

However, the alliance has virtually no political organisation and might lose at levels below the presidency if its candidates were to stand against better organised national parties, such as UDPS.

Such a rough system of democracy does offer the rebels other practical advantages: "There is no one here. The officials all fled the city. We have to have someone in charge before we leave to continue the fight. This is not perfect democracy, but it is the best we can do," explained Mawampanga Mwana Nanga, Mr Kabila's minister of economics and finance.

It is possible that Mr Kabila, like many revolutionaries before him, will lose enthusiasm for democracy once he captures complete power.

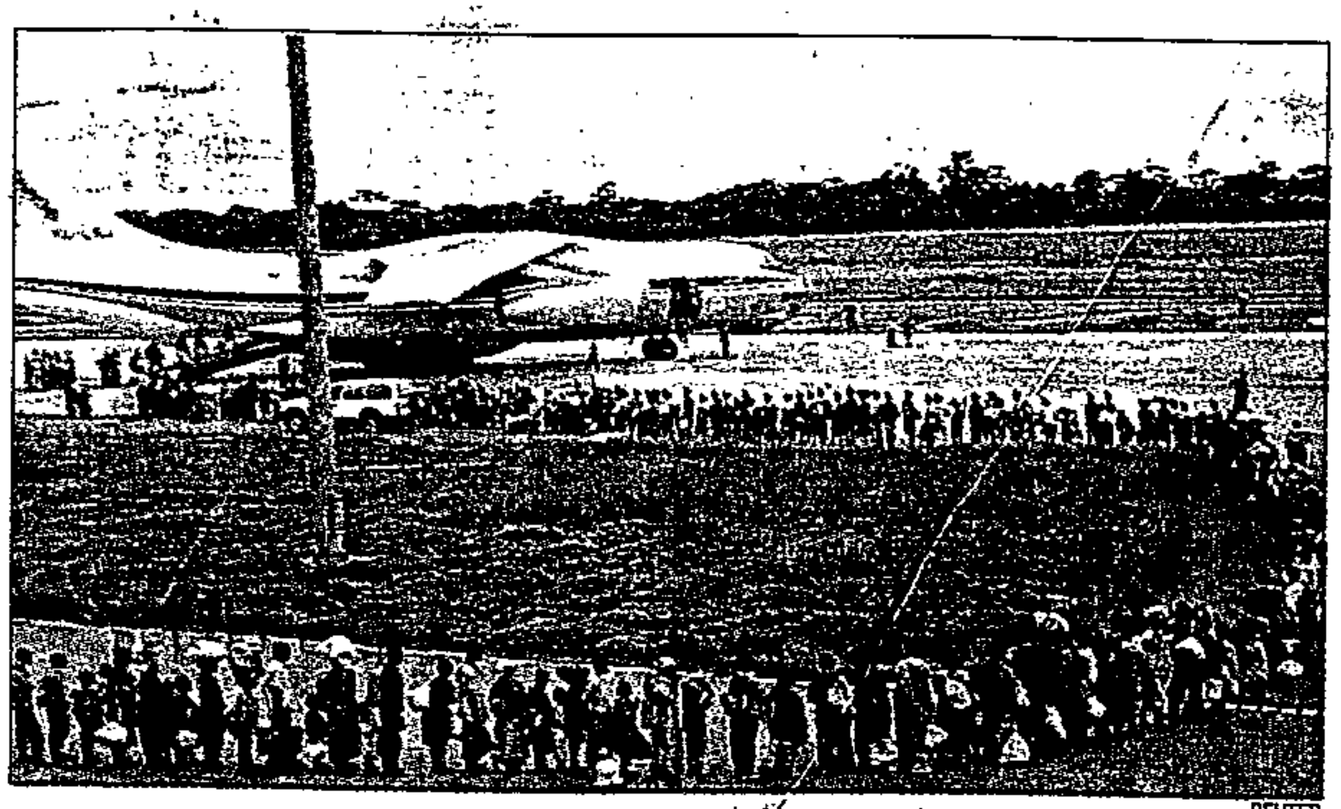
For the moment, the need to give power to the people, fight corruption and work hard are the themes of every speech by Mr Kabila and his representatives.

Such pledges are helping build their popularity and building a bank of promises that will be hard to renounce.

By bringing elections to occupied territory, Mr Kabila also deftly increases his leverage in negotiations with Mr Mobutu.

How, Mr Kabila asks, can he return power to Mobutu officials when the people have elected their own leaders in occupied territory?

Kinshasa waits in fear of advancing rebels



REUTER

Going home: Rwandan refugees queue for a UN plane to Rwanda. 7000 have already returned home

Defiant Mobutu returns to capital

Kinshasa – Fear and apprehension gripped Zaire's capital Kinshasa today after embattled President Mobutu Sese Seko returned to the city in defiance of rebel demands that he quit.

With Laurent Kabila's rebels reported less than 85km from the usually teeming capital of five million people, residents were slow to venture out, cautiously checking the streets.

Aides said the veteran leader, who is battling cancer as well as the whirlwind rebel advance, was resting in his presidential villa in Kinshasa's heavily guarded Tshatshi military camp.

Many Kinshasa residents openly welcome the prospect of Mr Kabila's arrival but fear the response of Mr Mobutu's soldiers, who in the past have looted and pillaged before fleeing from advancing rebels.

Markets operated normally and traffic picked up as the morning wore on but, with Mr Mobutu showing signs of hardening his position, newspapers predicted the imminent arrival of Mr Kabila. Some hinted at difficult times if Mr Mobutu opted to fight.

"Washington prepares Kabila's entry into Kinshasa," Le Potentiel newspaper headlined, focusing on comments from US special envoy Bill Richardson that Washington wanted a "soft landing" when the rebels arrived.

Mr Mobutu's foreign minister, Kamanda wa Kamanda, yesterday dismissed reports that Mr Mobutu had written to US President Bill Clinton pledging to resign.

A communique issued after weekend talks between Mr Mobutu, Mr Kabila and President Mandela on the SAS Outeniqua in Congo said Mr Mobutu had offered to hand over to an elected successor.

Meanwhile, a regional military source told Reuter today that Zairian soldiers, retreating from rebel advances, had gone on the rampage and were looting the village of Mr Mobutu's northern jungle palace at Gbadolite.

■ US peace envoy Mr Richardson arrived in Kasane, northern Botswana, today to hold talks with visiting African leaders on the crisis in Zaire, a Sapa correspondent reports.

Mr Richardson was holding talks behind closed doors with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. The two were to be joined by Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

The three were expected to leave Botswana later in the day and head for Cape Town for further talks with Deputy President Thabo Mbeki. – Sapa

KABILA GIVES PRESIDENT THREE DAYS

Mobutu allies prepare for counter-attack

ST 6/5/97 (358)

KINSHASA: Zairian soldiers are being offered 100 times their monthly salary to support an attempt by loyal troops to recapture Kenge from the rebels.

REBEL leader Mr Laurent Kabila has given President Mobutu Sese Seko "two to three days" to step down — but members of Mobutu's entourage are preparing a counter-offensive as the rebels advance on Kinshasa.

"If Mobutu turns over power before we enter Kinshasa, I will guarantee his safety and that of his biological family," Kabila said at his headquarters in Lubumbashi yesterday.

"If he does not, we will have to chase him away in humiliation."

The president's son and spokesman, Mr Mobutu Nzanga, 27, dismissed the threat as "the arrogant words of a hooligan".

Members of Mobutu's entourage said they were organising a counter-attack that would be carried out by soldiers hand-picked from the special presidential division and 500 Unita members from Angola.

They said yesterday that the column of elite troops was heading east and intended to try to recapture Kenge, about 140km from the capital.

Although Unita has a reputation for brilliance on the battlefield, it would probably take a stronger force to turn back the rebels.

The rebels claimed yesterday that they were only 50km from the airport outside Kinshasa.

To boost the ranks of loyal troops, Mobutu's agents are offering soldiers 100 times their monthly salary if they join units preparing for the counter-attack.

"Some of us are taking the money — but when the shooting starts, we'll run," a young private said. "Who wants to die for a dying man?"

US special envoy Mr Bill Richardson appeared to be of a like mind. "The object of my urgent mission is to prepare a soft landing for Kabila's rebels when they reach Kinshasa — to avert bloodshed and chaos," Richardson said.

Kabila has refused all diplomatic appeals to him to drop his demand that Mobutu resign and hand power over to his alliance. He has shaken off the reins of his original handlers in Rwanda and Uganda and has begun to emerge as an independent force.

In an attempt to persuade Kabila's allies to pressure him into adopting a less belligerent attitude, Richardson has visited Rwanda's Defence Minister, Mr Paul Kagame, and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda.

Most people in Kinshasa were waiting anxiously for the rebels to arrive. Their main concern was that government soldiers would embark on a final looting spree.

Citizens were preparing white flags to drape outside their homes as a sign of support for Kabila.

Most damaging for Mobutu was that many units in his army were also preparing to change sides. — The Times, London

Rwandan refugees treated 'worse than animals' — UN

NEW YORK: The United Nations yesterday accused Zairian rebels of treating Rwandan refugees worse than animals and preventing UN staff from organising an orderly repatriation.

UN spokesman Mr Juan Carlos Brandt told reporters that the rebels were still refusing to co-operate with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which needed access to the Biaro camp south of Kisangani to carry out the repatriation in an organised fashion.

On Sunday, 91 refugees were crushed to death in an overcrowded train from Biaro to Kisangani.

Brandt noted that yesterday the Zairian rebels sent trucks to Kisangani "with twice the number of people they should contain". This was unacceptable, he said.

A total of 7 500 Rwandans have so far been repatriated since an airlift got under way last week.

Brandt appealed to the rebels to allow the UN staff into Biaro, saying "we don't want to see more people dead." — Sapa-AFP

Will Mobutu jump ... or be pushed?

Star 6/6/97 (358)

By Peter Fabricius
Foreign Editor

Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko's 32-year long dictatorship of Zaire is rapidly drawing to an end, but the critical question remaining is whether he stands down peacefully within the next few days or is forced out by rebel leader Laurent Kabila's army.

Kabila threatened yesterday to take Kinshasa within three days if Mobutu did not resign, seemingly reneging on an undertaking given to President Mandela to halt his military advance while SA-brokered negotiations continued to seek a peaceful transfer of power.

But the South African Government remained confident last night that the peaceful option would prevail, suggesting that Kabila's bellicose statements were rhetoric.

South African and US negotiation efforts to prevent a bloody fight for the capital Kinshasa are intensifying. A follow-up meeting of Zairian government, rebel and mediating officials is expected within days to try to negotiate a peaceful transfer of power.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and and US special envoy to Zaire Bill Richardson are engaged in a lightning round of meetings with African leaders, to try to bring pressure to bear on the Zairian leaders to settle the war peacefully.

Richardson is expected in South Africa tomorrow to brief the SA Government on the results of his meetings with Kabila.

Reacting to Kabila's threat to continue the advance on Kinshasa, Mandela's spokesman Parks Mankahlana said last night: "Any statement has to be checked against what is happening on the ground – whether there have in fact been any military manoeuvres forward."

He reiterated the view expressed by a presidential aide on Sunday that SA was in no position to police or even monitor the military situation and had to trust Kabila to honour his pledge.

▶ 'Worse than animals'
Page 4

Zairean govt troops dig in to defend Kinshasa

BD 6/5/97 (358)

KINSHASA — Zairean troops were reinforcing their positions east of the capital Kinshasa yesterday after inconclusive peace talks between President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

Kabila said yesterday his troops were advancing on Kinshasa and that if Mobutu did not resign he would be "chased out". The rebel leader was speaking at his stronghold in Lubumbashi, in southeastern Zaire.

"My troops are fewer than 60km from Kinshasa airport," Kabila said. He said that Mobutu must resign or "he will be chased out within a few days".

A spokesman for Zairean Prime Minister Likulia Bolongo said volunteers from the 31st paratroop brigade and other army units, including the elite special presidential division, had gone to the Bandundu region at the weekend to reinforce Kenge, 200km from Kinshasa.

The move comes after talks on Sunday between Mobutu and Kabila on the naval ship SAS Outeniqua anchored off Congo, which ended with no peace agreement.

The rebel leader then pledged to halt the advance of his forces as a "goodwill" gesture, but some of his aides said he would have to account for this decision when he returned to Lubumbashi.

Bolongo named a co-ordinator for national reconciliation yesterday, while Mobutu returned to Kinshasa. Officials said Planning Minister Joseph Nsinga Udju was appointed to head a national reconciliation commission decided on last week to implement eventual agreements with Kabila's rebels. The rebels have seized more than half the country since October.

Meanwhile, Mobutu flew back to Kinshasa airport and immediately left with his aides in a fleet of limousines for the Tshatshi military base where he lives.

The reconciliation commission was formed on May 1 with the responsibility of canvassing politicians and other social groups on how to end the Zairean conflict, a source said yesterday.

Foreign mediators are seeking to prevent a bloodbath in Kinshasa and the graceful exit of Mobutu, whose rule has lasted for more than three decades.

Kenge, the last town in Bandundu province linked to the capital by road, was evacuated by government soldiers last week, but sources say it has yet to be overrun by rebel troops.

Rebel forces took control of the strategic town of Kikwit, about 200km east of Kenge, last month and sent in reinforcements by cargo plane from their southern stronghold of Lubumbashi.

"The rebels have not reached Kenge," Bolongo's spokesman said. Zairean military authorities were determined to retake Kikwit. He gave no details on army positions around Kenge. Travellers in Kikwit on Sunday said they had seen no government soldiers.

Information Minister Kin-Kiey Mulumba insisted in a media broadcast on Sunday Kenge remained in government hands.

Sources in touch with inhabitants of Bandundu province said rebels had arrived in Masi-Manimba, halfway between Kikwit and Kenge. Democratic Christian Social Party branch leader Kapitatu Massamba said "the town of Kenge has not fallen, but rebel soldiers are reinforcing their positions". — Sapa-AFP.

Comment: Page 11

Mobutu leaves Kinshasa – and it may be for good

Private jet takes off for crisis summit

ARG 7/5/97 (368)

Kinshasa – U[illegible]urity but with little fanfar[illegible]Mobutu Sese Seko flew out of [illegible]n his private Boeing 727 today, pe[illegible]r the final time after ruling Zaire fo[illegible] almost 32 years.

Journalists were kept out of the [illegible] terminal but saw a motorcade of at lea[illegible] dozen vehicles, including two stretch limousines, guarded by three military jeeps armed with mounted machine guns.

Unlike the reception by thousands of cheering people when Mr Mobutu returned last year after convalescing in France for months, his departure today to a regional summit in Libreville, Gabon, drew little attention.

The government says Mr Mobutu will return to Zaire after the summit, probably over the weekend. But a government source and Western diplomats have hinted the trip could be a first step of Mr Mobutu's final departure in the face of a rebel advance.

The motorcade travelled through some heavily populated neighbourhoods, but [illegible]eople on the streets ignored it. There was [illegible]lication that Kinshasa residents [illegible]Mobutu was leaving for good.

[illegible]aide, who asked not to be named, said it would be wrong to interpret the president's departure as a flight into exile.

Mr Mobutu, he recalled, had repeatedly ruled out fleeing.

Mr Mobutu, 66 and battling prostate cancer, has seen his hold [illegible]rica's third largest nation broken by [illegible]nd rebel offensive. Many in Kinsha[illegible] for change, welcome the prospect of rebel leader Laurent Kabila's arrival.

Meanwhile, US envoy Bill Richardson left Cape Town for Paris today to consult France on the crisis in Zaire.

Mr Richardson, US ambassador to the United Nations, left South Africa aboard a US Air Force plane and was due to put down for one refuelling stop on the 10 000km flight to France. It was not clear where the aircraft would touch down.

The envoy has been shuttling between the Zaire factions and neighbouring countries trying to avert a bloody end to the Zaire conflict. He was in South Africa yesterday for talks with Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

The Zairian rebel forces of Laurent Kabila say they are less than 85km from Kinshasa and have appealed for government troops to surrender to avoid a bloody takeover of the capital. Diplomatic sources say the front line is more like 200km from Kinshasa.



REUT

Suffer the children: Rwandan refugee children wait for a plane in Kisangani, Zaire. More than 300 orphans and minors have returned to Rwanda in a UN airl

Kabila, born in revolutionary mould

His 30-year fight against Mobutu shows signs of bearing fruit

ART 7/5/97 (358)

ZAIRE'S REBEL LEADER AND HEIR-APPARENT TO THE COUNTRY'S PRESIDENCY, LAURENT KABILA, HAS LONG EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN POLITICS AND REVOLUTIONARY WARS, WRITES BUCHIZYA MSETEKA OF REUTER IN LUBUMBASHI

Zairian rebel leader Laurent Kabila fought President Mobutu Sese Seko for more than 30 years before seizing most of Africa's third-largest country in just seven months.

Mr Kabila, who says his rebellion is not only about Zaire but about "changing the face of Africa", said after the first direct encounter with Mr Mobutu on Sunday that his forces would fight on while the ailing president considered their demand that he resign.

The rebel chief backs up his hard line by the lightning advance of his forces across Zaire and the fact that they are now only 100km from the capital, Kinshasa.

Many Mobutu supporters in the capital were riled in February by the sight of South Africa's President Mandela leaning on Mr Kabila's arm in Johannesburg and addressing him as "General Kabila".

But in April he suffered his worst public relations defeat with international condemnation of treatment of Hutu Rwandan refugees. Characteristically, rebels responded by switching from denying access to aid workers to swamping them with refugees.

Mr Kabila, 56, heads the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL). Its cutting edge is Banyamulenge, ethnic Tutsis who triggered the revolt in October.

"My long years of struggle were like spreading fertiliser on a field. But now, it is time to harvest," said the short, burly rebel leader recently at his headquarters in eastern Zaire.

Known by supporters as Mzee, the Swahili word for Grand Old Man, Mr Kabila is the public point man for his alliance of four obscure political groups which was formed only on October 8.

He says the parties to the alliance which met for the first time in Lemera, the first town to fall to the rebels, are his Popular Revolutionary Party (PRP), the National Council of Resistance for Democracy (NCRD), the Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Zaire (RMLZ), led by Masaso Minitaga Ndiaka, and the People's Democratic Alliance (PDA), led by Deo Bugera.

Analysts say that a major asset for Mr Kabila as the alliance leader is that he is not an ethnic Tutsi. Kinshasa still accuses him of being a puppet of the Banyamulenge, who have been denied citizenship, and ethnic brothers in Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

"The Banyamulenge wanted him for his experience and because he is not a Tutsi," said Gerard Prunier, a French specialist in the region.

Mr Kabila dismisses Kinshasa's accusations that he is a puppet. But the level of support the rebels received from numerous neighbouring countries as the war against Mr Mobutu picked up has fuelled widespread doubts about whether he calls the shots.

"I have lived with and known the Banyamulenge all my life. Many of them stood by me throughout my struggle against Mobutu's regime.

"The most important thing is that we are all Zairians," he said.

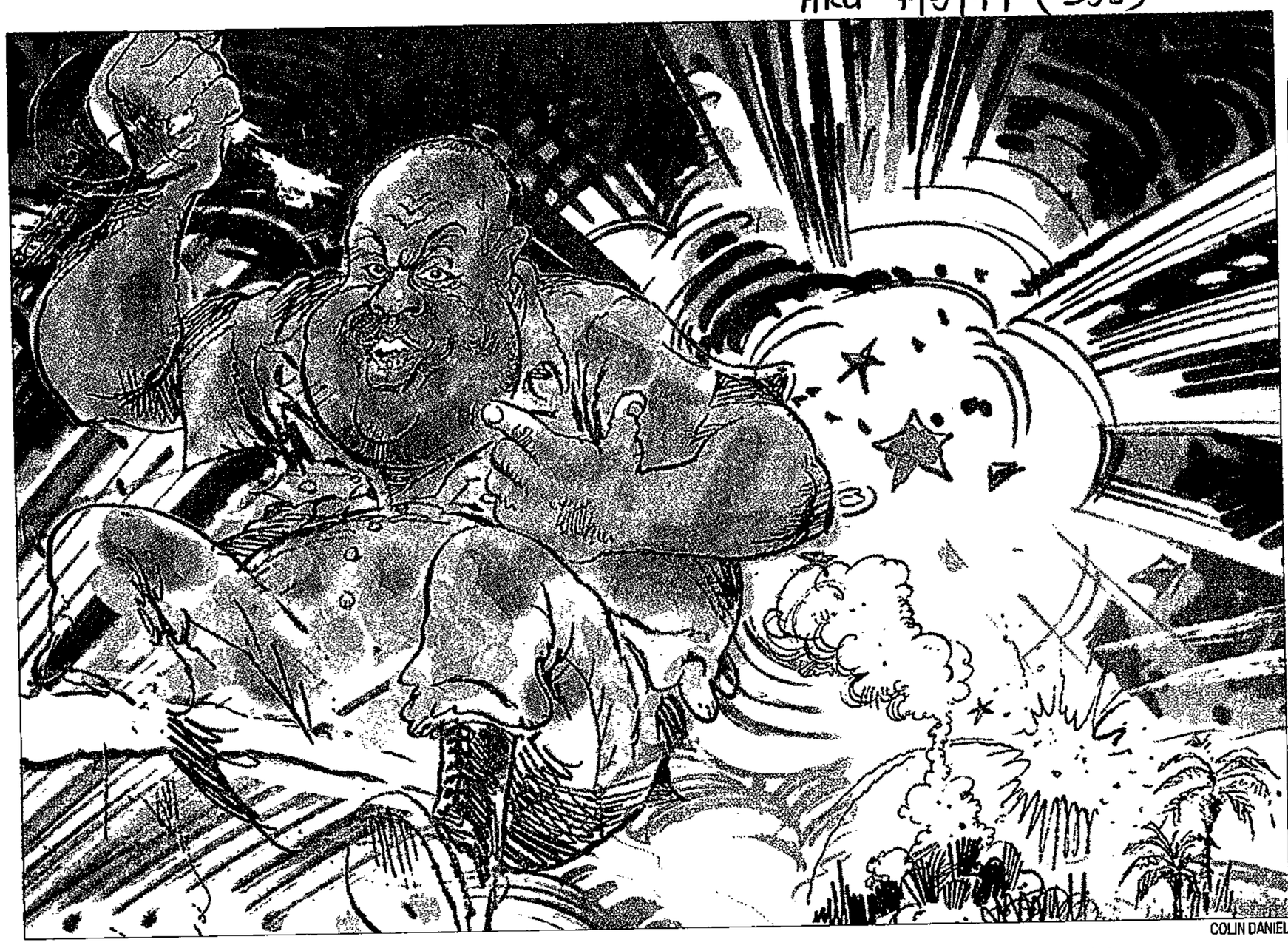
Mr Kabila is from mineral-rich Shaba in southern Zaire, but he has lived for many years among the Banyamulenge in the Mulenge Mountains south of Uvira, from where he plotted the uprising.

War in eastern Zaire began when the Banyamulenge, a community of roughly 400 000, resisted Zairian attempts to expel them to Rwanda, which they left up to 200 years ago.

But its roots go deeper and the rebels have a solid spine of veterans who fought with Rwanda's Tutsis after 1990.

Like most of the Tutsi diaspora around the world, the Banyamulenge flocked to join the rebel group of Paul Kagame, now Rwanda's vice-president and military supremo.

Stocky with white-flecked hair, Mr Kabila is a former comrade-in-arms of the late Argentine-born revolutionary leader Che Guevara, who was with Cuban guerrillas fighting in east Zaire in the 1960s.



COLIN DANIEL

Political lion: rebel leader Laurent Kabila is well versed in African politics, not least because of his 30-year battle against Mobutu Sese Seko

In 1965, Mr Kabila joined a rebellion led by Pierre Mulele, an education minister in the government of Patrice Lumumba, in eastern Zaire when the former Belgian Congo narrowly avoided breakup just after independence.

Mr Mobutu, president since 1965 but now ailing from cancer, crushed that rebellion with foreign help. Ironically, some of the Banyamulenge herdsmen then fought alongside the Mobutu forces.

Mr Kabila, who speaks perfect English despite coming from francophone Zaire, was a regular visitor to Uganda in the late 1980s after Yoweri Museveni's rebels took power in Kampala.

At the same time, exiled Rwandan Tutsis holding top positions in Mr Museveni's army fine-tuned plans to invade their homeland. They did so in 1990 and won the war in 1994 after the Hutus in power had exterminated some 800 000 Tutsis.

The link from Mr Museveni to Mr Kagame to the Banyamulenge is at the heart of claims by Kinshasa and some African states that a plot is unfolding to create a "Tutsiland" in central Africa.

Mr Kabila, as a non-Tutsi, says he is proof this is false. He is married with six children and one of them, Joseph, is the alliance commander for the northern division which captured Kisangani and Lubumbashi, Zaire's second largest city.

MOBUTU MAY HAVE BOLTED

Mediators insist Zaire peace deal on track

ET 7/5/97 (368)

CONFLICTING REPORTS on whether Zairian rebels have respected a pledge to stop fighting to give peace a chance, have not deterred political leaders.

SOUTH AFRICAN and American mediators insisted yesterday that the SA-led peace effort in Zaire was still alive, while contradictory reports from the battle grounds east of Kinshasa made it difficult to assess whether Mr Laurent Kabila's rebels were in fact observing a pledge to President Mandela to halt their advance on the capital.

In Kinshasa an announcement from Mobutu's office that the president would leave today for a regional presidential summit in Libreville, Gabon, on the Great Lakes crisis, has sparked speculation that Mobutu is bolting.

The French news-agency reported a presidential aide as stating: "I'd say he plans to make this a transit stop on the way to France."

Kabila yesterday reassured Deputy President Thabo Mbeki that he was honouring the undertaking to suspend hostilities while a SA-led negotiators try to broker a peaceful transfer of power, Mbeki spokesman Mr Ricky Naidoo said.

And after meeting Mbeki in Cape Town yesterday to reassure him of US support for SA negotiations and to brief him on his meeting with Kabila and Ugandan president Mr Yoweri Museveni, as well as Rwanda's leader, Mr Paul Kagami this week, US special envoy to Zaire Mr Bill Richardson said: "The peace process is still very much alive."

In Zaire Kabila's rebels are claiming to be as close as 80km from the city, while the government is claiming to be on the verge of retaking the strategic town of Kikwit, over 400km east of Kinshasa, which rebels took nearly two weeks ago.

Independent analysts dismiss both claims and believe the rebels have probably reached Kenge, some 200km from Kinshasa, where fierce fighting has been reported — apparently initiated by the Zairian army which seems to be trying to make a stand here.

Kabila's pledge to halt hostilities did not preclude his forces from retaliating if attacked.

Mandela brought Mobutu and Kabila together for their first meeting aboard the SA navy vessel Outeniqua in Pointe Noire, Congo on Sunday. Although neither side showed much compromise in a joint communique afterwards, a SA presidential aide told reporters that the two men were much closer to agreement in private.

He said Mobutu was ready to hand over power to a transitional authority but not to Kabila himself.

Today Mbeki embarks upon a rapid tour of African countries for meetings with key leaders able to influence events in Zaire, including Angola's Eduardo Dos Santos, Tanzania's Benjamim Nkapa, Congo's Pascal Lissouba, Gabon's Omar Bongo, Great Lakes mediator and former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, as well as Rwanda's Paul Kagami, culminating in meetings with Kabila and Mobutu on Friday.

At that point it should be possible to set the date for the next round of negotiations which was set to take place within the next eight to 10 days, Naidoo said. — Independent Foreign Service

Railway company seized

LUBUMBASHI: Zaire's rebels have "nationalised" the company running the railway system in rebel-held territory and confiscated its assets.

Sizarail company chief Mr Patrick Claes was ordered out of his office here by rebel officials on Monday.

No compensation had been offered for Sizarail's assets, he said.

Zambia and South Africa have responded by closing their rail links with Zaire, a move that is likely to lead soon to serious shortages of fuel and other essential commodities in Katanga province.

The rail line had been taking 4 000 tons of exports south and bringing in 10 000 tons of imports every month.

Claes said Sizarail had taken over a run-down network and developed it into an efficient service. Its contract was to have run until 2000.

Sizarail is owned jointly by big business in Zaire and Comazar, which in turn is a joint venture between South Africa's Spoornet and Belgian railways. — Sapa-AFP



BEING DISINFECTED: A Rwandan official from a medical team in Kigali sprays disinfectant on the feet of Hutu refugees as they arrive in Kigali, Rwanda yesterday after being airlifted by the UN from Kisangani in Zaire. They were registered and sent to a transit camp 30km outside Kigali. ***PICTURE: AP***

Refugees flock to Angolan border

LUANDA: While world attention is focused on Zaire, another drama is playing out along a remote section of the Angola-Zaire border in the north-west of Angola.

Reports are filtering out of an area around the city of Dundo, in the diamond-rich Lunda Norte Province, of thousands of Rwandan refugees arriving at the border. The Angolan army has sealed off the area to almost everyone, including UN peacemakers.

Diplomats and other officials who have travelled to Dundo say about 1 000 refugees have managed to enter the country. One diplomat said Angolan authorities had trucked most of these refugees back across the border.

Last week the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported that an estimated 7 000 refugees had arrived at the border.

Now Angola's Minister of Social Reintegration, Mr Albino Malungo, has said he believes some 17 000 refugees are trying to enter the country at the Dundo crossing.

Malungo, whose ministry is heading efforts to assist the refugees, said many of the refugees were armed and that only the women and children would be allowed into the country.

Earlier reports said many of the refugees were members of the former Hutu-dominated Rwandan army and Interhamwe militia that helped carry out the 1994 genocide in Rwanda in which hundreds of thousands of Tutsis and moderate Hutus died.

Top members of the former rebel movement Unita in the capital say at least 500 of the Rwandan refugees have entered Unita-held territory not far from the Dundo crossing. Unita officials in Luanda say they are willing to allow the refugees into their areas.

Complicating the situation in Dundo is an apparent massive build-up of Angolan military in the area. Angolans have reportedly been carrying out joint military activities with Zairian rebels along the border. Heavy artillery and tanks have reportedly been airlifted into the area.

Sources in Luanda say Dundo is being used as a training and logistical base for the assault on Kinshasa. — Independent Foreign Service

Politicians battle to save talks as Zaire's war goes on

ET 1/5/97 (358)

LONDON: Zairian rebel forces yesterday pledged to continue their advance on the capital, Kinshasa, after President Mobutu Sese Seko threw diplomats into disarray by quibbling over the venue for talks with Mr Laurent Kabila.

The two major players parried and thrust over the head of the US special envoy, Mr Bill Richardson, who last night repeated that there was agreement the talks take place on a South African ship in international waters off West Africa.

It would be chaired by the United Nations, he claimed, although both sides had previously agreed the meeting would be chaired by President Nelson Mandela.

Yesterday Deputy Foreign Minister Mr Aziz Pahad said: "Both parties (should) not hesitate any more, and not cause any more delays, and move quickly to the negotiating table."

Earlier, while the SA Navy ship SAS Outeniqua was already steaming to a position in the Atlantic off the coast of Zaire where South African officials thought the meeting would be held, Mr Mobutu Nzanga, 27, the president's son and spokesman, announced that the meeting was off.

He suggested neighbouring Congo or Gabon as alternatives, reportedly rejected by Kabila fearful of an assassination plot.

Last night the foreign affairs spokesman for Kabila's alliance, Dr Bizima Karaha, a former medical doctor in SA, said: "We lose nothing by not meeting Mr Mobutu. If anything, we have bent backwards too much for the man, given our military superiority on the ground. We are more than happy to take the war to Kinshasa and end Mobutu's arrogance.

"In fact, our forces are consolidating their approach towards Kinshasa. He must know it is the end game."

As the fighting continues, the United States, one of Mobutu's chief backers until the rebel army posed a distinct threat to the ailing dictator, yesterday put Kabila on notice that his credibility was at stake over reports of atrocities committed in the territory under his control.

The State Department urged Kabila to allow a UN team to enter Kisangani to investigate allegations of refugee massacres and mistreatment.

"We have very grave concerns about the persistent allegations of mass atrocities in and near Kisangani," State Department spokesman Mr Nicholas Burns said.

"What is at stake for him, if he does become the next leader of Zaire — if he does — is his credibility."

Tens of thousands of exhausted, hungry and terrorised Hutu refugees who fled Rwanda in 1994 after being accused of mass genocide against Tutsis, reportedly have been on the move for months as Hutu-aligned rebel forces advanced across the country. Kabila's forces have captured more than half of Zaire and seized Kikwit on Tuesday.

Kabila meanwhile, says talks must be brief and discuss only Mobutu's resignation. He also told Richardson in Lubumbashi he was ready to be flexible on a 60-day deadline he gave the United Nations to repatriate all the thousands of Rwandan refugees provided he saw progress.

● UN aid workers in Kisangani said nearly 600 Rwandan Hutu refugees may be flown home after Kabila's forces unexpectedly delivered them by train to the north-eastern city.

The refugees, who seemed in good condition as they got off the train at Lubungwa on the southern bank of the Zaire River, which divides Kisangani, crossed the river on an ageing ferry. — Reuter, The Times

Evidence that Angola may be secretly aiding Kabila

(358) Star 1/5/97

By Antonio Da Silva
Luanda

From the start of Laurent Kabila's march across Zaire, accusations have come from more than one quarter that the rebels were being helped from the outside. First came reports of Rwandan and Ugandan support for the rebels, and much later of Angolan involvement.

Kabila hasn't seemed to need much help in his effort to shove President Mobutu Sese Seko out of Zaire as most of the fighting has involved Zairian soldiers running away as the rebels marched forward. The inevitable assault on Kinshasa, however, may be a different story.

Presidential guards, and Zairian army soldiers, fresh from their retreat to the east, could make a stand in the capital.

Angola has many reasons for getting involved in the fray to the north. The country's long ruling MPLA (Popular Movement for Liberation of Angola) party has more than one score to settle with Mobutu which goes back to the early days of Angola's independence.

Mobutu's support for the FNLA (the National Front for the Liberation of Angola) in its struggle against the MPLA after independence from Portugal in 1975 and his support for Unita (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) in its 20-year civil war against the Angolan government, has gained Mobutu few friends in Luanda.

"There are plenty of people among the leadership here who would like nothing more than to see Mobutu fall," said one Western diplomat. "They think he is getting exactly what he deserves."

Besides the revenge factor, there could be more practical effects if Mobutu falls. Although Angola has now formed a unity government, consisting of Unita members, the former rebel movement still controls up to 70% of the countryside and retains the bulk of its fighting force," say military analysts here.

If Mobutu goes, they say, Unita will be denied the supply pipeline that has funnelled arms and fuel to its bases from Zaire for years.

"With a hostile regime in place to the north, Unita could be in a weakened position," said one analyst. "The government will be in a stronger position and might start testing the waters, pushing more aggressively into the Unita areas."

Sending out feelers even prior to uprising

Unita has also been accused of getting involved in the Zairian conflict, siding with Mobutu. Sources here say Unita had as many as 2 000 troops in Zaire at one time but withdrew most of them after the movement suffered casualties and realised the Zairians were prone to retreat.

Unita officials in Luanda deny any of its troops are in Zaire.

"We have none there," said Unita's top representative to Angola's peace process, Isaias Samakuva.

When told Unita is rumoured to have placed their troops under Zairian military command so they could conveniently deny involvement, Samakuva – after much laughter – said: "We would never do such a thing. The Zairian army is not capable of doing anything. Just look at how they are behaving. We would never subject our people to such incompetence."

A score of military officials, diplomats, mining officials and others say Angolan government involvement in Zaire has been building for months.

"It has been a poorly kept secret that the government supports Kabila in every way they can," said one official here close to Angolan government leaders.

"They were sending feelers out to Kabila and others in eastern Zaire even prior to the uprising in November," he said.

Officials here say the government has airlifted troops, including former Katangese rebels living in Angola, to eastern Zaire as well as cargo planeloads of arms. But military officials also say that the Angolan army has been offering extra pay to regular Angolan army troops to go to Zaire.

This week expatriates working with mining companies in a small government-held area near the town of Dundo on the Zairian border, in Lunda Norte province, reported joint military exercises between the Angolan army and Zairian rebels. The expatriates say a number of tanks and heavy artillery pieces have been brought into the area. The area around Dundo is the only common land border with Zaire controlled by the government, the rest of it is held by Unita.

Diplomats here say Angolan army chief Joao de Matos and several of his top aides were in Dundo this week. One official said it appeared that a large airstrip in Dundo was being used as a logistical base to move material farther to the west towards Kinshasa.

He explained: "As this is the only common border between the two sides it could be used as a staging area to move FAA (Angolan army) and the rebels west toward Kinshasa."

Last Friday a Western military official in Luanda said a number of crack commandos from the Zairian Army had been flown to Dundo from Cabo Ledo, an Angolan airbase south of Luanda.

Angolan army officials have repeatedly denied any involvement in Zaire and a spokesman for President Jose Eduardo dos Santos said that there were no Angolan troops in Zaire.

The Angolan enclave of Cabinda is just north of the River Zaire, west of Kinshasa. Zairian radio reported late last week that 1 400 heavily armed Angolan troops had crossed the Cabinda border into Zaire.

The Angolan government denies the reports as does the Angolan military commander in Cabinda.

Position of Savimbi and Unita weakened

But diplomats and Western military analysts here have warned that increased military activity in Cabinda is likely. They said the army's target would probably be FLEC guerrilla bases inside Zaire.They have been fighting for the independence of the enclave for years, and not, as has been reported frequently in the Zairian press, the city of Matadi, Kinshasa's only port, or Kinshasa itself.

"You can bet they are going to use the disruption in Zaire as an excuse to cross the border at some point and clean out some of the FLEC camps," said one foreign military analyst. – Star Foreign Service.

Zairean talks 'still on track'

Sowetan 1/5/97

358

THE Zairean peace process was at an advanced stage, President Nelson Mandela said yesterday.

"It is on track," Mandela said after meeting the Duchess of Kent in Pretoria. "The two leaders are conscious of their responsibility and want to bring about a peaceful solution acceptable to all."

Asked about a planned meeting between Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Laurent Kabila, Mandela said: "This is a sensitive matter because negotiations have reached an advanced stage. We have to be very careful about our comments."

Meanwhile, United Nations special envoy Mr Mohamed Sahnoun left Pretoria for Central Africa yesterday in a bid to keep the peace talks on track after reports that Mobutu had objected to using a South African navy vessel as a venue.

South African Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Aziz Pahad said yesterday he was surprised by the reports.

Agreed to meet

Pahad said as far as his government was concerned, Mobutu and Kabila had agreed to meet on the combat support ship the SAS *Outeniqua*.

The 21 000 ton *Outeniqua* arrived in international waters off the West African coast on Tuesday in readiness for the talks, which were expected to have taken place towards the end of this week.

Pahad said he believed the only issues that still had to be sorted out related to logistics and security.

South Africa believed the urgency of the situation meant the talks should start "very quickly". The plight of refugees and the destabilisation of Zaire were matters of concern.

"We would urge both parties not to hesitate and to move very quickly to the negotiating table," he said.

Ministry spokesman Mr Pieter Swanepoel said later that if the reports were correct, it "obviously complicates matters".

He also warned that any delay in talks would have serious consequences for Zaire and its neighbours. – *Sapa.*

All systems go for Zaire peace summit

ARG 2/5/97 (D58)

Pointe-Noire, Congo – Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko left the capital Kinshasa today for the first face-to-face talks with rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

Mr Mobutu was sporting his signature leopard-skin cap and chatted with his wife and two sons on the tarmac before boarding the plane, which departed just after 11 am. local time.

President Nelson Mandela was also on his way to meet a naval vessel docked here, an indication that the Zairean peace talks he is to help mediate may indeed get under way.

However, state television in Harare, Zimbabwe, today quoted Mr Kabila as saying the talks would be postponed until tomorrow.

"I have been told the meeting will now be tomorrow because Mobutu has changed his mind again," Mr Kabila told the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation.

The state-controlled Herald newspaper reported today that Mr Kabila flew unexpectedly into Harare yesterday for a private meeting with President Robert Mugabe, who takes over as chairman of the Organization of African Unity in June.

But Mr Mandela today appeared confident the talks would go on. "If I was not optimistic I wouldn't be going there," Mr Mandela told reporters at Waterkloof Air Force Base before departing for the Congo early today.

Mr Mandela was scheduled to meet Mr Mobutu in this port city, where he will accompany him to the South African Navy ship, the SAS Outeniqua. The Outeniqua will move out to international waters for the talks.

Diplomatic sources have reported concern that Angola, struggling to establish its own fragile peace process, could be sucked into Zaire's civil war, with government forces backing the rebels and former Unita rebels backing the Zairian regime.

The Washington Post reported today that troops from Angola, equipped with armoured vehicles and heavy artillery, had joined Zairian rebel forces pushing toward Kinshasa.

Quoting unidentified US officials and reports from the region, the newspaper said the accelerating rebel advance had led to a widely-shared assessment that President Mobutu's fall from power was imminent. – Sapa-Reuter

Angola's interests at stake, page 5

Mobutu camp still hopes for election deal

(358) CT 2/5/97

KINSHASA: President Mobutu Sese Seko's entourage, its future in Zaire threatened by the relentless rebel offensive, is looking for an election deal from tomorrow's talks at sea between Mobutu and civil war rival Mr Laurent Kabila.

With Kabila insisting that the veteran strongman must go, Mobutu's son and spokesman Nzanga sidestepped questions on his father standing down and said he expected the meeting on a South African navy ship would lead to further negotiations.

Both Nzanga and Mr Honoré Ngbanda, Mobutu's security adviser and hitherto chief negotiator, envisage elections for all.

But Kabila, whose forces control over half the sprawling nation and are marching on the capital Kinshasa, remains adamant — Mobutu must go.

"The agenda will be discussed and I think following that meeting there will be other negotiations that will bring, I hope, a peaceful transition that will lead to elections," Nzanga Mobutu told the BBC's African service.

Critics accuse the president and his entourage of milking what is potentially Africa's richest nation and amassing fortunes while Zaire's people remained mired in poverty.

Nzanga said Mobutu and his team would travel to neighbouring Congo today and the meeting would be launched from the Congolese port of Pointe Noire.

Mobutu, who is debilitated by cancer, agreed on Wednesday to meet Kabila face-to-face on the SA vessel in international waters, after meetings with US troubleshooter Mr Bill Richardson.

His clan, its hold on the sprawling nation broken by rebel advances, is anxious to retain a stake in the future of the mineral-rich nation.

But Kabila has remained firm that he will only discuss Mobutu's departure from power.

"The talks will just be about Mobutu and what we do with him. Our uncompromising demand is that he leaves power," Kabila said.

Nzanga and Ngbanda brushed aside suggestions that Mobutu was ready to quit or that the talks were about providing him with a face-saving way out. — Reuter

Kabila dumps De Beers

M+G (BM) 2-8/5/97 (346) (358)

The Zairean rebels' decision to jettison De Beers has placed the diamond cartel on an even shakier footing, reports Chris Gordon from London

LAURENT KABILA'S Zairean Rebel Alliance for Democratic Forces has terminated De Beers's contract to buy the output of the country's diamond parastatal Miba (Société Minière de Bakwanga).

This blow to De Beers's control over central African diamond production follows two weeks of talks between the rebels and senior De Beers executives. De Beers's London office acknowledged this week that the contract had been rescinded, though its Johannesburg headquarters declined to comment.

The rebels — who now control Zaire's diamond-producing regions — had previously warned they wanted to end De Beers's monopoly in Zaire and with it cut President Mobuto Sese Seko's last source of revenue. His income has been derived mainly from diamonds over the past few years.

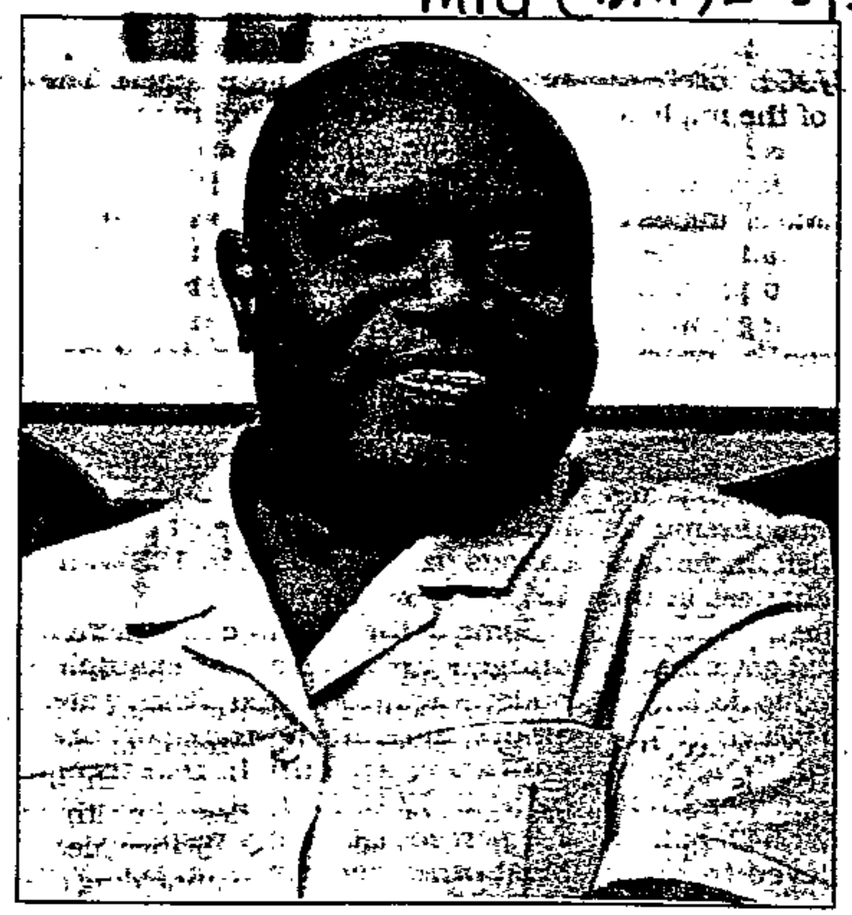
The alliance late last week put De Beers on three months' notice for the Miba contract, citing its ties to Mobuto and corrupt business practices — a charge denied by Andrew Lamont, representative for De Beers in London.

De Beers is also hedging its bets in Zaire. For the present Mobuto is still president, and De Beers is still contracted to his government. "The situation in Zaire is still fluid ... [De Beers will] ride with the change," Lamont said.

De Beers is still talking to Mawampanga Mwana Nanga, Kabila's designated finance minister, on sales from Miba when the contract ends.

The corporation's drubbing in Zaire is the latest in a series of blows to its control over the gem industry, which it exercises through its Central Selling Organisation (CSO).

The CSO has contracts to buy the bulk of world diamond production, and artificially buoys prices by controlling supply.



Laurent Kabila: Sent his finance minister to end the De Beers diamond contract PHOTOGRAPH: RODGER BOSCH



Julian Ogilvie Thompson: De Beers is losing its grip on the diamond industry PHOTOGRAPH: RUTH MOTAU

But of the top seven diamond producers in the world — who account for 80% of the world's rough diamond supply by value, according to De Beers's latest annual report — four are now no longer securely in the organisation's net.

Australia's Argyle diamond mine, the world's largest diamond producer by volume, quit the CSO last July, claiming it could secure better prices on the open market.

Russia, long a thorn in De Beers's side, leaking high-quality diamonds worth $1-billion a year onto the market, has also still to renew its sales agreement with the CSO, 14 months after signing a memorandum of understanding with De Beers that it would.

Zaire punches another hole in De Beers's control over low quality gems. Its neighbour Angola — a top-quality gem producer — has already reduced its dependence on the CSO, seeking other buyers alongside De Beers.

Such moves could prompt a radical reshape of central African diamond supplies, with De Beers, uncharacteristically, having to follow rather than lead.

The three other main producers are South Africa, Namibia and Botswana — where De Beers maintains close control over all production.

The output from Miba is industrial and near-gem diamonds — 6,5-million carats last year valued at $80-million. De Beers is also a shareholder in Miba, through its stake in Sibeka, a Belgian company which owns 20% of Miba .

However, Miba's output is only a fraction of Zaire's estimated diamond production of $350-million.

It is difficult to calculate Zaire's diamond wealth: much of the production is sold locally to the licensed buying offices or smuggled out to Antwerp. An unknown proportion of this consists of smuggled Angolan diamonds, much of which come from the Unita opposition party.

De Beers closed its four buying offices in Zaire — Kinshasa, Kisagani, Mbuji-Mayi and Kahema — as the rebels advanced.

The organisation then refused Alliance requests that it reopen the offices — a move which left the field open to Jean Boulle's America Diamond buyers, currently the only licensed diamond buying office in Kisangani, which is buying gems worth about $100 000 a day.

De Beers's manipulation of low-quality diamond prices via several harsh price cuts has enabled it to combat Argyle's defiance, and may go some way to cushioning it against Zaire.

Angola is a different story, however. Its mainly gem-quality diamonds were valued at around $1-billion last year. The CSO was forced to buy $800-million of these gems on the open market to underpin the prices it was targeting through its normal cartel operation.

De Beers chair Julian Ogilvie Thompson said in the latest annual report that De Beers had been hit by the "increasing uncontrolled outflow of Angolan diamonds to the major cutting centres ... Angolan diamonds tend to be in the categories that are in demand."

Is Kabila Mr Nice Guy?

M+G 2-8/6/97 (358)

The Zairean rebel leader has come from 20 years of exile obscurity with little clarity about his policies, reports Rehana Rossouw

AS South Africa frantically sweated to put the final touches to Zairean peace talks this week, serious doubts began to emerge about the character of the man who holds all the cards — Laurent Kabila.

Kabila approaches the talks, expected on Saturday, amid United Nations claims that the man vying to be president of Africa's third-largest nation is presiding over massacres and has organised a "slow extermination" of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees near the city of Kisangani.

A furious Kabila has demanded an apology from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan; none has been forthcoming.

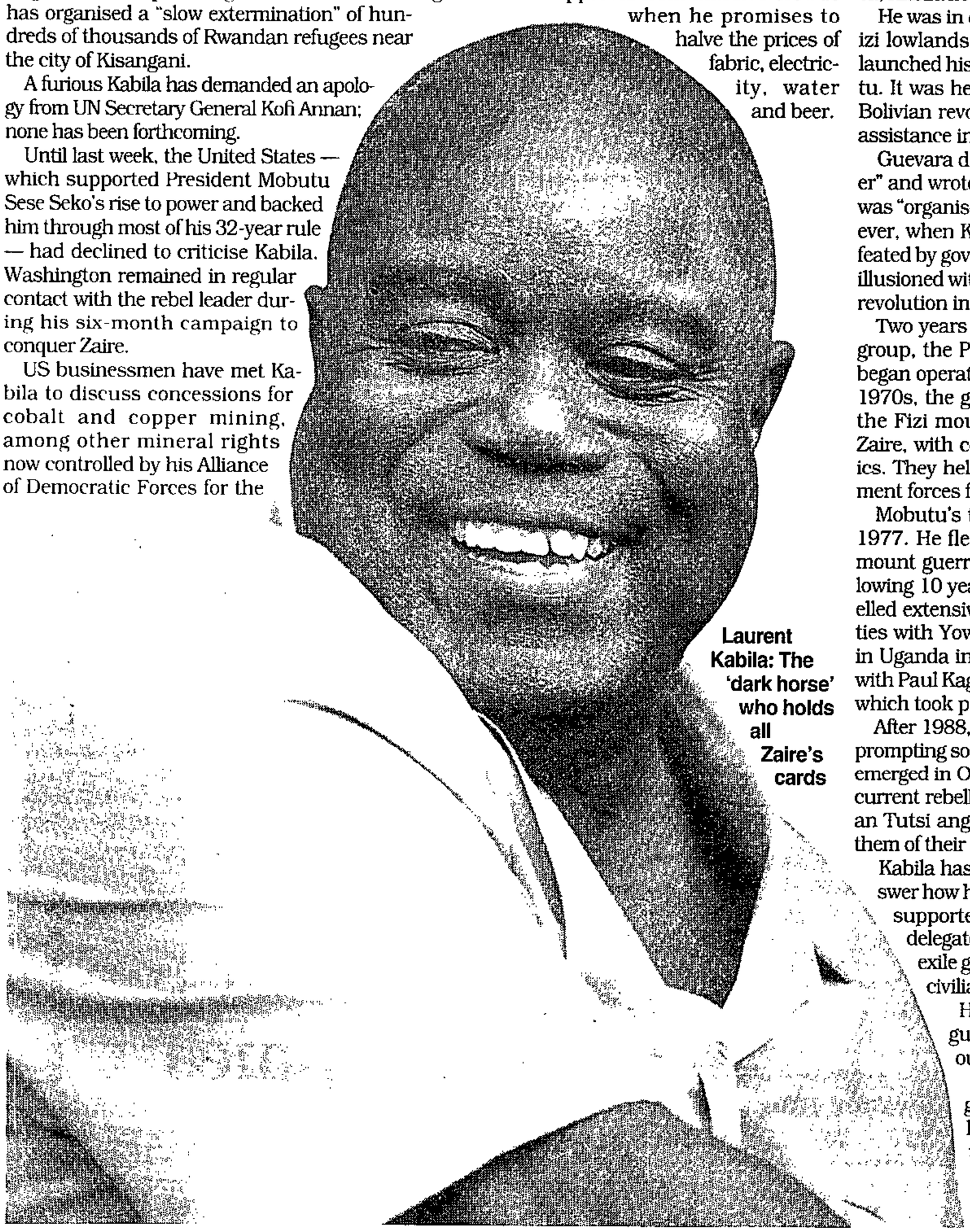
Until last week, the United States — which supported President Mobutu Sese Seko's rise to power and backed him through most of his 32-year rule — had declined to criticise Kabila. Washington remained in regular contact with the rebel leader during his six-month campaign to conquer Zaire.

US businessmen have met Kabila to discuss concessions for cobalt and copper mining, among other mineral rights now controlled by his Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire (AFDL).

But with the refugee crisis growing, Washington sent its UN ambassador, Bill Richardson, to Zaire to talk to Kabila about growing US concerns over his Alliance's behaviour.

In Zaire, however, Kabila represents change — one that people so desperately seek that they are prepared to overlook his spasmodic record of resistance in his 20 years in exile and his failure to detail how he will deliver on his promises of democracy and a thriving economy.

Since emerging from obscurity six months ago to lead a rebellion that has already seized two-thirds of the vast country, Kabila has proven himself an adept populist — a man who gets roars of approval from massive crowds when he promises to halve the prices of fabric, electricity, water and beer.



Laurent Kabila: The 'dark horse' who holds all Zaire's cards

But journalists in Zaire have found it near-impossible to dig beneath Kabila's veneer. He has fobbed off numerous attempts to interview him on his past, his family and more importantly, his politics.

Kabila (58), was born in southern Zaire on a branch of the Congo River in Shaba province. He studied political philosophy at a French university and returned to Zaire to enter politics shortly after his country gained independence from Belgium in 1960.

He became a member of the North Katanga Assembly, supporting Zaire's first prime minister, Patrice Lumumba. When Lumumba was killed in 1961 in a coup engineered by Mobutu, Kabila fled and began plotting insurrection.

He was in charge of the rebellion in the Ruzizi lowlands, the same place from which he launched his current campaign against Mobutu. It was here that he met Che Guevara, the Bolivian revolutionary, who came to offer his assistance in 1965.

Guevara described Kabila as a "good speaker" and wrote to Fidel Castro confirming there was "organised rebel activity" in the area. However, when Kabila's liberation council was defeated by government troops, Guevara left, disillusioned with Africa and Kabila, to pursue his revolution in South America.

Two years later Kabila founded a new rebel group, the People's Revolutionary Party, and began operating near Lake Tanganyika. In the 1970s, the group set up a "liberated" zone in the Fizi mountains in the Kivu Province of Zaire, with collective farms, schools and clinics. They held out against attacks by government forces for nearly two decades.

Mobutu's troops forced Kabila into exile in 1977. He fled to Tanzania and continued to mount guerrilla attacks into Zaire for the following 10 years. During his exile, Kabila travelled extensively in East Africa, forging strong ties with Yoweri Museveni, who seized power in Uganda in 1985. He was also closely allied with Paul Kagane, who led the Tutsi rebel army which took power in Rwanda in 1994.

After 1988, Kabila dropped from public view, prompting some to declare he was dead. But he emerged in October last year at the head of the current rebellion, which was sparked by Zairean Tutsi anger at a government plan to strip them of their land.

Kabila has been vague when pressed to answer how his rebels plan to rebuild Zaire. His supporters defend this by saying he has delegated authority to his well-educated exile group who have become part of his civilian Cabinet.

His aides say he sets broad policy guidelines and leaves them to sort out the details.

But it is just this policy of delegation, observers say, which may have led to death by starvation for thousands of refugees.

Kabila dumps De Beers, PAGE B1
Talks to remake Africa, PAGE 18

Doubts emerging over Kabila's qualifications

BD 2/5/97 (378)

NAIROBI — The rebel movement that has seized most of Zaire in seven months has hit trouble at a bend in the Zaire River, showing strains that could tear apart the loose alliance in its final drive towards the Zairean capital.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila's failure to stop his forces' brutality towards Rwandan Hutu refugees in the river town of Kisangani — despite an international outcry — raises questions over how much control he really has over the vast territory held by his Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

It points also to a growing rift between the 56-year-old rebel leader and the driving military force behind the rebellion — the Banyamulenge, or ethnic Tutsis of eastern Zaire.

Kabila appeared not even to have been aware of the international effect of rebels' reported mass killings of refugees last week outside Kisangani, or earlier in the year in eastern Zaire.

"Whether Laurent Kabila is the man to guide Zaire back into the comity of civilised nations is an open question, but the signs are not encouraging," wrote the independent East African weekly newspaper. "What concerns observers is that Mr Kabila's actions since he sprang to prominence seven months ago have shown few signs of high leadership quality."

Kabila, who has been involved in minor rebellions in Zaire since the 1960s, wants to unseat President Mobutu Sese Seko.

In the early days, when he brushed shoulders with Cuban revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara in eastern Zaire, he would have been content to get rid of Moise Tshombe, leader of mineral-rich Katanga province, Kabila's home turf.

Cubans who dealt with the Marxist-influenced Kabila in the late 1960s say he had no long-term strategy then — besides pushing out Tshombe and taking his place as regional leader.

In the end, Tshombe was kidnapped in 1969 and died under mysterious circumstances in Algeria. Kabila remained stuck in a small corner of eastern Zaire.



KABILA

In the current rebellion, Kabila served first as a spokesman for the rebels, then was pushed to the front as their leader in October — perhaps because, as a member of Zaire's Luba people, he would appear to be a neutral party in Hutu-Tutsi conflicts.

Some observers think Kabila still has no strategy for the future of Zaire.

But the Banyamulenge and their Tutsi kin in Rwanda have a plan — and a strategy. They want to make sure that the Hutu military and militia responsible for the 1994 massacre of at least a half-million Tutsis in Rwanda — who fled to Zaire and were welcomed by Mobutu — will never again attempt to regain power through attacks from their strongholds in eastern Zaire. If this means that women and children and other innocents accompanying the former Hutu soldiers and killers have to die as well, it is a price the Tutsi arm of the rebellion appears willing to pay.

The Banyamulenge have already secured a broad stretch of eastern Zaire that could be the bread basket and cattle pasture for the region. What happens west of Kisangani is of less importance to them. They know there is no international will to intervene to stop them.

The world stood by when the Rwandan Hutus carried out their orgy of killing; the Tutsis of eastern Zaire and Rwanda believe they hold the moral high ground and are openly scornful of international criticism of the rebel handling of at least 80 000 refugees scattered south of Kisangani.

Kabila and his political entourage may well wish the refugee question would go away. After rebel authorities in Kisangani thwarted a UN plan to repatriate the refugees, Kabila delivered an angry ultimatum that international agencies get the job done in just 60 days.

His ministers lose patience and scream at reporters who raise the issue. Rebel soldiers in Kisangani recently expelled a Cable News Network correspondent whose reports on the dying refugees were especially graphic. On Wednesday, they briefly detained a BBC correspondent familiar with the region the minute she arrived at the airport.

Kabila no longer grants easy access to the media. In February and March, as the rebels rolled across eastern Zaire towards Kisangani, pushing the refugees ahead of them, he posed for television cameras, joked with reporters and led victory parades.

Now he meets international businessmen intent on securing mineral rights to the copper, cobalt and diamonds of southeastern Zaire.

Kabila, who spent time in and out of Tanzania in the '70s and '80s, is said to own his own gold mine, but is unforthcoming about his background, sources of income and personal life. — Sapa-AP.

AFRICA

Firms eye Zaire's cobalt, with demand set to surge

(358) BD 2/5/97

NEW YORK — It is not traded on any market like gold or silver. Its uses are not widely known. Yet mining companies are willing to risk war in Zaire to get cobalt.

As a key ingredient in compact batteries used to power cellular phones and the next generation of electric cars, the demand for the once feared metal is expected to surge in coming years.

Zaire is estimated to hold anywhere from half to two-thirds of the world's cobalt reserves. However, Zaire's mining has been in decline because of political turmoil and the country has accounted for just a fifth of the world's cobalt production.

Yet as rebels get closer to ousting long-time President Mobutu Sese Seko, many firms are interested in extracting Zaire's riches. Mining firms already have signed deals with the rebels for various ores and minerals.

And the future of the US automotive industry promises to increase industrial appetite for cobalt, a key ingredient in nickel and lithium batteries that would give electric cars greater range.

"The market for electric vehicles is in its infancy stage. The basic point is this: Cobalt will be in growing demand," said Electric Vehicle Association of the Americas executive director Robert Hayden.

Kenneth MacLeod, president of International Panorama Resource Corporation, a mining company that has invested in Zaire, said he expected worldwide cobalt consumption to rise from roughly 25 000 tons a year now to 29 000 tons by 2000.

Mining entrepreneurs say cobalt could be a better investment than gold. The relatively low cost of producing it already makes cobalt more lucrative than many other precious metals.

Discovered by a Swedish chemist in 1730, cobalt is a hard, lustrous metal found in various ores — in fact a byproduct often found in the waste of other metals — used mostly in one solid metallic state or another, although it can come in liquid or powder form.

It was once considered useless and dangerous, as in some mines it contains arsenic. Perhaps its best known use, as the pigment cobalt blue, is one of its least frequent.

Its primary use is in superstrong steel and titanium alloys that can withstand extreme temperatures, such as those employed in turbine engines, jet engines and aircraft wings.

A form of cobalt known as Cobalt 60 is an important cancer treatment, used for radiation. Another form is used for irradiation of medical supplies and spices. Cobalt is also used as an adhesive that glues steel to rubber in tires. Other applications include prosthetic implants, high-strength cutting tools, magnets, video tapes, vitamins and helicopter rotors.

Cobalt's price is largely determined by the players as there is no cobalt exchange, no daily price quote or even a listing on any of the various global commodity exchanges. Users know the traders or producers they need to turn to — and vice versa.

Initially, the government producer in Zaire and a Zambian mining concern set producer prices annually. With the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russian cobalt became available via traders, who brokered cobalt prices.

MacLeod's company, rushing into Zaire to produce cobalt by early 1999, wants to give a big boost to cobalt supply. "Companies such as ours will have a detrimental effect ... on the price of cobalt," MacLeod said. — Sapa-AP.

Mobutu and Kabila set to meet for peace talks today

BD 2/5/97 (358)

Stephen Laufer

THE leaders of Zaire's opposing factions, President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel alliance chief Laurent Kabila, appear set for their first face-to-face meeting today aboard the SA Navy supply ship Outeniqua.

Following days of uncertainty on the exact timing and venue of the meeting, presidential spokesman Parks Mankahlana said last night the talks were set to go ahead in international waters off the coast of Congo today. They would be chaired by President Nelson Mandela.

Mankahlana said Mandela would escort Mobutu to the ship from the Congolese port of Pointe Noire. Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, who left yesterday with Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad to prepare for the talks, would escort Kabila to the vessel from the Angolan capital of Luanda.

The ship's helicopters could be used to ferry Kabila's party from the Angolan enclave of Cabinda. The vessel will dock either in Pointe Noire to take Mandela and Mobutu on board, or they will be flown to the ship.

The rebels' foreign affairs spokesman, Bizima Karaha, appeared to throw a spanner in the works yesterday afternoon when he said in Lubumbashi that Kabila would not be available for talks before Sunday. But Mbeki's early departure from SA appeared to coincide with a trip Kabila was reportedly taking to consult with neighbouring states before the talks and it appeared probable that the two had agreed to meet in Angola before proceeding to the Outeniqua.

Reuter reports Karaha said Mobutu had agreed to discuss the terms of his departure at the talks. "We are happy that Mobutu has agreed to come and negotiate one and only one thing: his departure from power."

SA officials have said the talks will centre on transitional mechanisms aimed at the introduction of a democratic dispensation in Zaire. Mobutu has ruled since taking power in a coup 32 years ago and democratic reforms promised in 1990 have foundered.

Meanwhile last-minute US intervention in the peace process, which resulted in special envoy Bill Richardson announcing that the face-to-face meeting would go ahead, was criticised by SA analysts and members of the SA team attending the talks.

University of the Western Cape analyst Vernon Seymour said: "SA was poised for a major foreign policy coup. The statement by Richardson, that the parties have agreed for the first time to

Continued on Page 2

Zaire

(358) BD 2/5/97

Continued from Page 1

direct face-to-face talks, borders on diplomatic plagiarism."

Stellenbosch University Africa analyst Willie Breytenbach said Washington had barged in to claim the glory: "America is trying to muscle in because it is now quite clear that the Zaire crisis is ripe for a solution and it is clear that Mobutu is going to go."

Sources in the SA team conceded there was irritation at Richardson's announcement of a meeting they believed SA "It would be preposterous to join the process in the last two days and claim credit for its success. Only a child would fall for that when it is clear that President Mandela has been working at this so long and so patiently," said one source.

See Page 7

Angola's interests also at stake in Zaire

ARG 2/5/97 (358)

FOREIGN SERVICE

Luanda – From the start of Laurent Kabila's march across Zaire, there have been accusations that the rebels are being helped from the outside. First came reports of Rwandan and Ugandan support for the rebels, and much later of Angolan involvement.

Mr Kabila has not seemed to need much help in his effort to shove President Mobutu Sese Seko out of Zaire, as most of the action has involved Zairian soldiers running away as the rebels march forward.

The inevitable assault on Kinshasa, however, may be a different story. Presidential guards, and army soldiers, fresh from their retreat to the east, could make a stand in the capital.

Angola has many reasons for getting involved in the fray to the north. The long-ruling MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) has more than one score to settle with Mr Mobutu, going back to the early days of Angola's independence.

Mr Mobutu has won few friends in Luanda with his support for the FNLA (the National Front for the Liberation of Angola) in its struggle against the MPLA after independence from Portugal in 1975 and for Unita (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) in its 20-year civil war against the Angolan government.

"There are plenty of people among the leadership here who would like nothing more than to see Mobutu fall," said one Western diplomat in Luanda. "They think he is getting exactly what he deserves."



On the march: rebel leader Laurent Kabila

Besides the revenge factor, there could be more practical effects if Mr Mobutu falls. Although Angola has now formed a unity government with Unita, the former rebel group still controls up to 70 percent of the countryside and retains the bulk of its fighting force, say military analysts here.

If Mr Mobutu goes, they say, Unita will be denied the supply pipeline that has funnelled it arms and fuel from Zaire for years.

"With a hostile regime in place to the north, Unita could be in a weakened position," said one analyst. "The government will be in a stronger position and might start testing the waters, pushing more aggressively into the Unita areas."

Unita has also been accused of getting involved in the Zairian conflict, siding with Mr Mobutu. Sources here say Unita had as many as 2 000 troops in Zaire at one time, but withdrew most of them after the movement suffered casualties and realised that its Zairian allies were prone to retreat. Unita officials in Luanda deny there are any troops in Zaire.

"We have no people in Zaire," said Unita's top representative to Angola's peace process, Isaias Samakuva.

A score of military officials, diplomats, mining officials and others say Angolan government involvement in Zaire has been building for months.

"It has been a poorly kept secret that the government supports Kabila in every way they can," said an official here close to Angolan government leaders.

"They were sending feelers out to Kabila and others in eastern Zaire even prior to the uprising in November," he said.

Officials here say the government has airlifted troops, including former Katangese rebels living in Angola, to eastern Zaire as well as plane-loads of arms. But military officials here also say that the Angolan army has been offering extra pay to regular Angolan army troops to go to Zaire.

This week expatriates working with mining companies in a small government-held area near the town of Dundo on the Zairian border, in Lunda Norte Province, reported joint military exercises between the Angolan army and Zairian rebels.

The expatriates say a number of tanks and heavy artillery pieces have been brought into the area, which is the only common land border with Zaire controlled by the government, with the rest of it held by Unita.

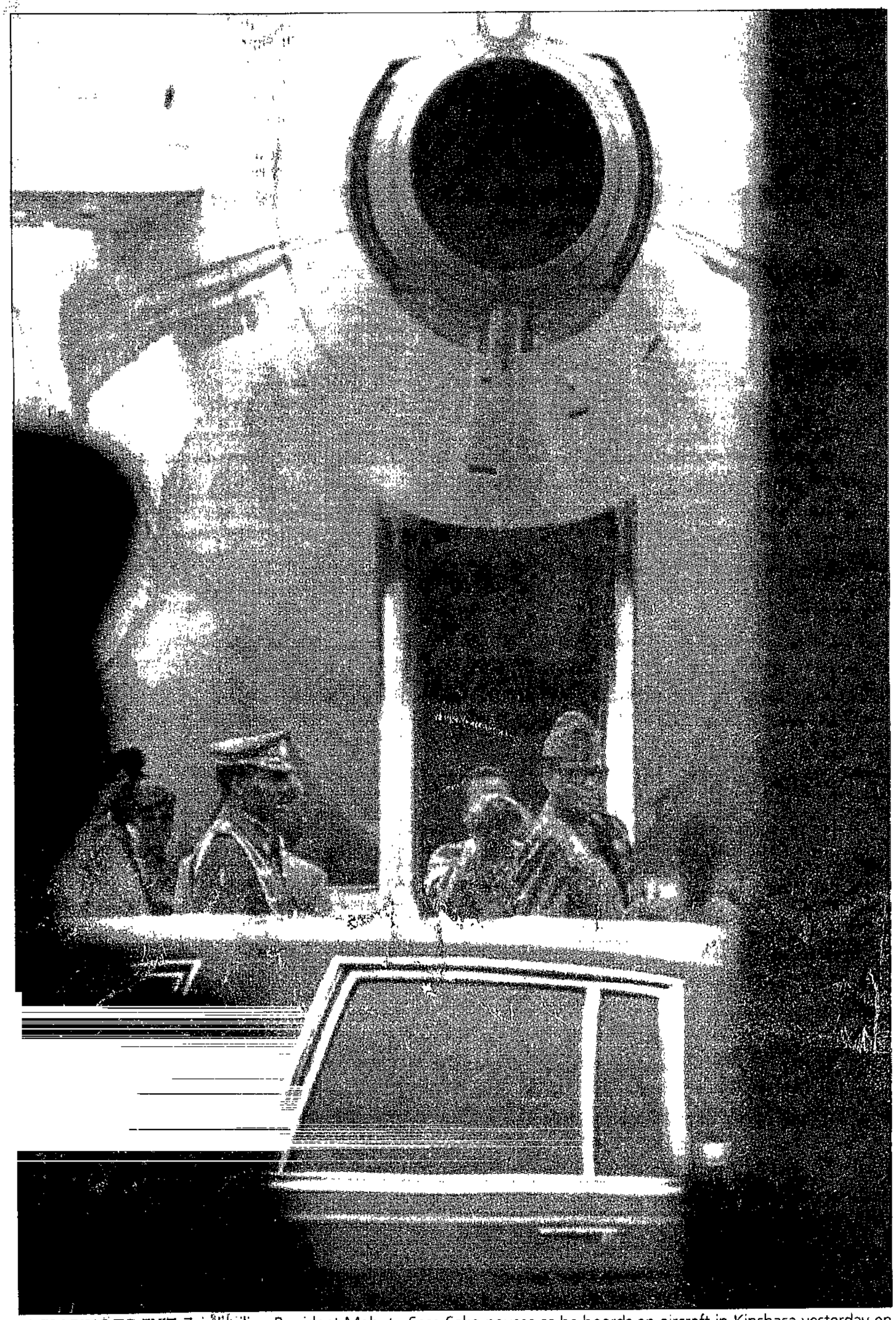
Diplomats here say Angolan army chief Joao de Matos and several of his top aides were in Dundo this week. One official said it appeared that a large airstrip in Dundo was being used as a logistical base to move material farther west, towards Kinshasa.

One official said: "As this is the only common border between the two sides it could be used as a staging area to move FAA (Angolan army) and the rebels west toward Kinshasa."

Angolan army officials have repeatedly denied any involvement in Zaire and a spokesman for President Jose Eduardo dos Santos said that there were no Angolan troops in Zaire.

The Angolan enclave of Cabinda is just north of the River Zaire, west of Kinshasa. Zairian radio reported late last week that 1 400 Angolan troops had crossed the Cabinda border into Zaire. – Independent Foreign Service

D-DAY FOR MOBUTU



PREPARING TO EXIT: Zaire's ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko pauses as he boards an aircraft in Kinshasa yesterday en route to Pointe-Noire in the Congo to meet rebel leader Laurent Kabila. The meeting was to be chaired by President Nelson Mandela on board a South African Navy ship in international waters PHOTOGRAPH: REUTERS

Ailing Mobutu finally makes it aboard SA 'peace ship'

Star 3/5/97 (358)

By PETER FABRICIUS AND ROSS HERBERT

Pointe-Noire – South Africa and international mediators breathed a huge sigh of relief yesterday as Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko eventually arrived on board the SA Navy supply ship SAS Outeniqua for his first face-to-face meeting with rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

Mobutu came aboard the ship, docked in this port city, several hours late after keeping peace brokers on tenterhooks for most of the day.

The Outeniqua steamed out to international waters after Mobutu's arrival, although Kabila had not reached the ship.

Indications late last night were that Kabila would not fly to ship until his safety was guaranteed, according to an Angolan government official..

Officials said that if the talks began they would continue into the night and would be unlikely to continue today, whatever happened – largely because of Mobutu's ill health.

The simple physical feat of getting the ailing Mobutu on board the Outeniqua came close to wrecking the talks.

Because of security fears, Mobutu had refused to board by helicopter as talks chairman President Mandela had done several hours earlier. His officials decided that the effort of alighting 31 steps on the gangplank from the docks to the ship would be too much for the ailing president to attempt with dignity – especially with the vulture-like press corps clamouring around to record his slightest stumble.

After rejecting the absurdly undignified option of hoisting Mobutu aboard in a steel basket, Mobutu eventually drove aboard in his presidential limousine through a roll-on-roll-off dock-level cargo door.

By that time, Pointe-Noire had acquired the atmosphere of a mini-United Nations or Organisation of African Unity summit as several regional heads of state gathered for what they clearly perceived as the all-important talks to try to end the war.

They included Togo's Gnassingbe Eyadema, Congo's Pascal Lissouba and Gabon's Omar Bongo.

Meanwhile Kabila's forces, which have already captured most of the vast country, continued their march on the capital Kinshasa.

None of the peace brokers were prepared to make firm predictions about the outcome of the talks, but US ambassador to the UN Bill Richardson – asked whether the talks would bring an end to Mobutu's rule – said carefully that "in my view, the meeting will produce a process that involves a transfer of power and a transitional inclusive government".

Richardson had spent several hours with both Mobutu and Kabila in shuttle talks this week. – Independent Foreign Service

Kabila sinks crucial Zaire peace talks

(358) ARG 3/5/97

Luanda – Zairean rebel leader Laurent Desiré Kabila has pulled out of an international peace summit intended to bring him into negotiations with President Mobutu Sese Seko, an official source in Angola said.

The source said that Mr Kabila would not join Mr Mobutu and President Nelson Mandela aboard the SAS Outeniqua, off the coast of Central Africa as planned.

He said South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki "has gone back to the boat to explain that Mr Kabila is not coming tonight. Kabila is not happy with the arrangements. I can't go into what that is".

"My understanding is that Kabila has left for his headquarters in Lubumbashi."

In Washington, a State Department spokesman said the United States was not confident the Kabila-Mobutu meeting would take place and urged the two men to hold the talks.

"These talks are very important for President Mobutu, very important for alliance leader Kabila. But most importantly, very important for the people of Zaire. We believe it is essential that these talks take place. And we urge the leaders to make that happen," said spokesman John Dinger.

Meanwhile, Portugal's Lusa news agency reported that Mr Kabila claimed that he had not received an "official invitation" to attend the talks.

He said that he had heard only late yesterday from South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki that he was awaited on the SAS Outeniqua.

Meanwhile Peter Fabricius reports from

To page 3

Zaire talks all at sea after Kabila no-show

(358)

From page 1

ARG 3/5/97

the Zaire port of Point Noire that the simple physical feat of getting the ailing Mr Mobutu on board the Outeniqua came close to wrecking the talks.

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They included Togo's Gnassingbye Eyadema, Congo's Pascal Lissouba and Gabon's Omar Bongo. The United States ambassador said: "In my view, the meeting will produce a process that involves a transfer of power and a transitional inclusive government."

Meanwhile, Mr Kabila's forces continue their march on the capital Kinshasa. – Sapa-AFP

Zaire under fire for walk-out threat

By ?ULE MOKHINE (365)

CP 4/6/97

ZAIRE could face expulsion from the Federation of International Football Association (Fifa) if they carry out their threat of withdrawing from the ongoing World Cup qualifying games.

☐ And in another shock move, the Zaire Football Association (ZFA) is believed to be seeking financial backing from the South African Football Association (Safa) to beef up its squad for their remaining preliminary games.

But Safa's chief executive officer, Danny Jordaan, told City Press yesterday that "there was no way" in which his association would finance Zaire.

"If they pull out it means we just have to win both our remaining matches," Jordaan said.

An angry Jordaan said Zaire was "trying to hold Safa to ransom" by asking the body to finance their next World Cup outing.

"I received a message to meet with a Mr Moumba in Johannesburg tomorrow and I will meet him but I can't guarantee anything," said Jordaan.

☐ On the threatened walkout, Fifa official Andreas Herren told City Press yesterday that the Zairean Football Association would be "severely punished" if they refused to continue with their World Cup commitments.

The Zairean Leopards this week threatened to back out of the tournament because of the civil war in their country, citing massive financial problems.

☐ Fifa rules state that if a country drops out of the World Cup, all games already played by that country be declared null and void.

This would be a serious blow to Bafana Bafana's chances of qualifying for the World Cup, as the South Africans won both games against the Zaireans, thereby earning six points.

The shock 2-0 loss against Congo has obviously hurt Bafana Bafana as well.

Given their 2-0 loss against Congo, the Zairean pullout would leave the South Africans with only a single point, gained by drawing with Zambia.

They now share the lead with Congo with seven points each.

The SA squad beat the Zaireans (1-0) at FNB Stadium last November before thumping their opponents (2-1) in an away game played at Stade Sport Eyadema in Lome, Togo last Sunday.

In their other games the Leopards drew twice – against Congo and Zambia.

Herren said Fifa would take all possible steps to ensure that Zaire "feels the pain" if they carry through with their threat.

"It's a great pity if Zaire spoils South Africa's chances of playing in France. They (the Zaireans) will pay a heavy fine, in addition to being suspended from the next World Cup," said Herren.

☐ Caf's Ishmael Bhamjee told City Press that Bafana Bafana would have to "battle against all odds" to win their remaining home games by convincing margins.

"Six points going down the drain is too much. Bafana Bafana will have to beat Zambia and Congo by much bigger margins to qualify," Bhamjee said.

Group 3 log:

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Congo	4	2	1	1	4	4	7
SA	4	2	1	1	3	3	7
Zambia	4	1	2	1	5	3	5
Zaire	4	0	2	2	4	6	2

Zaire's peace talks stay afloat

(3rd)

RAY HARTLEY on board SAS Outeniqua

ST 4/5/97

THE departure of the American delegation from the SAS Outeniqua yesterday paved the way for the Zairian peace talks to go ahead last night.

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad announced that the talks between President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and rebel leader Laurent Kabila were back on track.

"All the outstanding problems have been resolved," he said.

The talks were expected to take place aboard the SA Navy ship in international waters.

Pahad confirmed that Bill Richardson, the US ambassador to the UN, would not attend the talks. But he would not confirm that President Nelson Mandela had asked Richardson to leave the Outeniqua.

Mandela summoned Richardson to his cabin in the early hours of yesterday morning. Richardson and his party left the ship soon afterwards.

This followed reports that Kabila had insisted that he would not attend the talks if Richardson were present.

By yesterday afternoon Kabila, who had been waiting in the Angolan capital of Luanda with Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, was preparing to fly to the ship, accompanied by Mbeki.

Kabila had refused to board the ship as it sailed into international waters off the central African coast, as he had agreed with Mandela last week.

He is believed to have expressed concern at the presence of 11 of Mobutu's security staff on board the ship, fearing assassination.

A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs, Peter Swanepoel, also admitted to journalists yesterday that Mobutu aides posing as journalists had managed to board the ship.

"We asked people for press credentials and they did not have press credentials," he said.

"Because they were accompanying the president (Mobutu), we let them on board."

Pahad said that Kabila's security concerns had been dealt with. Mandela is said to have offered his own security officials to Mobutu to allay the rebel leader's fears.

After Kabila failed to arrive on Friday, Mobutu — who had eventually driven on board the ship accompanied by a 25-car cavalcade and a phalanx of bodyguards after ill health prevented him from climbing the boarding ramp — left the ship.

UN envoy Mohamed Sahnoun left the Outeniqua early yesterday to meet again with Mobutu, who spent the night at Pointe-Noire.

Mobutu was expected to board the ship again yesterday afternoon.

Meanwhile, SAPA-AP reports that rebel forces claim to have seized control of Kenge, the last major town on the way to the capital, Kinshasa.

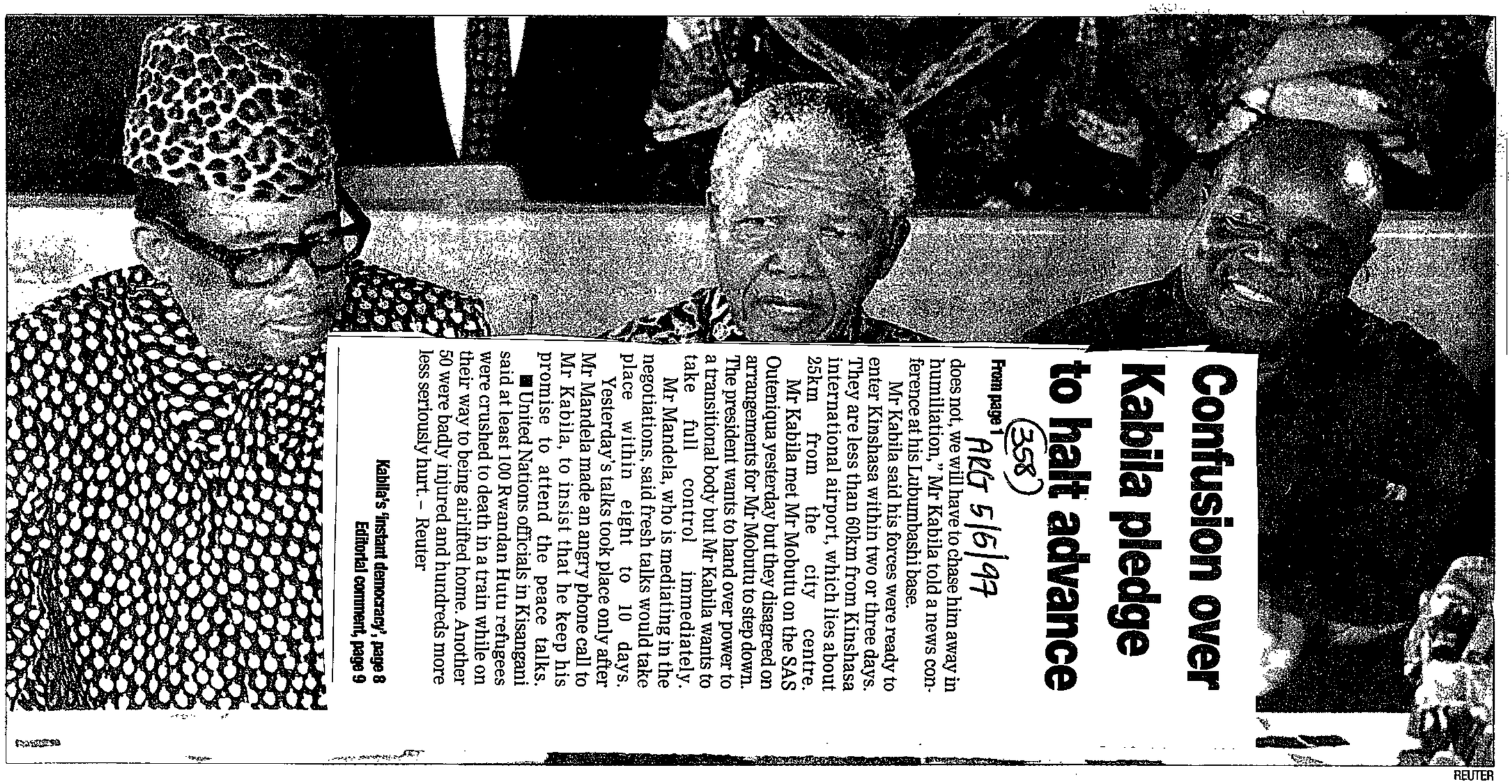
The rebels, who have now seized most of Zaire, also said that they had taken Lisala, Mobutu's home town and the capital of the northwestern Equateur region.

Kenge lies 190km west of Kinshasa, and Lisala is 240km south of Gbadolite near the Zaire-Central African Republic border, where Mobutu has an ancestral home and palace.

Despite denials by the Angolan government, troops in Angola are said to be participating in the drive on Kinshasa.



ALL HANDS ON DECK: President Nelson Mandela meets crew of the SAS Outeniqua ahead of the peace talks between Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Laurent Kabila **Picture: AP**



All at sea: President Nelson Mandela, flanked by President Mobutu Sese Seko, left, and rebel leader Laurent Kabila, at the inconclusive Zairian peace talks held on the SAS Outeniqua. Fresh talks are expected soon



REUTER

Rail horror: Rwandan refugees arrive at Kisangani, Zaire, after dozens were crushed to death on a train

Confusion over Kabila's pledge to stop advance

(358)

PETER FABRICIUS
FOREIGN SERVICE

Kinshasa – Confusion surrounds a promise by Zairian rebel leader Laurent Kabila to halt his advance on the capital, after President Mobutu Sese Seko rejected a demand to resign immediately.

The South African Government watched anxiously today to see whether Mr Kabila would stick to his pledge to President Mandela to stop his military advance towards Kinshasa while negotiating a peaceful conclusion to the civil war.

Mr Kabila's pledge was contradicted in comments he reportedly made in an interview, in which he said rebel forces would push on to Kinshasa.

And today he said his forces would chase President Mobutu out of Kinshasa if he had not handed over power by the time his forces arrived.

"If Mobutu hands over power before we enter Kinshasa, I will guarantee his safety and that of his biological family. But if he

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FACE-TO-FACE SUMMIT SOON

Kabila's advance now political not military

ET 18/4/97 (358)

KINSHASA: The end to the conflict may now be at hand after Kabila met Mandela, and five million residents here hold their breath.

AS rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila flew into eastern Zaire for a hero's welcome after agreeing to peace talks with President Mobutu Sese Seko, the capital anxiously awaited a face-to-face encounter to end six months of conflict.

With Kabila's rebels just weeks away from the capital, South African and UN officials said a deal had been struck to stage the summit as soon as possible.

Mobutu's special envoy, Honore Ngbanda Nzambo, said the accord heralded the start of "serious business".

The president's son and close aide, Mobutu Nzanga, said his father was willing to meet the man who has captured more than a third of the country but he could not confirm when a direct meeting would take place.

A Mobutu-Kabila meeting is needed to avoid a battle for Kinshasa, home to some five million. Kabila's army controls eastern Zaire and diplomats believe they are just weeks away.

Mobutu's regime is losing strength daily as the rebels control almost all the income-producing mineral wealth of the country and Mobutu's health is declining due to his prostate cancer, one western diplomat said.

"What you have left here in Kinshasa is a regime pushed by three inexorable forces," he said, referring to the regime running out of money, being hurt by Mobutu's fading health and facing the continued advance of rebel forces.

Diplomats agree the Zairian army is not strong enough to resist the rebels, who would easily take the city, but one noted: "The speed of Kabila's advance is now a political rather than a military issue."

He did not see what interest Kabila would have in either a battle or siege for Kinshasa that would destroy the city, probably through looting. Negotiations could seal his victory without further bloodshed.

The rebels have already begun consolidating their control over the mineral-rich east of the country, signing a massive mining deal with US firm AMFI.

For his part Mobutu, 66, supreme leader in his country for 32 years and until recently a firm US-ally against Soviet and Chinese influence in Africa, may simply be looking for an honourable way out of the war, diplomats said.

He has over the past two weeks shown his power in Kinshasa, suppressing a string of opposition demonstrations and appointing a general as prime minister after declaring a state of emergency on April 8.

Mobutu has also said that the transition to a new regime must take place via elections, and that he himself would run.

President Nelson Mandela yesterday said Kabila desired a solution supported by Mobutu and that he (Kabila) would not do anything to humiliate Mobutu.

● Meanwhile the Swiss cabinet yesterday declined to block assets Mobutu may have stashed in bank accounts, claiming no other country had frozen his assets and he remained president. Also, no Zairian authorities had requested it.

Also in Switzerland, ousted Prime Minister Leon Kengo wa Dondo, denied he had stolen government funds. — Sapa-AFP

UN airlift of Rwandan refugees could start today

KISANGANI: The UN refugee agency said it was aiming to start a massive airlift of Rwandans from camps in Zaire today but heavy rains and bad roads might slow the operation.

"We are still hoping to get the first plane off on Friday but it is pouring down now following heavy rains overnight," said UNHCR spokesman Mr Paul Stromberg yesterday in the north-eastern Zairian capital of Kisangani.

"With these rains the roads will become very difficult. They will become a quagmire," he said.

The UN airlift of an estimated 100 000 Rwandan Hutu refugees south of rebel-held Kisangani will be one of the biggest such operations and will cost millions of dollars.

Asked about the regional governor's concern that an epidemic of cholera among the Hutu refugees might spread to the Zairian population if the airlift began, Stromberg said: "We are confident we can bring out people who don't have cholera."

The first group of refugees due to be flown out today from Kisangani to the eastern city of Goma before being trucked back to Rwanda consists of 80 unaccompanied children.

An estimated 50 000 refugees are camped out at Kasese, 29km south of Kisangani, with a similar number in makeshift camps further south after months of trekking west to escape rebels.

Rebel chief Mr Laurent Kabila came under international pressure this month to agree to the airlift after earlier insisting the refugees should be trucked home, though the roads are impassable for long stretches.
— Reuter

Zaire rebel leader spurns Mobutu talks offer

Nairobi – Zaire rebel leader Laurent Kabila today spurned overtures from President Mobutu Sese Seko, ruling out negotiations with the ailing ruler and saying he would only attend a short ceremony on transfer of power.

Yesterday Mr Mobutu had grudgingly agreed he would now be willing to meet Mr Kabila to negotiate an end to the civil war.

But Mr Kabila told Reuter by phone from Zaire's second largest city, Lubumbashi, that his forces would march on Kinshasa if Mr Mobutu declined to step down.

"The South African initiative is about transfer of power. When he is ready for this, I shall go to attend a short day's ceremony on the peaceful transfer of power," said Mr Kabila.

"There will be no protracted negotiations with Mobutu, never – never. Maybe we have been misunderstood. The issue is about transfer of power, otherwise we march on to Kinshasa," said Mr Kabila.

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad had told a news conference in Cape Town yesterday that President Mandela had formally invited Mr Mobutu to meet Mr Kabila for talks in South Africa without pre-conditions.

"The outcome we have today (is) the agreement in principle by the two parties to meet at the highest level to discuss transitional arrangements," the UN special envoy to Zaire, Mahmoud Sahnoun, told the news conference.

Mr Mobutu's son and spokesman, Nzanga Mobutu, had confirmed yesterday that his 66-year-old father was now willing to meet Kabila, but cast doubt on any prospect of him stepping aside. He said Mr Mobutu's departure from power would bring chaos to Zaire. – Reuter

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(358)

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Mobutu set to kill all expats, claims Kabila

'He seeks intervention'

(358) ARG 18/4/97

Lubumbashi – Zaire's rebel leader Laurent Kabila has accused President Mobutu Sese Seko of ordering the massacre of all expatriates in Kinshasa to provoke foreign intervention and avert his downfall.

In a bombshell statement to reporters in Lubumbashi virtually guaranteed to cause panic in Kinshasa, a city of 5 million, Mr Kabila sent the man he wants to be finance minister to warn that the alleged plot could "start at any minute".

"The AFDL (rebel alliance) has learned from very reliable sources that Mobutu and his team have charged his SARM (military intelligence) and DSP (presidential guard) to kill all the expatriates who live in Kinshasa," said Mwana Nanga Mawanpanga.

"In this way they could blame those killings on our forces, which have not reached Kinshasa yet. And the reason for that is that they want to attract the intervention of foreign forces which are in Brazzaville (in neighbouring Congo)."

It was not clear whether the rebels' real intent was to provoke the quick evacuation of foreigners from Kinshasa before any risk of their being caught up in fighting.

"Instead of invading our country under the pretext of evacuating citizens, all they (foreign troops) have to do is make Mobutu get out as they did with (Philippines dictator Ferdinand) Marcos, as they did with (Haitian strongman Raoul) Cedras," said Mr Mawanpanga.

More than a thousand United States, French and Belgian marines are camped in Brazzaville ready to evacuate foreign nationals if Kinshasa looks like becoming the final battleground of Zaire's seven-month-old civil war.

The reason for last night's suprise announcement, made at short notice in a bizarre news conference by the hotel poolside in Lubumbashi, was not clear. It was unquestionably the authorised word of Mr Kabila, but seemed self-contradictory.

"This was a statement given me by the president (Kabila) himself. He doesn't joke. We have intelligence sources and friends everywhere and we know this plan will soon be executed in Kinshasa," said Mr Mawanpanga.

Referring to one of the most grisly episodes in Zaire's history, he said Mr Mobutu was preparing a repeat of the 1978 Kolwezi massacre, in which 2 000 Europeans were slaughtered during the suppression of an uprising in Katanga (now Shaba) province.

The massacre triggered French military intervention.

Asked if the rebel claim would not provoke panic and evacuation, Mr Mawanpanga said: "If they leave Kinshasa peacefully and safely without any foreign intervention, we have no problem with that. What we don't want is foreign intervention on our territory.

"But I am sure that if Mobutu's plot succeeds there will be foreign forces in Kinshasa under the pretext of evacuating the citizens, and we don't like that. What they should do is put pressure on Mobutu not to execute his plan.

"We want to call the world community's attention ... they should understand that if such a thing should happen, it is a plot which has been prepared by Mobutu's forces.

"What we are negotiating is Mobutu's peaceful exit from power to save violence and killing of our people. Keep in mind we are liberators ... if we can get into Kinshasa peacefully without firing a single shot, that would be best.

"What we are negotiating with Mobutu is his exit from power. Nothing else. And we will negotiate any time, at any minute."

Meanwhile efforts in Zaire to begin sending 100 000 Rwandan refugees home today have hit a snag after the rebels blocked the repatriation, citing fears that cholera among the refugees may spread to nearby Kisangani.

But the UN refugee agency, which is organizing a huge airlift of refugees to the border town of Goma and on to Rwanda, said it was still hopeful the first flight of 80 Rwandan children will take off tomorrow.

Paul Stromberg, a UN High Commissioner for Refugees spokesman, said the Kisangani governor, appointed by the rebels, had said repatriation could not start today until the cholera situation had been contained.

"He said this operation might propagate cholera," Mr Stromberg said. "We're disappointed by this last-minute turn of events, but we still hope we'll be able to begin on Saturday (tomorrow)."

"Our point of view is that the repatriation will not propagate cholera," he said. "On the contrary, if the operation doesn't get underway the healthy population is at risk of getting cholera."

He said a meeting was scheduled between UN doctors and cholera experts and the rebel authorities – including the governor – for today. UN workers want to persuade the rebels to give a final go-ahead for repatriation tomorrow.

A total of 19 deaths have been recorded among 330 patients at the cholera hospital at Kasese, 30km south of Kisangani.

Mr Stromberg said 43 suspected cholera patients had been released after blood tests came back negative. – Reuter, Sapa-AP



ANDREW INGRAM

Key players: Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad with UN special envoy Mohammed Sahnoun

Mobutu ready to talk – but not to resign

Son says dictator will meet rebel leader, but predicts chaos if he simply steps aside

Star 18/4/97 (358)

REUTERS AND SAPA
Kinshasa

Ailing and embattled President Mobutu Sese Seko has grudgingly agreed to personally negotiate an end to Zaire's civil war, but appears far from yielding to the key rebel demand that he relinquish power.

Mobutu's son and spokesman, Nzanga Mobutu, confirmed on Thursday that his 66-year-old father was now willing to meet rebel leader Laurent Kabila but cast doubt on any prospect of Zaire's ruler of 32 years stepping aside.

Nzanga said his father's departure from power, the rebels' uncompromising condition for a halt to their relentless six- month advance, would bring chaos to Zaire.

"We cannot leave a vacuum at the top of the country. The consequence would be turmoil," Nzanga told reporters here.

The UN's special envoy on the Zairian crisis, Mohammed Sahnoun, said yesterday the ultimate goal of a direct meeting between Zaire's two main protagonists would be to organise the terms for elections.

Speaking in Cape Town, where President Mandela met Kabila on Wednesday, Sahnoun said both sides had agreed to meet with no preconditions. Parallel efforts were going on in Brazzaville, the Congo capital just across the river from Kinshasa.

Mobutu watchers say the president would prefer to stay closer to home. Political opponents have suggested that should he venture far afield, his tenuous grip on power may slip away altogether. Mobutu had prostate cancer surgery last August.

The latest pronouncements by Kabila suggest he is intent on bringing the war to the sprawling Zairian capital should Mobutu continue to refuse demands to step aside.

On an optimistic note, Mandela said at Tuynhuys yesterday that after after talks with Kabila he was confident the rebel leader, in spite of his military advances, did not want a military solution but one that would receive Mobutu's support. He had also made it clear he did not intend to humiliate the ailing president.

Mandela said he had been in contact with Mobutu three times since Saturday. "He (Mobutu) is very co-operative. What he'll do I can't predict. But I do believe he has an strong interest in achieving a negotiated settlement."

'Order out to massacre all expatriates'

Lubumbashi – Zairian rebel leader Laurent Kabila has accused President Mobutu of ordering the massacre of all expatriates in Kinshasa to provoke foreign intervention and avert his downfall.

In a bombshell statement to reporters in Lubumbashi, which was virtually guaranteed to cause panic in Kinshasa, a city of five million, Kabila sent a trusted lieutenant, Mwana Mawanpanga, to warn that the alleged plot could "start at any minute".

"In this way, they could blame those killings on our forces which have not reached Kinshasa yet. And the reason for that is that they want to attract the intervention of foreign forces in Brazzaville (across the Zaire river in the Congo republic)."

More than 1 000 United States, French and Belgian marines are camped in Brazzaville ready to evacuate foreign nationals if Kinshasa looks like becoming the final battleground.

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Referring to one of the most grisly episodes in Zaire's history, Mawanpanga said Mobutu was preparing a repeat of the 1978 Kolwezi massacre in which some 2 000 Europeans were slaughtered during the suppression of an uprising in Katanga (now Shaba) province. The massacre triggered French military intervention. – Reuters.

SA seeks 'dignified' Mobutu exit to avert Kinshasa bloodbath

Star 19/4/97 (358)

Kinshasa – Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Laurent-Desiré Kabila are expected to meet face-to-face for the first time in Cape Town on Wednesday for crucial talks aimed at negotiating a "dignified exit" from power for Mobutu.

In Kinshasa yesterday Honore Ngbanda, a cousin of and special adviser to Mobutu, announced that the president had accepted an invitation from President Mandela for the meeting with Kabila.

Ngbanda said there had been no discussion of exile for Mobutu, who is asking for internationally supervised elections as the proper way to change political power.

In Lubumbashi, Kabila, on his return from Cape Town, was once again uncompromising, bluntly insisting the meeting with Mobutu would be "a short day's ceremony on the peaceful transfer of power".

SA officials dismissed this as grandstanding for his constituency, insisting that Kabila had agreed to allow Mobutu a dignified exit. "The question now is to reach agreement on what that means in practice," one source said.

In Kinshasa, the announcement of the meeting was greeted with mixed emotions. The diplomatic community has been pushing for a "soft transfer of power" that avoids a bloody battle for control of Kinshasa. But senior politicians close to Mobutu said they doubted he would agree to give up power except through an electoral battle.

"Now everyone (in Kinshasa) wants to follow the way of negotiations. Tell Mr Kabila if he comes here to Kinshasa, people will be angry. It will be very difficult for him," said Victor Nendaka, one of Mobutu's closest political allies since the early 1960s.

"Mobutu is counting on prospects for trouble in areas controlled by the rebels and chaos in Kinshasa to trigger international intervention," said an African ambassador.

Some analysts feared Mobutu was a virtual prisoner of his Ngbandi tribe who dominate his Israeli-trained presidential guard of between 6 000 and 10 000 men. His tribesmen fear wholesale retribution from the rebels and from other tribes oppressed under Mobutu, they said.

"He has a hard choice. Departure would mean abandoning his people and they are constantly reminding him of what happened to the Hutus," said an exiled Zairean scholar. He was referring to the former Rwandan Hutu troops blamed for the genocide of 800 000 people who have fought in vain alongside Zairean troops to quell Kabila's revolt.

The presence of Rwandan Hutu troops in western Zaire and the fact that Kinshasa is a power base for veteran opposition politician Etienne Tshisekedi make the city a tempting target for Kabila's Tutsi-dominated rebels to take by force rather than negotiation.

Tshisekedi's supporters on Thursday demanded a seat at any negotiations and one close Tshisekedi associate predicted Zaire would be ungovernable if rebels gained power and excluded the civil opposition.

"Unless Mandela's proposed deal involves uprooting the Rwandan Hutus from Zaire ... Kabila and his friends in Rwanda and Uganda may insist on a military victory," said a military analyst. – Independent Foreign Service and Reuters

'Pure intoxication' says Mobutu's son of claims that foreigners in Kinshasa are to be killed

Star 19/4/97 (358)

Kinshasa – Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko's son has dismissed as "ridiculous nonsense" claims by rebels that his father ordered a massacre of expatriates here in order to trigger a foreign intervention.

"This is pure intoxication. It is ridiculous nonsense. There's no foreigner here who will be killed by the government of Zaire, They are trying to spread panic," Nzanga Mobutu said.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila accused President Mobutu of ordering the massacre of all expatriates in the capital to provoke foreign intervention and avert his downfall.

In a statement to reporters in Lubumbashi, Mr Kabila sent the man he wants to be finance minister to give a warning that the alleged plot could "start at any minute".

"The AFDL (rebel alliance) has learned from very reliable sources that Mobutu and his team have charged his Sarm (military intelligence) and DSP (presidential guard) to kill all the expatriates who live in Kinshasa," Mwana Nanga Mawanpanga said.

"In this way, they could put those killings on our forces which have not reached Kinshasa yet. And the reason for that is that they want to attract the intervention of foreign forces which are in Brazzaville," he said.

But Nzanga Mobutu, also his father's spokesman, said the claims were absurd and were designed to spread panic in the Zairean capital, a city of more than five million people.

Diplomats said they received worried calls overnight from their home capitals after the predictions of an impending massacre of foreigners were broadcast.

"It is clearly designed to spread panic in Kinshasa and it is already succeeding in doing so," one Western diplomat said.

Mr Kabila's forces have seized about half of Zaire's territory and he says they will reach the capital within three weeks.

The rebel leader yesterday hardened his tone over planned face-to-face talks with the president, saying he would only meet him for a brief handing-over power-ceremony. – Reuter



Seeking support: Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko reaches for the arm of Prime Minister General Likulia Bolongo Lingbangi before a recent news conference

Zaire rebels halt aid to refugees

Convoy attacked, UN staff threatened

Star 19/4/97 (358)

Kisangani – Hundreds of angry Zaireans stopped aid workers from reaching camps for 80 000 Rwandan Hutu refugees and the United Nations has suspended its operations in the area.

The demonstrators prevented an aid convoy from leaving a ferry over the Zaire river, attacked vehicles and threatened aid workers, as part of a protest over the refugees and the aid they are receiving.

Witnesses said some aid workers were held for over an hour. Foreign journalists who crossed the Zaire river were attacked.

Demonstrators said the refugees should move deeper into the jungle away from Kisangani (formerly Stanleyville) and Zaire's third largest city. They said they did not want Western aid workers crossing the river.

It was the latest in a series of setbacks for the UN High Commission for Refugees, which delayed airlifting a first batch of refugee children out of Kisangani yesterday because rebel officials said they feared it could spread cholera in the area.

"We are going to give them (refugees) one week and then we will go up to camps to fight them," said Tony Manda, a trader.

"It is better if the refugees go back into the forest and be taken home from there. We don't want them coming through town."

A total of 330 cholera cases and 19 cholera deaths have been registered among 50 000 refugees at Kasese camp, 29 km south of Kisangani.

"The Zairean population refuses to let the whites (aid officials) take food to the refugees because the refugees are killing local Zaireans," said Yenga Masomboye, a boat operator.

The UNHCR temporarily suspended its operations and told other foreign aid workers not to visit the camps, saying it was seeking security guarantees from rebel officials in Kisangani.

A spokeswoman for the UN World Food Programme (WFP) said Zaireans had in the past three days attempted to loot food aid from two warehouses in Kisangani and a train ferrying supplies to the refugees and local Zaireans living near the two camps. "At the moment we have reports both our warehouses in the city have problems and are possibly being looted," she said.



Seeking help: Refugees from Kinsangani register at a Kinshasa aid centre after running away from advancing rebels in eastern Zaire

"We have been feeding both Zaireans internally displaced, and some members of the local population, for months," she added.

A UNHCR spokeswoman Pam O'Toole said demonstrators stopped a convoy with two international and four local UNHCR employees and other aid workers, hammered on their vehicles and blocked their way.

Tensions were whipped up by aggressive radio broadcasts against the refugees and unconfirmed reports in town that refugees had killed a rebel or several locals. Aid workers said they suspected rebels were inciting trouble to prevent the UN airlift via Kisangani of an estimated 100 000 Rwandan refugees.

"We have taken a step back today. Last night we were optimistic because we thought we could persuade authorities to let us start the repatriation," said UNHCR spokesman Paul Stromberg.

"We have had a security incident, fuel was requisitioned, so we are back to dealing with things on a very basic level."

He said rebel authorities requisitioned 60 000 litres of aircraft fuel due to be used for the refugee airlift to the eastern Zairean border city of Goma. Rebel officials gave no explanation.

Mr Stromberg said UNHCR still hoped that rebel authorities in Kisangani would allow the airlift to start today.

Besides the Kasese refugees, about 30 000 refugees are camped at near Kisangani and another 20 000 are scattered further south. – Reuter

Zaire open for business, says rebels' finance chief

ARG 19/4/97 (358)

DOUGLAS HAMILTON

Lumbumbashi – The new Zaire is open for business in what promises to be one of the most exciting chapters of African history, says the "finance minister" of the rebels.

Financial policy would be based on openness, honesty, monetary stability, fiscal responsibility and private enterprise actively assisted by clean government, Mwana Nanga Mawanpanga said.

"All those who want to be part of building this country are welcome to come and join us in the endeavour," he said.

Chosen as finance minister by Laurent Kabila's rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL), the 45-year-old, US-educated economist is soft-spoken and relaxed but clearly dedicated and proud of his mission.

He dismissed the notion that Mr Kabila, a former Marxist, would create a socialist Zaire if, as looks likely, the AFDL puts an end to President Mobutu Sese Seko's 32-year reign.

"The man is like Ronald Reagan. He knows how to delegate. He knows how to choose his advisers and when he gives you responsibility he trusts you," Mr Mawanpanga said. "There's no miracle. You work day in and day out.

"My No 1 priority will be to restore credibility at the central bank. We need the world to understand that we are not going to use the printing press all the time. The second move will be management of taxes. We have to reform the tax system.

"Corruption here has reached endemic levels.

"There are a lot of corrupt people but there are a lot of good people. So our challenge will be to find the good people and put them in charge."

He said a third leg of the policy equation would be to ensure that the government used its share of revenues in the most efficient way possible.

"I know that the president (Kabila) is a very, very honest man.

"On that score I can really rely on him to provide the leadership and make sure that the money that belongs to the treasury of this country is not wasted but is used for things like roads and telecommunications, not put in Swiss bank accounts," Mr Mawanpanga said. – Reuter

Kabila vows to take Kinshasa

ST 20/4/97 (368)

ZAIRIAN rebel leader Laurent Kabila yesterday pledged to continue his six-month offensive against the regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko until the capital Kinshasa fell.

In a fiery speech to 20 000 people in Lubumbashi, Zaire's second largest city, he declared: "The war must continue until the liberation of Kinshasa.

"Mobutu must negotiate with me on the conditions of his departure. He should give up power, give up his army, put down the arms so there can be a peaceful transfer of power."

It was Kabila's first public appearance in the capital of the mineral-rich Shaba province — which has now reverted to its old name, Katanga — since it was taken 10 days ago.

The anti-government alliance has already captured one half of Zaire, including areas that are home to the bulk of its vast mineral resources.

Kabila's insistence that he will capture Kinshasa came after Mobutu agreed in principle to a face-to-face encounter with the rebel leader at the request of President Nelson Mandela.

Kabila said Mobutu should remain in the country and "return all the money he has taken from the people".

The rebels have repeatedly said that the only talks they are interested in are on the details of Mobutu's departure from power.

Such insistence has riled Mobutu, who has maintained a dictatorial hold on Zaire for 32 years, and damaged hopes of a face-saving formula which would allow him to retire gracefully.

Mobutu's special adviser, Honore Ngbanda Nzambo, said on Friday that Mobutu had accepted Mandela's invitation, but practical details on the date remained to be sorted out.

But, given the rebels' refusal to declare any cease-fire before talks, the chances of an encounter appear remote.

Mandela's spokesman said Mobutu could meet Kabila in Cape Town "in the first part of next week, probably on Monday or Tuesday".

On Friday, rebel "foreign minister" Bizima Kahara said: "We will not stop hostilities, we want an end to the war. We cannot sign a cease-fire with mercenaries."

Nzambo rejected any suggestion that Mobutu should relinquish his 32-year rule or go into exile, but said there was agreement between the two sides on free and fair elections open to all, including the president.

Cancer-stricken Mobutu, 66, has resolutely clung to power despite the rebel onslaught and has announced he may stand if presidential elections are held.

In Washington, the US State Department urged dependants of embassy staff in Zaire to leave, and warned its nationals against all travel to the country.

Meanwhile, rebel leaders appeared determined to block a massive United Nations airlift of Rwandan refugees, insisting that impassable Zairian roads be fixed and used instead.

The UN refugee agency had hoped to begin Africa's biggest airlift last week by starting to fly some of the 100 000 refugees from squalid camps near Kisangani in central Zaire to the Rwandan border and then on to their homes by truck.

But Zairian rebels controlling the area have repeatedly delayed the effort, in an apparent bid to force the UN to repair roads in rebel-held areas.

"You shouldn't link repatriation with rehabilitation of roads," UN High Commissioner for Refugees spokesman Paul Stromberg said. "To link the two means to postpone the repatriation for many, many months."— *Sapa-AP*

Huge fortunes at stake in Zaire

MINERAL DEPOSITS

By JOHN CAVILL

BILLIONS of dollars' worth of mineral riches in Zaire's Shaba province are at stake in the battle for political supremacy now being waged in the country.

On Friday, Zairian Information Minister Kin-Kiey Mulumba said the government had revoked the $1-billion deal signed in Lubumbashi between the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), and Canadian mining group American Mineral Fields (AMF).

Headed by former De Beers manager in Zaire, Jean-Raymond Boulle, AMF cut across the bidding procedure for privatisation stakes in the mining assets of the parastatal Gecamines by negotiating directly with rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

In terms of the deal, AMF will take 51% and Gecamines 49% in a joint venture to exploit the Kolwezi mine's copper-cobalt tailings, re-open the Kipushi zinc-copper mine and build a major smelter and acid producing plant. In stockbroker presentations last year AMF put a value of $13.5-billion on the reserves.

Reports in London alleged that AMF loaned Kabila a private jet and advanced $20-million to help the rebellion. This was rebutted by AMF spokesman Earl Young.

A Canadian-quoted company with a market capitalisation of C$180-million — after a 20% jump on the Shaba news — AMF's operational headquarters are in Hope, Arkansas.



SPOILS OF WAR ... Mawapanga Mwan Nanga, rebel finance minister, and Jean-Raymond Boulle of American Mineral Fields after the signing of a joint-venture contract this week

(358) ST 20|4|97 (PT)

Young said: "All we are doing is continuing what we started last year. We have been running ahead of everyone else, including Anglo American."

AMF has it roots in one of the most sensational mining coups of the century. Boulle, with Canadian partners, had set up a Vancouver-based exploration company called Diamond Field Resources. Looking for diamonds in Labrador, the company stumbled on one of the biggest nickel orebodies in the world, Voisey Bay.

In 18 months the market value of Diamond Field Resources shot from C$40-million to C$3-billion. The company was then taken over by global mining giant International Nickel.

Boulle took a majority stake in a shell company and renamed it AMF. The company was granted a Toronto listing in October 1995 and its first strategic moves were to acquire diamond concessions in Brazil.

Last year in May, AMF entered into an agreement with Anglo American under which any project in Shaba undertaken by either group would be a 50:50 joint venture and Anglo would provide the first US$100-million in equity.

AMF then negotiated with Gecamines to conduct a feasibility study for Kipushi and was short-listed for the Kolwezi tailings project.

At the end of 1996 the joint-venture agreement with Anglo American lapsed as the Kabila rebellion rolled across Zaire.

Analysts in London said Boulle had foreseen the end of the Mobutu regime in Zaire and took the view that the new government would favour smaller independent companies against the SA majors.

Zaire's upheaval took a heavy toll on AMF's share price. From a peak of C$20 in March 1996, it fell to a low of C$2,85 last month.

A spokesman said AMF would be looking for partners in developing the Shaba operations.

The company has C$30-million in cash and can call on another C$18-million.

"We expect to be announcing partners in the ventures soon," the spokesman said.

"Meanwhile we are carrying on with our feasibility studies at Kipushi and in Zambia."

New order in Zaire may help boost region's

(358) BD 22/4/97

There is hope that prospects for Zaire and Africa will improve after the civil war, writes **Greg Mills**

FOR the Afro-pessimist, the civil war in Zaire provides yet another indication of the continent's continuing political difficulties.

While some argue that Laurent Kabila's rebel alliance might offer hope of a new era of democracy and stability, pessimists highlight risks of ethnic fratricide and implosion of the Zairean state.

However, there is much about which to be optimistic. The capture by Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire of Zaire's second-largest city, Lubumbashi, in the mineral-rich Shaba province, highlights the economic potential of a stable Zaire as well as the contribution it could make to southern Africa.

After all, almost any form of government would be preferable to the (mis)rule of President Mobutu Sese Seko. Since seizing power in 1965, Mobutu has succeeded in making himself one of the world's richest figures by making his nation one of the poorest. The crumbling and chaotic Zairean state has become a by-word for an African kleptocracy.

Zaire's annual per capita gross domestic income was estimated at just $545 last year. The fall of the world copper price and the closure of its main transport route via Angola in 1974, coupled with inefficient and corrupt government, sent Zaire into a downward economic spiral from which it has never recovered.

The economy has contracted by an average annual rate of 6,7% since 1989, with the result that the country, in the words of one Western diplomat, "does not exist any more as a state entity".

The scale of decline can be measured by the fact that the rate of Kabila's advance is governed mainly by the state of the roads rather than military opposition.

Although it is now devoid of infrastructure in many areas, Zaire's economic riches are underexploited. Formal economic performance is heavily reliant on mining, representing about two-thirds of export earnings and about 5% of gross domestic product (GDP). But the production volumes of its principal minerals — copper, cobalt, diamonds and zinc — have all declined since the 1980s. Copper production is at 7% of the 1980s level and cobalt at 25% of its 1974 peak.

The war has overshadowed all attempts at economic liberalisation which principally hinge on efforts to privatise the state mining conglomerate Gecamines as well as the raising of new loans, restructuring of repayments of Zaire's $12bn foreign debt, and improvements in its relationship with its traditional Western partners — particularly France, Belgium and the US — as well as SA.

Zaire's imports from SA increased about 520% between 1989 and 1994, and could be expected to rise further with changes to the political landscape. Privatisation of Gecamines would also provide a much-needed boost through the injection of new resources and technology and, given prospective links with SA mining houses, could further strengthen the bilateral relationship.

Zaire's domestic stability could also have positive effects for the region. Zaire is Africa's largest state, bordering on nine countries. With 48% of its population of 44-million younger than 15, it will overtake France as the most populous French-speaking state early in the 21st century.

Its close relationship with the political fortunes of the great lakes region is illustrated by the role of Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda in supporting Kabila's rebels. Although not a member of the Southern African Development Community, already Zaire is inextricably linked to the community's water and hydro-electric schemes given southern Africa's needs and the virtually unlimited potential of the Congo River in this regard.

The stability of the southern Shaba province is also tied closely to Zambia's northern copper belt; while SA, too, is linked not only through the mining companies, but also through the operations of Spoornet. The SA parastatal is a major shareholder in the Zairean railway company Sizarail.

Political change might well also bring Zaire the opportunity to realise its immense tourist and farming potential. Although there is little accurate data available on the performance of either the informal or the formal economic sectors, agriculture would appear to be the largest economic activity, accounting for about 53% of Zaire's GDP.

As Zaire is also the continent's richest country in terms of its biodiversity, there might now well be opportunity to institutionalise wildlife sanctuaries and rigorously protect this resource.

Of course, many challenges will have to be met before Zaire is able to realise its full potential. In the short term Kabila will have to pacify many constituent elements of his alliance, balancing the need to "pay back" against the establishment of democratic norms.

In doing so, he will have to avoid empowering the ambitions of secessionists.

Even if a great many uncertainties remain, Zaire appears to offer better prospects than it has for many years.

□ *Greg Mills is the national director of the SA Institute of International Affairs.*



Apes ... a role to play in reviving Zaire's tourism industry.

JCI team seeks to save Zaire projects

(352)

David McKay BD 22/4/97

MINING group JCI has become the latest SA company to despatch a high-ranking delegation to Zaire in an attempt to salvage millions of rands worth of business interests and potential project contracts.

The delegation, due to leave Johannesburg today, follows hard on the heels of groups bearing the standards of Anglo American and De Beers which left for Goma on Sunday.

Reuter reports that Anglo and De Beers were sending their third such delegation to Zaire in the past month.

One analyst observed that this was "ironic" given the two groups' previous announcement that they would not meet the rebel alliance, led by the charismatic Laurent Kabila and poised to clinch power after military victories.

A source close to JCI's Zaire delegation said the stakes were high for the group as it already had R30-R40m in rehabilitation projects under way in the country. One of these was a sulphur melter in Likasi which was nearing completion. This project was considered strategically valuable to the group as it would help it establish a track record of successful project work in Zaire while it pursued other business opportunities there.

These other opportunities included an open-pit copper-cobalt mine at Ruashi-Etoile which one analyst said compared with the Kolwezi copper tailings plant — the $1bn project that JCI and Anglo reportedly lost to US group American Mineral Fields (AMF).

Zairean parastatal Gecamines said last week this deal between AMF and the rebels was void as AMF had circumvented the tendering procedure.

It is believed the Anglo American and De Beers delegations will discuss this issue with the Mobotu government and Kabila's alliance.

JCI said it had been a frontrunner in the Kolwezi tender. "We now want to see who the decision-makers are in Zaire and take the matter of Kolwezi further with them," he said.

Continued on Page 2

Zaire

(358)

BD 22/4/97

Continued from Page 1

Gencor, another SA hopeful for the Kolwezi project, was not sending a delegation to Zaire but was adopting a "wait-and-see" attitude. New business director Dave Munro said Gencor was keeping in touch with the situation in Zaire, believing it would play itself out.

□ Reuter reports from Kinshasa that President Mobutu Sese Seko will not travel to SA this week for talks with Kabila on ending Zaire's civil war.

His son Nzanga Mobutu said: "Apparently President Mobutu doesn't want to travel to SA. He prefers somewhere else. It is a long flight and he's still convalescing."

He said, however, that the talks were not off and that negotiators were still working on a date and venue.

See Page 11

FOOD AID STOPPED

Zairians, refugees in clash over supplies

(358)

CT 22/4/97

Hundreds join as Kabila approaches Kinshasa

KASESE, Zaire: Mobs have gone on the rampage, with a train looted, as locals blame Hutu militia for murders and theft of food.

AID workers yesterday suspended operations in Rwandan refugee camps after an outbreak of looting, murder and attacks on foreign journalists and aid workers by Zairian mobs.

Zairians went on a rampage and attacked foreigners near Kasese, 26km south of Kisangani, after at least six local people were murdered and two injured. The Zairians blamed Rwandan Hutu militiamen for the killings.

The World Food Program said Zairian mobs also raided a food depot, and in a separate incident looted a trainload of food intended for Rwandans starving in refugee camps, while Zairian rebel soldiers did nothing to stop them.

"Almost on every front, we are facing problems," said Ms Michele Quintaglie, of the World Food Program. "At this point, we cannot continue to keep sending priceless food without assurances from the rebels."

The food supplies are essential to 100 000 Rwandan refugees, dying at a rate of about 60 a day from starvation and disease as they wait for rebels and aid agencies to agree on plans to send them home.

Tensions have been high between Zairians and the refugees, because local people accuse Rwandans of stealing their crops. Even though it was not clear who committed the murders, Zairians blamed the refugees.

Near Kasese, a villager heard soldiers in his village speaking the Rwandan language, Kinyarwanda, at the time of the murders, leading to suspicion that Hutus had been on a rampage.

"They told me to go back to my hut. Then I heard gunshots around the village, and when I came out I saw them run into the jungle," said Mr Asida Musalia, who then found dead bodies.

The governor of Eastern Province, formerly Haut-Zaire, Mr Jean-Yagi Sitolo, went on radio calling the population to calm.

"The situation is tense," Sitolo said in his Kisangani office. "The population is very upset because the refugees killed six Zairians. We sent a group of soldiers to investigate."

In the same area, two WFP local employees fled gunfire and a mob, believed to have looted a food warehouse during the night, said Quintaglie.

About 18km to the south, a train bringing enough food for 32 000 people for a week was attacked and presumed looted by local Zairians at a rebel checkpoint, where the train had been ordered to stop eight hours earlier.

Quintaglie said the train had been cleared by rebel leaders to use the narrow-gauge track leading to the camps.

However, when the train got to a rebel base near Lula just south of Kisangani on Sunday, troops ordered it to stop, saying it was not safe to pass through the area, she said.

Nine hours later the rebels cleared the train to leave.

"As soon as the train started its engine, more than 100 people from the local community started to come out of the forest and attacked it. Our two local staff ran for their lives," Quintaglie said.

She added it was not clear why the troops had held the train for so long, or who had organised the raid. However, the rebel troops did nothing to stop the villagers from attacking the train, she said.

The UN refugee agency wants to fly the refugees to the border town of Goma and send them on to Rwanda by truck.

But the rebels want them to go all the way on trucks, and say the United Nations should fix the rough 600km road from Kisangani to the border town of Bukavu.

A local rebel leader yesterday discussed the problem with rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila.The Rwandan Hutus at the camps in central Zaire are among more than one million Rwandans who fled in 1994, fearing retaliation for their country's slaughter of a half-million minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus. — Sapa-AP

LUBUMBASHI: Hundreds of recruits have left the rebel-held city of Lubumbashi to join the ranks of Mr Laurent Kabila's rebels who appeared to be nearing the Zairian capital Kinshasa.

The rebels yesterday flew several hundred young men and woman to training camps from Lubumbashi, the capital of the south-eastern Shaba province, known to local people and guerrillas by its old name, Katanga.

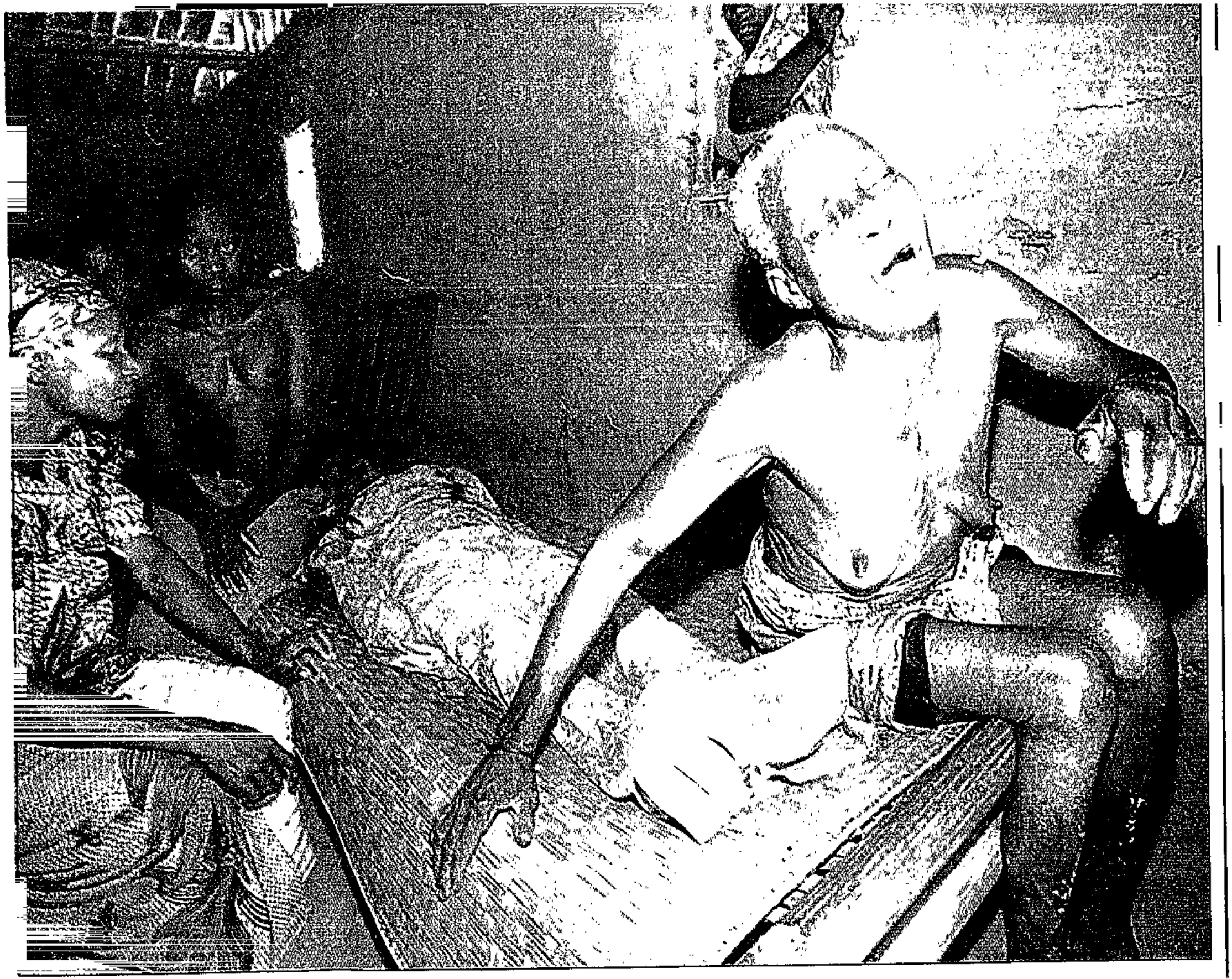
A source close to the mainly Tutsi rebels said that on Sunday, local air carriers began taking recruits to the "liberated" towns of Kalemie, Kisangani to the north and Goma on the border with Rwanda.

The planes were coming back to Lubumbashi, Zaire's second city, with more rebel troops, their equipment and families.

On Saturday Kabila told a public meeting here that his forces, who have captured half the vast, impoverished African country, were preparing for the final offensive on Kinshasa.

The rebels are determined to oust President Mobutu Sese Seko, ailing with cancer at 66, who has ruled Zaire for more than three decades, has refused to quit and said he will even stand again if presidential elections were held.

Latest reports tell of rebel forces close to Matadi, a port town on the Zaire River 200km from Kinshasa. — Sapa-AFP



BEREAVED: An elderly Zairian woman wails yesterday as she mourns her 17-year-old grandson in the village of Kasese, 25km south of Kisangani. The youth was among six people shot dead in an attack on the village by unknown assailants. ***PICTURE:AP***

SAAF stands by for Kinshasa airlift as Kabila talks tough

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT (358)
ARG 22/4/97

PRETORIA – Diplomatic efforts are under way in a bid to keep the faltering Zairean peace process alive but back-up plans to evacuate South Africans from the war-torn country are now in place.

A South African Air Force spokesman confirmed it had planes on eight-hour stand-by to airlift South Africans from Kinshasa should it become necessary.

The Department of Foreign Affairs confirmed it had withdrawn all family members and non-essential personnel from its mission in the capital.

Foreign Affairs spokesman Pieter Swanepoel said only a handful of essential staffers were left in the capital and plans had been made for an evacuation of South Africans should it be necessary.

South African companies with operations in Zaire are also monitoring the civil war closely, after rebel leader Laurent Kabila adopted a hardline approach during a public address in Lubumbashi in eastern Zaire.

Mr Kabila told supporters that President Mobutu Sese Seko was "a satan" who had to go.

He also pledged to press ahead with a military offensive on the capital.

Zairean conflict 'could ignite southern Africa'

BD 23/4/97, L1 (358)

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad has warned that increased conflict in Zaire and a battle for the capital, Kinshasa, could reignite the conflict in Angola and destabilise SA Development Community countries bordering that country.

Pahad was briefing Parliament's foreign affairs committee as news broke that embattled Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko had, for health reasons, rejected SA as a venue for meeting rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

Emphasising again the serious implications of a failure to broker peace in Zaire, Pahad said other countries were involved and that President Nelson Mandela had been in touch with their leaders in an attempt to keep the negotiations on transitional arrangements for Zaire on track. While the meeting scheduled for Cape Town today was off, Pahad and foreign affairs officials remained optimistic that they could still succeed in getting the warring parties to the negotiating table.

"If the instability in Zaire continues, the entire continent and SA will be affected," Pahad said. "Chaos in Zaire will also allow for the intensification of the crisis in Angola."

He said there was alarming information emerging of increased involvement of mercenaries and soldiers from other countries in Zaire. Sources said there were also reports that soldiers from Angolan opposition leader Jonas Savimbi's Unita movement could be involved.

Pahad said that part of the diplomatic effort was to persuade these other forces not to become involved in the conflict. If the initiatives did not succeed, visions of an African renaissance would be nothing but hollow words.

He told the committee not to take it "as read" that health problems were really preventing Mobutu from travelling to SA for a meeting.

Contact had been maintained with Kabila, who had given an assurance that he would abide by the agreement to meet and was waiting to return to SA, Pahad said.

SA was not interested in where the meeting was held, but in seeing that it took place in the interests of halting hostilities in Zaire.

Pahad said that United Nations special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun still believed SA was the best venue for a meeting.

Simon Barber reports from Washington that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki urged business yesterday not to make any deals with Zairean rebel leader Laurent Kabila and his Democratic Alliance but to wait until the formation of a "transitional authority".

Speaking at Washington's National Press Club, Mbeki remained confident that direct talks between Kabila and President Mobutu Sese Seko on the formation of such an authority would occur soon.

He was not alarmed by the latest bellicose statements from the two sides. Kabila said yesterday he saw no reason to negotiate, and there were threats that the Zairean army would defend the capital, Kinshasa, at all costs.

Mbeki said "a lot of what is happening would be normal in a situation of conflict and negotiation".

Depicting the war talk as "understandable pre-negotiation positioning", Mbeki continued to stress that Mobutu and Kabila had already agreed to meet and that the two sides had committed themselves to finding a peaceful solution involving a ceasefire and negotiations on transitional arrangements paving the way to a "new" Zaire.

In response to Mobutu's change of heart on attending talks in SA in favour of a closer venue, Mbeki said the venue was not important.

The cancer-stricken Zairean leader last week informed President Nelson Mandela that he was fit enough to attend talks in SA. "But if his health situation has changed and he should travel a shorter distance, that's fine," Mbeki said.

Asked about the race between foreign minerals companies — including Anglo American — to strike deals with Kabila, Mbeki said he understood "the intense competition to get a foot in the door before another person", but he urged restraint.

"It would be better to enter agreements with whatever transitional authority will come," he said.

Mbeki was due to head home last night after talks with Vice-President Al Gore and Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

On Monday he spoke at the Attracting Capital to Africa conference, the largest gathering of US businessmen and African officials yet organised, expounding on his vision of "an African renaissance".

See Pages 8, 10

Zairean conflict 'could ignite southern Africa'

BD 23/4/97 (358)

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad has warned that increased conflict in Zaire and a battle for the capital, Kinshasa, could reignite the conflict in Angola and destabilise SA Development Community countries bordering that country.

Pahad was briefing Parliament's foreign affairs committee as news broke that embattled Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko had, for health reasons, rejected SA as a venue for meeting rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

Emphasising again the serious implications of a failure to broker peace in Zaire, Pahad said other countries were involved and that President Nelson Mandela had been in touch with their leaders in an attempt to keep the negotiations on transitional arrangements for Zaire on track. While the meeting scheduled for Cape Town today was off, Pahad and foreign affairs officials remained optimistic that they could still succeed in getting the warring parties to the negotiating table.

"If the instability in Zaire continues, the entire continent and SA will be affected," Pahad said. "Chaos in Zaire will also allow for the intensification of the crisis in Angola."

He said there was alarming information emerging of increased involvement of mercenaries and soldiers from other countries in Zaire. Sources said there were also reports that soldiers from Angolan opposition leader Jonas Savimbi's Unita movement could be involved.

Pahad said that part of the diplomatic effort was to persuade these other forces not to become involved in the conflict. If the initiatives did not succeed, visions of an African renaissance would be nothing but hollow words.

He told the committee not to take it "as read" that health problems were really preventing Mobutu from travelling to SA for a meeting.

Contact had been maintained with Kabila, who had given an assurance that he would abide by the agreement to meet and was waiting to return to SA, Pahad said.

SA was not interested in where the meeting was held, but in seeing that it took place in the interests of halting hostilities in Zaire.

Pahad said that United Nations special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun still believed SA was the best venue for a meeting.

Simon Barber reports from Washington that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki urged business yesterday not to make any deals with Zairean rebel leader Laurent Kabila and his Democratic Alliance but to wait until the formation of a "transitional authority".

Speaking at Washington's National Press Club, Mbeki remained confident that direct talks between Kabila and President Mobutu Sese Seko on the formation of such an authority would occur soon.

He was not alarmed by the latest bellicose statements from the two sides. Kabila said yesterday he saw no reason to negotiate, and there were threats that the Zairean army would defend the capital, Kinshasa, at all costs.

Mbeki said "a lot of what is happening would be normal in a situation of conflict and negotiation".

Depicting the war talk as "understandable pre-negotiation positioning", Mbeki continued to stress that Mobutu and Kabila had already agreed to meet and that the two sides had committed themselves to finding a peaceful solution involving a ceasefire and negotiations on transitional arrangements paving the way to a "new" Zaire.

In response to Mobutu's change of heart on attending talks in SA in favour of a closer venue, Mbeki said the venue was not important.

The cancer-stricken Zairean leader last week informed President Nelson Mandela that he was fit enough to attend talks in SA. "But if his health situation has changed and he should travel a shorter distance, that's fine," Mbeki said.

Asked about the race between foreign minerals companies — including Anglo American — to strike deals with Kabila, Mbeki said he understood "the intense competition to get a foot in the door before another person", but he urged restraint.

"It would be better to enter agreements with whatever transitional authority will come," he said.

Mbeki was due to head home last night after talks with Vice-President Al Gore and Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

On Monday he spoke at the Attracting Capital to Africa conference, the largest gathering of US businessmen and African officials yet organised, expounding on his vision of "an African renaissance".

See Pages 8, 10

Moosa releases plans for

Refugees in dire straits as rebels clash with Hutus

Aid workers left helpless

ARG 23/4/97 (358)

Kisangani – United Nations refugee agency spokesmen said today they were checking reports that 55 000 Rwandan refugees had fled from two camps in northeastern Zaire after two days of unrest in the area.

"We have received reports that the population at the Kasese camps may have moved from the sites. We are trying to check, but for the moment we have no access on the ground," said Paul Stromberg, one of the spokesmen.

New fighting flared yesterday outside the sealed-off refugee camps of central Zaire, further jeopardising the 100 000 Rwandan refugees already devastated by disease and hunger.

Rebels blocked aid workers from the camps, even commandeering the fuel that aid agencies needed for flights over the camps.

Aid workers had no way to help the refugees dying of starvation and disease at a rate of 60 a day.

The rebels said their forces and Rwandan Hutu soldiers and militiamen had begun fighting after residents around the camp went on a rampage on Monday, blaming the refugees for the killing of six local people. The mobs looted food supplies and attacked aid workers and journalists.

The rebels – many of them ethnic Tutsis from eastern Zaire – have periodically fought former Rwandan Hutu soldiers and militiamen during their seven-month insurgency against Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko.

■ The Argus Correspondent in Washington reports meanwhile that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki has criticised American and South African companies that have been signing business contracts with rebel leader Laurent Kabila to exploit the country's mineral wealth.

South Africa's De Beers Consolidated Mines and Anglo American, Tenke Mining of Canada and American Mineral Fields have been negotiating in rebel-held areas.

Mr Mbeki said: "It is important that agreements be reached with an authority for Zaire as a whole. The kind of action we see now could encourage separatism."

Mr Kabila's forces control the diamond-rich eastern regions, including the diamond fields of Kasai province and the copper-rich hills of Shaba province.

'You can kill by shooting or by staryation. Starvation is what's going on'

(358) Star 24/4/97

New York – UN chief Kofi Annan, accusing Zairian rebels of "killing by starvation", yesterday called on the rebel leader to allow aid to reach tens of thousands of refugees stranded in eastern Zaire.

In comments to reporters after briefing the UN Security Council on the latest humanitarian developments in Zaire, Annan said: "I do not think the international community can stand by as thousands of men and women and children are starved to death.

"You can kill by shooting or by starvation. Killing by starvation is what is going on."

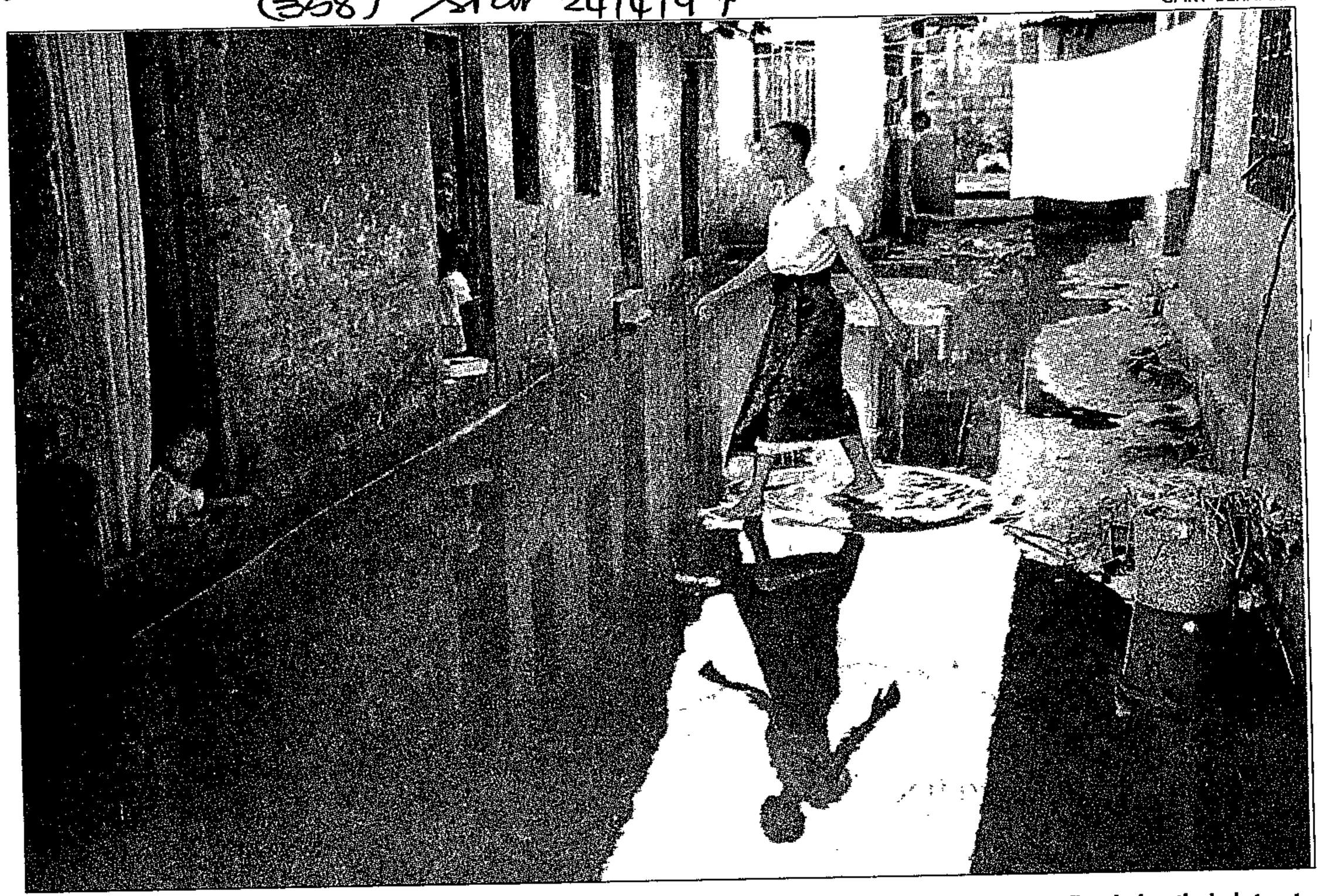
He pointed to the fact that despite promises made to UN relief agencies, the Tutsi rebels who control eastern Zaire were refusing to allow the delivery of assistance to around 80 000 Rwandan refugees "in deplorable condition" in the Kisangani area.

"I am shocked and appalled by the inhumanity of those who control eastern Zaire to these refugees, most of whom are innocent," said Annan.

Referring to rebel leader Laurent Kabila and those in the region who back him, Annan said: "If Mr Kabila is in charge of his forces, he has to bring them under control. If he is not, he should take measures to control them." – Sapa-AFP.

▶ **Mobutu will still talk, but not in South Africa**
Page 4

GARY BERNARD



Uncertainty ... as Kinshasa quietly waits for rebel soldiers to arrive, not knowing what to expect, rain has flooded potholed streets, reminding everyone how much Zaire's infrastructure has crumbled. Because puddles can conceal treacherous holes, most taxis stay off the streets, forcing workers to stay home or leap-frog the puddles and make their way to their destinations on foot.

ZAIRE

Mining houses stake claims

SA envoys hastily dispatched to deal with new strongman

358
FM 25/4/97

Fearing a close-out, local mining houses this week scampered to protect possible ventures in war-torn Zaire.

As the *FM* went to press, high-level delegations from Anglo American and De Beers were still locked in discussions with rebel Zairean leader Laurent Kabila in Lubumbashi.

De Beers is discussing the security of its five diamond buying offices while Anglo is focusing on "obtaining clarity on the situation."

The corporations are already rattled by last week's US$1bn coup by American Mineral Fields Inc (AMFI)'s Jean-Raymond Boulle. A friend of US President Bill Clinton, Boulle moved quickly to grab control of mineral interests — to the dismay of the local houses. Stampeded into action, the blue chips sent damage control teams to meet Kabila.

But Anglo spokesman Charmaine Russell says "Anglo is also discussing tendering for the abandoned Ruashi Etoile copper and cobalt mine outside Lubumbashi. While the Kolwezi Tailings tender has apparently been awarded to AMFI, the Ruashi Etoile tender is still outstanding."

The AMFI contract grants it a 51% share, with the rebel administration, in three mineral-related projects. This will allow the Arkansas-based mining company to:

- ❑ Exploit the Kolwezi tailings project;
- ❑ Build a new zinc smelter at Kipushi with 200 000 t/year capacity; and
- ❑ Explore the 500 000 km² Shaba province for further mineral finds.

In May last year, Anglo entered into a 50-50 joint venture with AMFI to tender for the projects. This was subsequently disbanded as the Mobutu administration wanted each to submit a separate tender.

De Beers spokesman Tracey Peterson says De Beers' interest in the Miba diamond mine — one of the biggest in Zaire — is through its 20% shareholding in Belgian mining company Sibeka, which also holds a 20% interest. Zaire's government owns the balance.

Mark Gonsalves, corporate affairs manager for JCI, says "JCI Ltd, in common with other companies, has put in bids on the Kolwezi copper tailings project and the open-pit copper-cobalt mine at Ruashi-Etoile."

BOE NatWest Securities analyst Barry Sergeant says Zaire's mineral wealth will, it's hoped, be unlocked under conditions of "open public tender, as is the international norm. If not, Kabila might find his administration shunned by dominant international trade and financing institutions."

A stable political administration, supported by globally acceptable minerals and investment legislation, will be a prerequisite. "Then you can expect massive development."

Arnold van Huyssteen

Zaire's 'sphinx' is scorned

MtG 25|4-1|5|97 (358)

Despite being scorned as a member of the regime by the Zairean rebels, Etienne Tshisekedi has strong support from the people, reports **Chris McGreal**



Etienne Tshisekedi: Believes he has played a crucial role in Zaire's transformation and demands a say in its future PHOTOGRAPH: SACHA J

AS Zaire's rebels brace for their assault on Kinshasa and final victory, they must also resolve whether to draw Mobutu Sese Seko's long-standing political rivals into the revolution or shove them aside in favour of the new order. The rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, says he intends to suppress party politics for now — much as one of his principal backers, Uganda, has done during its much vaunted reconstruction.

Mobutu's political opponents, led by Etienne Tshisekedi, are horrified. The 64-year-old former prime minister and his allies claim to have played as crucial a role as the rebels in the transformation of Zaire, and demand a leading say in the future. One of Tshisekedi's aides, Mukendi wa Muludba, even insists that once the rebels win the war they should step aside in favour of the traditional political class.

"[Kabila] must respect our way of non-violence. Zaireans have died for the institutional order we have struggled for 20 years to achieve," he said. The opposition backs its claim to being a powerful force by pointing to last week's "dead city" strike which shut Kinshasa down for a day in protest at Mobutu's dismissal of Tshisekedi as prime minister within a week of his appointment. But the ease with which the army was able to discourage street protests suggests the opposition is still unable to galvanise public dissent to confront the regime.

The rebels are scornful. At best, they view Tshisekedi as Mobutu's useful fool. At worst, they see him as in collusion. Kabila accuses politicians of impotence and corruption. The rebels wonder aloud what Tshisekedi has achieved in the seven years since Mobutu was pressured into promising a multi-party democracy. There have been many "dead city" strikes, with little enduring impact. And, until the civil war, Mobutu appeared to have every chance of engineering an election victory amid opposition division and incompetence.

But it was Tshisekedi's willingness to accept his short-lived appointment as prime minister earlier this month which sealed the rebels' contempt. Although technically nominated by Parliament, Mobutu had to confirm the choice. And although Tshisekedi accepted in the hope of using the office as a means to strip the president of power — as well as offering the rebels six seats in the Cabinet — the insurgents were dismissive. One of their leaders, Raphael Nghenda, scorned the new prime minister as a member of the regime.

Yet Tshisekedi remains a force to be reckoned with in Kinshasa. An opinion poll last month showed that more than half the population of the capital has a good opinion of Kabila, but only a fraction would vote for him. More than one-third backed Tshisekedi for president. Tshisekedi, the first Zairean to graduate as a lawyer, is known as "the sphinx". Some say it is because he is a quietly shrewd strategist who keeps his own counsel. Others suggest it is because he is a far from courageous individual paralysed into inaction, beside having a reputation for spending an inordinate amount of time in bed. He is certainly no Boris Yeltsin, ready to storm the barricades against a greater tyranny.

Tshisekedi has one thing in common with his more powerful rivals — an authoritarian style which demands unquestioning obedience from his supporters. After he was dismissed as prime minister first time around, Tshisekedi continued to insist on being addressed as "excellency" and held weekly "Cabinet meetings" at his house.

Many of the city's poorer residents have forgiven Tshisekedi his past role in helping to entrench the Mobutu dictatorship as a Cabinet minister and key member of the only political party then permitted. For them, Tshisekedi redeemed himself in 1980 when he put his name to a 52-page letter condemning dictatorship and calling for democratic reform.

While other signatories were bought by Mobutu, Tshisekedi kept up his opposition. He was banished to prison for forming the Union for Democracy and Social Progress while political parties were banned.

Mobutu was finally forced to bow to demands for a multi-party system in 1990. A year later, Tshisekedi was named prime minister. He didn't last long on that occasion either. Mobutu dismissed him for challenging the president's supremacy over the Constitution.

Parliament twice again appointed Tshisekedi as prime minister. And Mobutu twice rid himself of his foe by proving more adept at running rings around opponents.

But for all the noise in Kinshasa over Tshisekedi's maltreatment by the regime, it barely made a dent in other parts of Zaire where he is deeply loathed. And while the young men on the capital's streets may continue to promise open defiance of the rebels if they fail to take Tshisekedi on board, there is no sign they are prepared to seriously confront Kabila any more than they were Mobutu.

Business at war for Zaire's wealth

(358) M+G 25/4-1/5/97

The South African government cannot be seen to take sides, but it must still protect domestic business interests, reports **Stefaans Brümmer**

SOUTH AFRICA faces a dilemma in its role as peace mediator in Zaire: as "honest broker" the government cannot be seen to take sides, yet South African companies — chiefly mining interests — stand to lose on lucrative concessions if links are not created with the rebels of Laurent Kabila.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki this week urged American and South African companies, including Anglo American, not to make deals with Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), but to await the establishment of a negotiated transitional authority.

Mbeki said he feared the scramble by outside mining interests could trigger dormant secessionist tendencies. Much of Zaire's vast mineral wealth is concentrated in Shaba province, which has a history of secession attempts. The ADFL now controls about half of Zaire, including Shaba.



Make me an offer: Laurent Kabila, Zaire's rebel leader, has received 'favours' from foreign business

...Boesak's comments followed claims last week in the *Mail & Guardian* by Kabila's finance minister, Mawampanga Mwana Nanga, that Anglo's associate company, De Beers, had agreed in talks with the ADFL to sever ties with ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko's regime in Kinshasa — a claim De Beers refused to confirm or deny. This week, a team of Anglo and De Beers executives resumed talks with the ADFL in Lubumbashi, capital of Shaba.

Meanwhile, South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs has to walk the tightrope of not appearing to compromise its role as disinterested peace facilitator, but still to give South African companies — which feel threatened by the rapid *rapprochement* between the rebels and the Canadian-based company, America Mineral Fields — the necessary back-up to secure their interests.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, co-chair of the peace initiative, this week said through representative Pieter Swanepoel: "We act as facilitator and cannot be partial in the matter. But if we receive requests from South African businesspeople to talk to Kabila's people, we pass them on."

Swanepoel said there was a clear distinction between the South African involvement in the peace talks, which centred around a United Nations peace plan, and "normal bilateral relations" with Zaire — which, in this case, also included contact with the ADFL. Foreign Affairs had, for example, helped set up a meeting earlier this month between South African businesspeople and an ADFL delegation, headed by Bizima Karaha, Kabila's foreign minister. Karaha was in South Africa for the first direct talks between the rebels and representatives of Mobutu.

The scramble for Zaire's mineral wealth gained momentum last week when the ADFL awarded a US$1-billion tender for the Kolwezi copper and cobalt reclamation project near Lubumbashi, the construction of a new zinc plant and further prospecting to America Mineral Fields. South Africa's Anglo, JCI and Gencor had all tendered for the Kolwezi project.

Anglo representative Charmaine Russel, stopping short of condemning the tender award as invalid, this week said Anglo wanted "clarity". But several mining analysts said the legality of a rebel movement awarding such a contract was questionable. Both Mobutu's government and the state mining company Gecamines — or at least the part of Gecamines that still answers to Kinshasa — have dismissed it as illegal.

The stampede by mining companies to Kabila's door poses the danger of an escalation in the war. America Mineral has made no secret of the jet plane it has provided to transport ADFL officials and the "favour" it had done the rebels by outbidding De Beers in rebel-controlled diamond auctions.

A mining analyst with extensive experience in the region this week said it appeared America Mineral's bid for Kolwezi had included a larger cash element than competing tenders. This may have suited the ADFL: when the $1-billion deal was announced, rebel finance minister Mawampanga said initial cash injections would help fund the war effort.

The analyst, who requested anonymity, said Kabila's new war talk — after he had told President Nelson Mandela last week he was ready for face-to-face negotiations with Mobutu — might not be a coincidence if greater mining revenues were becoming available to him.

It is widely thought that Kabila's backers — alleged to include neighbouring Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda, and according to some speculation also the United States — intended Kabila to take no more than a swathe of land in eastern Zaire, and were surprised by his rapid advance towards Kinshasa. Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has already said he does not think Kabila is a "suitable" future ruler.

MHG 25/4-1/5/97

It appears Kabila's funding started drying up before the ADFL reached Lubumbashi earlier this month, but that his control or impending control of the mineral fields opened new sources of funding. Said the analyst: "Suddenly the ADFL moved again, and there must have been new sources of funding. The only real source would have been from the mines."

He said America Mineral's principal shareholder, Jean-Raymond Boulle, a former De Beers Zaire diamond buyer, gambled on Kabila when companies like De Beers and Anglo could not be seen to be dealing with a rebel movement. This, in turn, raised the stakes for the South African companies.

Boulle was quoted last week as saying he had sided with the rebels as they were the "de facto" government. "It was a risk — but to us it was the logical one," he said.

If Anglo and De Beers are in a precarious position, JCI — now controlled by Mzi Khumalo's African Mining Group — appears to be in even more of a dilemma. Khumalo, because of his close ties to the African National Congress and Mbeki, may be under greater pressure not to upset the peace talks through early deals with Kabila.

After it lost out on the Kolwezi project — if indeed America Minerals will hang on to it — JCI is staking much on its tender for the Ruashi-Etoile copper and cobalt mine, also in Shaba. JCI, which already has engineering contracts with Gecamines, this week sent a task team to Shaba. But the company said the team was not meeting with "any political representatives".

JCI's corporate affairs manager, Marc Gonsalves, refused to say whether future contact with Kabila was envisaged. "The situation there is extremely fluid, but other than that we are not prepared to comment," he said.

The 'sphinx' is scorned, PAGE 15

Mobutu admits lack of democracy

(358) BD 25/4/97

Bartholomäus Grill

THE crisis in Zaire was the result of hesitation by the country's political class which had not taken charge of the democratisation process announced seven years ago, President Mobutu Sese Seko said in an interview this week.

Mobutu said that his country's transitional phase to democracy had taken too long and had been enormously costly to the economy and population.

In written answers to questions from the German weekly Die Zeit which published the interview today, the besieged Zairean leader said the living conditions of the population had deteriorated as a result. The country had also become a victim of its own generosity towards refugees from Rwanda and Burundi.

Zaireans were following rebel leader Laurent Kabila because "the people have submitted to those who have weapons in their hands and who oppress people of other opinions, even if they do not believe in him".

Asked whether Zaire could still be saved, Mobutu said Zaire's resources meant it would remain a country of the future in Africa. The unity of the country was not under threat. "That is the most lasting achievement of my political career," he said.

The world would learn a lesson from the war, Mobutu said. Zaireans were "welded together by national pride" and would not allow the country to disintegrate.

He was ready to negotiate in the interests of a political solution to the crisis and in order to avoid an unnecessary bloodbath.

Repeating his rejection of calls by Kabila and the US government for his resignation, Mobutu asked what right they had to make such demands of the Zairean people. "I will resign when I believe it is necessary, when elections demand it of me, but not on the orders of some person or other."

It was sufficient to be against Mobutu today to be regarded as a democrat, even if one had grabbed power by force of arms and was refusing to introduce democracy, the Zairean president said, in an apparent reference to Kabila.

He did not feel betrayed by his former allies in the west, Mobutu said, just "misunderstood". The cold war antagonism between east and west had little meaning anymore, but the west should be aware that the weapons which were aiding the enemies of the Zairean government would one day be turned against those who had provided them.

He denied he was a dictator, saying that power resided with the organs of state as defined by the constitution. "You can believe me that President Mobutu is not as all powerful as is commonly said. Just read our constitution."

Denying that he was as wealthy as is commonly believed, Mobutu said "that is a legend".

See Page 11

Seven years after Mobutu's promise little is changed

BD 25/4/97

KINSHASA — Zaire awoke yesterday, the seventh anniversary of its supposed launch to democracy, amid renewed fears for the lives of tens of thousands of refugees and confusion over peace talks.

Seven years after President Mobutu Sese Seko heralded the advent of a multiparty system, rebel forces were advancing on the capital Kinshasa after claiming the capture of three more towns.

They were reported to be closing in on two fronts, from Bandundu province to the north and via Kikwit, 500km to the east, where soldiers in rebel uniform — believed to be advance troops — had already been sighted.

Amid reports of mass killings in the rebel-held east, UN chief Kofi Annan accused Laurent Kabila's rebel alliance of "killing by starvation" thousands of Rwandan refugees by refusing them access to food aid.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees officials said on Wednesday tens of thousands of refugees had fled a camp at Kasese, near rebel-held Kisangani, but the rebels refused to let the agency overfly the region.

Speaking to reporters after briefing the UN Security Council on the latest developments in Zaire, Annan said: "I do not think the international community can stand by as thousands of men and women and children are starved to death. Killing by starvation is what is going on. I am shocked and appalled by the inhumanity of those who control eastern Zaire to these refugees, most of whom are innocent."

The US urged "immediate, unhindered access" for the humanitarian organisations to the refugees, saying the rebels had "no further excuses" to block repatriation efforts.

If the rebels want good relations with Washington, US state department spokesman Nicholas Burns said, "they have got to act in a humanitarian way".

It was on April 24 1990 that Mobutu announced to parliament the introduction of a multiparty system after a transitional period of one year.

Seven years on, little has changed, thanks to Mobutu's political cunning and disarray in the opposition. But now he faces the end of his 32-year dictatorial regime at the hands of rebels.

Fragile hopes of peace talks faded still further this week amid continued bickering over a venue for direct talks.

Mobutu's son and spokesman Nzanga Mobutu announced the president would not travel to SA for a face-to-face encounter for health reasons. Hours later, however, Mobutu's envoy Honore Ngbanda Nzambo began talks with SA Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, one of the main mediators in the Zairean crisis.

Parks Mankahlana, spokesman for President Nelson Mandela, denied that the Zairean head of state had called Mandela to say he could not travel.

Nzanga Mobutu said the rebels had suggested meeting in Lubumbashi, Zaire's second city, which was captured two weeks ago.

"It is not what you would call a neutral zone," he said.

Mobutu prefers neighbouring Congo, which Kabila rejects. Another huge gulf between them is the rebel chief's insistence on the president's immediate departure from power.

Nzanga Mobutu said his father remained committed to peace talks. — Sapa-AFP.

'Conscientiously, I won't fight': soldiers desert the gang that couldn't shoot straight

FOREIGN SERVICE

Kinshasa – With more than half his country in the hands of rebels and his health threatened by prostate cancer, a heavily medicated President Mobutu Sese Seko is being reassured by one of his top generals that he will retake lost territory and turn the tide of the disastrous war.

The same general, apparently sniffing defeat in the air, has shipped his family and his valuables out of the country.

In six months, rebel leader Laurent Kabila's forces have swept from eastern Zaire to within striking distance of Kinshasa in what analysts describe as a military walkover.

When they finally arrive here, they may meet some initial and perhaps heavy resistance, but mostly what they will find is a capital city full of military men who have taken off their uniforms and donned white headbands to signal their welcome of Mr Mobutu's demise.

Many of the soldiers see their commanders' cut-and-run mentality as confirmation of the bankruptcy of the corrupt system known as Mobutuism – yet another reason to abandon it and embrace the change symbolised by Mr Kabila's rebel movement.

"Personally, I won't fight," said a sergeant in the paramilitary Civil Guard. "Conscientiously, I won't fight."

Even if the troops wanted to fight, they couldn't do it effectively, diplomats said. Equipment is run down, and diplomats say Zairean troops are so ill-trained that their proficiency on any but the most basic of weaponry is questionable.

"This is really the gang that couldn't shoot straight," said a diplomat.

Of the 70 000 soldiers once estimated to make up Zaire's military, about 15 000 are believed to be in Kinshasa. Thousands more soldiers are slowly streaming in from outlying towns that have fallen to rebels or are expected to fall any day, a Western military analyst said.

Still, the military's unpredictability makes the potential for bloodshed great if the rebels try to take Kinshasa by force. The Special Presidential Division (DSP), which is recruited largely from Mobutu's northern home region of Equateur and is the most loyal and best-equipped branch of the military, is said to have 5 000 troops in Kinshasa and could make a last stand.

But another Civil Guardsman predicted that if the Presidential Division tried to fight, it would fight alone – and fail.

"The DSP cannot fight alone. I think they will run to the ocean as the rebels say, because the other units won't fight." – The Washington Post

Fear and tension as Kinshasa waits for Kabila

Rebels close in on capital – and residents ponder a future without Mobuto

ARG 26/4/97

FOREIGN SERVICE

Kinshasa – As rebels tarry to the east and the president languishes in his palace, the five million people of Kinshasa wait and wonder: how will the drama play out?

After six months of civil war in which the government's forces largely just melted away, rebel leader Laurent Kabila and his guerrilla fighters are headed for the capital of this vast central African country. They aim to claim their greatest prize and wrest power from President Mobutu Sese Seko – and of this almost everyone feels certain.

Nobody really knows where Mr Kabila's troops are, though he has said he will be in Kinshasa within two weeks. Some radio broadcasts are saying he plans to launch his attack this weekend.

In the meantime, Zaire's new prime minister, Likulia Bolongo, has been on state television urging calm and saying the country's defenders are ready to face the enemy.

Will Mr Mobutu, Africa's longest-ruling dictator after 32 years in power, decide to run or stay? Will his army put up a real battle, desert en masse or turn its guns in vengeance on the people of Kinshasa in one final orgy of rape and pillage?

What will the United States and Europe do? With a rescue force in place four minutes away in Congo, will Western governments intervene to avoid a bloodbath? Will diplomats arrange for Mr Mobutu, now 66 and ill with prostate cancer, to get safely out of the country, or will they persuade the rebels to allow him to stay pending democratic elections?

The list of imponderables seems to grow with each day as rumours swirl through the markets and streets of this poverty-stricken city. One day there's a report that Mr Kabila's men have come through Angola to seize the main Atlantic port, Matadi. Another day, newspapers quote security sources as saying rebel infiltrators have already entered the capital.

In the past few days, Mr Kabila's forces have resumed their advance by capturing Ilebo, a port on the Kasai River, bringing them within striking distance of Kinshasa, diplomatic sources and a rebel spokesman said.

Meanwhile, a South African initiative to host Mobutu-Kabila peace talks appears to have floundered; Mobutu's health does not permit the journey to Cape Town, his son told reporters.

Kinshasa is a city ripe for change. Here, the best public transportation is broken-down Peugeot taxis, doors akimbo, and crammed with 10 or more people as they bounce over the rutted pavements. Poverty is ubiquitous, from the club-footed beggar boy pawing at the windows of cars stopped in traffic, to the teenage girl in the market who says she prefers to stay in bed on alternate days because her family lacks money to feed her every day. Nearly everyone has lost a relative to malaria or another disease as hospitals crumble and doctors go unpaid.

A small elite has grown fat and sleek on Zaire's legendary corruption. Its members emerge from walled and guarded compounds in late-model Mercedes cars, wearing designer sunglasses and Swiss watches, to dine at restaurants where a dinner for two is never less than $US100 (R450).

Most people say they cannot wait for Mr Kabila and his forces to arrive. Yet there is widespread fear of what will happen when they do. Many have fled to Brazzaville, the Congolese capital across the Zaire River, their exodus filling the ferries with luxury cars. The very rich have flown even further – to Europe and South Africa.

Those who cannot run – the vast majority – are squirreling away what food they can, hiding small treasures such as radios and sewing machines, and trying to anticipate where they will be safest if fighting starts.



REUTER

Vigil: Zairean rebels at Kasese refugee camp, south of Kisangani, after a UN team found 55 000 Rwandan refugees missing from a camp in eastern Zaire

The chief fear is not a battle itself – the government's soldiers usually flee just ahead of Mr Kabila's arrival in a town – but that the troops will run amok, taking what they can, just before doffing their uniforms when Mr Kabila's forces come.

"People are going to church and praying – even the pagans are in church," said Richards Nzangwa, a 32-year-old English teacher, the day after being robbed of $20 (R90) at gunpoint by four soldiers, in what he thinks is a foretaste of what will happen citywide. He felt lucky to have escaped with his life.

"We are really afraid," said Kabita Buriji, a young woman working as a money-changer. "Do you think the American army can come here and do its best to protect us?"

Parfait, a 40-year-old builder so thin he loops his belt around his waist twice, said he had seen maize, rice and cassava disappearing from the markets, and some of his neighbours were stockpiling wood.

"Maybe there will be no power, and they'll need to burn it," he said.

The uncertainty has interrupted life in other ways. Schools are barely functioning, and some businesses have closed because their owners have left.

Secondary teacher Michel Luka said most of his pupils did not want to pay fees this term, and therefore were barred from classes. "They think that when Kabila comes, school will be free. Or else they say: 'Why should I pay today, when tomorrow I might get killed?'," he explained.

While most people want Mr Mobutu to go, many add that they would prefer to retire him democratically through elections. If it is done by force, Zaire might just be replacing one dictator with another.

Mr Kabila's reputation ranges from avuncular to avenging, and Kinshasans shudder at stories that zealous, greed-fighting rebels have lopped off the ears of vendors caught price-gouging, or amputated the hand of a corrupt university president.

Although undoubtedly popular, Mr Kabila remains something of a question mark even to many sympathisers, said pollster Francesca Bomboko. "He needs to work on his democratic image."

Buriji, a money-changer, said she just wanted to survive. "President Mobutu and his soldiers will kill a lot of people," she predicted. "In Africa, a chief never dies alone," agreed her friend, Kadi Tshiama, one of legions of ill-paid government workers who oppose their head of state.

Faustin Ngonkumu, a 40-year-old insurance worker, represented the optimists' camp. He confidently predicts no violence. "The soldiers don't see any reason to fight," he said. "We are like the people of Israel coming out of Egypt – God will lead us to safety." – Los Angeles Times

Mobutu's rent-a-mob turns out in force at R5,50 a head

(358) Star 28/4/97

By Ross Herbert
Star Foreign Service

Kinshasa – Wrapped in Mobutu skirts, Mobutu shirts, Mobutu hats and Mobutu tunics, the faithful of President Mobutu Sese Seko's political party turned out yesterday to woo the world.

There was a choreographed dance troupe, tiny Mobutu flags, a much-dented brass band and chants of "Mobutu forever" from some 3 000 supporters brought at party expense to the national parliament.

The message: the world must pressure rebel leader Laurent Kabila to stop the war.

It was an affair with all the subtlety of a Soviet missile parade, but it signalled an important shift in party thinking. Zaire officially began its movement toward democracy in 1990, but it has been a transition fraught with seven years of delays and restarts.

The Movement of the Popular Revolution was once the only legal party in Zaire and eagerly assisted Mobutu, extending the transition to democracy. The participants in this partisan rally acknowledge that Mobutu must go, but through peaceful elections.

Mananga Di Ntoka, the number two man in the party behind Mobutu, blamed the war on Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda and said fighting continues because the international community wants to take Zaire's mineral wealth.

After the rally party members handed out about R5,50 to each participant.

The effort to show Mobutu's popularity, however stage managed it seemed, reflects a growing awareness that the war is coming to a climax that will change forever the lives of his party faithful.

If Kabila comes to Kinshasa he will have a free hand to drive Mobutu's supporters out of their positions in the civil service and state companies, bases from which many have grown rich.

Worst yet to come in Zaire

CT 28/4/97 & (308)

CONTRIBUTING Editor **COLIN LEGUM,** author of *Congo Disaster*, and editor of Patrice Lumumba's autobiography, *My Country*, raises questions about the Zairian rebel leader, Laurent Kabila.

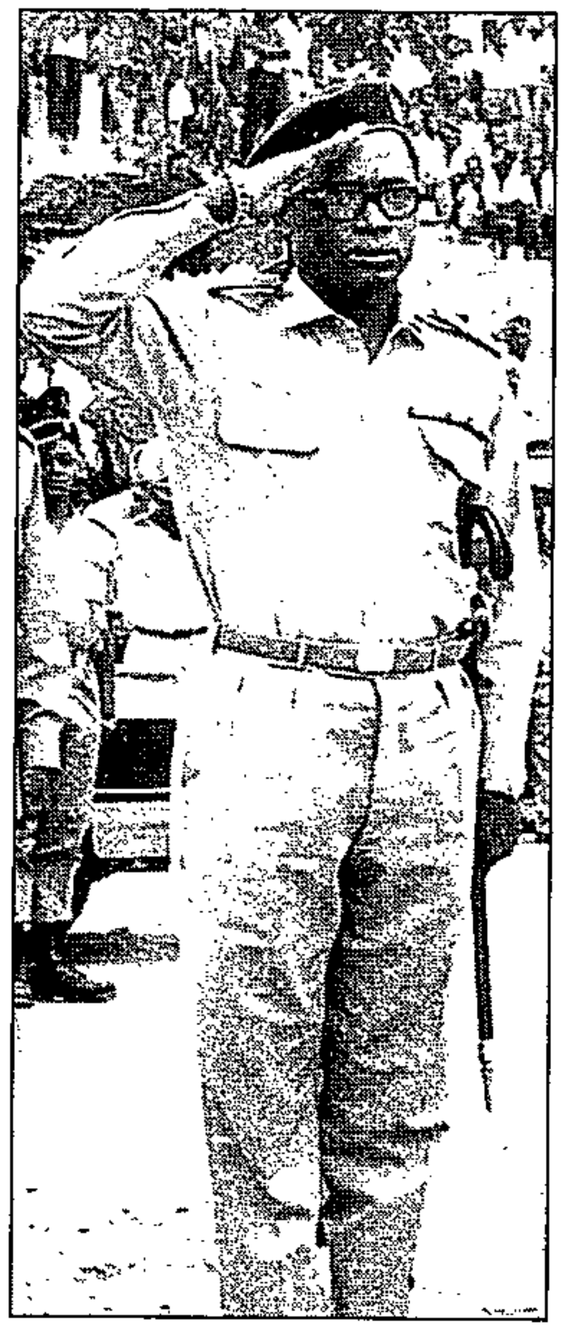
THERE is little reason for optimism about the immediate future of Zaire, even if the South African-led mediation effort should succeed in brokering a ceasefire and persuading President Mobutu Sese Seko to step down.

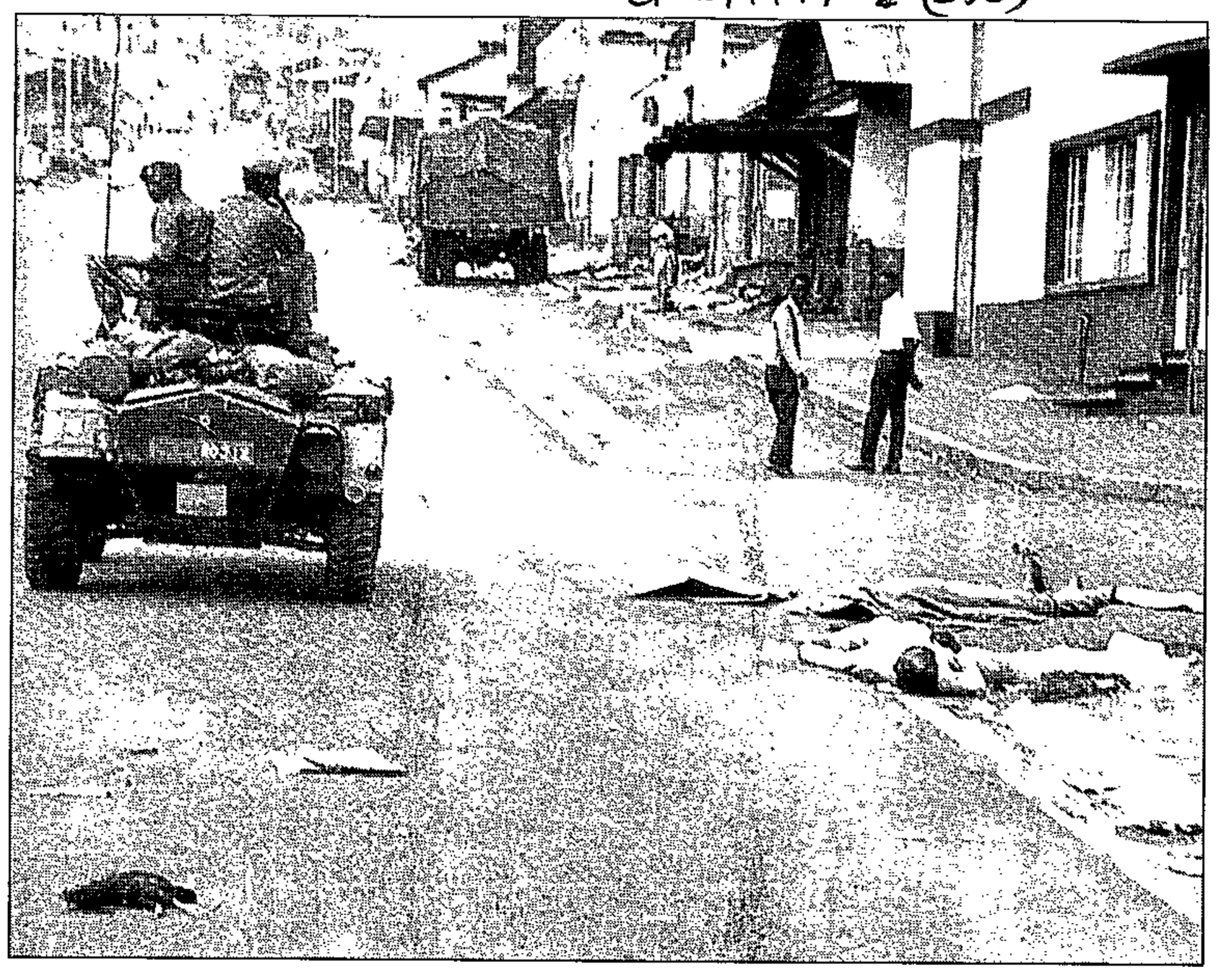
The most dangerous time in a country that has lived for a long time under a tyranny is when it ends. Witness, for example, what happened in the USSR, Yugoslavia, Iran and Ethiopia.

It is still possible to avert a new disaster in Zaire provided the lessons are learnt of what went wrong in 1960 when Belgian authoritarian rule over the then Congo was abruptly ended.

Some of the conditions that led to the chaos at the time are still present — three in particular:

- An indisciplined mutinous army.
- The attempted secession of Katanga (now Shaba), the mineral-rich province of the country.
- African and extra-continental





A NATION DIVIDED: At the height of the civil war in the Congo in the early 1960s, soldiers ruled the streets (above). Mobutu (above left) established his virtual dictatorship in Zaire three years after Belgian authoritarian rule was abruptly ended. It is still possible to avert a new disaster in Zaire provided the lessons are learnt of what went wrong in 1960.



REBEL LEADER: Kabila is only one among some 42 party leaders, at least 10 of whom are major political figures.



DICTATOR: The South African-led mediation effort should succeed in persuading General Mobutu to step down.

intervention.

The most immediate risk is that the rump of Mobutu's demoralised army breaks rank and spreads fear, as happened in 1961. That was the beginning of chaos that lasted more than three years until the American-backed Mobutu established his virtual dictatorship.

It will be too late once mutinous soldiers have stormed out of their barracks to prevent their depredations. Therefore, the present negotiations must seek a double role for an armed peace-keeping force: to monitor a ceasefire between Mobutu's army and the rebel forces and to secure the gates of the military barracks to prevent the break-out of mutinous troops. (The UN peace-keeping force had no difficulty in blocking the barracks, but only after the mutinous had been brought back to the barracks.) . CT 28/4/97

The role of external forces is different from what it was in the 1960s when the Cold War was at its height and when the two radical African governments were Nkrumah's Ghana and Sekou Tourés's Guinea. De Gaulle's France was quietly encouraging the break-up of the Congo. Belgian and British big business were supportive of Tshombe's secession bid in Katanga, with Roy Welensky's government in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) backing them.

The active African actors today are Museveni's Uganda and the Tutsi-dominated regimes of Rwanda and Burundi. These three have a common interest in supporting Laurent Kabila's rebel army since, initially at least, it comprised a majority of Zairian Tutsis. (Although not sufficiently acknowledged, Museveni played a leading role in helping his ethnic kinsmen, the Tutsis, to overthrow the mainly Hutu Rwanda regime that set off the carnage there before spreading into Burundi.)

The Americans, this time, have no favourites to succeed their former ally; but they would strongly oppose any attempts to break up the Congo. Their interest now is the stability of the region.

Of the Europeans, only the French show any serious interest in Zaire; but they have not yet indicated who they prefer as Mobutu's successor.

In my view, the major mistake being made in reporting and analysing the present situation in Zaire is the virtually exclusive focus on the role of Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (ADFLC).

Kabila is only one among some 42 party leaders, at least 10 of whom can be regarded as major political figures. Although he has acquired a strong position as a successful rebel leader, when it comes to negotiating a political settlement and a new constitution, he will suffer from the lack of a national constituency. His present supporters are the marginalised minority Zairian Tutsi community and, potentially, the important Shaba electorate among whom he has strong opponents from Shaba's traditional leaders and the local establishment who, like Tshombe of old, favoured secession.

There is also the question of Kabila's behaviour as a possible future leader. Even before gaining effective power, he high-handedly made his own nominee governor of Shaba, despite strong local protests; already he had begun to negotiate new mining contracts with foreign companies and has upset Anglo American Corporation by wrongly accusing the company of enjoying a diamond monopoly in the country. Besides, does Zaire need another leader whose power derives from the barrel of a gun?

The oldest established political opponent of Mobutu is Etienne Tshisekedi who has courageously defied him since 1986, enduring imprisonment, detention and internal exile. His Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UPDS) has survived a decade of repression. But like most of the other parties, its principal support is regional, mainly Kwango-Kwilu. At one time he enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the 42 parties who had been meeting for more than five years to draft a new constitution. This constitutional council chose Tshisekedi as prime minister, a position he held in parallel to Mobutu's choice.

Other significant parties are the Front of the Community of Nationalities (FNC) led by Kamancha wa Kamanda, a former president of the Supreme Court; the Christian Democratic PDSE, inspired by Catholics, but with some support from Protestants; and the Kimbangists of an influential independent church; the small but influential Alliance of the Bakongo (ABAKO), the community established around the capital, Kinshasa; and, of course, Mobutu's ruling party, the Popular Movement for the Revolution (MPR), a majo part of which has been unhappy with their leader for some time.

The critical political issue that will face Zaire when Mobutu finally goes is the chronic differences between the plethora of parties, most of them regionally based.

However, the hopeful factor is that the majority of these parties did succeed, after years of hard bargaining, to produce a new constitution. So, the first task will be to get Kabila, Tshisekedi and the rest to form a representative interim national government. Set against this background, it is important that serious political analysts should stop presenting the present struggle as one between Kabila and Mobutu. The key forces that need to be involved to achieve a viable political settlement are unlikely to opt for Kabila as their leader.

Finally, the crunch question is: what would happen if Kabila and other Shaba parties were outvoted in the set-up of a new government? Will we then have a replay of Katanga (Shaba) secession supported by Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and, possibly, Zambia?

Only preventive diplomacy by the Organisation of African Unity could prevent this from happening.

Kabila gives UN 60 days to rescue refugees

ARG 28/4/97 (368)

Kisangani – Rebel leader Laurent Kabila has given the United Nations two months to airlift home the 100 000 Rwandan refugees scattered in the jungle of central Zaire after attacks on their camps.

The first 40 refugees were flown from Kisangani to the Rwandan capital of Kigali yesterday, according to representatives of the UN High Commission for Refugees.

Filippo Grandi, an official with the UN agency, said Mr Kabila had given 60 days, beginning on May 1, for the UNHCR to collect and airlift the refugees, using any airport except one the rebels held in Goma on the border with Rwanda.

It was not spelt out what would happen to the refugees if they remained in Zaire after the 60 days.

Mr Kabila also promised in a meeting with international officials that aid workers would be allowed unrestricted access to the scattered Rwandan Hutu refugees in desperate need of food and medicines.

The camps, crammed earlier by often sick or exhausted refugees, were found deserted last week, five days after rebels sealed off the area to foreign aid workers and journalists.

"We are going tomorrow to the camps. We've been given access," said European Union envoy Aldo Ajello said after he and UN representatives met Mr Kabila in Kisangani.

Land access to refugees, apparently too frightened to come out of the dense tropical forest, was the only way to supply them with food and medicine. So far, aid workers had only found a few hundred refugees.

The few who managed to escape towards Kisangani said they fled their camps last week when Zairian villagers attacked with machetes, and rebel soldiers opened fire on at least one camp.

During a flight over the jungle yesterday, aid officials spotted heavy smoke at two sites west of the abandoned camps. That had led to hopes that the smoke was from the campfires of large groups of refugees, said Paul Stromberg, a UN High Commissioner for Refugees spokesman.

"We don't know how many people there are," said Mr Stromberg, adding only that there seemed to be a lot of campfires.

"The problem is that the forest is so dense it's virtually impossible to see anything from the air," he said earlier.

The refugees are among the more than a million Hutus who fled Rwanda in 1994, fearing reprisals for the genocide in which at least 500,000 people, mostly Tutsis and moderate Hutus, were killed.

Most have since returned to Rwanda.

Rebels have repeatedly blocked UN efforts to fly the refugees home and have done little to prevent looting and attacks by Zairian villagers. – Sapa-AFP

Where are Mobutu's billions? See page 4



Going home: Rwandan refugees paddle a canoe down the Zaire River on their way to Kisangani

Mobutu's billions 'not in Switzerland'

ARG 28/4/97

(358)

Geneva – After the international furore over Switzerland's wartime collusion with the Nazis, Swiss banks are taking no chances on hurting their image further on the question of dictators.

Trying some damage control, usually secretive banking officials announced that Swiss banks neither had nor wanted any assets linked to Zaire's corrupt and unpopular president, Mobutu Sese Seko. Mr Mobutu is reputedly one of world's richest men thanks to years of plundering state coffers.

Popular myth in Zaire says his wealth, at $7-billion (R30,8-billion), equals his country's debt.

It has long been rumoured that up to $4 billion (R17,6-billion) of Mr Mobutu's money is hidden in Switzerland and the rest stashed away in Zaire, and elsewhere in Europe.

As Mr Mobutu's power weakens – threatened by prostate cancer and a rebel insurgency – curiosity only increases over the whereabouts of his fortune. Mysteriously – though, perhaps, not surprisingly – the money cannot be found.

"We don't have any indication that Mr Mobutu has funds in Switzerland," Jean-Paul Chapuis, a top official at the Swiss Bankers' Association, said. The regulatory Federal Banking Commission also failed to track down any Mobutu assets. But critics are unconvinced.

"The debate over the Holocaust money shows that the banks always say 'no we have nothing' and then something is found," said Gertrud Ochsner, an economist with Action Finance Place-Switzerland-Third World, which fights bank secrecy. It campaigned against Swiss banks that dealt with South Africa during apartheid.

Mr Mobutu's enemies do not believe the dictator has no money in Switzerland, and they want the Swiss government to freeze all possible assets. "Everyone knows that Mr Mobutu had a lot of money here. Where did it go to? Where are the documents which prove it?" demanded José Mutombo-Kady, a Zairian opposition representative in Switzerland.



Mobutu Sese Seko: where is his money?

The government has so far refused to take action. It says arbitrary freezing of accounts would undermine foreign confidence in the security of the Swiss financial centre. But the country is desperate to restore its clean image. "Switzerland should not be a haven for money from dictatorial or corrupt regimes," Finance Minister Kaspar Villiger said.

Mr Mobutu used to be a regular visitor here and still has a lavish 30-room Swiss villa worth an estimated $5,40-million (R23,8-million). But the government has refused to renew his visa.

The Swiss want to avoid a repeat of the 11-year-old legal drama over $500-million (R2,2-billion) in assets linked to the late Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The money, blocked in Swiss banks, is subject to competing claims from Mr Marcos' heirs, the Philippine government, a business corporation and human-rights victims. – Sapa-AP

SA has much to fear from Zaire's strife

The Zairean conflict contains all the ingredients for an orgy of bloodletting in central — and southern — Africa, writes Simon Barber in Washington

BD 29/4/97

(308)

TO BOLSTER SA's seemingly stalled mediation effort, the Clinton administration sent UN ambassador Bill Richardson to Zaire at the weekend in the hope of reviving talks between the government (such as it is) of President Mobutu Sese Seko and Laurent-Desire Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (such as it is).

Richardson earned a reputation for dealing with tough customers while a Democratic congressman from New Mexico. His exploits as a special envoy for President Bill Clinton included winning the release of Americans held in Iraq and North Korea and helping convince Haiti's Raoul Cedras to pack his bags and permit the peaceful reinstallation of President Bertrand Aristide.

His mission to Zaire might be his toughest to date. That is because neither of the two leaders he will be dealing with have the authority to come to any meaningful arrangement on Zaire's future. The real fight in Zaire, it should be obvious by now, is not between Kabila and Mobutu. Both are mere figureheads in a much more complicated regional fight for the spoils of post-Mobutu Zaire.

This is no ordinary civil war. It is closer to a war of conquest by Angola, Rwanda and, to some extent, Uganda. Also involved are the Eritreans, a people rather proud of the fact that they broke the Organisation of African Unity rule of keeping colonial boundaries sacred.

Mobutu was placed and kept in power by outside intervention, one of whose principal objectives was to prevent Zaire fractionating. Outside intervention is now removing Mobutu. Deservedly. But this time the interveners are not the former colonial powers or the US, but neighbouring states for whom Zairean territorial integrity does not appear to be the most pressing consideration.

Rwanda and Uganda, US officials have argued, are not directly involved because their troops in Zaire under the Democratic Alliance banner are "on leave" from duties back home. That is quaint. How many governments, in the real world, innocently allow thousands of soldiers to go on holiday, fully armed and supplied, to provide the backbone for a rebellion in a neighbouring country?

The war aims of the Tutsi government in Kigali are self-evident: to smash the Hutu forces driven out of Rwanda after the 1994 genocide and prevent them reconstituting; that is to say, to kill them and all associated women and children. A pro-Tutsi regime in Kinshasa would be useful in that regard. The Ugandans have a similar interest in seeing a new Zairean government installed which will not tolerate its soil being used as a launching pad for Ugandan rebels.

Some theorise that Kigali's objectives may go further: to enlarge Rwanda's borders to encompass Tutsi populations in eastern Zaire, thereby diluting the Hutu majority in Rwanda, while at the same time easing the country's severe land shortage.

"We are deeply concerned about reports of Angolan involvement in Zaire," said Assistant Secretary of State for Africa George Moose on Thursday. Quite why he had to refer coyly to "reports" is unclear. The troops who took Kisangani spoke Portuguese, and Angolan aircraft are making daily supply flights to the rebel HQ at Goma, sometimes bringing in Angolan generals to discuss the war.

For Angolans, it is time to pay back Mobutu for having supported Unita. It is also time to root out Unita forces in Zaire, kept there as part of Unita leader Jonas Savimbi's "insurance policy" in the all too probable event that the newly installed Angolan national unity government falls apart.

Also, once Angola's ruling MPLA controls the Zairean border area, it will be able to deploy its army — which it has been massively resupplying over the past several years (to the point of bankrupting itself) — to regain from Savimbi the diamond-producing region in the northeast.

Katangans appear to be doing much of Angola's wet work in Zaire. These are the offspring of the Katangan "gendarmes" driven into exile after they unsuccessfully sought to secede from the then Congo at its independence in 1960. They made a couple of stabs at reclaiming their territory — Shaba province — in the 1970s and would likely have succeeded had not France, Belgium, the US and others sent in troops to protect their mining interests.

"No one has spoken to the Katangan gendarmes in exile in almost two decades," points out Philip Christenson, a former US state department official and long-time congressional adviser on Africa whose career has frequently been interrupted by his propensity for seeing and telling the truth.

"Their current political goals are not known. But there is no particular reason to assume that the Katangans spent 35 years in exile in a remote region of Angola only to abandon their original goal of an independent Katangan republic."

It is hard not to agree with Christenson that the so-called democratic alliance is little more than a cover for the designs of neighbouring powers, and that its popular support, while for the moment broad, is really very shallow and rests largely on the fact that the alliance is against Mobutu and is winning.

"Other than toppling Mobutu," argues Christenson, "there is no cohesive political movement behind the rebellion ... Kabila has no national organisation, his alliance does not have the capacity to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of Zaire's government, and he has shown an unwillingness to work with other anti-Mobutu elements in Zairean politics who might help fill the vacuum."

Furthermore, Kabila appears to have scant control over the forces of which he is the titular commander. His thus far mealy-mouthed response to the massacre by rebel troops of Hutu refugees — not to mention intimidation of indigenous Zaireans — suggests less complicity than impotence. Either way, if he does make it into Kinshasa without a major fight or triggering pillage, the euphoria of liberation looks to be short lived.

It is interesting that SA Deputy President Thabo Mbeki pleaded with foreign companies last week not to negotiate and sign minerals deals with Kabila, on the grounds that this might threaten Zaire's territorial integrity. Mbeki knows something.

What he knows he would likely not say, but it might be something like this:

- ☐ Aside from diamonds, the minerals in question are concentrated in Shaba/Katanga;
- ☐ Kabila is a member of the Luba tribe; and
- ☐ Historically, the Luba and the Katangans are mortal enemies.

Also worth remembering is that Kabila, a lieutenant of Patrice Lumumba, and the Katangans were on opposing sides in the independence struggle. The Katangans murdered Lumumba before the CIA could carry out its assassination plot. So, with Katangans under arms and fighting once more inside Zaire, there might be a problem if they were to see Kabila selling out their birthright to enrich and empower himself at their expense.

The Tutsi rat hunt for Hutus in Zaire is pushing the rump of the Rwandan Hutu army towards Mobutu's home turf in Equateur province. Other elements are headed for Savimbiland in Angola. These Hutu, all deeply implicated in the 1994 genocide, have little option but to fight; they are walking dead men if they decide not to fire their weapons.

They therefore form a nucleus for serious Mobutuist resistance, and they will also stiffen Unita ranks if and when civil war breaks out again in Angola.

And who is to say that, with so many of its men on leave in Zaire, the Tutsi government in Kigali will not face a rising by the Hutu who still make up more than three quarters of Rwanda's population?

All the elements are in place for an apocalyptic orgy of violence in central Africa which will leave, by Christenson's estimate, a million or more dead. In Africa this is not 1997. It is 1914.

SA should be very afraid, for one way or the other it, too, will be sucked in.



Soldiers of the Zairean Rebel Alliance [illegible] Kisangani [illegible]

Picture: AP

Step down, US envoy tells Zairian president

Star 29/4/97 P
(358)

Kinshasa – US envoy Bill Richardson arrived in Zaire yesterday as international outrage mounted over the plight of Hutu refugees from Rwanda in the eastern part of the country.

Fresh reports of thousands of refugee deaths have filtered out of the north-east corner, where rebel chief Laurent Kabila has given aid agencies 60 days from Sunday to repatriate the Rwandans.

But Kabila's rebels, accused of driving the refugees into the jungle, moved closer to Kinshasa, closing in on Kikwit, 350km to the east.

Richardson, arriving in Kinshasa for talks with ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko, declared that "there can be no military solution to the crisis, but rather a negotiated settlement leading to an inclusive transitional government and fair and free elections".

"I am also here because of our grave concern for the plight of several thousand refugees and displaced Zairians. There is a humanitarian crisis here and the international community must respond," he added in a prepared statement.

The Washington Post reported today that Richardson was dispatched to urge Mobutu to step down, using his prostate cancer as an excuse to quit office voluntarily, and that Washington would arrange a dignified exit.

Richardson is to fly south late today to see Kabila in Lubumbashi.

Kabila returned to Lubumbashi yesterday after a weekend trip to the north-east to try to calm the outcry over the refugees' fate. He told Reuters in the city of Goma that he hoped Mobutu would make a peaceful exit, but if he did not the rebels could settle the issue by military force.

Thousands of Rwandan Hutus returned to Biaro Camp south of Zaire's third city of Kisangani on Monday, telling of a horrific slaughter that prompted their exodus last week.

The rebels, who took up arms in October in a dispute over nationality for ethnic Tutsis in Zaire, control half of the country.

But both Washington and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, rejected Kabila's repatriation deadline as unrealistic. – Reuters.

SA in bid to save Zaire peace talks

(358) Star 30/4/97

By Peter Fabricius, Ross Herbert and agencies

International negotiators are struggling today to rescue the first face-to-face meeting between Zairian President Mobutu and rebel leader Laurent Kabila which was to be chaired by President Mandela on board an SA Navy ship off the the Zairian coast.

Until late yesterday the SA Department of Foreign Affairs was saying the meeting was still on track and would be chaired by Mandela.

But news agencies reported early today that Mobutu was now refusing to meet on board the SA supply ship, SAS Outeniqua.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Pieter Swanepoel said today that Mobutu and Kabila had agreed in principle to meet on the Outeniqua although negotiators still had to deal with logistic and security arrangements.

He said the Government had received no official word from Mobutu that he was not prepared to meet on the ship any longer.

Swanepoel said UN and OAU special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun, co-organiser of the talks, had rushed to Kinshasa today to try to resolve the logistic and security arrangements.

Some sources speculated that either press disclosure of the venue or Kabila's premature announcement of the talks venue yesterday might have changed Mobutu's mind.

Swanepoel stressed that a meeting between the two leaders had now become extremely urgent in the light of the deteriorating condition of refugees in the war zone.

The talks also offer the last chance of a negotiated end to the war, avoiding the feared prospect of a bloody last-ditch stand by Mobutu's forces and a likely pillaging rampage through Kinshasa.

Last-ditch stand to stop pillage in capital Kinshasa

Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire has now captured over half of Zaire and yesterday added the vital town of Kikwit, just 500km east of Kinshasa which fell without a shot being fired.

This is virtually the last town of any substance standing between the rebels and the capital.

The choice of an SA navy ship seemed to have resolved the problem of finding a neutral venue acceptable to both parties. Both had agreed to meet in SA, but then Mobutu said it would be too much for him to travel so far because of his ill-health.

Kabila had already said he was prepared to meet Mobutu in SA and the two could not agree on any other country. So the solution was in effect to park a little bit of SA in the Atlantic, near to Kinshasa and Angola.

The ship left South Africa on Thursday and is now standing in place in the Atlantic probably near the port of Banana at the mouth of the Zaire river.

The plan is for on-board Puma or Oryx helicopters to ferry Mobutu and his delegation to the ship from Kinshasa and Kabila's delegation probably from nearby Angola, a country friendly to the rebels, sources said.

The naval approach to the problem was a case of "if you can't take Mohammed to the mountain, take the mountain to Mohammed".

The Mohammed in this case being Mobutu, who told negotiators he could not travel as far as South Africa for the meeting because of ill health – he is suffering from advanced prostate cancer which requires constant intensive medical treatment.

Kabila said in Lubumbashi yesterday he had accepted Mandela's invitation to meet Mobutu on board an SA Navy vessel off Zaire. US special envoy to Zaire Bill Richardson confirmed after meeting Mobutu in Kinshasa yesterday that the Zairian leader would attend, but later agencies reported a source in Richardson's party as saying Mobutu was not prepared to meet on the ship.

UN and OAU special representative Mohamed Sahnoun and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, who has been closely involved in the discussions, were also due to attend the on-board talks.

■ Reuters reported that the Outeniqua, bought from Russia in 1993, is the SA Navy's newest, biggest and ugliest ship. It has been dubbed "the Grey Diplomat" for its humanitarian missions.

Captain Fred Marais said the 166m-long ship had two luxury suites, and the galley would be able to serve the Zairian rivals and their host Mandela. The food would be "as good as they will get anywhere," he added.

► **Rebels take revenge**
Page 4

Mandela will chair Zairean peace talks on board SA Navy vessel

BD 30/4/97

Stephen Laufer

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela will chair the peace talks between Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Laurent Kabila, starting on Friday on board the SA Navy auxiliary vessel, Outeniqua.

Also participating in the talks will be United Nations and Organisation of African Unity special envoy Mohammed Sahnoun, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad.

It is understood that Mandela's presence is a precondition of Mobutu's participation, as he believes it will guarantee his safety.

Pahad said last night he hoped the talks would begin "before the weekend". In Zaire, US special envoy Bill Richardson said the talks would start on Friday, and Reuter reports Kabila said he had "agreed to Mandela's request that I meet Mr Mobutu on a ship off the Atlantic coastline to discuss Mr Mobutu's departure".

Kabila, the leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire, said that as far as he was concerned there would be a short ceremony at which Mobutu would agree to leave office, "otherwise our forces now advancing on the route to Kinshasa will eject him".

But diplomatic sources said the talks were likely to be more complex. Both parties had already agreed during talks in SA to seek a long-term solution to the Zairean crisis.

The sources warned that Kabila's stance could torpedo the talks.

The parties would discuss transitional mechanisms and arrangements leading to democratisation. A diplomatic source said the logistics of registering voters, getting them to the polls and ensuring fair elections in a country whose infrastructure was largely in ruins were a major headache.

Richardson said he was happy Kabila and Mobutu had agreed to meet, but that he would also be "working out details with Mr Kabila on free and fair elections and the rule of law which should follow the end of the war".

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Reuter reports that Richardson referred to the rebel leader as "President Kabila", a move interpreted as increasing public pressure by the US on Mobutu to step down.

Sapa-AFP reports Richardson said he had given Mobutu a letter from US President Bill Clinton during the course of a "very frank" meeting. "We were both very frank, I carried a very strong message, but at the same time we made progress."

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Zaire

(358)

Continued from Page 1

BD 30/4/97

Richardson visited Kisangani yesterday in an apparent effort to focus international attention on thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees and displaced Zaireans.

The rebels have been accused of driving the refugees into the jungle in the hope that they will die there. Kabila has given aid agencies 60 days to repatriate them to Rwanda.

It is understood the Outeniqua has reached the area in which it will anchor for the talks. Foreign Affairs spokesman Pieter Swanepoel said the exact location could not be given for security reasons. He was unable to say by which route Kabila would reach the ship, but it is assumed he will fly to Angola and then be transported by helicopter. Swanepoel said it was not possible at this stage to give details on the length of talks for which the SA government had prepared.

Meanwhile, the rebels claimed to have seized the key town of Kikwit, 500km from Kinshasa. Seen as the last line of defence before the capital, its loss is considered to be a decisive blow to Mobutu.

The rebels have captured more than half the vast mineral-rich nation since they launched their offensive to topple Mobutu nearly seven months ago.

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'Anglo American and Co can go to hell' as Zairean rebels decide to play by the rules

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In the new "scramble for Africa" in war-torn Zaire, established political and business hegemony is threatened,

writes **Alec Russell**

BD 30/4/97

IN THE footsteps of the colonial adventurers who carved up Africa, Western businessmen and diplomats are pouring into rebel-held Zaire to try to secure a share of the riches in the centre of the continent.

The sudden collapse of President Mobutu Sese Seko's regime has sparked a frenetic struggle for control of Zaire's fabulous mineral wealth in one of the continent's most far-reaching upheavals this century.

"The old rule book has been torn up," said one businessman with years of experience in the region. "All our contracts are meaningless. We have to start again."

To win the contracts requires all the buccaneering instinct and cool nerves of the colonial era. But there are two key differences from the original "Scramble for Africa" when European speculators secured frontiers and concessions.

First, the leaders of the rebels and their backers in Rwanda and Uganda seem determined not to be exploited by foreigners.

Second, a powerful new player has joined the old Africa hands. In a twist which could be from Evelyn Waugh's novel, Scoop, about a civil war in the fictional state Ishmaelia, US businessmen appear to be closely involved in the course of the war.

Even Anglo American, the SA mining giant which prides itself on its stranglehold over Africa's mines, appears to have been wrong-footed by the rapid turn of events.

While it was awaiting the outcome of the war, Canadian rival America Mineral Fields was flying the rebel leaders around their newly won territory in a private jet.

The Randlords of Johannesburg were said to be aghast when they heard that the Canadians had beaten them to a multimillion-dollar contract to reclaim cobalt and copper in Shaba province (the former Katanga). "This was Anglo's hunting ground," said one insider. "It was a massive kick in the teeth."

Diplomatically, however, the big loser is France whose reluctance to break ties with Mobutu and whose paternalistic approach to Africa have alienated its former protegés in its traditional sphere of influence.

After decades as a bastion of La Francophonie, Zaire is slipping from the Quai d'Orsay's grip. The revolution is even washing against the stone walls of the Lycée Molière which has for years been the lodestar of French culture in Kinshasa.

It was here that Zaireans became little to SA than to Belgium and France."

French officials cite the American Mineral Fields contract as evidence that the decline of their influence has been plotted by Washington.

With the rebels backed by the English-speaking governments of Rwanda and Uganda, and dominated by the Zairean diaspora from the US, American firms are clearly well positioned.

"They (Americans) have taken a position of crushing neutrality," said one Western diplomat. "And they argue that if that benefits one side, well that's politics."

However, French claims that the revolt has been tailored by US intelligence, similar to its backing of Mobutu's rise, may be wide of the mark. While no love is lost between the US and France over the best way forward for Africa, Washington's policy appears to have lagged behind events.

After the Cold War years when the US backed Mobutu, it has struggled to formulate a coherent new policy. It was only this weekend that the White House announced it would be sending a senior diplomat to help resolve the crisis.

Moreover, the days when foreigners could milk Zaire's resources may be over as Rwanda and Uganda have learned through bitter experience that self-reliance is the best way to achieve your ends.

"We want to play by the rules," the rebels' finance minister, Mawampanga Mwana Nanga, said. "That is the toughest thing for Anglo American and Co to swallow. In Africa they are not used to doing business like that. If they don't like it ... they can go to hell." —©Telegraph plc.

Frenchmen or Belgians. The idea of English language classes becoming more popular than French, or Shakespeare supplanting Racine, was as absurd as a Parisian patisserie selling Big Macs.

But Jean Abery, the headmaster, concedes those days may be at an end. "France is losing a lot politically," he said. "The French government helps us enormously, but English is becoming more and more popular. There's even a danger that in the future it may become the official language."

Disillusionment with the old patron can be heard all over Kinshasa. "There's been a lot of talk about La Francophonie but no concrete advantages," said Francesca Bamboko, who runs the only opinion poll agency. "It has no political reality. More Zaireans go

Zaire talks in limbo as Mobutu shuns SA plan

Sese Seko balks at ship as parley venue

ARG 30/4/97 (358)

Pretoria – United Nations special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun left Pretoria for central Africa today in a bid to keep Zairian peace talks on track after reports that President Mobutu Sese Seko had objected to using a South African navy vessel as venue.

South African Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad said he was surprised by the reports. As far as South Africa was concerned Mr Mobutu and rebel leader Laurent Kabila had agreed to meet on the SAS Outeniqua.

The Outeniqua arrived in international waters off the West African coast yesterday in readiness for the talks, which were expected to have taken place towards the end of this week.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Pieter Swanepoel said that if the reports were correct, it "obviously complicates matters".

He said Mr Sahnoun, who has been in Pretoria for the past week, left for Central Africa today for further consultations and to "try to overcome this obstacle".

In Zaire, United States envoy Bill Richardson, speaking after three hours of talks with Mr Kabila last night, said that although the two men had agreed to meet, details of the venue and date remain unresolved. "As you heard Kabila say, he's agreed to face-to-face talks. Mobutu has agreed to face-to-face talks. They are ready to proceed as soon as possible, this weekend or earlier," he said.

Mr Mobutu's son Nzanga was quoted as saying his father would not take part in talks on the ship, but that this did not mean he was not interested in peace.

There is speculation that Mr Mobutu is afraid he will not be able to return to the capital Kinshasa after he leaves Zaire.

A spokesman for President Mandela, who is to preside over the meeting, said the president's office was aware of the reports from Zaire, and was waiting for clarification from the department of foreign affairs.

In Lubumbashi, Zairan rebels on Wednesday shrugged off Mr Mobuto's reported refusal to meet on the ship, and said they would take their war to Kinshasa.

A senior aide to Mr Kabila said the rebels had nothing to lose from Mr Mobutu's refusal. Rebel foreign policy strategist Bizima Karaha said: "No change in venue will be accepted by us."

Mr Karaha said rebels were consolidating a push towards the capital from Kikwit, 390 km east of Kinshasa. – Sapa-Reuter-AP



Kinshasa's civilians fearfully await fate

(358)

Residents are preparing to bury their few possessions in soil around their homes, reports Lynne Duke

Like thunder clouds growling in the distance, the storm bearing down on Kinshasa threatens a violent deluge. Street demonstrations are set for today. A humiliated autocrat still clinging to power, President Mobutu Sese Seko threatens to crack down. And looming in the distance, but never far from the minds of Kinshasans, is Laurent Kabila, leader of the rebel alliance that declared on Sunday, at the end of a three-day deadline for Mobutu to step down, that fighting will resume.

The rebels now control nearly half the country and say nothing will stop their push to the capital.

In the marketplaces and aboard minibuses, a mixture of fact and fiction is sowing the belief that blood soon will be spilled and property ruined.

And so a 38-year-old newspaper seller named Thomas is once again looking to the soil around his house as a hiding place for the family valuables – the television, radio, suitcases and clothes. When Zaire's soldiers last rampaged, in 1993, many households' goods were taken, except for his wife's sewing machine, buried in the yard.

Thomas does not yet know if the men of Mikondo quarter near the airport in the city's eastern sector will set up the warning system they used four years ago: whistles blown from house to house to alert each other of trouble. But if he cannot spirit his six children away in time, he said: "As the father of the family, I will stay in the house and die with my family."

This capital of more than 4 million people has become combustible, with residents now expecting and demanding the change they have wanted for so long, but knowing its price may be high.

People want Mobutu's ouster, but they fear that fighting and looting could be brutal here – whether sparked by Kabila's onslaught, or by the demonstrations that are to take off this week.

Though Kabila's forces are hundreds of miles away, his insurgency has rocked Mobutu's world and created space for greater agitation by the political opposition. How the army will respond is not known, but the threatened crackdown could be chilling. Just last week, opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi was tear-gassed, and his supporters beaten and shot at, amid an army melee as Mobutu prevented Tshisekedi from occupying the office of the prime minister, to which he had been legally appointed.

Kinshasa is so unstable that people are expecting anything, and an array of dire possibilities is circulating on the "radio *trottoir*," or sidewalk radio, Kinshasa's version of the grapevine. A rumour is making the rounds that the army is mining the airport area and telling people to move, said Thomas.

So people are hoarding food. They are spiriting away their valuable possessions. They are moving to the homes of relatives.

"Kabila" has become shorthand for liberation from Mobutu, the military commander who seized power in his second coup d'etat nearly 32 years ago and has ruled as a unifying patriarch and immovable dictator who plundered much of Zaire's wealth and allowed his political allies to do the same.

All the while, the quality of life for ordinary Zairians has grown more bleak. The daily preoccupation of many Zairians is the hustle for money for food for that day's meal. The bureaucracy and infrastructure has crumbled to the point that the state, under Mobutu, has receded in importance in the lives of most people. Teachers are not paid. Civil servants live as paupers.

Soldiers have taken this state of affairs especially badly, thus their 1991 and 1993 pillages, joined by civilians, over poor wages. Only the elite units closest to the president have benefited from the Mobutuist system.

This is the fertile ground for rebellion that Kabila's armed forces – called the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire – as well as the unarmed political opposition here in the capital now are harvesting.

"He has no choice now," said Valentin Mubake, an opposition parliamentarian who also sits on the negotiating team that has represented Mobutu's government in talks with rebel officials in South Africa.

On Saturday, Mobutu held open the possibility of direct talks with Kabila, but said Kabila must treat him with proper respect and not issue an ultimatum.

People here don't speak of "if" Kabila gets here; they speak of "when". But Mobutu Nzanga, the president's son and adviser, has warned that Mobutu's military will crack down on the illegal demonstrations planned for this week. If chaos breaks out, thousands of US, French, Belgian and British troops are massed across the river and off Zaire's Atlantic coast to intervene to evacuate their nationals. – The Washington Post.

Kabila gets hero's welcome in liberated Lubumbashi

Star 15/4/97 (358)

Lubumbashi, Zaire – Laurent-Desire Kabila, leader of Zaire's rebels, arrived in this rebel-held southern city yesterday, with thousands of cheering local residents lining the route from the airport to the city centre.

Supporters danced and cheered, making the V-for-victory sign as the rebel leader entered the city, captured by his troops last week after a three-day battle with government forces. Shaba is Kabila's home region and its population is broadly favourable to the rebel leader.

Kabila had earlier left his Goma stronghold aboard an official Ugandan plane.

Residents shouting "Kabila, Kabila" and "Mokozi", which means "saviour" in Swahili, lined the 10km route from the airport into the city centre.

Heavily armed rebels wearing black, red or green berets were also posted along the route, and they made the airport safe before the arrival of Congolese President Pascal Lissouba.

Kabila, wearing his now familiar cowboy hat and looking relaxed, disappeared into a vehicle waiting at the airport without making any statement.

He was expected to address a public meeting today in Moise Tshombe Square in the city centre after spending last night in a former residence of President Mobutu Sese Seko in Lubumbashi.

The rebel leader might later head for South Africa. A spokesman for the guerrilla leader said on Sunday that Kabila would probably travel "very soon" to South Africa to give a fresh impetus to peace talks with the Kinshasa authorities.

The spokesman held out the possibility of a face-to-face meeting with Mobutu, who on Sunday defied a three-day ultimatum from Kabila to stand down or face further fighting.

Zairian government spokesman Kin-Kiey Mulumba said yesterday the Kinshasa authorities "envisaged" direct talks between Kabila and Mobutu.

Lubumbashi is Zaire's second city and capital of mineral-rich Shaba province.

Earlier the rebel alliance announced that a nephew of Kabila, Gaetan Kakuji, had been named interim governor of Shaba. Kakuji held a press conference at which he announced the rebels' intention to hold "real elections". – AFP.

Now Kinshasa faces assault from within

Star 15/4/97 (358)

Mobutu under siege from internal protest as well as inexorable advances from the east

By Ross Herbert
Kinshasa

President Mobutu Sese Seko, besieged by seemingly unstoppable rebel forces in the battlefield, is facing a new second front in Kinshasa as opposition leaders vow to stir civil unrest until he resigns.

Yesterday Kinshasa came to a commercial standstill in a day of protest that brought sporadic clashes between opposition supporters and soldiers eager to break up any public protest against Mobutu.

Burning-tyre barricades were erected at several crossroads in the city as demonstrators vowed that today would bring larger protest marches, which seem certain to result in violent clashes with the army.

"Please, please tell (rebel leader Laurent-Desire) Kabila the people are waiting for him. He is wasting too many days coming here. We need him to come immediately," said one fruit trader in Mikondo, one of Kinshasa's poorest slum areas.

Opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi called for a day of no work in Kinshasa to protest against Mobutu's rule. Outside

Clashes expected as opposition rage grows

his home, soldiers broke up gatherings of supporters and at one point fired automatic weapons in the air over a vehicle full of foreign journalists who were later held at gunpoint.

After a meeting of Mobutu's new military cabinet, the new information minister, Kin-Kiey Mulumba, called foreign journalists together to issue a warning that the cabinet had "instructed the minister of interior and the minister of justice to strictly enforce the law. Without issuing threats to you, we won't go so far as ending your stay here, but the government wants to remind you of your professional ethics."

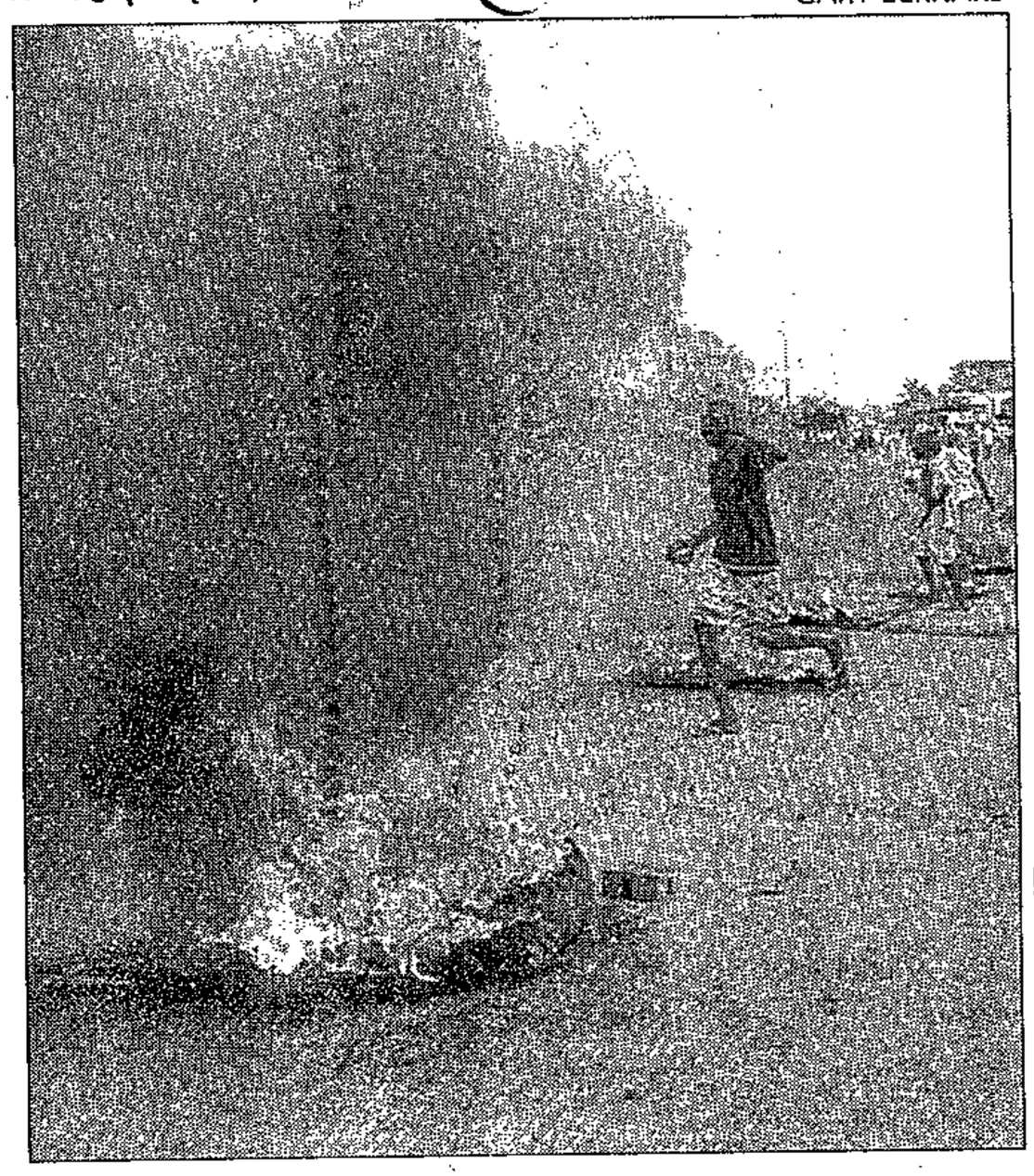
Journalists, he said, were taking rumours into account and reporting unverified claims by rebels that they had captured towns as close as 300km from Kinshasa.

Asked what the law was that would be strictly enforced, Mulumba shoved through the crowd of journalists around him and said: "You are journalists. You find out.

"We need total change. We expect the same total change you had in South Africa," said Makakala Sindani, a street trader in Mikondo. – Star Foreign Service.

▶ Residents wait in fear
Page 18

GARY BERNARD



Wind of change ... smouldering tyres marked roadblocks at key intersections in Zaire's capital Kinshasa as the city's control began to slip away in the face of rebel advances.

Rebels set to renegotiate mine deals

(358) BD 15/4/97

LUBUMBASHI — Zairean rebels tightened their grip on the country's economic backbone yesterday by appointing a new governor and announcing plans to renegotiate mining contracts with foreign firms.

Rebel boss Laurent Kabila appointed a provisional governor, Gaetan Kakudji, to oversee mineral-rich Shaba province, rebel officials announced.

Rebel financial commissioner Mwana Nanga Mawampanga said the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) rebels planned to renegotiate contracts with international mining companies, including SA diamond giant De Beers Consolidated Mines.

He said he was not happy with the monopoly position of De Beers in the diamond industry.

"It is a monopoly and we don't want monopolies in this country.

"If they don't want to accept that, they will have to make up their own minds what to do. We will not tolerate monopolistic behaviour," Mawampanga said.

By replacing the governor, Kabilastalled an attempt by the incumbent, proautonomy Kyungu wa Kumwanza to stay in power under the AFDL rebels, who now control more than half of Zaire.

Kyungu was fired by President Mobutu Sese Seko in 1985 and reappointed last month ahead of the rebels' arrival.

Many Mobutu opponents in Shaba said allowing Kyungu to stay in power would be tantamount to letting him steal their revolution.

An alliance spokesman said elections would be held in Shaba at a later date, but that there was confusion and the alliance felt it was "not appropriate to go into detail on what is going on".

Kakudji said the alliance was committed to establishing a "social market economy" that would attract foreign investors and allow Shaba to benefit from the wealth Mobutu's regime had plundered for the past 30 years.

De Beers announced earlier this month its representatives had met Kabila for discussions which it said had focused on the security of its staff and facilities.

The firm has been buying offices in the rebel-held towns of Kisangani and Mbuji-Mayi and a contract to buy the production of the Miba mine at Mbuji-Mayi.

The Zaire government owns 80% of Miba mine with Belgium-owned Sibeka holding the remaining 20%. De Beers holds 20% of Sibeka which indirectly gives it a minor stake in Miba.

Meanwhile, Kabila arrived in Lubumbashi from his Goma stronghold aboard an official Ugandan plane yesterday. Thousands of cheering local residents lining the route from the airport to the city.

Supporters danced and cheered as the rebel leader entered the city, captured by his troops last week after a three day battle with government forces. Shaba is Kabila's home region and support base.

A spokesman for the rebels said at the weekend Kabila could later head for SA. He said Kabila would probably travel "very soon" to SA to givefresh impetus to peace talks with the Kinshasa authorities.

The spokesman hinted at the possibility of a face-to-face meeting with Mobutu, who this week defied rebel threats. — Reuter-Sapa-AFP.

Strike piles pressure on Mobutu to bow out

ET

16/4/97 (358)

KINSHASA: Shops were closed, streets deserted and Zaire's capital eerily silent as millions of people observed a one-day strike yesterday to press demands that President Mobutu Sese Seko step down.

Soldiers kept a low profile and patrolled key intersections.

They fired shots into the air to break up a crowd outside opposition leader Mr Etienne Tshisekedi's house. No injuries were reported.

On the war front, rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila said his forces had captured Kananga, capital of West Kasai and one of the largest cities, other than Kinshasa, which is still in government hands.

The rebels, who control nearly half the country, claimed to have reached the city of Bandundu, 250km north-east of here, and said they were advancing on Kinshasa, Mobutu's last major stronghold.

Tightening their grip on Zaire's economic heart, the rebels appointed a new governor in mineral-rich Shaba province and announced plans to renegotiate mining contracts with foreign firms.

In Kinshasa, the strike increased pressure on Mobutu. The rebels halted their advance for three days last week to give Mobutu time to think over their demand for his resignation.

Japan, France and Belgium have evacuated some of their citizens from Kinshasa, but US ambassador Mr Daniel Simpson said his embassy was not preparing for an evacuation.

UN refugee agency spokesman Mr Peter Kessler said the repatriation by air of up to 100 000 Rwandan refugees from the jungles of Zaire would begin late this week.

The outbreak of a mild strain of cholera among the refugees should not delay the evacuation, Kessler said. The outbreak has claimed nine lives and spread to 150 people.

Meanwhile, a Zairian government spokesman said yesterday the Kinshasa authorities expected direct talks between Kabila and Mobutu to take place.

Following an extraordinary cabinet meeting, spokesman Mr Kin-Kiey Mulumba said the government had examined the results of talks with the rebels held last week in South Africa.

Asked whether the government had discussed a meeting between the rebel leader and Mobutu, Mulumba replied "that is envisaged".

Mobutu said at the weekend he was willing to meet Kabila — "if he asks politely".

However, rebel spokesman Mr Bizima Karaha said that the rebels still wanted Mobutu to resign. "We won't give Mobutu another chance." — Sapa-AP-AFP

Zaire soldiers plot surrender

(358)

ARG 15/4/97

Army looting spree feared

There is a split in the Zairian military with one group of soldiers already making plans for how they will surrender when the rebel leader Laurent Kabila reaches Kinshasa.

"I am a soldier and I am starving. We are ready to welcome anyone who brings change. I have been talking with my fellow soldiers ... they all agree if Kabila comes they will all fold their arms and not fight," said a captain in the Federal Army of Zaire, who asked not to be identified.

His is but one voice in a country where any conversation between the media and military brings a strong risk of arrest.

But his opinion is widely shared in the slums where many ordinary army men live with their families.

In areas surrounding Kinshasa's airport and military camps, people have begun moving out amid persistent rumours the airport will be the first target.

Kinshasa is the last big redoubt for president Mobutu Sese Seko, whose beleaguered army has been relentlessly driven westward by Mr Kabila's disciplined troops.

Although there was no independent confirmation, rebels said yesterday they had captured the city of Kananga, capital of West Kasai province and an important military and railroad hub.

Kinshasa has been anxiously pondering just what the army will do once it has retreated to Kinshasa and there is no where else to go. The Federal Army, or FAZ as it is known, and the Civil Guard have gone on looting sprees just before rebels have closed in on each major city. Will the same happen to Kinshasa, where Mobutu's political and military allies live in spacious homes? And what will the elite Presidential Guard do?

"We are not afraid of Kabila. What we fear is what our own soldiers will do," said Albert Nimingoyi, who sells cigarettes out of a tiny shack in Kinshasa.

Public animosity toward the Presidential Guard is such that members cannot live among the population, according to the captain, a former Presidential Guard.

Such animosity does not stop with the Presidential Guard. What would the public do with Mobutu if he were shed of his Presidential Guard? "They will kill him," said Pierre, a devote Christian working at one of Kinshasa's many religious missions. – Foreign Service

SPECIAL REPORT



ROSS HERBERT IN KINSHASA

Kinshasa campuses cordoned off to block demos

(358) Star 16/4/97

Opposition leader vows to continue protests until president leaves office

By Ross Herbert
Kinshasa

Government security forces cordoned off university campuses and erected roadblocks at points in Kinshasa yesterday to block demonstrations planned by students against President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Nearly all shops were closed for the second day of a no-work protest.

But the strong military presence seemed to dissuade students from significant demonstrations.

The protests were organised by radical opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, who was ousted as prime minister last Wednesday after less than a week in office.

He has vowed to continue protests until Mobutu leaves office or the city is captured by the rebel forces that have conquered nearly half of the country since taking up arms in October.

The day of protest was meant to express discontent with Mobutu and support for Tshisekedi.

However, students at three university campuses, traditionally bastions of radical opposition to Mobutu, said they were tired of protests that change nothing.

"What we need is the coming of (rebel leader Laurent-Desire) Kabila," said one student.

At the Institute of Superior Pedagogy, a women's college in the affluent Gombe district, women said many students were leaving the campus out of fear of what might happen before rebel troops finally conquer Kinshasa.

Women at the college, located near the heavily guarded office of the prime minister, said soldiers from Mobutu's army had vowed to rape female students just before the final rebel assault.

"I am afraid because behind the institute there are soldiers who tell us they will come and rape us," said one student.

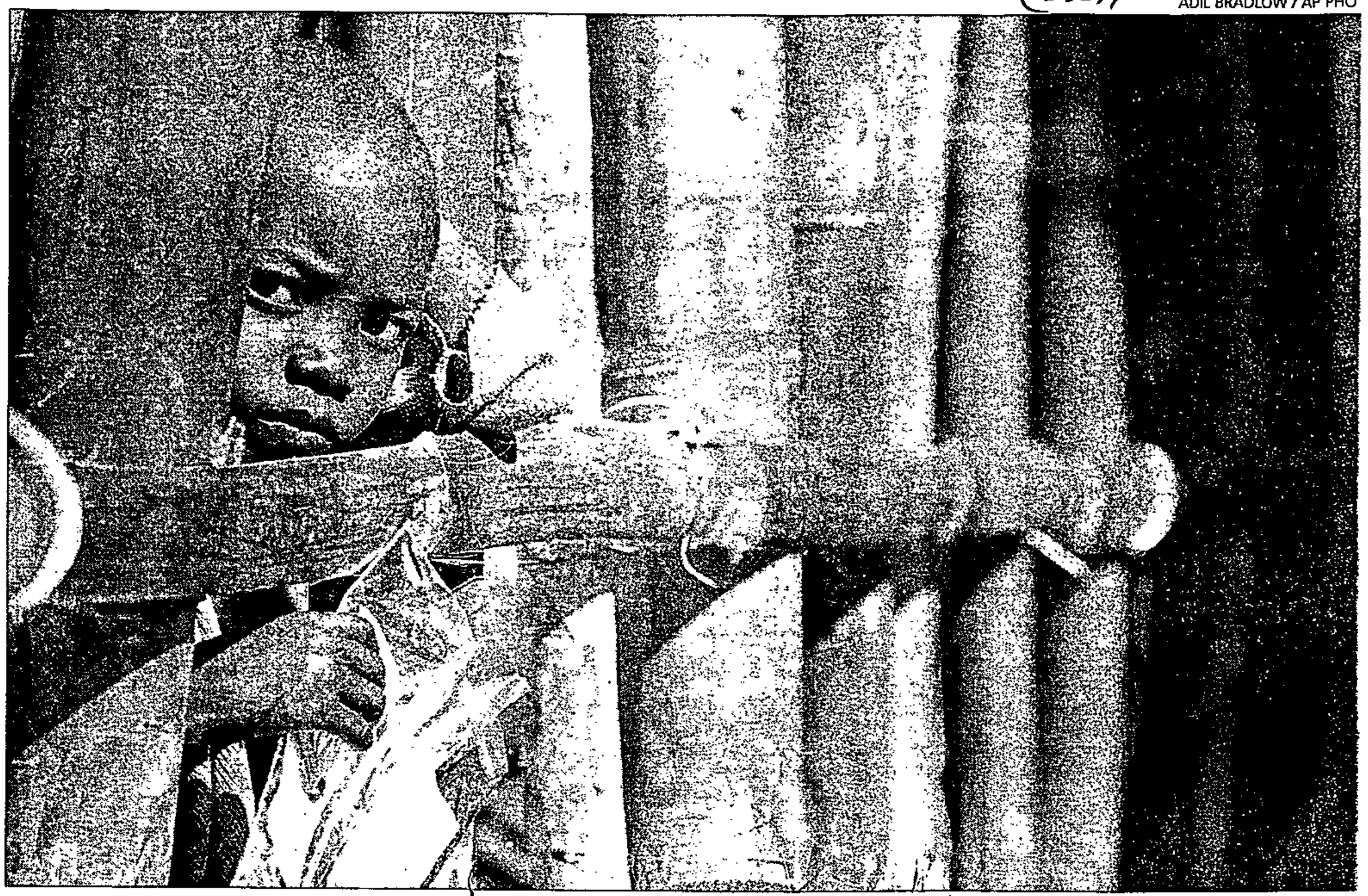
Yesterday, five foreign television cameramen, including two South Africans, were attacked and abducted by men who claimed they were students.

The cameramen were robbed of cellular telephones and cash and forced into a van, which was driven to the new military prime minister's office and then to an army base, where the journalists were later released.

The journalists included South Africans Chevan Rayson of Associated Press Television and Spokes Mashiyane of World Television News. A Reuters cameramen and two Belgian cameramen were also abducted.

The incident came a day after the information minister warned all journalists that they were disseminating unverified claims of rebel victories. – Star Foreign Service.

ADIL BRADLOW / AP PHO



Displaced ... a young Rwandan child peers through the fence of a feeding centre in a refugee camp on the road to Kisangani.

Army faction plans to surrender to conquering rebels

Kinshasa – A split has erupted in the Zairian security forces, with some soldiers already planning to surrender to rebel leader Laurent-Desire Kabila when his army arrives in Kinshasa.

"I am a soldier and I am starving. We are ready to welcome anyone who brings change," said one captain. His opinion is widely shared in the slums of Kinshasa, where many of the ordinary troops live with their families.

Zaire's Federal Army and the civil guard have gone on looting sprees before each major city has fallen to the rebels. The question on everybody's lips in Kinshasa is whether the same will happen here and how Mobutu Sese-Seko's elite Presidential Guard will react when the rebels arrive.

"We are not afraid of Kabila. What we fear is what our own soldiers will do," said cigarette vendor Albert Nimingoyi. – Star Foreign Service.

Nzo optimistic for peace initiative amid reports that Kabila is due in SA for talk

Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said yesterday he expected "dramatic progress" shortly in international efforts to broker peace in Zaire.

"We are in constant touch with all the role-players in Zaire (and) in the region, and international efforts will see some dramatic progress within the next few days," he told Members of Parliament in Cape Town.

Nzo's comments follow confirmation by South African Government sources that Zairian rebel leader Laurent-Desire Kabila is expected in South Africa soon for talks with the Government and with United Nations and Organisation of African Unity special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun to explain whether he intends taking Kinshasa by force or agreeing to a settlement.

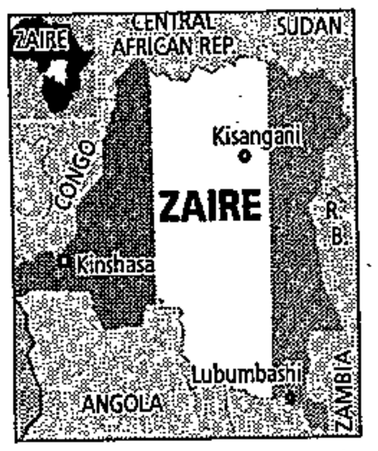
Kabila has shown no signs of calling off his army's march towards the capital despite signs, at recent talks between his representatives and President Mobu Sese Seko's government, t settlement was possible.

Diplomatic sources said t by meeting Kabila, the Sou African Government and S noun would be able to clar the position. – Star Foreign S vice, AFP.

Mobutu in decline is an embarrassment to France

Star 16/4/97 (358)

Paris seems at a loss after this serious setback for its policy in the region, writes Craig R Whitney



For once, France appears to have had no direct role in the latest military and political upheaval in French-speaking Africa: the rebellion that now threatens to bring down President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, one of its oldest allies.

But having stuck with Mobutu so long since he seemed the best hope of keeping the biggest and most important French-speaking country on the continent intact and favourably disposed, Paris now seems at a loss after what is clearly one of the most serious setbacks in years for its policy in the region.

Michel Roussin, a former French foreign aid minister, called Mobutu "a dinosaur who should leave", but he noted with regret that France had no contacts with and little understanding of the man most likely to replace him, Kabila.

Guy Labertit, an Africa expert at the Institute of International and Strategic Research, said: "France committed a major political mistake by clinging to the myth of Mobutu even after his regime had lost all coherence."

France can hardly be blamed for the impoverished ruin that Mobutu made of Zaire, which was once a colony of Belgium, not of France. But France did nothing to keep him from draining the country of hundreds of millions of rands worth of mineral resources while letting its infrastructure go to ruin, or from building a vast villa in the French Riviera at Roquebrune-Cap-Martin.

Mobutu (66) stayed there for a good part of this year and last, recovering from treatment for prostate cancer, as rebellion and disorder spread in eastern Zaire and imperilled hundreds of thousands of refugees from Rwanda. France tried last year to get the USA and its European allies to send a military force there to protect them, but many saw this as a disguised attempt to prop up Mobutu's government.

France, unlike Belgium, the United States and most of the rest of Europe, has still not actually pronounced Mobutu's era over or called on him to step aside.

Last week the French foreign ministry did say that a meeting between Mobutu and Kabila would help define what it called "a mutually agreed process of transition" to democracy.

And President Jacques Chirac's aides have denied recent newspaper reports that France had anything to do with recruiting or financing Serbian and other mercenaries who tried to rally government troops against the rebels in recent weeks.

But persistent reports in French newspapers that American advisers to the neighbouring governments of Rwanda and Burundi had provided support and supplies for the rebels seem to reflect not so much the truth of the assertions as deeply felt French embarrassment at having kept hold of the wrong end of the stick in Zaire far too long.

Chirac's Socialist predecessor as president, Francois Mitterrand, distanced himself from Mobutu, and even Prime Minister Alain Juppe's government has occasionally shown itself to be parsimonious with visas for the ailing dictator and his relatives.

But after his election, Chirac, encouraged by his long-time *eminence grise* on Africa policy, Jacques Foccart, received Mobutu at Elysée Palace last summer.

Foccart, Charles de Gaulle's right-hand man on France's former African colonies in the 1960s, died last month. But in a memoir written last year and published last week, he said of Mobutu:

"In spite of everything, and take me for an incurable conservative if you will, I am convinced that, by his presence, the chief of state keeps the worst from happening, that is, the implosion of the nation and the unleashing of tribal struggles that could turn bloody." With this kind of advice in the Elysée and Mobutu in Europe for much of the last year for treatment of prostate cancer, France stuck with Mobutu.

Now it seems doubtful that Mobutu will hold on to power much longer, while France may soon have to find a way to keep American influence from displacing its own in French-speaking Africa. – NY Times.

Ousted premier missing with millions of dollars

Star 16/4/97

Kinshasa – The Zairian government yesterday accused the former prime minister of stealing millions of dollars intended for the military and said it would launch an international search for him, the latest twist in the country's chaotic political situation.

Leon Kengo wa Dondo, who was ousted from the premier's post by a parliamentary vote of no confidence three weeks ago, could face treason charges if he is found, the country's new information minister, Kin-Kiey Mulumba, told reporters. (358)

Kengo's demise followed allegations he had failed to provide the military the support it needed to battle Laurent-Desire Kabila's rebel army, which has come to control nearly half the country since it launched its incursion seven months ago.

According to Kin-Kiey, "several million" dollars, which had been controlled by Kengo's government and were intended for the army, were missing. "Each time a Zairian buys a litre of petrol, each time he buys a cigarette, he pays something for the war effort. There was an account where this money was supposed to be," he said. "This money has to be someplace, but we haven't seen any of it."

– Sapa-AP.

▶ **More reports**
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Hard times for staff at Mobutu's hotel

STAFF at a Johannesburg hotel owned by Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko's wife have not received full salaries since December.

Sapa reports staff at the Orchidea hotel in Braamfontein said yesterday they had received irregular payments of R100 and R200 at a time, but no full salaries. This month they had not received anything.

Staff said the manager had resigned. Many others had also left because of nonpayment. Employees said the Mobutus bought the hotel in 1993. The last time the Zairean owner visited the hotel was in 1994.

The African National Congress Women's League had stepped in to assist workers and would also probe whether the Zairean president or his family had any other assets in SA, ANC MP Thandi Modise said.

Wyndham Hartley reports from Cape Town that Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad said yesterday a multinational African peacekeeping force, such as the one that has been training in Zimbabwe during the past two weeks, could not be deployed in Zaire before there was a suspension of hostilities and a general ceasefire.

Briefing Parliament's joint standing committee on defence, Pahad contradicted news reports that Zairean rebel leader Laurent Kabila was in SA or expected at any specific time. He said he hoped he would arrive soon but did not know when.

There had been much talk of a peacekeeping force being used in Zaire. Such a multinational force would not help while there was open conflict. Once there was a ceasefire, a "verification" force could be considered to monitor the ceasefire.

Pahad denied that asylum had been offered to Mobutu. In response to a question from Modise, he said Mobutu's investments in SA would be handled in terms of international law. There have been reports that the Swiss government has frozen Mobutu's investments in Switzerland.

Pahad said SA was not supplying arms to any of the factions.

See Page 2

BD 16/4/97 (358)

highest priority was attacking the 165 criminal syndicates which were known to be operating in Gauteng and which were largely responsible for the province's most widespread crime—housebreaking.

Duarte said government would also be fulfilling its obligation to ensure the "management processes we she said.

Asked if she favoured the reintroduction of the death penalty, Duarte said: "The fact of the matter is if we are going to be hanging people in this country, we will be hanging young black males only." Focus needed to be placed on rehabilitative measures in SA prisons instead.

Bill allows insurance crackdown

Linda Enson (388) BD 16/4/97.

CAPE TOWN — The urgent passage of legislation through Parliament to strengthen the regulatory powers of the Financial Services Board overcame its first hurdle yesterday when it was approved by the finance portfolio committee.

The Financial Institutions Amendment Bill would enable the board to crack down on unauthorised activities, particularly in the short-term insurance sector, board research head Fransovan Zyl said when motivating the bill. He said it had the backing of Finance Minister Trevor Manuel and the cabinet.

The board wanted to stamp out, among other things, brokers' failure to pass on premiums from policyholders to insurers, brokers' lack of financial guarantees, and unauthorised dealing in trust property.

The board had lost several court cases relating to the conduct of unauthorised business by insurance brokers because it lacked these powers, Van Zyl said.

Objections from the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), relating to its demand that banks be included in the clauses relating to the handling of trust property, were sorted out a week ago, he said. The Council of SA Banks and the registrar of banks did not object to this.

While the legislation empowered the board to inspect stockbrokers when the JSE failed to take action, it made no inroads into the powers of the JSE. Legal action against a stockbroker could be instituted by the board only with JSE approval.

Mobutu's guards flee to Zambia

BD 16/4/97 (355) 369

LUSAKA — More than 100 soldiers from the special guard of embattled Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko fled into Zambia on Sunday night, local press reports said.

According to the reports yesterday, their weapons were immediately seized by the Zambian security forces.

The minister in charge of Zambia's northern copper belt region, Charles Museba, confirmed the arrival of 106 soldiers who were part of the elite division fleeing the advancing rebels of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

De Beers yesterday rejected claims by the rebel alliance that it commands a monopoly position in the central African nation's diamond industry.

A finance spokesman for Laurent-Desire Kabila's rebel forces said on Monday that the alliance planned to renegotiate previous contracts with international mining companies in the wake of rebel victories in eastern Zaire. Mwana Nanga Mawampanga described De Beers' operations in Zaire as a monopoly. "We don't want monopolies in this country any more," he said.

De Beers spokesman Tom Tweedy said in Johannesburg that Mawampanga's accusations were groundless given that the company did not mine gems in Zaire itself. Its Central Selling Organisation unit buys low-quality rough diamonds from the La Miniere de Bakwanga mine, 80%-owned by the Zairean government and 20% by Sibeka of Belgium. De Beers owns 20% of Sibeka.

This operation, known as the Miba mine, produces a little more than a third of Zaire's total annual diamond output of 15-million carats. All gems are sold to De Beers on a renewable-contract basis. The remaining two-thirds of Zaire's diamonds flow from alluvial operations around the country.

"De Beers is one of more than a dozen licensed to buy diamonds in Zaire," Tweedy said. "We compete on price, which doesn't always make us popular.

"In the case of Miba, we have a renewable sales contract and every three to five years, we've got to go back to the mine and pitch for their output."

De Beers has held two meetings with representatives of Kabila's rebel forces in the past 10 days, with a second encounter in Goma focusing on the benefits De Beers brought to the country, Tweedy said. — Sapa-AFP, AP-DJ.

House committee calls for Mobutu's resignation

(358) KPaw 17/4/97

Washington – A congressional panel called for the immediate resignation yesterday of Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko, accusing the former US ally of human rights abuses and of causing Zaire's severe poverty.

The State Department, meanwhile, called on the Rwandan government to allow a massive airlift and overland evacuation of 100 000 refugees from Zaire back to their homeland in Rwanda, to begin on Friday.

The House International Relations Committee unanimously adopted a resolution expected to be approved by the House later this week. It urges President Clinton to adopt the same position.

The State Department has said Mobutu's 32-year rule is a "creature of history" but is urging a negotiated settlement between him and rebel leaders advancing on the capital. A statement yesterday reiterated that position, supporting a South African effort this week to bring the sides together in Cape Town.

"President Mobutu's days as leader of Zaire are numbered," said the committee chairman, Republican Benjamin Gilman, "and there will be an opportunity in the coming days to bring a more responsible and more democratic form of government to Zaire."

The resolution calls on Mobutu to resign immediately and leave Zaire. It was approved by voice vote, despite concerns raised by subcommittee members at a recent hearing on Zaire over the political ambitions and commitment to democracy of rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

The resolution accuses Mobutu of violating human rights and turning potentially prosperous Zaire into one of the world's poorest countries.

Some fears over Kabila's ambitions

"The Mobutu government has proven itself unwilling to allow a genuine transition to multiparty democracy and continues to cling to power against the best interest of Zaire's people," it says.

At the State Department, spokesman Nicholas Burns said an announcement by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees that it might begin airlifting refugees from Zaire provides a "glimmer of hope" in the humanitarian tragedy.

"People continue to die in these camps from malnourishment and starvation," Burns said, adding that the US has made money available for the airlift.

"We continue to await the decision of the government of Rwanda to allow women and children, at least, to be evacuated from the refugee camps," he said.

Burns said 20 000 to 30 000 refugees are expected to be airlifted and the remainder to be transported overland from Kisangani to Goma in Zaire and then into neighbouring Rwanda. – Sapa-AP.

Former Zairean PM flees

(358)

Sowetan 17/4/97

KINSHASA – Former prime minister Kengo wa Dondo has fled Zaire and the government is thinking of charging him with treason, government spokesman Kin Kiey Mulumba has said.

Zaire's war chest funds were empty and the government – which has lost the eastern half of the country to rebel forces – believed Kengo was responsible, the spokesman told reporters.

Officials were considering issuing an international arrest warrant against Kengo, he said, because "the coffers are empty".

"We would like to get that money back," he added. He said the amount missing was "several million dollars".

Mainly Tutsi rebels, led by Laurent Kabila, have since October seized the eastern half of Zaire in a drive to unseat President Mobutu Sese Seko,

Rebels now control the second and third largest cities, Lubumbashi and Kisangani, and parts of Africa's third-largest country, rich in cobalt, copper and diamonds.

Discreet security measures

Kengo resigned as prime minister on March 24 after parliament criticised the way he conducted the war. But he remained in charge of the day-to-day administration until handing over the reins to new prime minister Likulia Bolongo last Saturday.

After a general strike on Monday the capital Kinshasa became calm as discreet security measures foiled an opposition protest to demand Mobutu's resignation.

Security forces blocked off two access roads to a campus housing three universities, a measure that proved sufficient to stop students from coming out. Stores that shut down on Monday were reopened, with people out and about on the streets but road traffic was limited.

In the eastern rebel stronghold of Goma, a rebel leader said Rwandan authorities had refused to allow a planned mass repatriation by air of Rwandan Hutu refugees to Kigali. – *Sapa-AFP.*

Mandela meets Zairean rebel leader

Stephen Laufer

TALKS on the future of Zaire appeared to enter a crucial phase last night as rebel leader Laurent Kabila met President Nelson Mandela and United Nations (UN) special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun in Cape Town.

The meeting appeared to be a prelude to a face-to-face meeting in the next few days between Kabila and Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, possibly in SA. It is understood Mobutu's security adviser, Honore Ngabanda, is in Cape Town and is keeping abreast of the talks with Kabila.

Reuter reports that Zaire's Information Minister Kin-Kiey Mulumba said in Kinshasa that a meeting between Kabila and Mobutu was "imminent". "Things are getting clearer. Plans are afoot for a meeting between the head of state and the rebel leader," he said.

Presidential spokesman Parks Mankahlana said he did not yet know whether Mobutu was on his way to SA. Mandela had met Kabila alone before proceeding with him to a meeting with all the participants in the talks. They included Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo and his deputy, Aziz Pahad.

Kabila has been demanding a meeting with Mobutu as a precondition to a ceasefire. There has been frustration among participants in the SA talks that Mobutu's envoys have no final negotiating authority and keep returning to Kinshasa to confer with him. Getting Mobutu to SA would allow the talks to move more rapidly, a source said. Another said the talks were "at a point where a face-to-face meeting between the two would produce results".

A source said Kabila was expected to stay in SA if it seemed likely Mobutu would agree to talks here within the next 24-48 hours. Otherwise Kabila could leave SA and return once Mobutu was prepared to meet him.

Just before leaving for SA, Kabila said: "There will be no ceasefire before Mobutu relinquishes power. The people do not want a ceasefire, they want an end to this corrupt regime."

(358)

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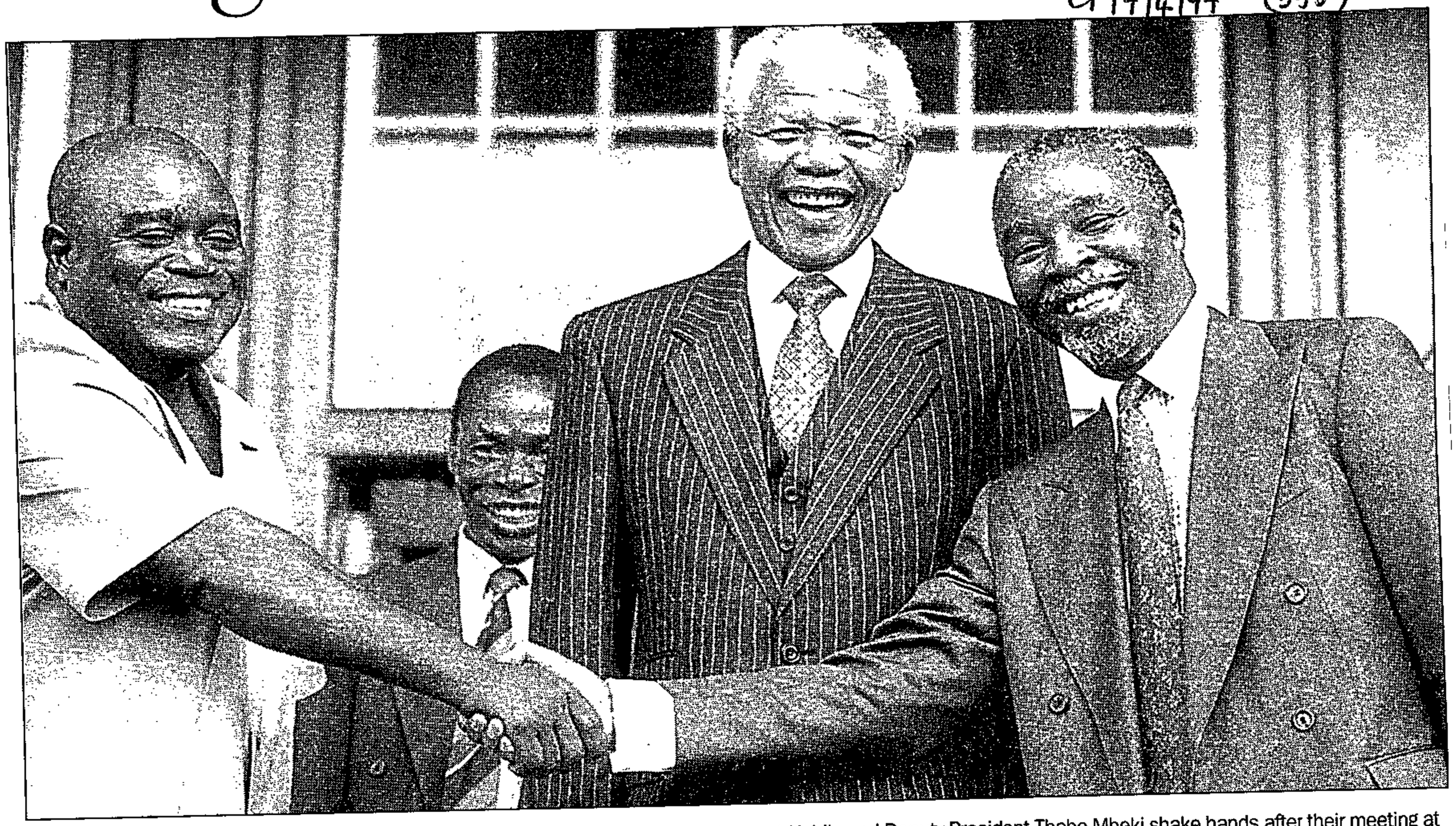
No meeting with Mobutu — Kabila

CT 17/4/97 (358)

THE PROSPECT of a ceasefire appeared no closer after Zaire's rebel leader talked to a UN and OAU envoy at Tuynhuys last night.



PEACE TALKS: President Nelson Mandela smiles broadly as Zairian rebel leader Laurent Kabila and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki shake hands after their meeting at Tuynhuys yesterday. *PICTURE: BENNY GOOL*

ZAIRIAN rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila met President Nelson Mandela and United Nations and Organisation for African Unity envoy Mr Mohamed Sahnoun last night in Mandela's Tuynhuys offices for talks intended to boost the flagging Zairian peace effort.

Mandela and Sahnoun aimed to arrange the first face-to-face meeting between Kabila and President Mobutu Sese Seko to discuss an end to the crisis, and to find out if Kabila is really interested in a negotiated settlement or is determined to take Kinshasa by force.

Mandela, Kabila, Sahnoun and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki posed for pictures on the Tuynhuys steps, but did not accept questions.

Diplomatic sources said they hoped Kabila would clarify an "obvious disjoint" between negotiations in South Africa last week — where a "positive spirit of compromise" emerged — and what was actually happening on the ground, with Kabila's forces continuing their march to Kinshasa.

Although Foreign Minister Mr Alfred Nzo told Parliament on Tuesday to expect dramatic progress in the talks, the prospects for either a Kabila-Mobutu meeting or a ceasefire did not look promising last night.

Diplomats in Kinshasa said SA even if he wanted to.

And Kabila left Lubumbashi for Cape Town — reportedly in an SA Air Force jet — yesterday afternoon in an uncompromising mood, saying he did not expect to meet Mobutu.

"It is not important for me, who is he?" Kabila said.

"The people do not want a ceasefire; they want an end to this corrupt regime.There will be no ceasefire until Mobutu

The key to a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement was finding a way to allow Mobutu a "dignified exit", SA government sources said.

Last week senior representatives of Mobutu and Kabila, meeting in SA, announced a broad agreement in principle for a ceasefire and independently-supervised transition to proper democratic elections in Zaire.

The sources said the negoMobutu would remain in office in a ceremonial role and then retire just before the elections.

Since then, however, Kabila's forces have taken the second-largest town of Lubumbashi, which seems to have persuaded the rebel leader that he can take Kinshasa, and the country, without great loss.

Mobutu has also given no sign of being willing to stand down since last week's talks. On ...htened his grip by firing a prime minister elected by parliament and replacing him with a general.

At the weekend, however, Mobutu said he would meet Kabila if asked "politely" but yesterday Zairian embassy spokesman Mr Jean-Nestor Bokumbe said in Pretoria that the embassy had received no word from Kinshasa that Mobutu was coming to SA.

Sahnoun has warned that the departure of Mobutu must be handled delicately: "To humiliate the old guard by driving them unceremoniously from power will only ensure that they regroup somewhere, sometime, to wreak havoc on any new government and continue to destabilise the region.

"That is why we are encouraging Mr Kabila's movement to look for the peaceful compromise of a coalition government." — Independent Foreign Service

US firm deals with rebels

CT 17/4/97 (358)

LUBUMBASHI: A United States-based mining venture capital company has signed three major agreements with the Zairian rebels, company officials said yesterday.

America Mineral Fields, of Hope, Arkansas — which had been negotiating with the Zairian government in Kinshasa until very recently — said it had signed agreements with the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire to process copper-and-cobalt-rich tailings at Kolwezi.

The agreements will enable them to rehabilitate a zinc mine on the border with Zambia at Kipushi and to conduct further exploration for minerals in the Kipushi area.

"Congo is now open for business," said Mr Jean-Raymond Boulle — the majority stockholder in the company that was founded in 1995 — referring to the rebels' name for Africa's third-largest nation.

The deal was signed here by AMF officials and new rebel mining minister Mr Kambale Kabila Mutututlo.

America Mineral Fields last week secured rebel authorisation to run the only licensed diamond-buying operation in Kisangani, Zaire's third-largest city and a major buying centre for diamonds dug by artisan miners outside the official circuit.

Mbuji-Mayi, capital of the eastern Kasai region and headquarters of the state-owned diamond mining company MIBA, was taken by the rebels on April 4.

Anglo-American and De Beers Consolidated Mines — which had a monopoly on Zaire's official industrial diamond output — have been holding talks with the rebels at their headquarters at Goma in eastern Zaire.

The state-owned Kilo-Moto gold mine at Bunia in north-eastern Zaire — captured by rebels late last year — as well as smaller mines in eastern Zaire, are also potential cash cows for the rebels.

Rebel finance minister Mr Mawampanga Mwana Nanga, who was working until late last year as an economist at the University of Kentucky, said "backdoor dealing" on the part of Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko's government had "corrupted the process".

In other words, he said, they demanded bribes from interested parties.

Mawapanga said it was still too early to decide how the rebels would handle the vast corporation, Gecamines-Exploitation, that could become the driving force behind the development rebel leaders say Zaire needs.

Mawapanga said one thing was certain — the engineers and mining expertise at Gecamines were first class; it was Mobutu and his corrupt entourage that were the problem.
— Sapa-AP

Hopes rise for rebel talks with Mobutu

Mandela upbeat on peace

ARG 17/4/97 (358)



REUTER

Leaders meet: President Mandela and Zairian rebel leader Laurent Kabila shake hands at Tuynhuys yesterday

:US CORRESPONDENTS AND REUTER

ıpes surged today of a face-to-face :eting between President Mobutu se Seko and rebel leader Laurent .bila, as President Mandela said he ıs confident of a peaceful solution to : civil war in Zaire.

Mr Kabila flew back Lubumbashi in ire early today after two sessions of talks Tuynhuys, the second of which ended ın after midnight.

Sapa reports that Mr Kabila is expected address a rally in the city – which fell to : rebel alliance last week – later today .

"I have been speaking both to Kabila d to President Mobutu, and as a result of : exchanges I have had with them, and : other leaders in Africa, I am confident ıt a peaceful solution will be achieved," · Mandela said today.

He had spoken to Mr Mobutu three nes since last Saturday. The Zairian esident's representative in an earlier und of talks in South Africa, Honore ;banda, had also been here, Mr Mandela .d. He had met Deputy President Thabo beki, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo and ; deputy, Aziz Pahad.

South Africa had today flown Mr ;banda back to Zaire, where he was pected to consult Mr Mobutu.

There was optimism in senior govern-ent circles that a meeting between princi-ls could soon take place.

Mr Kabila has previously insisted that ere can be no ceasefire in Zaire prior to · Mobutu agreeing to negotiate arrange-nts for his departure from power.

With the rebel alliance continuing to make military gains, and significant support for protest action against the government in Kinshasa, Mr Mobutu's bargaining position has been weakening steadily.

Mr Kabila had arrived yesterday for the talks which also involved the UN special envoy to Zaire, Mahmoud Sahnoun.

Mr Mandela and Mr Sahnoun had aimed to arrange the first face-to-face meeting between Mr Kabila and the ailing Mr Mobutu; and to find out if Mr Kabila really is interested in a negotiated settlement or is determined to take Kinshasa by force.

But Western diplomats in Kinshasa were gloomy, saying Mr Mobutu, suffering from prostate cancer, was too ill to come to South Africa even if he wanted to.

And Mr Kabila had left Lubumbashi for Cape Town yesterday in uncompromising mood, telling Associated Press he did not expect to meet Mr Mobutu.

The key to achieving to a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement was finding a way to allow Mr Mobutu a "dignified exit", South African Government sources said.

Last week senior representatives of Mr Mobutu and Mr Kabila meeting in South Africa announced a broad agreement in principle for a ceasefire and an independently supervised transition to proper democratic elections in Zaire.

The sources said the negotiators had also agreed – although this was not announced – that Mr Mobutu would stay on in a purely ceremonial role and then retire just before the elections.

But since then Mr Kabila's forces have taken Lubumbashi, which seemed to have persuaded him he could take Kinshasa without great loss.

Mr Mobutu has also shown no sign of being willing to stand down. Indeed he has tightened his grip by firing an elected prime minister and replacing him with a general.

Mr Sahnoun has warned the departure of Mr Mobutu must be handled delicately. "To humiliate the old guard by driving them unceremoniously from power will only ensure that they will regroup somewhere, some time, to wreak havoc on any new government," he wrote in the International Herald Tribune.

ZAIRE

FM 18/4/97

NEGOTIATING MOBUTU'S EXIT

(358)

Zairean rebel chief Laurent Kabila was expected to arrive in Cape Town this week, signalling fresh impetus to negotiations with President Mobutu Sese Seko's tottering regime for a democratic transition.

The prospect of direct talks between Kabila and Mobutu, which the rebels have consistently demanded, now appears a real possibility. On Monday a Zairean spokesman said in Kinshasa his government expected face-to-face talks between the leaders to take place.

More than four days of discussions in Pretoria between the two sides were adjourned on April 8, to allow delegates to report to their principals.

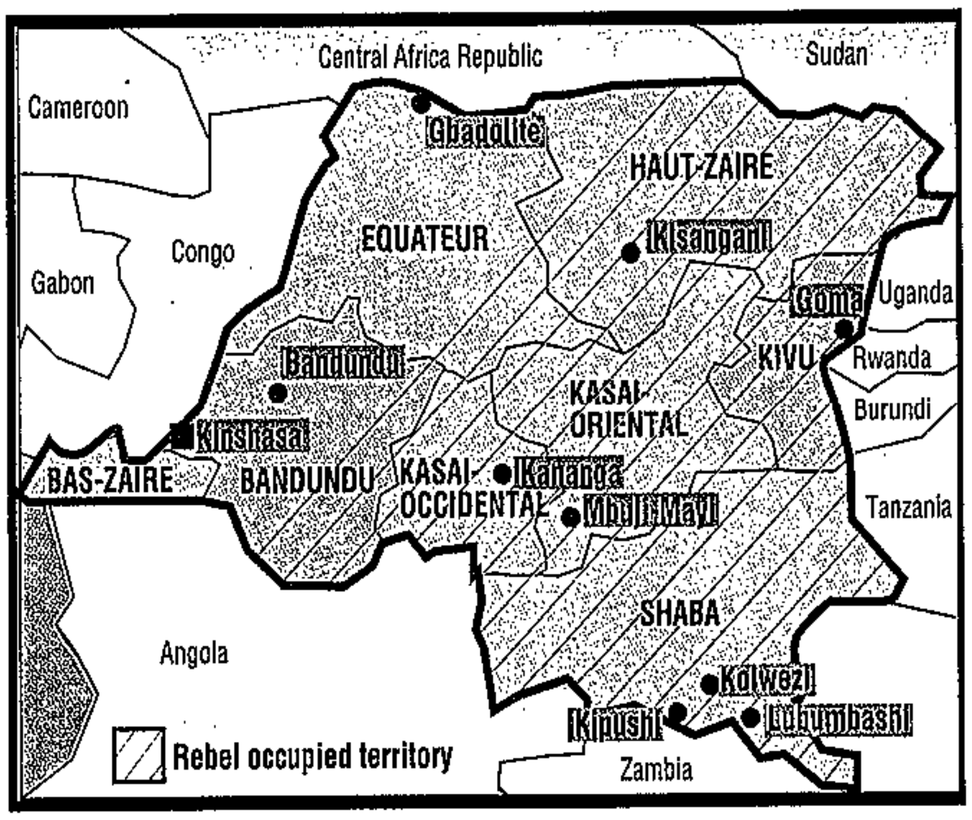
On Tuesday, Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad, who co-chaired the Pretoria talks, said Kabila might arrive in Cape Town this week. There was no official confirmation but there were indications of Kabila's visit.

Diplomatic efforts in easing talks between the rebels and Kinshasa are focused on the "transitional period" and the question of what awaits Zaire after Mobutu. Arrangements for elections and ensuring the territorial integrity of the country are key concerns.

"It's fair to say that we're in a post-Mobutu era," says an informed source. However, "different scenarios" are being looked at — including the possibility that Mobutu will refuse to budge.

The talks had been expected to resume on Monday, but were delayed because of the need to follow up "various suggestions" put to President Nelson Mandela by his counterparts attending the inauguration of the Angolan unity government in Luanda last Friday.

Continuing the talks, which SA is supporting with the backing of the US, UN and OAU, is seen as essential — despite the inexorable march across Zaire by Kabila's rebel alliance and the apparent lack of an incentive for him to negotiate a ceasefire.



In Goma last Sunday, Kabila's representative at the Pretoria talks, Bizima Karaha, told reporters: "We want Mobutu to leave the country and then we can negotiate a ceasefire . . . They want war, and they will get it."

This after the April 8 joint communiqué he signed in Pretoria with Mobutu's Deputy Prime Minister Kamanda wa Kamanda, in which both parties "agreed on negotiations to bring about a peaceful political solution to the conflict, (necessitating) a cessation of hostilities and . . . implementation of the UN/OAU peace plan." Karaha's remark followed a three-day suspension by the rebels of their seven-month onslaught, to give Mobutu the opportunity to resign.

In spite of universal advice to Mobutu to accept the inevitable and step down with dignity, observers point out that the wily dictator could yet pull something out of the bag — even if his long-time backer, France, is unlikely to intervene on his behalf. Certainly no-one else will.

Though government sources maintain that international and especially African pressure on Mobutu to step aside is having an effect, it is pointed out that he is well equipped and that he could be preparing to make his last stand at Gbadolite, the seat of his palace, which the rebels would have difficulty approaching.

Informed sources this week also maintained there would be "a change" before Kabila's forces get to Kinshasa — their prime symbolic target — which suggests a deal is on the cards. At the weekend Mobutu said he would agree to direct talks with Kabila "if he asks me politely."

Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) now controls about two-thirds of the country, including the diamond capital Mbuji-Mayi. Last Friday, Zaire's second city and mining capital Lubumbashi fell to the ADFL, which appointed a new governor of Shaba and announced plans to renegotiate mining contracts with foreign conglomerates. This came amid the first signs of opposition from a faction seeking greater autonomy for the mineral-rich province.

De Beers confirms it held contractual talks with the ADFL last weekend.

On Sunday Kabila claimed to have captured the West Kasai capital of Kananga and to have reached the outskirts of Bandundu, 250 km northeast of the capital.

Kinshasa on Monday was turned into a "dead city" by a stayaway of millions of supporters of opposition leader and sacked Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi, to back their demand for Mobutu to bow out. *Amarnath Singh*

Ethnic cleanser returns to Shaba

(358) MtG 4-10/4/97

Zaire's president has reinstated a dictatorial governor he removed four years ago. Chris McGreal reports from Lumbumbashi

IT is four years since Kyungu wa Kumwanza tried to revive an independent Katanga with the brutal ethnic cleansing of one million people. He even went so far as to declare secession from Zaire. It cost the demagogic governor his post, and he was placed under house arrest.

Now Kyungu is due to move into the governor's mansion again. President Mobutu Sese Seko ushered him back into office this week as rebel forces encroached ever deeper into Shaba, the southern province known as Katanga when United Nations troops killed its independence in the early 1960s.

Quite why Kyungu was reinstated is a mystery even he has difficulty explaining, other than as recognition of his undoubted popularity. But suspicion is rife in Shaba that Mobutu looks on the new governor as



A hero's welcome: Supporters of rebel leader Laurent Kabila welcome him to Kisangani, Zaire's third-largest city, last month PHOTOGRAPH: SACHA J

[illegible] weaken support for the rebels by reviving dreams of independence. It is a long shot.

Popular opinion in Shaba has swung firmly behind Laurent Kabila's rebels. They are within 250km of Lumbumbashi, Shaba's capital and the country's second-largest city, where people eagerly await the promise of change.

As soon as news of Kyungu's reappointment was broadcast, a stream of well-wishers made for his home where the new governor met them dressed in black with a gold watch hanging loosely from his wrist.

The politicians and businessmen were there to sound out his position on the civil war, but Kyungu is firmly straddling the fence. Although he grew up in the same village in Shaba as Kabila, he is evasive about their relationship.

"We know each other by name. We met, but he was not really my friend. Our families knew each other," he said.

But Kyungu is also careful not to criticise the rebels. "I don't have any problem with the rebels. The Zairean people want change. I'm among those who want things to change because the system of government we have didn't permit the development of the country."

Above all, Kyungu does not want to discuss secession any more. Perhaps he is trying to avoid upsetting Kabila, who insists that accusations he planned to split up Zaire are spurious charges aimed at justifying foreign intervention against the rebels.

Kyungu's rabid broadcasts denouncing Kasaians as parasites did much to fuel the violence

Shaba has more reason than most of Zaire to resent the central government. Beside the brutal suppression of Katanga's secession from the newly independent Congo in the Sixties, and the use of foreign troops to end two revolts in the following decade, Shaba has seen little benefit from its vast mineral wealth.

The province was on the cusp of a flourishing future when uranium for the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was mined at Shinkolobwe, 140km north-west of Lumbumbashi. Fifty years later, the state-owned company J Gecamines has concessions to enough minerals to make it the most profitable copper and cobalt mining firm in the world. But like much else in Zaire, Gecamines has fallen into ruin; its equipment systematically plundered or rotted into disrepair.

Mobutu drained the firm of so much hard currency it could not pay its debts overseas. Last year, copper production fell to a miserly one tenth of its peak.

But even when Gecamines was functioning well, Shaba saw few benefits.

Lumbumbashi, a graceful if dilapidated city, is still in better shape than most in Zaire. But hardly a new building has gone up since independence and the infrastructure is collapsing.

Mobutu appointed Kyungu as Shaba's governor four years ago as a pawn in his game to undermine the growing pressure for democratic rule. But in the climate of despair and resentment, Kyungu swiftly revived Shaba's secessionist tendencies, giving the province back its old name of Katanga. He launched a massive ethnic cleansing pogrom. About one million people with roots in neighbouring Kasai province were driven out.

Like the Asians in East Africa, the Kasaians are deeply resented in Shaba. They dominated the civil service, management and business. When Kyungu ordered their expulsion, the rest of Shaba's population was quick to seize their homes and loot their shops. Thousands of people were killed. Hundreds of thousands of others were forced on to trains to Kasai with no more than they could carry.

Kyungu's rabid broadcasts denouncing Kasaians as parasites did much to fuel the violence. Today he paints a different picture of his role.

He said: "Most of those who went back to Kasai are those who didn't have work or places to stay. We had an internal conflict between different communities. These things won't happen again while I'm governor. We are turning the page."

Ethnic cleansing barely caused a stir beyond Shaba, but then the governor went too far even for Mobutu. He declared secession. The president placed him under house arrest.

This week Kyungu returns as governor declaring that secession is off the agenda. "We can't even think of it. The world won't accept Katangan independence. We've had three wars over this and if we try it, we'll have another war. We have to talk about autonomy. With federalism, we can get everything we can get from independence."

Kyungu may be right, for now. The failure of Shaba's people to grasp the present opportunity to declare an independent Katanga when the central government is in no position to prevent it suggests that the desire for secession has weakened.

But if Mobutu's successors treat Shaba as dismissively as the ailing president, Kyungu's old battle cry of independence could find new voice.

M+G 4-10/4/97

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Zairian peace talks kick off behind closed doors

ST 6/4/97

AFTER exchanging handshakes at the official opening of peace talks at the Union Buildings in Pretoria yesterday, representatives of Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Laurent Kabila left to continue private discussions at an undisclosed venue, write CAROL PATON and CRAIG DOONAN.

South Africa's Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, and UN special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun will mediate between the two sides. The Zairian government's negotiating team will be led by the foreign minister, Kamanda wa Kamanda, and the rebels by Bizima Karaha.

Kabila's popularity is growing daily and, while his soldiers may be more than 1 000km from Kinshasa, he is becoming the only hope for residents weary of three decades of corrupt rule, rocketing inflation and poverty.

Mobutu has lost more than a quarter of Zaire to the rebels, who reportedly captured Mbuji-Mayi, the diamond-rich Kasai provincial capital, this week and are assured of victory in the country's second largest city, Lubumbashi.

● See Pages 4 and 5

Zairian rebel leader says he's ready to deal

Star 7/4/97 (368)

SAPA-AFP AND STAFF REPORTER

The secret peace talks in South Africa between the Zairian government and guerrilla forces which control a third of the country have been set at odds by rebel leader Laurent Kabila's statement yesterday that he would talk directly to President Mobutu if the dictator is ready to step down.

The secret talks near Pretoria continued until midnight on the third day of negotiations about a possible ceasefire in the rebel offensive that began in October.

The rebel Voice of the People radio station in Goma, eastern Zaire, meanwhile declared that the cobalt and copper mining hub of Lubumbashi, in the south-east, would be captured within hours.

It gave no indication as to where rebel lines were, but Kabila on Friday had boldly predicted that Lubumbashi – Zaire's second city after the capital Kinshasa – would fall on Monday.

Having refused in the past to speak with Mobutu, Kabila told Belgium's RTBF network by telephone that he now was ready to talk with the man he ultimately wants to depose.

"I have always said that he must talk (about the crisis) directly and not through intermediaries, least of all international organisations which will delay negotiations endlessly to nobody's benefit," he said.

But he insisted that Mobutu – who took power in 1965 and has undergone prostate cancer treatment in Europe in recent months – must resign.

"I think Mobutu himself knows that his resignation is necessary in the interest of the country, which is also mine," he said. "He does not have a programme to rebuild the country."

Mobutu earlier described Kabila as a "patriot" and urged him to pursue peace talks, in a remarkably conciliatory interview.

► **Report and picture** *Page 4*

Zaire's rebels push on despite peace talks in SA

(358)

BD 7/4/97

LUBUMBASHI — Rebels pushed on with their drive into Zaire's southern economic heartland yesterday, ignoring the start of peace talks in SA.

Fresh from capturing diamond capital Mbuji-Mayi, the rebels drove south to tighten the noose around Zaire's second-largest city, Lubumbashi, in the copperbelt. Expatriates said rebel leader Laurent Kabila's forces had taken the small town of Tenke, site of what is planned to be the world's biggest copper and cobalt mine, about 200km northwest of Lubumbashi.

Canada's Consolidated Eurocan Ventures agreed in December to buy 55% of the Tenke-Fungurume concession from state-owned Gecamines. The project was set to be the biggest foreign investment in Zaire in two decades.

Traders in nearby Kolwezi, where Belgian expatriates were massacred in a 1978 secessionist rebellion, said Zairean soldiers based in the town were nowhere to be seen. Rebels were also at Ksenga, on Zambia's border, about 220km from Lubumbashi.

People in Lubumbashi said they were praying that the peace talks would not slow Kabila down.

SA foreign affairs spokesman Pieter Swanepoel declined to reveal anything about the substance of the negotiations and would not say whether they would continue today.

Mbuji-Mayi, 1 000km from Lubumbashi, was looted by Zairean troops who stole vehicles and drove off on Friday with their booty towards Kananga.

Kabila said officials from Anglo American, which owned the diamond mines in the Mbuji-Mayi area, were in Goma on Saturday to discuss plans and renegotiate contracts. Rebels who took the town at the weekend were restoring order and consolidating control yesterday, urging people to work normally today, mining sources said.

Shaba province governor, Kyungu wa Kumwanza said at a mass rally in the city on Saturday that his priority was to avert bloodshed.

"We want liberty for all." He warned that looting would not be tolerated.

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Zaire

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"Anyone seen carrying a television away on his head will go to meet the Lord with that television," he said.

Meanwhile, UN officials started organising an airlift of up to 100 000 Rwandan Hutu refugees stranded in Zaire's jungle after Kabila granted permission. Earlier the rebels insisted that refugees — camped along a railroad south of Kisangani and reportedly dying at the rate of 120 a day — had to be repatriated by road. However, the roads are virtually impassable.

US, Belgian, French and British forces are in Brazzaville, Congo, across the Zaire River from Zaire's capital of Kinshasa, in case western civilians need to be evacuated from Zaire.

The rebels are not convinced the foreign troops are there merely to evacuate civilians. Kabila objected yesterday, calling them a threat to the country's integrity. "They don't recognise the sovereignty of our people," he said. — Reuter, Sapa-AP.

Picture: Page 10

Big welcome for Kabila in Mbuji-Mayi

BD 8/4/97

MBUJI-MAYI — Rebel leader Laurent Kabila arrived victorious in Zairean diamond capital Mbuji-Mayi yesterday with the prospect of mining wealth to finance his war against President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Residents turned out at the airport to greet Kabila, who flew in from Goma. Hundreds on the streets shouted support as he drove into the city.

Kevin O'Grady reports peace talks between Zairean government and rebel delegations entered their second full day with Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's participation yesterday.

Foreign affairs spokesman Pieter Swanepoel said the talks at a secret venue near Pretoria were of "an informal nature", unlike the "structured" discussions on Sunday.

He said United Nations and Organisation for African Unity envoy Mohamed Sahnoun and Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad also took part in the talks.

Swanepoel would not comment on whether the imminent capture by rebels of Lubumbashi had given a sense of urgency to discussions, saying it was up to the delegations to comment on the situation in their country.

David McKay reports that De Beers representatives met Kabila at the weekend. He "noted the group's inquiries" about the security of its offices in Zaire. A spokesman said yesterday that the two sides met to discuss concerns relating to the protection of equipment and facilities in the areas now controlled by the rebels. This included Kisangani and Mbuji-Mayi.

De Beers has a contract to buy the production of the Miba mine at Mbuji-Mayi, which is 80% held by the Zairean government. Sibeka of Belgium, in which De Beers has a 20% holding, owns the balance of the mine.

The De Beers spokesman said company staff had been withdrawn from Kisangani last year and from Mbuji-Mayi earlier this year.

Analysts were unfazed by reports that rebels were gaining control of the southern province of Shaba, where most of Zaire's important mining assets are located. "Kabila has outlined his commitment to fostering mining developments in Zaire," one said.

Zaire has become important to the international ambitions of several SA mining companies, including Anglo American, Gencor and Iscor, which have recently submitted new bids to develop mining operations there.

Meanwhile, Zaire's Gecamines mining company closed its headquarters in Lubumbashi yesterday as rebels took

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the town of Kipushi 30 km away, witnesses said.

Officials at Sizarail, a Belgian-SA consortium that runs the railway in the area, said its offices were also closed until further notice.

Lubumbashi appeared to be on the brink of capture after army commanders ordered government troops to lay down their arms and said rebel forces were welcome to move in.

The order was broadcast over a radio station.

In Lubumbashi, schools closed early and the streets emptied as news spread of the rebel advance.

In Kinshasa, soldiers violently dispersed a march when a crowd gathered outside the home of Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi, an opposition figure who faces ousting less than a week after taking office. Soldiers rushed in as the crowd of about 3 500 marched towards the parliament to show support for Tshisekedi. Marchers fled, chased by troops firing teargas. — Sapa-AP-AFP, Reuter.

Picture: Page 3

REBELS CLOSE IN ON SHABA CAPITAL

Zairian troops switch sides

CT 8/9/97 (3/8)

LUBUMBASHI: As rebels close in on the city, government troops sent to defend it are changing sides, and prominent citizens favoured by the Mobutu regime are fleeing to Zambia.

MORTAR fire exploded yesterday on the southern approaches to Zaire's second city, Lubumbashi, which has been declared the next main target by rebels.

Residents said they suspected the firing was from Mr Laurent Kabila's rebels, who were closing in on the copper mining capital. Earlier in the day a Zaire government army commander said the rebels were about 15km from the city.

In Kinshasa defence ministry sources said Zaire's Special Presidential Service forces (DSP) had been sent to push back rebels from Kipushi, 30km south-west of Lubumbashi.

It was not clear if the firing had anything to do with their reported intervention.

Earlier in the day, fear gripped Lubumbashi amid reports that rebels had taken Kipushi, which is on the Zambian border.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Zairian government troops changed sides yesterday and donned white headbands to signal their allegiance to rebels closing in on Lubumbashi.

As they did so, unrest grew in Kinshasa, with factions of President Mobutu's government squabbling over who should wield what remains of its power.

Soldiers at several barracks in and around Lubumbashi switched sides after men, believed to have been fellow government soldiers, broadcast appeals on the local radio station urging them to lay down their arms.

In a further sign that Zaire's rebellion is taking the form of a revolution against President Mobutu, the Lubumbashi-based governor of Shaba province repeated his plea that the army should not allow "bloodshed or looting".

Mr Kyungu wa Kumwanza was appointed governor by Mobutu only a fortnight ago. Mobutu hoped Kyungu would put backbone into his army after it retreated from a third of Zaire without a fight.

Since taking office the governor, a former secessionist, has dropped demands for an independent Shaba and sought to reserve a position for himself in a rebel administration by insisting that he looks forward to working with Kabila.

In Lubumbashi, while groups of soldiers milled about discussing which side to join, businessmen shut their shops and rich Zairians close to the Mobutu regime continued to leave for the "safety" of neighbouring Zambia. — Reuter, The Times

De Beers talks to Kabila about safety of its staff

JOHANNESBURG: South African diamond mining giant De Beers, which controls the world diamond market, held talks with Zairian rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila at the weekend.

The company said yesterday its representatives had discussed the protection of its staff and facilities in the areas now controlled by Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL).

De Beers has trading offices in Zaire's diamond capital, Mbuji-Mayi, and an office in Kisangani, both of which are controlled by AFDL rebels.

Most of the eastern half of the mineral-rich Central African country is in the hands of Kabila's fighters.

Analysts said the De Beers talks were a further sign that Mobutu's government had become irrelevant.

De Beers has a contract to buy the production of the La Miniere de Bakwanga mine at Mbuji-Mayi, which is 80% owned by Mobutu's government.

The remaining 20% is owned by Sibeka, a Belgian company in which De Beers has a 20% stake. — Reuter

Demos try to stall MPs' bid to oust new PM

KINSHASA: Supporters of Zairian Prime Minister Mr Etienne Tshisekedi broke through cordons of troops who tried to halt a march on parliament, where an attempt was to be made yesterday to oust the controversial politician.

Several thousand protesters set up burning barricades in the streets of the capital's shantytowns.

Paramilitary gendarmes used armoured vehicles and teargas to disperse more than 1 000 protesters — one of several groups trying to stop the session of parliament.

Smaller groups advanced on the parliament building from different directions. Armoured vehicles, circling the building, homed in on small crowds and drove them back — but the protesters surged forward again.

They were joined by trucks of protesters carrying palm leaves and chanting support for Tshisekedi.

Nearby, on the 24th of November Avenue, protesters blocked traffic with barricades of burning tyres.

Some gendarmes ordered to disperse the crowds visibly dragged their feet. "We, too, support the prime minister," said one. "We do not want him to be toppled."

Earlier, soldiers prevented lawmakers from entering parliament. It was not clear if this was also a gesture of support for the prime minister.

Tshisekedi, a radical politician and President Mobutu Sese Seko's chief political rival, was appointed last week. However, parliament has initiated moves to remove him because of his unilateral decision to dissolve the assembly.

Parliament — including the opposition bloc that returned him to the job from which he was sacked four years ago — planned to use its opening session to start procedures to remove him. — Reuter

Breakthrough in talks on Zaire crisis

Bonile Ngqiyaza

ZAIRE's warring parties reached agreement in Pretoria late yesterday on five key points aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the country's crisis while the rebels, led by Laurent Kabila, continued to move in on the southern city of Lubumbashi.

The breakthrough followed four days of secret talks, conducted mostly at a secret venue outside Pretoria.

The parties will return to Zaire soon to report the details of the agreement to their principals. They said at a news briefing there were different points of view on the nature and source of the crisis, but agreed on the need to address as a matter of urgency issues of political structures and governance.

The factions agreed on negotiations to resolve the conflict, for a complete cessation of hostilities and the implementation of unspecified measures consistent with the United Nations/Organisation of African Unity peace plan.

They expressed a need for fundamental and democratic change in Zaire and a process of transition leading to a "transparent, fair and inclusive" elections organised and supervised by an independent body and monitored by the international community.

The feuding groups expressed a shared commitment to the principles of territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and the unity and sovereignty of Zaire.

At the briefing, where both camps declined to be questioned, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said the delegations had shown a commitment and willingness to tackle in-depth discussion of issues in a process which would hopefully lead to an end to hostilities.

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The talks were led by UN envoy in Zaire, Mohamed Sahnoun, and Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad.

Reuter reports Zairean troops said they had driven back a rebel advance on the copper city of Lubumbashi, which was rocked by explosions overnight. "We have repulsed the enemy," said an officer from President Mobutu Sese Seko's presidential guard, the only part of the army that seems ready to fight. There was no independent confirmation of this.

Meanwhile, Zaire's parliament was shut for a second day as militant supporters of Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi disrupted legislators' plans to remove him. "No MPs dared show up this morning," state radio reported.

Parliament is due to consider the dismissal of Tshisekedi, who has built up huge popular support for his years of tough opposition to Mobutu. Tshisekedi alienated Mobutu's allies and his own opposition backers by excluding all but his most loyal followers from a cabinet he announced last week. The opposition alliance that helped return him to the job ganged up with rivals to unseat him. But Tshisekedi's fanatical supporters moved to pre-empt a parliamentary vote against him, battling troops and frightening off MPs. Meanwhile, Tenke Mining Corp president Ted Webb said rebels swept past the rich Tenke Fungurume copper-cobalt property yesterday, but work continued. Tenke is pressing ahead with plans to develop a $1,3bn copper and cobalt mine at the site in Shaba province.

At a 600% inflation rate, even the beggars have become millionaires

Zaire's monetary regime falls to the people

(358) CT(BR) 9/4/97

FROM THE ECONOMIST

Kinshasa — In Zaire even the beggars are millionaires. Inflation, about .600 percent last year, has reduced the official exchange rate from three new zaires to the dollar in 1993, when it was introduced, to 162 000 last week.

The commonest note, the 10 000, is worth just 6,2c. Or rather, it would be — except that people in Zaire, fed up with inflation, have taken the money supply into their own hands.

Monetary policy-making begins, appropriately enough, on Wall Street, near the American embassy in Kinshasa.

No one outside the country wants zaires, and most Zaireans try to change them for dollars as fast as possible.

With the banking system in virtual collapse, the value of the zaire is determined by women sitting on stools on the pavement with bundles of zaires on tables in front of them and rolls of foreign currency secreted in their voluminous robes.

Their power is daunting. In January the government introduced 1 million, 500 000, and 100 000 zaire notes as a quick way to make up months of back pay due to public servants. The market women initially refused to accept them, brutally dubbing them "prostates" since their emergence coincided with President Mobutu Sese Seko's operation for prostate cancer.

Now, prostates do trade on Wall Street — but at a miserable rate of 340 000 zaires to the dollar.

Government cheques are discounted to about 600 000 zaires to the dollar. Wall Street's obstinacy has worked wonders for Kinshasa's economy.

With the supply of smaller-denomination banknotes limited and the newer large-denomination notes little-used, inflation in the capital has been held this year to about 5 percent a month.

But the reach of the market women extends only so far. Those million-zaire notes they scoff at trade in Lubumbashi, the capital of Shaba province, at only 300 000 to the dollar.

This, of course, has created opportunities for arbitrage. Money traders snap up unwanted prostates in Kinshasa, fly them to Lubumbashi and trade them for the smaller-denomination notes wanted in the capital.

Even airline seats, though, are scarce in Zaire. The traders simply cannot move enough banknotes around to equalise the exchange rate.

Neither prostates nor the smaller 10 000 new zaire notes will get you far in the diamond-rich province of East Kasai. Here, traders prefer old zaires.

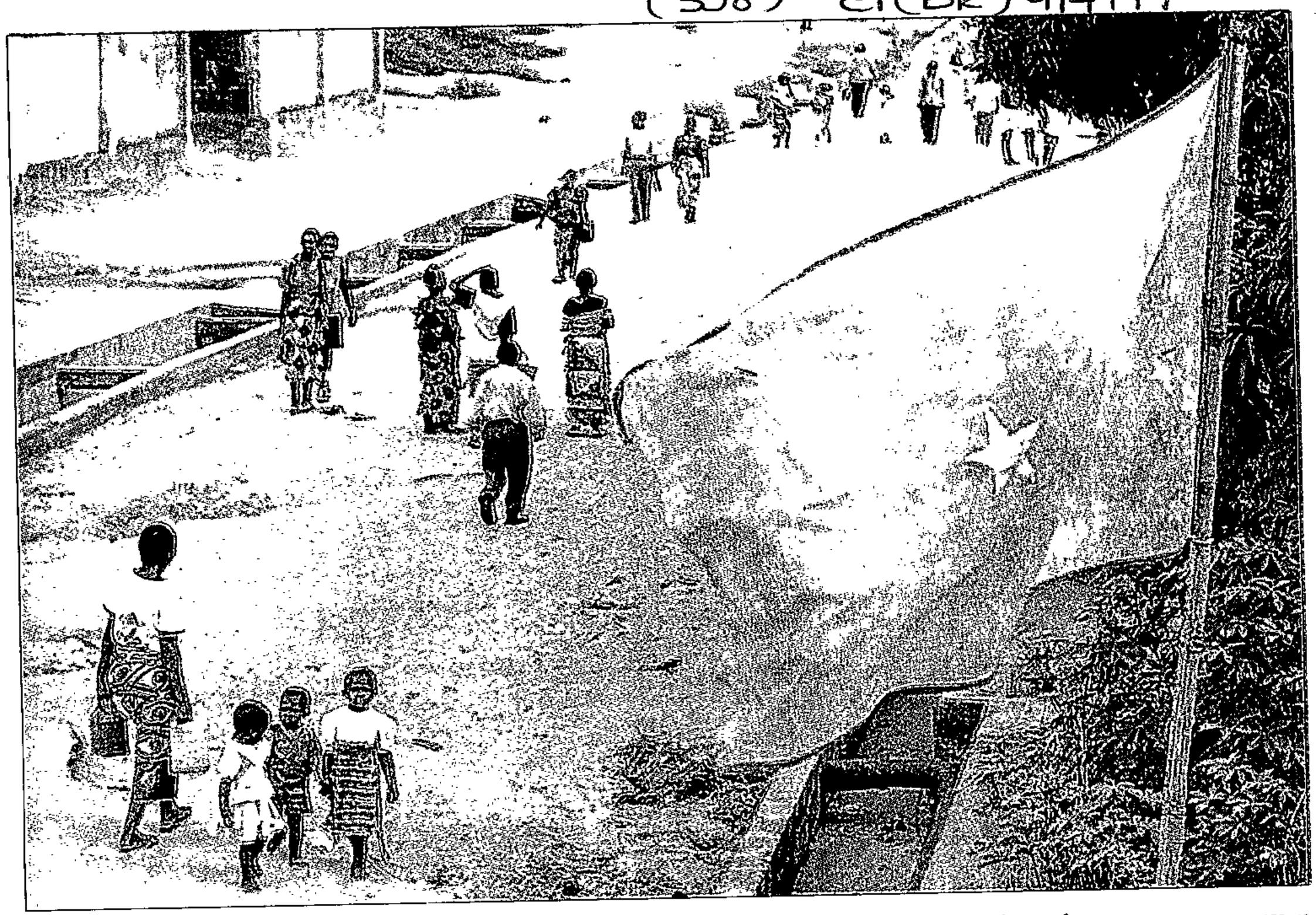
The reason is simple enough: an abandoned currency should not experience inflation. Mysteriously, though, as grubby old notes wear out, new ones appear. Some say they are old stocks kept by banks.

Others claim that new old zaires are being printed in South America. Whatever the case, old zaires trade at 16 million to the dollar in East Kasai and do not trade at all in Kinshasa or Lubumbashi.

If the rebels who have conquered eastern Zaire succeed in toppling Mobutu's government, one of their first tasks will be to introduce yet another currency.

This is certain to be tumultuous, because imposing a single exchange rate across the entire country will bring overnight price drops in some places and huge rises in others.

A new currency will surely displease Kinshasa's market women as well and reaffirm the old suspicion that the biggest obstacle to Africa's economic advance is Wall Street.



POOR MILLIONAIRES *Zaire's feeble exchange rate means the man in the street remains poor despite an abundance of money* PHOTO AP

Mobutu and rebel Kabila must meet, sides agree

Congo invites them to talk in Point Noire

(358)

ARG 9/4/97

Pretoria – Representatives of Zaire's warring factions have agreed on the need for a meeting between embattled Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel chief Laurent Kabila, UN envoy Mohammed Sahnoun said today.

"We have agreed on the necessity of a meeting," said Mr Sahnoun, who also represents the Organisation of African Unity.

Without giving details, Mr Sahnoun added that "consultations continue regarding a future meeting."

The Zairian delegations, led by Kinshasa Foreign Minister Gerard Kamanda wa Kamanda and rebel envoy Bizima Karaha, remained in South Africa today after adjourning talks in Pretoria yesterday.

Mr Sahnoun said post-talks "consultations" were continuing, but declined to elaborate.

A senior diplomat, who asked not to be named, said a Mobutu-Kabila meeting could take place within "48 hours or a week", but that the venue for such an encounter would depend partly on the ailing health of Mr Mobutu, who underwent cancer treatment in France this year.

Political "preparations" for such a meeting would also have to be made, the diplomat added.

The delegates agreed yesterday on the need for a ceasefire and further talks, but stopped short of ending hostilities.

Yesterday Congolese President Pascal Lissouba invited Mobutu and Kabila to use the city of Point Noire for peace talks.

"Congo offers freely to Marshall Mobutu and Mr Kabila its superb and peaceful city of Point Noire as a venue for these delicate but life-saving negotiations," he said at the opening of an economic summit of heads of state and government leaders of several African nations.

Mr Lissouba also praised what he said was the Zairian government's willingness to negotiate with the rebels, who have taken control of a third of the country during a six-month civil war. He did not suggest a date for the talks. – Sapa-AFP

Mobutu declares state of emergency as Zaire rebel advance continues

Star 9/4/97 (368)

Kinshasa – Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko yesterday decreed a nationwide state of emergency amid unrest in the capital and with rebels controlling the eastern third of the country.

The state of emergency was apparently designed to stop demonstrations planned today by supporters of Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi, who are expected to accompany him on a symbolic walk to the prime minister's office to begin the work of government, sources close to the government said.

Mobutu also named five military governors for provinces not occupied by rebels – Bandundu, Lower-Zaire, Equateur, western Kasai and Kinshasa. The province of Shaba/Katanga, threatened by rebels, remains for the moment under a civilian governor.

The rebels control almost the entire eastern half of Zaire, the five provinces of North and South Kivu, Upper Zaire, Maniema and eastern Kasai.

Rebels were attacking the country's second city Lubumbashi in Shaba in the southeast but government forces, for the first time in the six-month civil war, were resisting, according to reports.

Pro-Tshisekedi supporters have planned massive demonstrations for today to protest an expected attempt by parliament to fire him for declaring Mobutu's regime illegitimate, soon after being appointed last week.

Zairian journalist Michel Ladi Luya told AFP that Mobutu had acted since the demonstrators in Kinshasa were in fact creating a second front, in addition to the one against the rebels.

Mobutu acted "to show that his regime does not intend to be buried alive," Ladi Luya said. "The creation of two fronts risks being fatal for the regime."

Pro-Tshisekedi protests on Monday degenerated into street battles that forced parliament to cancel a session at which it was expected to fire Tshisekedi, and yesterday an MP was wounded and an assistant of the deputy Speaker attacked.

The rebels' six-month sweep through Zaire shows no sign of slowing. Rebel leader Laurent Kabila told crowds in Mbuji-Mayi, Zaire's diamond mining centre, that his troops were 260km northeast of the capital, Kinshasa, near the city of Bandundu. He said they would press on and finally oust Mobutu, the country's dictator for almost 32 years.

But a government spokesman denied the rebels were anywhere near Bandundu, calling the report an attempt to manipulate the media. Speaking later to reporters, Kabila said rebel troops had encountered stiff opposition from Mobutu's Presidential Guards in Lubumbashi, "however, the soldiers will be defeated. There is no doubt about that".

"Everyone is afraid. Everyone is staying in their homes," said Dr Makwenge Kaput of Lubumbashi, reached by telephone from Kinshasa. He said the sounds of fighting had been increasing near Lubumbashi since Monday.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, who organised the first face-to-face meeting between the enemies in South Africa, said after the talks the "timing and modalities" of a ceasefire had been discussed but no specific agreement had been reached.

The two delegations would now return to their principals for further discussions. The UN and OAU special envoy Mahomed Sahnoun and Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad – who co-chaired the talks with Sahnoun – would continue to talk to all the main players.

Mbeki, who played an active role in the negotiations held at a secret venue in South Africa, said he believed a spirit of mutual trust was developing between the two sides. – Sapa-AFP.

Mobutu battles to regain political control as rebels seize

BD 10/4/97

Lubumbashi

KINSHASA — Zairean rebels seized the country's second largest city, Lubumbashi, yesterday as President Mobutu Sese Seko sought to regain control of the political chaos in Kinshasa by naming a military chief as premier.

Rebel radio in Goma said Lubumbashi, capital of the mineral-rich Shaba province in southeastern Zaire, fell to the forces of Laurent Kabila "despite the apparent resistance of the presidential security division backed by Belgian mercenaries".

There was no immediate reaction to the report in Kinshasa, where Mobutu fought to reassert his waning authority by dumping prime minister-designate Etienne Tshisekedi and installing former defence minister Gen Likulia Bolongo in his place.

The move came the day after Mobutu imposed a state of emergency in an apparent bid to stifle a planned pro-Tshisekedi march.

In Washington, White House spokesman Michael McCurry said Mobutu was "about to become a creature of history".

Paris, which has backed Mobutu as a key figure in its Africa policy, gave a muted response to the developments, with a foreign ministry spokesman saying France "does not recognise governments but states".

Tshisekedi, the long-time opposition leader who is immensely popular in Kinshasa, was arrested by security forces as he tried to enter the premier's office to begin running his government.

About 10 000 supporters who had rallied outside his house to accompany him to his offices were charged by soldiers, who used teargas to disperse them. Tshisekedi was later released and escorted to his home by Mobutu's son, Kongolo Mobutu, said an aide of Likulia.

After Tshisekedi's release, his closest aide, Joseph Mukendi, said the "legal government" formed by Tshisekedi last week would "continue its work".

The capital remained tense late yesterday, and several journalists were attacked by army troops as they observed skirmishes between police and demonstrators.

In Lubumbashi, residents cheered as the rebels — who have seized more than a third of the country — moved into the city, where the governor of Shaba province, Kyungu ku Mwanza, was seen driving around with a white flag in his hand.

Fighting could be heard for much of the day, particularly to the north where the airport is located.

The fall of the city, a strategic cross-

Continued on Page 2

Zaire

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roads to southern Africa, would give rebels control of the vast majority of Zaire's mineral wealth. Last week they gained control of important diamond mining centre Mbuji-Mayi.

In Geneva, a spokesman for United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan said Annan did not believe the rebels would achieve a military victory in Zaire, despite their rapid advances. "Taking eastern Zaire is one thing, taking western Zaire, the balance of Zaire, is something else in terms of the ethnic composition in Zaire, and in terms of the extension of lines of supply."

□ SA iron and steel company Iscor said Zaire's political and economic situation could improve dramatically and that the company's present interest in Zaire was a long-term investment.

Iscor reached a co-operation agreement with Zaire's state mining company, Gecamines, in February, winning the right to complete a feasibility study for the rehabilitation of the Kamato copper/cobalt mine in Shaba province.

"We believe that the Zairean nation's current fluid political and economic status has great potential for improvement and we view our relationships as a long-term investment."

Stockbrokers Investec Securities said production and exploration in Zaire had largely remained normal despite the rebels' advance.

"Mining companies already operating in Zaire are watching events with much apprehension but should remain confident that a ratification of their existing positions can be concluded with the rebel leaders," Investec said. — Sapa-AFP, Reuter.

Picture: Page 5
See Page 6

Mobutu battles to regain political control as rebels seize Lubumbashi

BD 10/4/97

KINSHASA — Zairean rebels seized the country's second largest city, Lubumbashi, yesterday as President Mobutu Sese Seko sought to regain control of the political chaos in Kinshasa by naming a military chief as premier.

Rebel radio in Goma said Lubumbashi, capital of the mineral-rich Shaba province in southeastern Zaire, fell to the forces of Laurent Kabila "despite the apparent resistance of the presidential security division backed by Belgian mercenaries".

There was no immediate reaction to the report in Kinshasa, where Mobutu fought to reassert his waning authority by dumping prime minister-designate Etienne Tshisekedi and installing former defence minister Gen Likulia Bolongo in his place.

The move came the day after Mobutu imposed a state of emergency in an apparent bid to stifle a planned pro-Tshisekedi march.

In Washington, White House spokesman Michael McCurry said Mobutu was "about to become a creature of history".

Paris, which has backed Mobutu as a key figure in its Africa policy, gave a muted response to the developments, with a foreign ministry spokesman saying France "does not recognise governments but states".

Tshisekedi, the long-time opposition leader who is immensely popular in Kinshasa, was arrested by security forces as he tried to enter the premier's office to begin running his government.

About 10 000 supporters who had rallied outside his house to accompany him to his offices were charged by soldiers, who used teargas to disperse them. Tshisekedi was later released and escorted to his home by Mobutu's son, Kongolo Mobutu, said an aide of Likulia.

After Tshisekedi's release, his closest aide, Joseph Mukendi, said the "legal government" formed by Tshisekedi last week would "continue its work".

The capital remained tense late yesterday, and several journalists were attacked by army troops as they observed skirmishes between police and demonstrators.

In Lubumbashi, residents cheered as the rebels — who have seized more than a third of the country — moved into the city, where the governor of Shaba province, Kyungu ku Mwanza, was seen driving around with a white flag in his hand.

Fighting could be heard for much of the day, particularly to the north where the airport is located.

The fall of the city, a strategic cross-

Continued on Page 2

Zaire

(358)

Continued from Page 1

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Picture: Page 5
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Rebels capture Lubumbashi railhead

Spoornet a casualty in Zaire's war

378

CT (BDR) 10/4/97

AUDREY SEKWAKWA

Johannesburg — Spoornet, South Africa's state-owned railway company, was losing more than R500 000 a month on its operations in Zaire because of the civil war, Friedel Mulke, the managing director of Comazar, a subsidiary of Spoornet, said yesterday.

Spoornet has operating contracts over sections of Zaire's railway system, much of which is now under rebel control.

Mulke said Spoornet was still operating its locomotives a few days a week in Zaire and would be able to recoup the losses, which he said were "not a lot".

Sizarail, a Zairean railway company, was still using 120 Spoornet railway trucks with a loading capacity of 4 800 tons. Spoornet is the majority shareholder in Sizarail with a 51 percent stake held through Comazar, with Trans Urb, the Belgian railway company, holding 49 percent.

Sizarail was set up two years ago to manage and operate the Zairean southern and eastern rail networks. The railway's main route is between South Africa and Lubumbashi, the capital of the mineral-rich Shaba province in southern Zaire. Another route transports fish from Lake Tanganyike to the interior through the rebel-held territory of Kalemie.

Johan Hugo, a Spoornet spokesman, said yesterday that Zairean authorities had stopped Spoornet last Friday from transporting traffic from South Africa further north than Lubumbashi. Operations could also be affected by yesterday's capture of Lubumbashi by Laurent Kabila's rebels.

Mulke said the import traffic between Zaire and South Africa had decreased. He said the Zairean economy was totally depleted and economic activities had virtually halted.

He said Sizarail, which had been serving the Zairean economy "very well", had to put its business on the backburner until the situation stabilised.

He said Sizarail was losing about $1 million a month.

Mulke described the situation in Zaire as tense and said it was very important to restore the link between South Africa and Lubumbashi. Spoornet's employees in Lubumbashi were still in their offices and appeared not to be in danger. No damage to locomotives has yet been reported.

"The rebels in Lubumbashi must just finish their operation so that we can start operating with Sizarail again," he said.

The situation threatens to mirror events of 1993 in which Spoornet leased railway trucks to Zaire.

The trucks were found stranded in Zaire and stripped of everything usable. Most of them were retrieved in a project called Operation Rescue, when spare parts, fuel, locomotives and technicians were sent in to get them rolling again.

The locomotives and 120 wagons on hire in Zaire are serviced directly from South Africa.



Crackdown: followers of Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi flee after army units fired teargas to disperse a protest march in Kinshasa

Rebels mop up in final Lubumbashi skirmishes

Looting spree after second city falls

(368)

ARG 10/4/97

SAPA-AFP AND FOREIGN SERVICE

Lubumbashi – Rebels traded heavy and light arms fire today with pockets of Zairian troops in several areas of Lubumbashi, Zaire's second-largest city captured by the rebels yesterday, amid looting by residents.

Most of the city has been in rebel hands since last night but small areas of resistance remain, particularly around the airport 10 kilometres to the north.

Most government soldiers and troops of the elite Presidential Security Division (DSP), which put up unexpected resistance to the rebel advance, retreated to the airport when the rebels first entered the city from the south.

Residents began looting several businesses in the city centre last night and the plunder continued today. One resident said that "young people are driving past in vans full of stolen goods, shooting".

The residence of President Mobutu Sese Seko, which served as the DSP headquarters, was looted overnight.

The capture of Lubumbashi gives rebel forces control of the vast majority of Zaire's rich metal and mineral reserves and all its major cities except the capital, Kinshasa.

Yesterday the battle for control of Zaire erupted in the streets of Kinshasa as recently appointed Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi tried to take control of his office.

He was attacked by hundreds of government troops who fired teargas at him and beat him, his supporters and foreign journalists.

Security forces detained Mr Tshisekedi as he tried to enter the prime minister's office to take over the reins of his new government. He was later released.

Diplomatic sources said in South Africa today that negotiations to arrange the first direct meeting between Mr Mobutu and rebel leader Laurent-Desire Kabila to discuss a peace settlement were making progress.

They said that efforts to take up an offer by Congo President Pascal Lissouba to host peace talks in the city of Pointe Noire "seemed to be gaining momentum".

The talks would be under the chairmanship of United Nations and Organisation of African Unity special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun, who was co-chairman of peace talks between the warring sides in South Africa from Saturday to Tuesday this week.

Mr Sahnoun remained in South Africa after the talks and it is believed that some members of the two Zairian delegations also did and that consultations had continued.

Reuters reports that at his headquarters of Goma in eastern Zaire, Mr Kabila said today that after taking Lubumbashi he was proclaiming a three-day pause in his offensive to allow Mr Mobutu to quit.

"I am waiting for a little period of three days for Mobutu to make a decision to contact us to negotiate his departure," Mr Kabila said.

Asked whether he was declaring a ceasefire, he said: "No, a pause. I am not saying more. We hope that something big will happen within three days."

It was not clear today how Mr Kabila's three-day "pause" related to Mr Sahnoun's remark after the South African peace talks adjourned on Tuesday that a ceasefire was possible "very soon" depending on the military situation.

Some observers believe that the fall of Lubumbashi was a crucial phase in the war, creating an opening for a negotiated settlement.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in Geneva this week that he did not think that Mr Kabila's forces would be able to take the western half of Zaire, including the capital, as easliy as they had taken the eastern half. This likely stalemate might make him more amenable to a ceasefire and peaceful settlement.

At the same time the United States, once an ally of Mr Mobutu, has stepped up pressure on the president to resign to ease the transition to a new democratic dispensation in his country. White House and State Department spokesmen are now stating that the Mobutu era is "history".

It is understood that at the talks in South Africa this week, both sides directed their deliberations at the "post-Mobutu" era.

Rebels give Mobutu three days to resign

(358) Star 10/4/97

Prime minister Tshisekedi teargassed, beaten up, detained a[nd] given the sack as the president changes his mind and decides to place a general in charge

By Ross Herbert and SAPA
Kinshasa

President Mobutu Sese Seko dismissed new prime minister Etienne Tshisekedi as he was about to take office yesterday, and the president now faces a deadline by rebels who control the eastern third of the country to start talks on his resignation.

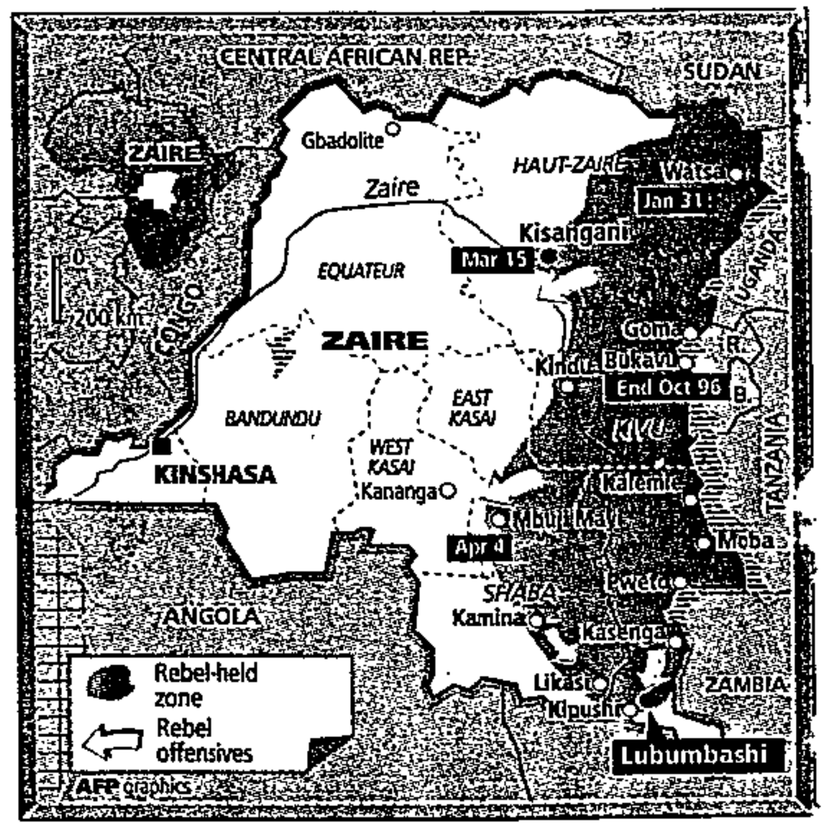
The rebels have taken over Lubumbashi, Zaire's second most important city, and rebel leader Laurent Kabila has announced "a slowdown of military operations" for three days while Mobutu considers his future.

On the same day, the battle for control of the whole country erupted on the streets of the capital. Tshisekedi, the opposition leader appointed prime minister by parliament eight days ago in defiance of Mobutu, tried to take control yesterday, but hundreds of soldiers attacked him. They fired teargas and assaulted him, thousands of his supporters, and journalists. Tshisekedi was detained, but later released.

Tshisekedi's appointment was intended to unify the population against rebel forces which were rapidly advancing in the east and now control almost half the country. His first move was to offer Kabila's rebels cabinet posts, which were rejected, and he announced that he would disband the largely pro-Mobutu parliament.

Mobutu responded last Tuesday by declaring a state of emergency and then appointed a military general yesterday to replace Tshisekedi.

Meanwhile, a relaxed Kabila said in Goma, his eastern stronghold, that Mobutu should make contact "directly" to open talks on ending his dictatorship.



Extra pressure on Mobutu came from Washington, which yesterday abandoned the man it counted on during the Cold War to help check Soviet and Chinese influence in Africa.

"We have suggested that the era of Mobutu in Zaire is over, because the status quo is no longer tenable given the dire conditions that exist for the people of Zaire. It's clear we have to move beyond Mr Mobutu," White House spokesman Michael McCurry said.

In Kinshasa, where Mobutu has rarely been seen since he returned home from prostrate cancer treatment in Europe, the latest man to be named prime minister, General Likulia Bolongo, said only a defeat at the ballot box would get Mobutu to stand aside. But he did not specify when elections would be held.

In Geneva, a spokesman for UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Annan did not believe the rebels would achieve a military victory in Zaire, despite their rapid advances.

"The military assessment has been that it most likely would not be possible for Kabila to win militarily," spokesman Fred Eckhard said. "Taking eastern Zaire is one thing. Taking western Zaire ... is something else, both in terms of the ethnic composition and the extension of lines of supply."

JACK DABAGHIAN / REUTERS



Street shambles ... Zairian prime minister Etienne Tshisekedi in distress from teargas as an army officer tries to lead him away for arrest before he was sacked.

Zairean rebels in control

358

Sowetan 11/4/97

LUBUMBASHI – Zairean rebels yesterday consolidated their control of the south-eastern city of Lubumbashi by seizing the airport without a shot being fired.

Sources said the guerillas took control of the airport at around 5pm, closing in on some 300 elite troops of the Presidential Security Division (DSP) holed out at the facility some 10km north of the city.

The DSP troops in Lubumbashi provided what little resistance the rebels met as they battled their way into Zaire's second largest city. The rebels have agreed to let some defeated army forces to fly out of Lubumbashi airport. Yesterday, the rebels controlled practically all of Lubumbashi, with occasional gunfire echoing around the city.

Earlier yesterday, rebel leader Laurent Kabila gave Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko an ultimatum to resign within three days and retreat to his home village.

Although fighting continued yesterday on the outskirts of Lubumbashi, Kabila declared a three-day "pause" in his military advance to await a call from the capital indicating whether Mobutu would resign.

"In three days, if we do not get good news from Kinshasa of his willingness to depart, then we will be forced to continue the military advance," Kabila told journalists at a news conference. The rebel leader, who has captured one-third of Zaire since September, said: "The loser is him if he doesn't take our advice."

The new prime minister appointed by Mobutu, General Likulia Bolongo, went to the presidential palace in Kinshasa yesterday to meet with Mobutu. Kinshasa is the only major city still under Mobutu's control.

The US has urged Mobutu (66) and ill with prostate cancer, to make way for a democratic government. White House spokesman Mike McCurry has called Mobutu's three-decade dictatorship "a creature of history". *Sapa-AFP.*

'We hope he burns in hell'

(358) M+G 11-17/4/97



Suddenly, everyone in Zaire's second-biggest city is cursing President Sese Seko Mobutu, reports **Chris McGreal** in Lubumbashi

REBELS seized Zaire's second-largest city, Lubumbashi, on Wednesday to be greeted by tumultuous applause as hordes of people welcomed them as liberators.

The fall of the city left President Mobutu Sese Seko scrambling to retain what is left of his crumbling power by imposing a *de facto* military government even as the United States went public with an extraordinarily open condemnation of their former close ally. "Mobutuism is about to become a creature of history," said White House spokesman Mike McCurry.

US support for the rebels has been an open secret for months, but this week the White House said bluntly that President Mobutu Sese Seko should leave power because support for him was insufficient to lead Zaire "into the next chapter of its history".

In what appeared a desperate last attempt to exert his authority Mobutu dismissed his old foe, Eti-



Staring defeat in the face: Beaten soldiers of Mobutu's army

PHOTOGRAPH: SACHA J

as if a huge burden had been lifted after the rising tensions of recent days as frightened government troops became increasingly abusive, beating up suspected rebel sympathisers and extorting money at gunpoint.

Food was hard to come by for poor residents. Almost no new deliveries came into the city, most shops were closed and the prices of what was available rose steeply.

Among those who welcomed the rebels was a group of Italian nuns looking after homeless teenage girls. They have been living in terror for days, fearing that undisciplined government troops would repeat the rapes and murders which have become a hallmark of their retreats elsewhere.

"We haven't slept properly in days. Every little noise in the night terifies us. We've heard the tales of the nuns who were raped by the army in the north. God knows what they will do to us. We just want this to be over," said Sister Maria.

After the fighting began, many government troops fled into the city centre and hijacked cars in the hope of making their escape. Senior officers could be seen fleeing towards the airport, about 6km miles away. But some government soldiers fought back. Rebel wounded were carried from the front-line which shifted rapidly around corners and down streets.

The rebels launched their assault after positioning troops on at least

on the same day the rebels took Lubumbashi — the very day he was to have taken office.

Earlier in the day security forces in Kinshasa fired in the air and used teargas against thousands of Tshisekedi supporters who turned out to accompany him to the prime minister's offices to instal his new government team. Security forces had blocked off the office complex with troops and armoured vehicles.

Tshisekedi, his eyes streaming from the teargas, had set off on foot for the offices surrounded by his supporters. Security forces fired in the air and fired teargas grenades after the crowd burst through an initial security cordon.

Witnesses said that Mobutu's son, Kongolo, a presidential guard officer known in Kinshasa as "Saddam Hussein" after the Iraqi leader, had escorted Tshisekedi back home. Tshisekedi was bleeding from a wound to the head, one aide said.

In his place, the president imposed a military man, the former defence minister General Likulia Bolongo. His appointment on the heels of a state of emergency which gave the army direct administration of those provinces still in government hands, may have been the military's condition for continuing to fight. But it is likely to prove a futile gesture.

With the fall of Lubumbashi, the regime retains real control of little more than Kinshasa and large areas of rainforest.

After several hours of artillery fire on Lubumbashi's outskirts, which cleared the city centre in a matter of minutes as residents scurried for their homes, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire launched its assault. Government forces did not put up significant resistance. One unit simply abandoned its barracks and ran. Gunfire continued through the day until the rebels had taken control of most of Lubumbashi.

As the rebels moved into the city, a single chant swept across Lubumbashi: "Kabila, Kabila", the name of the rebel leader, Laurent Kabila.

Most of the city was immensely relieved at the rebels' arrival, which residents had expected for days. Crowds of people took over the military headquarters to clap and whistle in support of the insurgents, even while fighting continued close by. Many tore strips of white cloth from sheets and rolled-up white towels to wrap around their heads to reaffirm their support for the rebels. In their enthusiasm, some young men jumped into the back of rebels' vehicles saying they would join the fight.

Suddenly everyone has always been against Mobutu. Suddenly everyone found the courage to denounce him. Sammy Toassa, sporting the obligatory makeshift headband, struggled to express his contempt.

'We don't ever want to think of Mobutu again. We hope he burns in hell, or worse. But what could be worse? Now we are liberated by our brother Kabila," he said.

Not everyone was so confident of the rebels. As they swung into sight, one elegantly dressed young woman ripped off her earrings and gold chain, saying she feared they would be stolen. Shortly afterwards the jewels were back in place and she was chatting happily to one of the insurgents dressed in a black beret, olive fatigues and Wellington boots.

The rebels did not have a lot to say but what they did revealed some to be Swahili-speaking Tutsis who have grown up in Tanzania or Uganda as exiles from Rwanda, reinforcing the evidence that Zaire's neighbours are backing the Alliance. The crowd did not care.

But while there was an immense relief at getting rid of a grim regime which for most Zaireans is the only one they have ever known, people looked mystified when asked what it is they expect from the rebels. Eventually someone chirped up their hopes for democracy. Another said jobs.

Appollos Mufunga got into the swing of things. "The people hope for better lives and freedom, and more money to spend. That's what they have in Goma and Bukavu and other places liberated by the rebels," he said.

Mufunga is mistaken. In many ways, life remains as hard in rebel-held areas as it always was and the Alliance has shown a streak as authoritarian as Mobutu's.

But in Lubumbashi this week it was the city after seizing the town of Likasi, two hours' drive north of Lubumbashi, and Kipushi, 30km to the south.

The main resistance was put up by Mobutu's personal regiment, the Special Presidential Division (DSP) which claimed to have beaten off the rebels just two days ago. But the DSP was increasingly isolated and nervous as units of the regular army went over to the rebels or refused to fight, and most of the city's civilian population openly sided with the Alliance.

The DSP was left with almost no means of escape other than the surrounding bush, where they are likely to be hunted down, or heading several hundred kilometres for the Angolan border.

Shortly before the rebel assault the army scrambled to boost its manpower by press-ganging young men into uniform. A forlorn bunch was lined up outside the military headquarters, but their reluctance to fight was obvious. When soldiers at a nearby road block opened fire after a car failed to stop, some of the conscripts took the opportunity to flee in the chaos.

M+G 11-17/4/97

[redacted]

Mobutu ignores rebels' ultimatum

KINSHASA — Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko, facing the greatest threat to his power in more than three decades of rule, failed to respond yesterday to a rebel ultimatum for him to negotiate his resignation.

Late on Wednesday, rebel leader Laurent Kabila, who now controls almost the whole eastern half of Zaire, gave Mobutu three days to contact him "with a view to negotiating his departure" from power.

Kabila issued the ultimatum from his eastern stronghold of Goma after his guerrillas added Lubumbashi to the territory captured in a steady advance launched six months ago.

But Mobutu seems to want to hang on. His new prime minister, Gen Likulia Bolongo, has ruled out any imminent departure for Mobutu, saying he would have to be voted out. He did not say when elections would be held.

The US and Belgium have both said recently that Mobutu's days as president are numbered.

SA Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad said: "Everybody is committed to the fact that there must be a fundamental change in Zaire and that despotic rule is no longer possible." Britain has also suggested that it is time for change.

Simon Barber reports Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said yesterday that SA would consider taking in Mobutu as part of a settlement to the Zairean conflict.

He was responding to a question from a reporter as he arrived in Washington at the start of a fleeting visit. His spokesman, Ricky Naidoo, stressed that Mbeki was not making a formal or considered offer.

"If (accepting Mobutu) was part of the process, we would obviously consider it," Naidoo said.

Mbeki is in Washington to address the annual conference of the US society of newspaper editors.

Naidoo said that SA had "put no proposals on the table" at talks in Pretoria between the Zairean government and the rebel alliance, and there was "no talk" of SA being involved in peacekeeping.

Rebels seized the airport at Lubumbashi yesterday as they mopped up the last pockets of resistance in Zaire's second largest city to a backdrop of sporadic gunfire and looting.

The guerrillas, who overran Lubumbashi on Wednesday, captured the airport without a shot being fired.

Mobutu's residences in Lubumbashi were plundered and shops and businesses were looted. — Sapa-AFP.

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Comment: Page 13

Rebels are lords of economic heartland

(358)

CT 11/4/97

LUBUMBASHI: Rebels took the airport here yesterday, winning the battle for Zaire's second city and making themselves lords of the country's economic heartland.

In a 90-minute gunfight, they sent the local remnants of President Mobutu Sese Seko's army running into the maize fields and bush around the airfield, some still armed, witnesses said.

"It was terrifying, I can't put my fear into words," said Ms Marie-Josephine, who huddled with others in a hangar through the fighting, in which her soldier husband chan-ged sides.

"Then the DSP (presidential guards) ran off. There were about 250 of them. I don't think many were killed."

The rout of the hated DSP ended the battle for the capital of Shaba province, whose mineral wealth helped fund three decades of Mobutu rule.

Casualties seemed low in the fight for control of the city. Missionaries said three rebel soldiers had been buried in a main cemetery. Hospitals reported only a handful of injured.

Doctors, however, said the mortuary had received the bodies of seven civilians, whom they were told the rebels had shot for looting.



CRACKDOWN: Zaire's new prime minister, General Likulia Bolongo

Mr Laurent Kabila's forces, welcomed as heroes and liberators in a wave of joy, slowly restored order in the city, but not before looters stripped military bases and houses of Mobutu officials of everything, including the kitchen sinks.

"This is not looting, this is taking back what they stole from us for so long," one man said.

Abandoned weapons and ammunition were carted off from Mobutu's own villa, used as a DSP base, into a city now awash with arms.

White flags and headbands, signs of support for Kabila, covered the city. Symbols of the 32-year Mobutu era that has now ended here were swiftly and angrily eradicated.

People hauled down a statue of a hand carrying a flame, the symbol of Mobutu's Popular Revolutionary Movement, scrawling "Mobutu is dead" on the bottom of the pedestal that lay in the road.

"Kabila is the new strong man of the Congo," read one slogan on a party monument, reverting to the old name of the country that the rebel alliance favours.

Portraits of Mobutu in his trademark leopardskin hat, once obligatory in offices, were torn up.

The battle for Lubumbashi began in earnest early on Wednesday, when rebels marched in to cheers of adulation from civilians and short-lived street resistance from the DSP.

The rest of the regular soldiers changed sides or changed clothes, dumping uniforms and melting into the million-strong population. A plane flew out military top brass in the night, but left the rest of the DSP stranded and encircled.

Turncoat officers urged their former comrades in arms in Kinshasa to give up the fight. "We saw we were defending a lost cause. I appeal to the military in Kinshasa especially, put down your arms, let the liberation take place in peace," said Colonel Nsau Nzuzi of the Zairian army's 21st Infantry Brigade.

Mobutu declared a nationwide state of emergency on Tuesday and appointed general Likulia Bolongo as prime minister in a last bid to assert his authority.

Bolongo, a former defence minister, went out of his way to rule out any thought of Mobutu stepping down and said his government would crack down on lawbreakers. — Sapa-Reuter

Major powers taken to task for their indifference to Zaire's tragic pligh

ARG 11/4/97

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London – The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says a lack of convergent views and interest among the major powers is to blame for failed attempts at humanitarian aid in Africa's Great Lakes region.

Sadako Ogata levelled harsh criticism at the leading UN member states when she addressed the Institute for Strategic Studies in London recently.

Her agency is responsible for nearly 40million people worldwide who have been displaced within their own countries or have become refugees elsewhere as a result of socio-political upheaval or persecution.

Describing the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, she said that with intensifying military action, Sarajevo in August 1995 showed that a people and their city could be saved when the major powers agreed to act. Determined political leadership both in Europe and across the Atlantic stepped in, out of compassion, but perhaps even more out of a shared political interest and halting tensions in the Atlantic alliance.

The combination of military enforcement and leadership delivered the push necessary to arrive at peace talks.

"As far as UNHCR is concerned, we are committed to make inter-ethnic (refugee) returns possible.

"But we need the close security involvement of Nato forces, targeted progress in reconstruction and concerted political political backing."

In terms of the UNHCR's close collaboration with the political and military actors, Rwanda and Zaire "have been rather painful", she said.

In fact, such a relationship had not materialised, except for the military help during the initial flight of 1,1 million Rwandan refugees to Zaire in the summer of 1994.

The exodus occurred during and after the genocide in Rwanda. Without the military airlift capacity and emergency help, the UNHCR would not have coped with the disastrous situation in Goma when thousands of people died.

However, the military assistance quickly pulled out, amid speculation about the possible revival of armed conflict between the ousted Hutu and new Tutsi leadership.

"There was no intention among major powers to use their military or to engage in intensive efforts to solve the complex political and ethnic problems in the region."

She said security in the refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania worsened rapidly. Under control of the former leadership, former Rwandan army and militias, refugee patriation was often violently obstructed.

In close consultation with the UNHCR, then secretary-general Bhoutros Bhoutros Ghali proposed various options to the Security Council to mobilise security support to halt the situation in the camps.

"The response was negative and nothing happened," recalls Ms Ogata. As a stopgap measure, the UNHCR then created a security contingent with the Zairian government recruiting Zairian soldiers and a small number of foreign security personnel, whose task it was to ensure a minimum of law and order in the Zaire camps.

The major powers deserted humanitarian agencies and then criticised them for protecting and feeding those who had committed genocide.

"Our dilemmas have been agonising, but as the large majority in the camps were innocent and needy civilians, did we have another choice?"

Ms Ogata said the failure of Zaire and of the international community to separate military elements from the refugees contributed to the spreading of insecurity and conflict.

The Rwandan militias in exile compounded inter-ethnic tension in eastern Zaire.

Worse still, she said, her agency was accused in December of exaggerating estimates of the remaining refugee population who had been chased and dispersed in the Zairian bush. "As in the case of Bosnia, effective humanitarian action suffered from a convergence of views and interests among the major powers."

Relieved Lubumbashi awaits Kabila

Star 12/4/97 (258)

By JEAN-PIERRE CAMPAGNE

Lubumbashi – Linda had to pinch herself to make sure the war was over.

For as she made her way through the morning-after mood hanging over Lubumbashi, through its debris-strewn streets and past its new rebel masters, it was difficult to believe that the tense anticipation of the past few weeks was finally over.

"It will finally be over when (Laurent-Desire) Kabila is here," she said, referring to the Zairean rebel leader, something of a hero for most citizens of Zaire's second city, which fell to Kabila's forces on Wednesday.

The relief in Lubumbashi was palpable yesterday morning, after the first calm night since residents realised weeks ago that the city would play host to a decisive battle between Kabila's buoyant rebels and the demoralised army of President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Pockets of locals gathered around in central Lubumbashi, admiring their most welcome guests: young rebel fighters bleary-eyed with fatigue but nonchalant in their black berets.

"These are our liberators," ventured one youth, in awe of the rebel detachments which overcame minimal resistance in a matter of hours.

The "liberators" were not making much of their latest success.

Some patrolled supermarkets to put paid to any lingering notions of pillage, another recurrent feature of Zaire's six-month war. Others stretched out on the grass for a well-earned rest, grateful no doubt for Kabila's promise that military activity would be scaled down for a while.

None of them spoke much, and when they did, it was with a Swahili dialect immediately traceable to the Kivu region of eastern Zaire, which gave birth to the rebellion in October last year.

The rebels drove out regular army soldiers and elite troops of the Presidential Security Division (DSP).

Sources said the DSP commander in Lubumbashi, Colonel Kinene, had been captured by the rebels after trying to flee the city with about R90 000.

"The colonel had a tough reputation," said one resident, adding that it was he who gave the order to point mortars at the city from the airport once it became clear the rebels would take the town.

Changes are beginning to show. The city's main radio station has already been renamed the Voice of Katanga in a reference to the old name for the mineral-rich province of which Lubumbashi is capital. Mobutu changed it to Shaba.

But for Linda and the other residents of Lubumbashi, cosmetic change will not be enough. They are waiting for Kabila's arrival and the resumption of normal life.

No shops are open in Lubumbashi, and virtually no one is working. Linda, an employee of the town-planning office, does not know when she will go back to work, nor who her new bosses will be. But whoever they are, she hopes they will pay her salary, which Mobutu's government has failed to do for months. – AFP

Zimbabwe said to have sold weapons to Kabila

Harare – Zimbabwe was reported yesterday to have sold weapons, uniforms and other military supplies to Zairean rebel leader Laurent-Desire Kabila, who is fighting to overthrow President Mobutu Sese Seko.

The claim was made in the *Zimbabwe Independent*, a weekly newspaper, which said it had it on good authority that consignments of war equipment had been transported to rebel-controlled areas in eastern Zaire. Zimbabwe has a small armaments factory on the outskirts of Harare, built by the Chinese.

Sources told the paper that the arms supplies should not be regarded as military help but as a commercial deal which entailed payments for the equipment.

President Mugabe's office said that before the Zimbabwean leader's role could be commented on, confirmation would have to come from the Defence Ministry. Defence Minister Moven Mahachi was said to be out of the country.

Earlier this month Kabila was reported to be planning a visit to Harare for talks with Mugabe, but no more has been heard of this. – Independent Foreign Service

Zaire braced for rebel push on Kinshasa

Reporters beaten up

ıbumbashi – Zairean troops beat and reatened to kill four foreign porters here before the city fell to bel forces who are now advancing on e capital Kinshasa.

Around 10 soldiers from the special esidential division (DSP) detained correondents from Reuters, the BBC and Lon-n's Guardian newspaper agency and a elance Belgian journalist.

The journalists – three men and a oman – said they were hit about the face d head. The soldiers then loaded a rifle d told them to say their last prayers cause they were about to die. The solers also stripped, beat and kicked a local anslator accompanying the journalists, cusing him of selling his country.

Intervention from the security police ılmed the situation, and after several ours the journalists and translator were lowed to go, minus car and cameras.

Meanwhile, Zairean rebels urged all forgners to leave Kinshasa, warning they ıuld not guarantee their safety if fighting me to the city.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila was quoted ı rebel radio as saying: "The ADFL will ıt be responsible for problems that may fect the foreigners who may be caught in ossfire."

Mr Kabila, leader of the Alliance of emocratic Forces for the Liberation of ongo Zaire (ADFL), gave President Mobu-ı Sese Seko three days starting Thursday step down during the rebel-declared lull ı fighting.

"If he does not use this last chance, the ghting will go on and will only end until ıe capture of Kinshasa," Kabila said on is Voice of the People radio. – Sapa-DPA



REUTER

Family ties: Kongolu Mobutu, son of embattled Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko, drives through a crowd of anti-government protesters in the capital Kinshasa

Mobutu's time is running out, fast

ARG 12/4/97 (308)

Kinshasa – Rebels pressing hard to end Mobutu Sese Seko's 32-year dictatorship have given him until tomorrow to resign or their troops will advance on the capital city.

The rebels control more than a third of the country, mostly in the east, and have encountered little resistance in their quest to topple the president. They claim to be ready to march on Kinshasa, if Mr Mobutu doesn't leave.

Meanwhile, an increasingly isolated Mr Mobutu – abandoned by such longtime supporters as the United States and Belgium – has turned to the military to salvage his long and corrosive rule.

Likulia Bolongo, an old army comrade of Mr Mobutu, wore his general's uniform and was saluted by his guards Thursday as he left his luxurious Kinshasa home for his first meeting with the president since being made premier.

Mr Bolongo presented his 25 new cabinet ministers this week for approval by Mr Mobutu. According to defence department spokesman Leon Kalima, 10 are loyal to ousted prime minister Leon Kengo wa Dondo.

Mr wa Dondo was Mr Mobutu's handpicked prime minister, but was blamed for the army's losses to eastern rebels, and Mr Mobutu was forced to sack him two weeks ago and replace him with the widely popular opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi.

Mr Bolongo replaces Mr Tshisekedi, whom Mobutu cronies blocked from taking his seat as premier on Wednesday. The move, coming after Mr Mobutu had given into domestic and international pressure and appointed Mr Tshisekedi, outraged the president's overseas allies.

"Mobutuism has no future, and now we have to see how to get to a transitional government," Belgian Foreign Minister Erik Derycke said in Brussels.

The United States called on Thursday for rebel-government negotiations on "interim arrangements for new constitutional authority in Zaire," said White House spokesman Michael McCurry.

But, a senior aide to Mr Tshisekedi promised further resistance and said the Tshisekedi administration – which considers itself Zaire's legitimate government – would seek to try Mr Mobutu for high treason.

Joseph Yaone said Mr Tshisekedi's path would continue to be non-violent. "We don't have to prove ourselves against barbarians," he said.

Mr Bolongo's convoy arrived at Mr Mobutu's heavily guarded palace, overlooking the rapids of the Zaire River.

The pomp recalled Mr Mobutu's rise to power in 1965, when the US and Zaire's former colonial masters in Belgium saw the eager and capable young colonel as the key to stabilising Zaire and thwarting Soviet expansion in the region. – Sapa-AP

Zaire mining group looks to SA, US partners

(358) ARG 12/4/97

Lubumbashi – Zaire's Gecamines, which closed its head offices in Lubumbashi earlier this week, fearing civil war would engulf the city, is to resume normal business on Monday and is looking for partners from South Africa or the United States.

"We'll start up again on Monday without fail. As you can see, there is not a single broken window," said Jean Nawej Yav, administration and payroll director of the state-owned copper and cobalt producer.

News of the office's closure in the face of advancing rebel troops underpinned a rise in the cobalt price to around $25 a pound in London this week. Zairean cobalt production of 5 000 tons a year accounts for roughly one-fifth of global supply.

The rebel forces of Laurent Kabila captured Lubumbashi, Zaire's second-largest city, with ease on Thursday.

The deputy governor of Shaba province, Donatien Mwitaba, said he was confident Gecamines, currently working at no more than 20 percent of capacity, could quickly be modernised with help from foreign partners.

Potential partners could come from South Africa or the United States.

"These are the countries which have the financial capacity to help us develop, and now we will have the political stability that these partners seek. There will be a rebirth of confidence."

Mr Mwitaba said Sizarail, a Belgian-South African consortium that runs the railway in the area, had also reopened.

Glint of fabulous wealth in 'heart of darkness' beckons

ST(DT) 13/4/97 (358)

JOSEPH CONRAD's character, Kurtz, found the "heart of darkness" in Zaire. A local trading companies calls Zaire "Cowboy Land", and several SA companies have burnt their fingers trying to do business there.

Yet Zaire is being discussed in the boardrooms of mining conglomerates around the world.

The spur is Zairean rebel leader Laurent Kabila's territorial advances, which have given him control over areas of great mineral wealth.

Even though Zaire's economy has been badly mismanaged, it is potentially one of Africa's richest countries.

Zaire's chronic political instability since independence in 1960 has sent many SA companies scurrying for cover.

For example, Credit Guarantee Insurance Corporation, which covers trade risk, has done no direct business with Zaire since notching up large losses almost 20 years ago.

The only deal Metro Cash & Carry has concluded since its store in Kinshasa, Zaire's capital, was burned and looted in riots in 1991 was the sale of the property a year ago.

Its parent company, the Premier Group, which sent in two jets to evacuate its staff from Zaire's copper capital Lubumbashi in 1991, now only trades with some of the city's larger wholesalers.

However, Zaire's huge latent potential has lured back some who burnt their fingers in the past. In the 1970s, "political pressures" forced Anglo American to walk away from the copper- and cobalt-rich Tenke Fungurume deposits despite a $268-million investment made by a consortium of which it was part.

While it has no personnel on the ground yet, Anglo has found premises for its Zairean office. It has also submitted tenders for two copper and cobalt projects: Kolwezi Tailings and Ruashi-Etoile.

State-owned railway company Spoornet suffered heavy losses in 1993 when the railway trucks it leased to Zaire were found stranded and stripped of everything usable.

Two years ago, however, it set up a venture to manage and operate Zaire's southern and eastern rail networks.

This week Spoornet said its Zairean operations were losing over R500 000 a month because of the civil war.

Following an embargo introduced last Friday by Zairean authorities, 37 of Spoornet's wagons loaded with SA commodities are standing idle in Andola, Zambia, 20km from the Zairean border. Another 24 wagons en route are also likely to meet the same fate.

SA exporters are feeling the heat too. Trading group Industrial Commodities, for example, says its sulphur exports, worth about $360 000 a month, have been on hold for the past six weeks. It made its last aid shipment of maize to Zaire two months ago.

Standard Bank, the only SA bank with a Zairean operation, reports a slowdown in its business there and says contingency plans are in place to evacuate its Kinshasa staff if the situation deteriorates.

There are also concerns that a $45-million timber and logging operation in Zaire's northwest Mai-Ndombe region — financed by Standard Corporate and Merchant Bank — could be delayed.

However, Engen, the second largest exporter of petroleum products into Zaire, reports no problems, mainly because its products are in such demand. This is possibly because of large military consumption.

SA businessmen are not openly cheering Kabila's advance, but judging from their comments they are not opposed to him.



ZILLA EFRAT
Looks at a country of dazzling potential

With the country's power base still split in half, most businessmen are keeping pretty tight-lipped. Little is known about Kabila, once a Marxist revolutionary who now believes in a market economy.

But some businessmen believe any change to the 32-year reign of president Mobutu Sese Seko, who is said to have amassed a private fortune of R24-billion, can only be good.

'Zaire is a virgin country. It's mineral wealth is probably spread across the country'

"Things cannot get worse than they were under him," says the head of a local trading company. Zaire's economy has been on the decline since the 1970s. It has a gross domestic product per capita of about $100 a year and an annual inflation rate of 300%.

Two years ago the World Bank closed its Kinshasa office, declaring Zaire insolvent.

Yet, in addition to having rich agricultural and oil resources, Zaire is Africa's biggest diamond producer in volume terms. Zaire was the continent's fifth-largest mineral producer in 1995 — a time, says BOE NatWest analyst Barry Sergeant, when mineral production had plummeted because of a failure to commercialise its mining industry. Gecamines, Zaire's copper and cobalt mining company which is headquartered in Lubumbashi (taken by rebel forces this week), produced half a million tons 20 years ago, but only 30 000 tons in 1995.

Zaire's cobalt production is now 25% of its 1974 peak, copper at 7% of 1980 levels and diamonds at 85% of the 1986 high.

Sergeant says: "Zaire is basically a virgin country. It is known to have deposits across the spectrum of minerals. While Shaba province is seen as the key mineral area, the mineral wealth is probably spread across the country.

"Western mining companies do not have to worry about exploration in Zaire. They know that its ore bodies have phenomenal potential."

Sergeant believes that at the first signs of a political turnaround, these companies will invest in Zaire. Many are already positioning themselves.

SA groups like Anglo, Gencor, Iscor, as well as internationals like Barrick Gold, American Mineral Fields, Broken Hill, Australia's BHP and Ashanti Goldfields, are known to be interested.

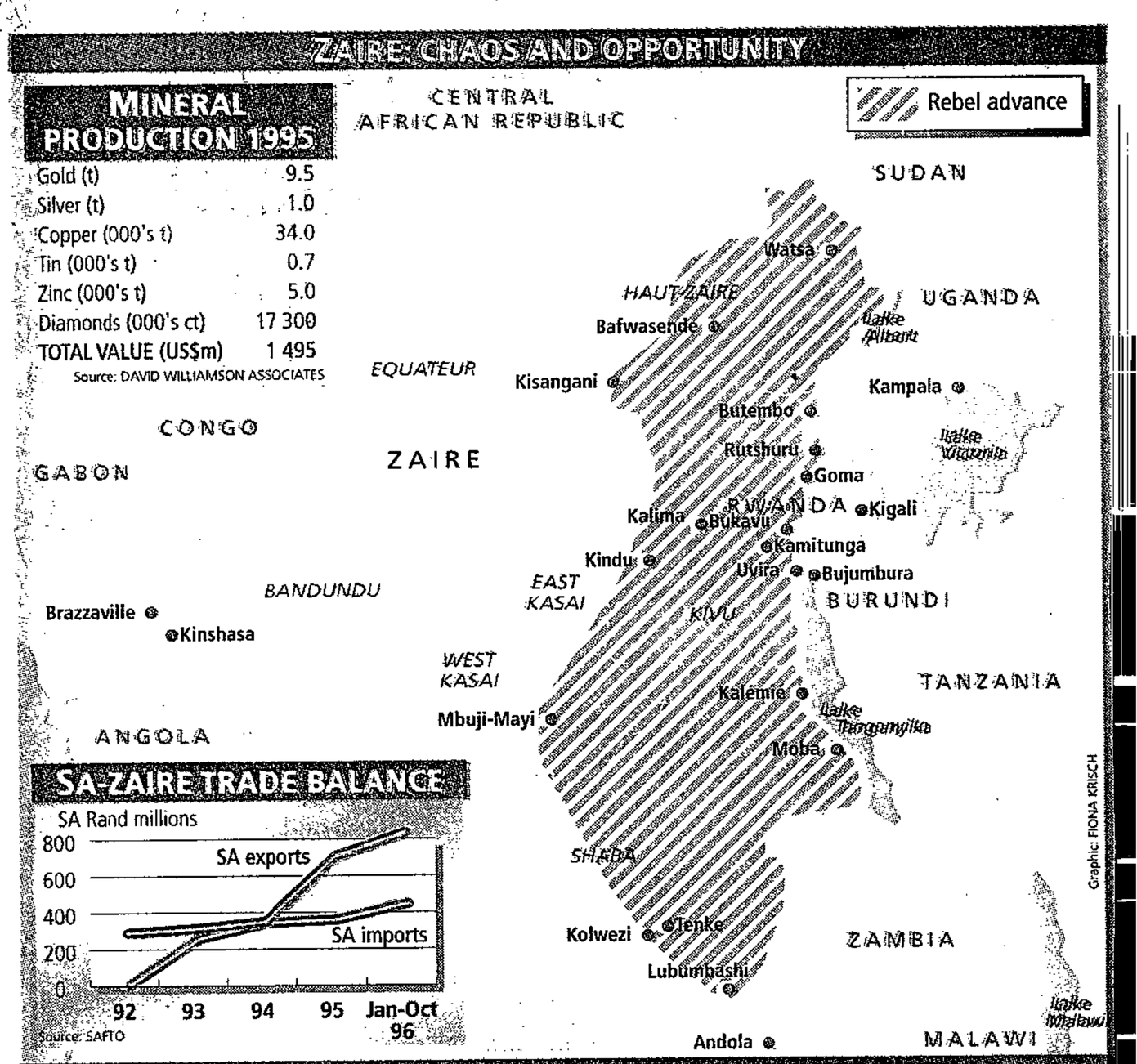
The Financial Times reports that Kabila was courted by a number of mining executives as he flew into Zaire's diamond capital Mbuji-Mayi this week on a plane owned by a private businessman. First to greet him were executives from Miba, Zaire's largest single producer of diamonds.

He also met with representatives from both Anglo and De Beers over the weekend.

De Beers has buying offices in Kisangani and Mbuji-Mayi, now controlled by rebel forces, and a contract to buy Miba's production. Miba is 80%-held by Zaire's government while Sibeka of Belgium, in which De Beers has a 20% stake, holds the remaining 20%.

Like a number of other SA companies with no current investments in Zaire, Gencor says it is watching the situation with great interest.

Iscor, which has been involved in Zaire for several years, says it is focusing on the long-term potential of the country and not on its immediate situation. Iscor's agreement with Gecamines, reached in February, gives it rights to complete a feasibility study for the rehabilitation of the Kamato copper/cobalt mine in Shaba province.



'I'll talk, but I will not leave'

Ailing leader hangs on in the face of defeat

ZAIRIAN President Mobutu Sese Seko indicated for the first time yesterday that he would be willing to meet rebel leader Laurent-Desire Kabila face to face.

This has been one of the key demands of Kabila's rebels, who have captured nearly half of Zaire in their seven-month push to overthrow Mobutu.

"If he asks politely, I can't refuse to speak to a Zairian compatriot," Mobutu said at the presidential palace.

The ailing president dismissed the rebel demand that he step down by today, referring to Kabila as a "bandit chief".

"I find that kind of joking in bad taste. I am the chief of state," he said. "Let's talk seriously."

Asked if he felt threatened by Kabila's approach, Mobutu said: "He's still 300km away. You can't take everything he says seriously. This evening he could say he's at Mobutu's door."

Rebels control almost half of Zaire and have threatened to overrun Kinshasa if Mobutu, ill with prostate cancer, doesn't resign.

They have given him until today to step down. They say he has enriched himself and impoverished his people during his 31-year reign.

Meanwhile, rebels controlling the diamond-dealing city of Mbuji Mayi are demanding a $34,5-million (about R153-million) "ransom" for 46 Lebanese nationals held there, a diplomatic source in South Africa said yesterday.

The rebels are demanding $750 000 dollars for each person before allowing them to board a plane for South Africa, the source said.

Kabila's representatives made the demand to officials representing Mobutu during talks in Pretoria. Both negotiating teams have since returned to Zaire.

The Lebanese were to be flown out of Mbuji Mayi aboard a commercial aircraft hired by members of South Africa's 20 000-strong Lebanese community.

Mbuji Mayi, the main city in the diamond-producing Eastern Kasai province, was captured by the rebels 10 days ago. Lubumbashi seemed to have fallen by Friday.

"All that happened because I was sick," Mobutu said yesterday of the chaos engulfing his nation.

He named Likulia Bolongo, a four-star general, as his prime minister on Wednesday in the hope that it was not too late to rehabilitate the tattered army.

Bolongo replaces Etienne Tshisekedi, a popular opposition leader who was blocked by Mobutu loyalists from taking office on Wednesday.

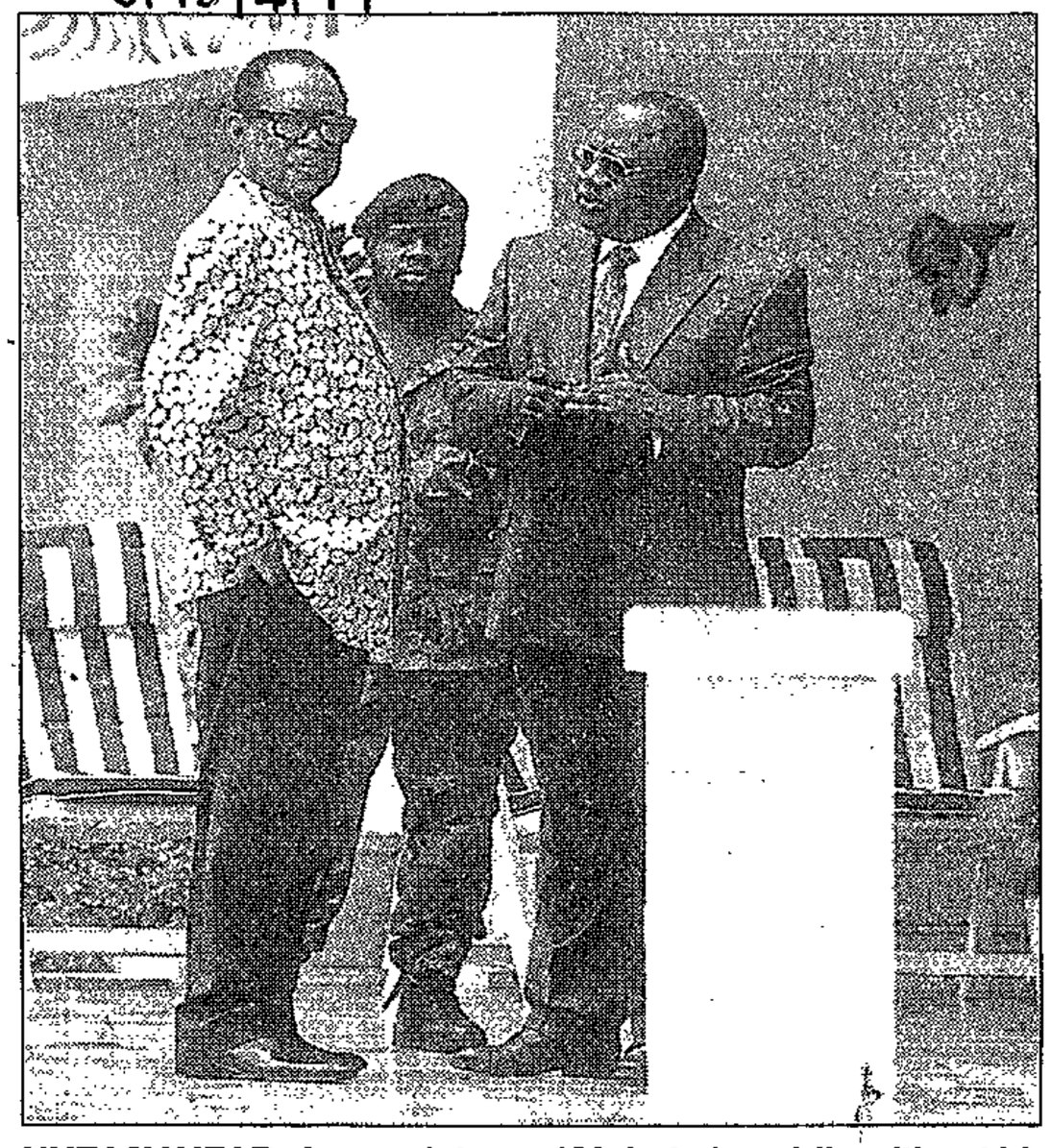
Mobutu was stung this week when traditional Western allies abandoned him. His one-time backers no longer need him to thwart Soviet expansionism and are increasingly embarrassed by his corrupt regime.

Bolongo said that a priority of his government would be "to control public finances and ensure good governance".

But there were few real concessions to Western demands for greater human rights. Mobutu has declared a state of emergency, banned demonstrations and promised a crackdown on the press. — *Sapa-AFP-AP*



IN THE HOT SEAT: Prime Minister General Likulia Bolongo



UNEASY HEAD: A rare picture of Mobutu in public without his leopard-skin hat **Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS**

Plan for post-Mobutu Zaire takes shape

ST 13/4/97 (358)

RAY HARTLEY
Political Correspondent

A NEW political phrase, "post-Mobutism", emerged in Pretoria this week as Zairian rebels and government representatives agreed to a five-point plan to bring democracy to their country.

The term signalled the shift in international focus from ending the war to building a political system to take the place of dictator Mobutu Sese Seko's crumbling regime.

This followed the rebels' capture of Lubumbashi and the announcement by the US that it would seek a new "broad-based interim transitional authority" to replace the Mobutu regime.

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, George Moose, told the US House Committee on Africa that "popular demand for political change has been frustrated by manoeuvring by the political leadership in Kinshasa".

Moose's statement was the most far-reaching criticism of Mobutu so far by his erstwhile allies.

As Moose spoke, Zaire's foreign minister, Gerard Kamanda wa Kamanda, and Bizima Karaha of the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire signed a five-point communiqué.

It was agreed there was a need for "fundamental democratic change in Zaire" and for a "process of transition leading to transparent, fair and inclusive elections which would be organised by an independent body and monitored by the international community".

Meanwhile in the US, talks between Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and US Vice-President Al Gore were expected to focus on the shape of an international mission to supervise elections in Zaire.

South Africa's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, said his country remained committed to involvement in an international mission to the country, but this would not necessarily involve troops.

"It could take the form of humanitarian observers or experts to create institutions for the new government," he said.

The chief concern that Mbeki and Gore now have is the possible disintegration of Zaire into an ethnically divided state.

This is despite the Pretoria agreement which stresses "... territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of Zaire" — a signal that the country will not be split into ethnic enclaves.

A creature of history

As a teenager, Mobutu burgled a mission, was sent to jail and then to the army. He has been robbing his country ever since. But now his end approaches. ALEC RUSSELL reports from Kinshasa

(308)

ST 13/4/97

IN THE grounds of President Mobutu Sese Seko's Kinshasa residence peacocks strut between tropical shrubs, and sentries with gold epaulettes stand to attention beside giant stone leopards.

Zaire's "Great Helmsman" has long been living in a fantasy world. If he was to stroll through his garden this morning, he could no doubt convince himself that, with a click of his fingers and a waggle of his ebony cane, his unruly country would once more fall into line. But the appearance of normality at his palace is as illusory as everything else in his crumbling domain.

Laurent-Desire Kabila, the rebel leader, had given Mobutu until last night to announce plans for standing down. He will almost certainly try to stall by calling for talks — a tactic that has served him well in the past. But at best he would gain a couple of months, the longest it could take the rebels to hack their way through the jungle to Kinshasa. No one will come to save him now. The wiles with which he has bamboozled Zaire and much of the world since he seized power in 1965 have run their course. The US, which so often bailed him out, has finally disowned him. The final chapter of an extraordinary story is under way.

For Africa it is a moment of hope. The end of Mobutu's rule will close one of the most depressing chapters in the continent's recent history.

In 1984, Mobutu bragged on US television that he was the second richest man in the world, with more than $8-billion in a Swiss bank account.

He is, in the words of one government aide, "the king of kleptocracy". Researchers have estimated that, in the 80s, he siphoned $100-million to $300-million a year from Zaire's copper and cobalt exports.

All the while, his country sank further into chaos. Per-capita income has fallen by about 60 percent since 1960. A third of children die before they are five. Zaire is a case study in how a state can wither away.

A young CIA operative named Lawrence Devlin is widely credited with engineering his rise. He met Mobutu, then 29, in Paris in 1959, was struck by his anti-communist rhetoric and decided he had found his man. The CIA looked on approvingly as Mobutu navigated the five years of chaos that followed independence and became president-for-life.

Mobutu had come a long way from his impoverished childhood as the son of a maid and a cook. According to one historian, he was expelled at 19 from a mission school for his "adventurous character, his proclivity for delinquency, and his burglary of the library".

He was sentenced to six months in prison and seven years in the colonial army. He rose to sergeant major and left at 25 to pursue a career in journalism. It was in this capacity that he first encountered the CIA. He knew a good meal ticket when he saw one.

Playing on US fears of Soviet expansion into Africa in the 70s, he received nearly half of the US's funds to sub-Saharan Africa, and was even welcomed to the White House by the Republican president Ronald Reagan as a "voice of good sense and goodwill".

So it was with wry smiles that many Zairians greeted Wednesday's statement by the White House that Mobutu was a "creature of history".

He is a dinosaur whose departure is overdue, but his political obituarists will at least have to acknowledge his remarkable staying power. Mobutu has weathered attempted coups, civil wars and, in the past seven years, the new breeze of democracy sweeping through Africa. He has consistently outmanoeuvred his opponents, using assassination when co-option failed.

Mobutu added the names Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga to his own more humble moniker shortly after he became president. It translates as "The all-powerful warrior who because of his endurance and inflexible will to win will go from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake." It might have been true once, but the magic has faded. — © *The Telegraph, London*

Mobutu's pride gets in way of deal with rebels

Star 14/4/97 (398)

Kabila's foreign affairs adviser says president must leave the country, and announces renewal of offensive

Reuters, Ross Herbert and Sapa-AP
Kinshasa

Fear gripped the Zairian capital yesterday as rebels said they were resuming their offensive in a final push to topple President Mobutu Sese Seko.

"We have decided we won't give Mobutu another chance," said Bizima Karaha, the rebels' foreign affairs adviser. "We want him to leave the country and then we can negotiate a ceasefire."

Karaha said in the rebel headquarters town of Goma that the rebels have resumed their offensive after a three-day lull in fighting.

Residents of Kinshasa, a city of more than 5 million, people scrambled to stock up, sending prices soaring in city markets and a handful of shops that opened before a potentially violent anti-Mobutu protest shutdown of the city planned for today.

Kinshasa's military governor intervened on the lunchtime national television news to urge Zairians and foreigners to remain calm.

"An atmosphere of panic, due essentially to the situation in the east of our country, reigns among Kinshasa's men and women," General Amela Lokima said. "The most fantastic rumours, according to which the city of Kinshasa would soon fall to the armed rebellion, are gaining ground."

He said the army was ready to defend Kinshasa, adding: "The security of our capital is our fundamental duty."

The television announcer said panic had swept districts of Kinshasa near the airport after local anti-Mobutu militants urged residents to leave. The airport is in the direction of Bandundu province to the north-east where rebels say they have infiltrated.

The fear of further confrontation between activists and security forces sent Kinshasa residents scrambling for supplies.

Shop owner Mohamed Umar said shops were running out of imports: "Suppliers are not bringing in goods. We too are not buying because you don't know if your shop will be looted the next day." He said prices of imported food had shot up in the few days since rebel leader Laurent Kabila's forces seized the copper capital Lubumbashi and set their sights on Kinshasa.

Nearby, anti-Mobutu activists distributed leaflets calling for a "dead city" strike today, followed by the closure of schools and colleges tomorrow.

"It will be a total boycott, a total shutdown. No vehicle dares go on the road," declared a man called Mbambu. "We are not afraid of Mobutu or his army."

Bizima Karaha, foreign affairs commissioner in the rebel alliance, told a news conference in Goma that Kabila would probably go to South Africa soon to spur negotiations on Mobutu's departure from power.

"There will never be a ceasefire before negotiations – never, never, never," Karaha said.

On Wednesday Kabila announced a three-day ceasefire, which would end yesterday if Mobutu failed to leave office. Mobutu has raised the possibility of meeting Kabila but insists this will only be possible if Kabila asks him politely.

"It is a kind of joke," said Mobutu, seeming more energetic and combative than in past appearances before the press. "I am head of state of Zaire. I don't have to receive ultimatums from a chief of (an armed) band.

"If he asks me politely I cannot refuse to talk to a compatriot but (for him) to be in Goma and say 'I give him three days' (to resign), it's not my style or nature. I cannot reply," Mobutu told reporters.

Mobutu's collapsing army has been unable to check the rebel offensive that began near Zaire's eastern border in October. Kabila's forces now hold more than half the country, including most major centres outside Kinshasa.

Reporters asked Mobutu what he would consider to be a polite request?

" 'Mister President of the Republic of Zaire, it is my intention to meet with you.' That is polite," Mobutu said.

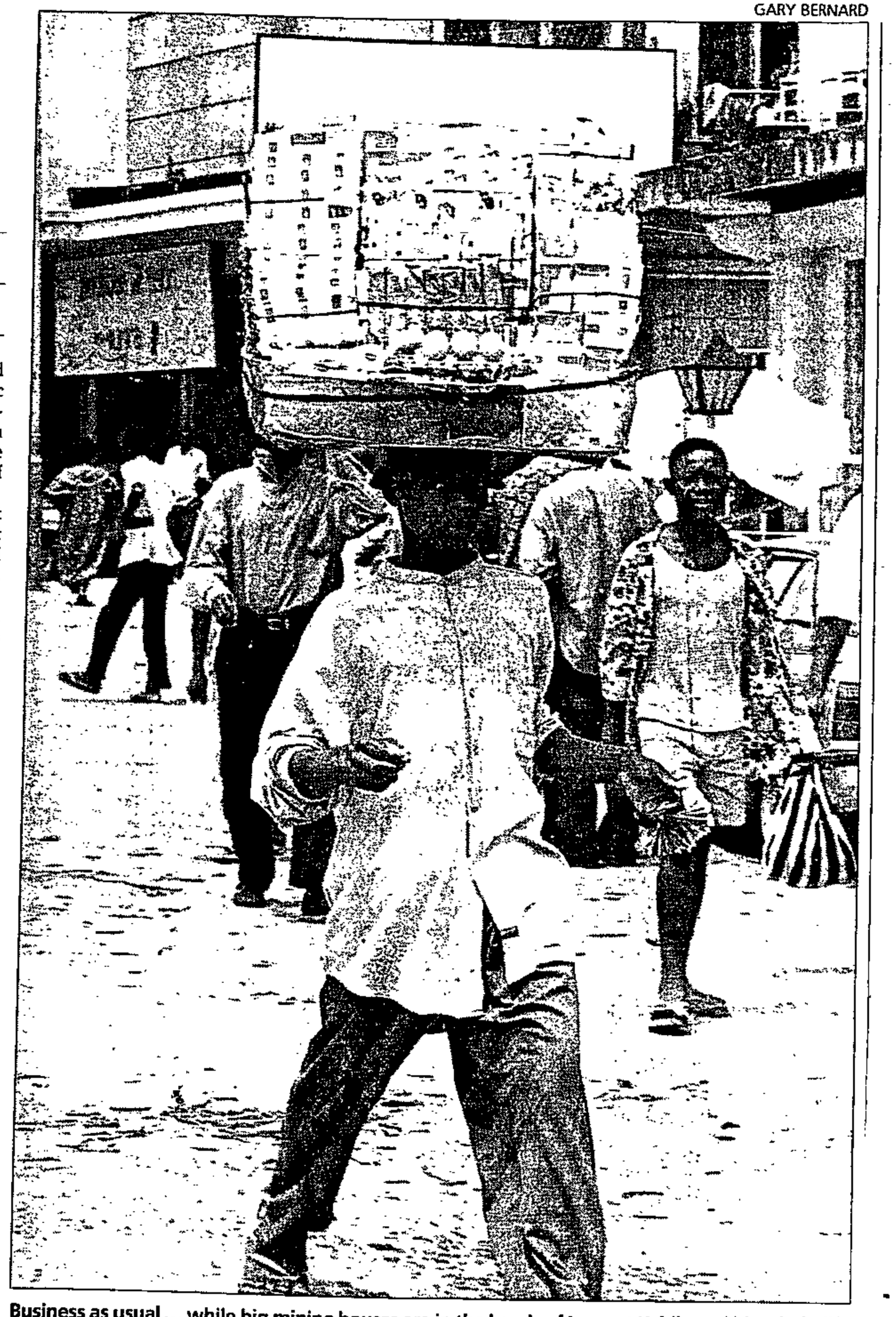
His performance left Zairian waiters laughing in at least one Kinshasa bar when it was replayed on CNN. "He has no army. He has nothing. How can he say no. Kabila has everything," one bartender said in explanation of the chuckles.

Rebel radio broadcast on Saturday said: "Mr Mobutu has just 24 hours thanks to the extreme generosity of the alliance. He has only two choices – to resign or to go into exile."

Rejecting the dire military reality he faces, Mobutu dismissed calls for his resignation.

In another development, a cholera epidemic among Rwandan Hutu refugees in eastern Zaire was yesterday threatening to delay the planned repatriation airlift.

GARY BERNARD



Business as usual ... while big mining houses are in the hands of Laurent Kabila and his rebels, life goes on in the streets of Kinshasa and small traders continue to ply their trade. This hawker carries all his trading goods on his head looking for willing customers.

Zairean rebels restart civil war

BD 14/4/97 (368)

GOMA — Zairean rebels said yesterday they were restarting the civil war against the Kinshasa-based government after a three-day pause and demanded the resignation of President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mobutu offered on Saturday for the first time to meet rebel leader Laurent Kabila for peace talks, although he dismissed a rebel ultimatum to quit power by yesterday.

Kabila was to give fresh impetus to peace talks with the Kinshasa authorities, probably with a visit to SA, his foreign affairs official said yesterday.

He reiterated the rebel demand that Mobutu leave power and repeated that no ceasefire could be considered before negotiations took place.

Meanwhile the military governor of Zaire's capital Kinshasa appealed for calm yesterday following what he called widespread panic over a possible attack on the city by rebels.

"An atmosphere of panic, due essentially to the situation in the east of our country, reigns among Kinshasa's men and women," Gen Amela Lokima said in a special broadcast which followed the expiry of a deadline for Mobutu to resign or face all-out war.

He called on Zaireans and foreigners living in the city to remain calm.

Local television said panic had gripped the districts of Kinshasa close to the airport after anti-Mobutu militants urged residents to evacuate.

Opposition militants, who have declared their support for Kabila, have called for a total shutdown of the capital today as part of a campaign to force an end to Mobutu's 32-year rule.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) said yesterday a cholera epidemic had broken out among Rwandan Hutu refugees in rebel-held eastern Zaire. The announcement was certain to delay plans to repatriate at least 100 000 refugees camping between rebel-held Kisangani and Ubundu, said WHO official Leonard Kinuani.

"Up to April 9 in the Kasese 2 site we had recorded 120 cases requiring hospital treatment of whom five died," Kinuani said from Kisangani.

About 50 000 of the Rwandan Hutu refugees are at Kasese 2 with an equivalent number at other makeshift sites.

"This formal declaration of an epidemic will delay the repatriation until it is brought under control," Kinuani said. "We have to fear that there is the same cholera problem in the other sites."

The local Zairean population was also at risk, he said. — Reuter.

Panic in Kinshasa as 'shutdown' looms

BD 14/4/97 (358)

KINSHASA — Fear gripped the Zairean capital yesterday as rebels announced they were resuming their offensive in a final push to topple President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Residents of the city of more than 5-million people scrambled to stock up with commodities, sending prices soaring in city markets and at a handful of shops that opened before a potentially violent anti-Mobutu protest shutdown of the city planned for today.

Kinshasa's military governor appeared on television yesterday to urge Zaireans and foreigners to remain calm. Gen Amela Lokima said "an atmosphere of panic" was reigning in the city. "The most fantastic rumours, according to which Kinshasa will soon fall to the armed rebellion, are gaining ground." The army was ready to defend Kinshasa. "The security of our capital is our fundamental duty," Lokima said.

A television report said panic had swept districts of Kinshasa near the airport after local anti-Mobutu militants urged residents to leave.

The fear of war and a looming confrontation today between anti-Mobutu activists and security forces sent Kinshasa residents rushing for supplies.

"People have been stocking up since yesterday," said Mauritanian store owner Sidi Mohamed. Another store owner said shops were running out of imported goods. "Suppliers are not bringing in goods, and we are also not buying because we do not know if our shops will be looted."

Prices of imported food have shot up since Kabila's forces seized the copper capital, Lubumbashi, and set their sights on Kinshasa. "A kilo of onions from Belgium has gone up to 280 000 zaires from 240 000 zaires, " the store owner said. The zaire was being exchanged at about 180 000 to the dollar.

Activists were distributing leaflets yesterday calling for a "dead city" strike today, and the closure of schools and colleges tomorrow. "It will be a total shutdown. No vehicle dares go on the road," declared a man called Mbambu. "We are not afraid of Mobutu or his army." — Reuter.

See Page 9

ZAIRE *International business looks to rebel leader*

Cobalt mining to resume

CT(BE) 14/4/97 (358)

FROM REUTER

Lubumbashi — Zaire's Gecamines, which closed its head offices in Lubumbashi last week fearing that civil war would engulf the city, would resume normal business today, a senior manager said on Friday.

"We'll start up again today. As you can see there is not a single broken window," said Jean Nawej Yav, the administration and payroll director of Gecamines.

News of the intended closure in the face of advancing rebel troops underpinned a rise in the cobalt price to about $25 (R181) a pound in London this week.

Zairean cobalt production of some 5 000 tons a year accounts for roughly one fifth of global supply of the metal.

"We have just had the Kolwezi operation on the radio asking for their salaries and we are getting those ready for them right now," Nawej Yav added.

The rebel forces of Laurent Kabila captured Lubumbashi, Zaire's second-largest city, on Thursday with remarkable ease.

By Friday shops were already re-opening, streets were crowded and there were long lines at gas stations which had been closed during days of tension as the rebel army advanced and the government reinforced its troops.

Officials said reports that there was widespread looting by inhabitants after the rebels took the city were exaggerated.

They said rebel units moved quickly to stamp out the pillaging and seven people were shot dead.

The deputy governor of Shaba province Donatien Mwitaba, said he was confident the copper and cobalt mining company, working at no more than 20 percent of capacity, could quickly be relaunched and modernised with help from foreign partners attracted by the prospect of an end to President Mobutu Sese Seko's rule.

Mwitaba said international business clearly saw rebel leader Laurent Kabila as someone they could work with.

"With Kabila's growing international credibility we think it will be possible to relaunch Gecamines very rapidly," he said.

"There are a number of privatisation and joint venture possibilities. There were offers but I think now we can enlarge on these. Potential partners were a bit reticent about doing business with a decadent regime."

Mwitaba said potential partners could come from South Africa or the US.

"We seek an opening in the south," he said.

Mwitaba said that Sizarail, a Belgian-South African consortium that runs the railway in the area, had also re-opened.

CAPE TIMES
MONDAY, APRIL 14, 1997 ★

'DEAD CITY' STRIKE CALL

Fear grips Kinshasa as rebels resume advance

CT 14/4/97 (358)

KINSHASA: As opponents of the Mobutu regime call for a "dead city" strike, the ailing president says he will talk to the rebel leader only if asked "politely".

FEAR gripped the capital yesterday as rebels said they were resuming their offensive in a final push to topple President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Residents of the city of over five million people scrambled to stock up, sending prices soaring in city markets and a handful of shops that opened before a potentially violent anti-Mobutu protest shutdown of the city planned for today.

In the eastern rebel headquarter city of Goma, the rebels said they were resuming their offensive after a three-day pause to allow Mobutu to step down honourably.

Kinshasa's military governor intervened in the lunchtime national television news to urge Zairians and foreigners to remain calm.

"An atmosphere of panic, due essentially to the situation in the east of our country, reigns among Kinshasa's men and women," General Amela Lokima said.

"The most fantastic rumours, according to which the city of Kinshasa would soon fall to the armed rebellion, are gaining ground."

He said the army was ready to defend Kinshasa, adding: "The security of our capital is our fundamental duty."

The television announcer said panic had swept districts of Kinshasa near the airport after local anti-Mobutu militants urged residents to leave. The airport is in the direction of Bandundu Province to the north-east where rebels say they have infiltrated.

The fear of war and a looming confrontation between anti-Mobutu activists and security forces sent Kinshasa residents scrambling to snap up supplies.

"People have been stocking up since yesterday," said Mauritanian shopkeeper Mr Sidi Mohamed.

His compatriot, Mr Mohamed Umar next door, said shops were running out of imports: "Suppliers are not bringing in goods. We too are not buying because you don't know if your shop will be looted the next day."

He said prices of imported food had shot up in the few days since Mr Laurent Kabila's forces seized the copper capital Lubumbashi and set their sights on Kinshasa.

"A kilo of onions from Belgium has gone up to 280 000 zaire from 240 000 zaire, " he said. The zaire was exchanging at about 41 000 to the rand.

Nearby, anti-Mobutu activists distributed leaflets calling for a "dead city" strike today, followed by the closure of schools and colleges tomorrow.

"It will be a total boycott, a total shutdown. No vehicle dares go on the road," declared a man called Mbambu. "We are not afraid of Mobutu or his army."

Mr Bizima Karaha, foreign affairs commissioner in the rebel alliance, told a news conference in Goma that Kabila would probably go to South Africa soon to spur negotiations on Mobutu's departure from power.

"There will never be a ceasefire before negotiations — never, never, never," Karaha said.

Mobutu on Saturday for the first time raised the possibility of meeting Kabila but insisted this would only be possible if Kabila asked him politely.

"If he asks me politely I cannot refuse to talk to a compatriot but (for him) to be in Goma and say I give him three days (to resign), it's not my style or nature. I cannot reply," Mobutu, 66, told reporters.

Mobutu's collapsing army has been unable to check the rebel offensive that began near Zaire's eastern border last October. Kabila's forces now hold more than half the country, including most major centres outside Kinshasa. — Reuter

Strikers supporting Zaire's ousted PM clash with army

Rebels threaten new attack on capital

(358)

ARG 14/4/97

Kinshasa – Soldiers clashed with several hundred demonstrators on an anti-government strike today, firing to disperse a crowd that gathered outside an opposition leader's home.

Supporters of the ousted prime minister, opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, had called a one-day strike today to press their demands for President Mobutu Sese Seko's ousting and Mr Tshisekedi's re-instatement.

Mr Mobutu fired Mr Tshisekedi last week and replaced him with an army general after Mr Tshisekedi's attempt to undermine Mr Mobutu's rule by firing the parliament and scrapping the constitution.

Most people obeyed the strike call. Streets were deserted in this city of several million, and stores were closed. Injuries were not immediately reported as a result of the clash with the soldiers.

Rebels who have captured nearly half of Zaire also urged Mr Mobutu to resign and said they were again moving on the capital.

"We want him to leave the country and then we can negotiate a ceasefire," rebel spokesman Bizima Karaha said yesterday in the eastern city of Goma. "They want war, and they will get it."

A lull in fighting came after rebel chief Laurent Desire Kabila gave Mr Mobutu three days to resign or watch the rebels advance. The rebels have been fighting for seven months to topple Mr Mobutu's rule of nearly 32 years.

The rebels claimed they were at Bandundu, 250km northeast of the capital. They took Lubumbashi, Zaire's second-largest city, on Friday. Red Cross workers yesterday cleared bodies from the airport, which was littered with wrecked vehicles and spent cartridges.

After a lot of international pressure, Mr Mobutu said at the weekend that he was willing to meet rebel leader Kabila face to face — "if he asks politely".

Mr Karaha, however, said the rebels still wanted Mr Mobutu's resignation.

"We have decided we won't give Mobutu another chance," he said.

Japan, France and Belgium have evacuated some of their citizens from Kinshasa, but United States Ambassador Daniel Simpson said yesterday that there was no heightened readiness for an evacuation at the embassy.

Meanwhile, the airlift of up to 100 000 Rwandan refugees from the jungles of Zaire to their homeland would begin later this week, said United Nations refugee agency spokesman Peter Kessler.

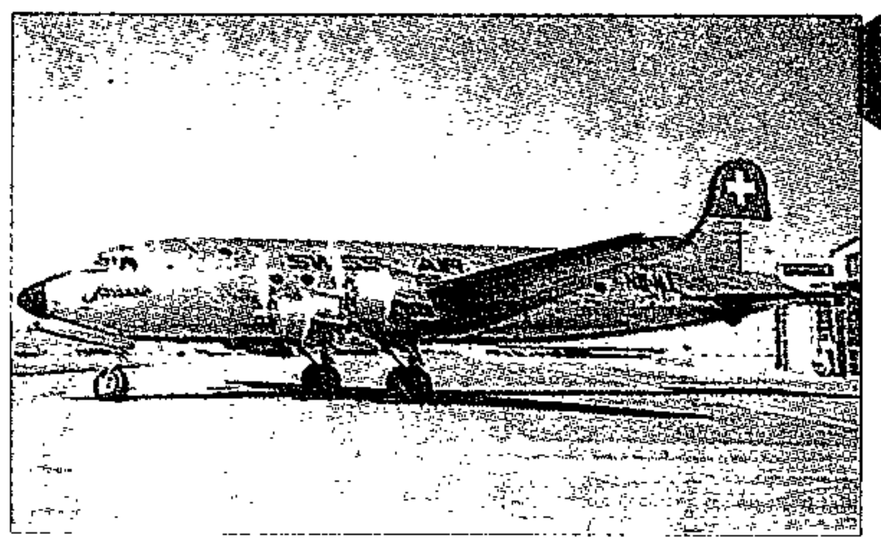
The Rwandan Hutus fled to eastern Zaire in 1994 after extremists among them slaughtered at least 500 000 minority Tutsis.

As Zairian rebels seeking to oust Mr Mobutu have moved west, backed by the Rwandan Tutsi-led government and fighting armed Hutus, refugees have fled deeper into the jungles of north-central Zaire. – Sapa-AP

AIRLINES

This feature is appearing in The Star, the Pretoria News, the Cape Argus and the Daily News.

EDITORIAL: IAN SCHIFFMAN



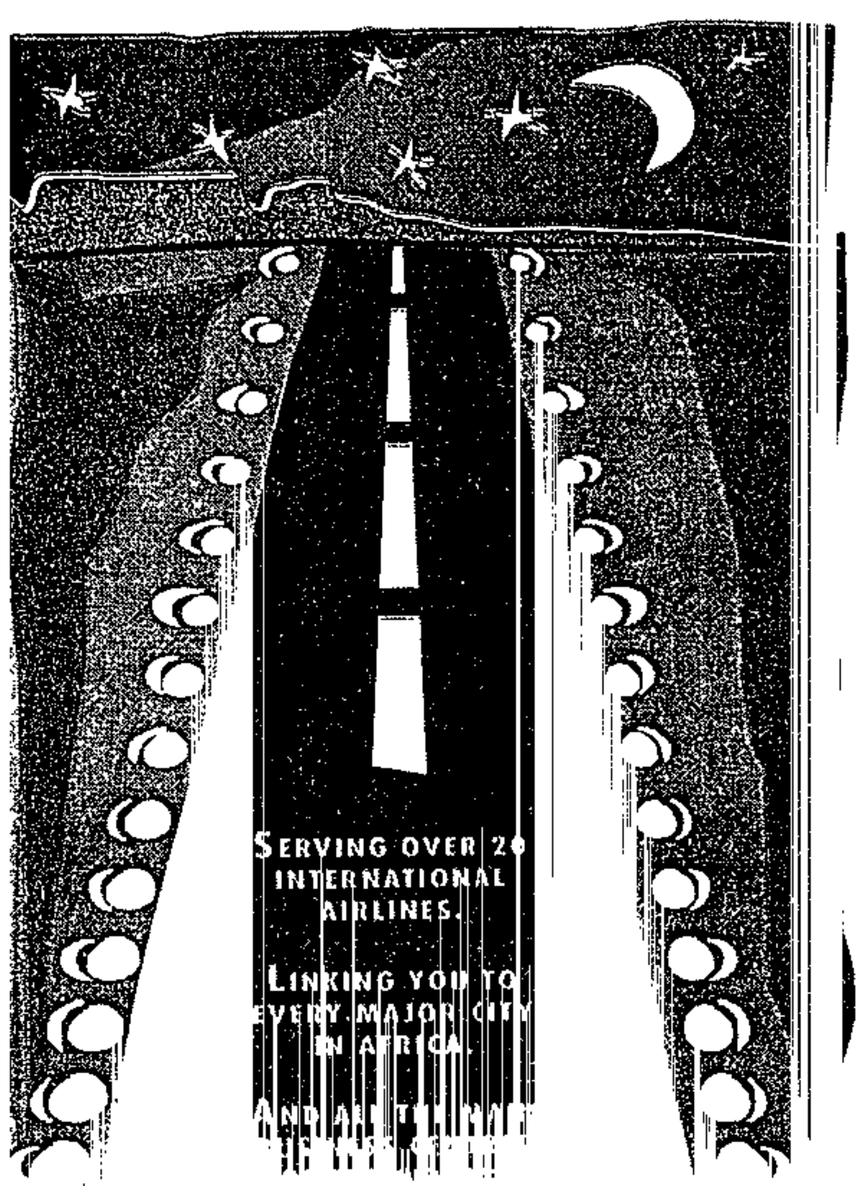
Looking back: This DC-4 will commemorate Swissair's 50th anniversary

Swissair relives the era of piston-engined flight

Swissair are celebrating two major events in the airline's history.

This week, a piston-engined DC-4, leased from the SA Historic Flight Society for three months, took to the skies in original Swissair livery to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first DC-4 flight between Switzerland and New York.

In another event, Swissair pilot Hans Georg Schmid commemorated the 70th anniversary of the first flight made by one of the founders of Swissair, Walter Mittelholzer, by piloting an aircraft – built by himself – between Switzerland and Cape Town, following Mittelholzer's route.



Airbus 340 for Air Mauritius

Air Mauritius has boosted its fleet with the delivery from Airbus Industrie of its second Airbus A340.

The fleet expansion programme has enabled Air Mauritius to spread its wings, increasing the number of services to four southern African destinations.

The carrier also operates regular flights to Perth and Melbourne and several destinations in Asia, including New Delhi, Mumbai, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Jakarta.

Air Mauritius is the only airline to offer direct flights from Melbourne to Cape Town.

Flights depart from Melbourne at 9.05am on Wednesdays, arriving at Cape Town at 7.40pm the following day.

Busiest months for several airlines

Many airlines flying the South African route have been experiencing their busiest months on the route while, in contrast, others have been forced to withdraw their flights or curtail frequencies.

Flights to and from Europe have recorded load factors of 85 percent over the past few months and a number of carriers are increasing their flight frequencies to this country.

Several airlines already operate daily services and others are planning to upgrade their flight frequencies to daily services over the next two years.

Most European carriers report an increased number of foreign passengers flying south, with the bulk of passengers visiting Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Foreign passengers departing from Cape Town for the period December 1996 to February 1997 increased by 108 000 passengers compared to the corresponding period last year. In fact, many carriers report that on most flights during this period there were often more passengers destined for Cape Town than Johannesburg.

This reflects an important growth in tourism to the Cape and airlines are taking cognisance of these developments by boosting Cape Town-bound flights.

From May Austrian Airlines will operate two direct flights each week between Vienna and Cape Town. Air France and KLM will both be adding an extra weekly flight to Johannesburg and Cape Town from April and June respectively.

South African Airways and British Airways continue to operate with excellent load factors on the London route, but it seems that Virgin Atlantic is losing a lot of Cape Town and Durban passengers, as these passengers dislike changing planes at Johannesburg and having to undergo the hassle of immigration and customs there.

The major airlines are presently promoting special flights to Europe and the UK and it is possible to obtain an economy class return ticket for less than R3 000.

The United States continues to be South African Airways' most promising route and has sustained a load factor of 85% over the past few months. SAA will boost its services to Miami to five a week and to New York to daily from July.

American Airlines operates a codeshare agreement with SAA on its services to New York and Miami and offers connections onwards to major US destinations. SAA and American Airlines operate under both airlines' flight numbers within the United States and on all flights to South Africa.

In contrast to the prosperity being experienced on several routes, a number of airlines withdrew their flights to South Africa last month.

Air Lanka and Gulf Air have withdrawn their flights, while Air India and Saudi Airlines will operate only seasonal flights.

Ethiopian Airlines has reduced the number of flights to one a week, and has dropped Durban from its schedule.

The Far East route has seen SAA switch its hub from Singapore to Bangkok and boost its Hong Kong flights, while being forced to cease flying to Taipei.



High flier ... A South African Airways Boeing 747 in the new corporate colours

SAA's new livery set for wider exposure as frequencies increase

South African Airways is not only

The airline has also launched a new

ternational services and will introduce

■ Five flights a week to Miami and

figure of nagging coup because of Kabila's revolutionary history.

In Zaire's early days of independence, Kabila was a supporter of the country's first prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, who was strongly influenced by Marx and Mao. After Lumumba was killed in a 1961 coup engineered by the present president, Mobutu Sese Seko, his followers, including Kabila, fled to the bush where they organised a series of eastern insurrections with Russian and Chinese support.

In 1964 the Lumumbists briefly set up a separate state with its capital in Kisangani. But Mobutu, with the backing of white mercenaries, Belgian troops



Victorious ... but Kabila still goes out of his way to criticise France, even to crowds who care little for global politics.

and American aircraft, eventually crushed the rebellion in 1965.

At the time, Che Guevara, the Argentine revolutionary, and a contingent of Cubans came to aid the rebels, but Guevara, according to his memoirs, became disillusioned with the rebels and withdrew. However, Kabila continued to fight.

Two years later he formed the People's Revolutionary Party, which set up a mini-state in the Baraka and Fizi mountains in the Kivu province, where the present rebellion began. In 1975, Kabila's forces kidnapped three Americans and a Dutch researcher from the Gombe Stream research centre in Tanzania, where famed chimpanzee expert Jane Goodall was conducting research.

After holding the four for 67 days, Kabila succeeded in securing Kabila rules the country. The question remains: who is Kabila and what will he bring to this deeply troubled nation?

His revolutionary struggle is hardly unique on a continent where dozens of leaders spent years fighting from the bush. But Kabila steadfastly dismisses discussion of his past.

At a press conference in Kisangani, a dozen reporters tried to broach the subject with Kabila a dozen different ways and only got a rebuke in the form of the question turned on the questioner.

"Should I answer to the propaganda that made my people slaves in this country?" he snapped.

The least defensive answer came from a third-tier finance ministry official, who told a Dutch radio journalist that the alliance wants "socialist capitalism". How can that be? Just give us a chance. Let us try, was his answer.

Kabila added to doubts about his intentions (among journalists if not Zairians) by banning all political party activity until the war is over, which is precisely what Mobutu did after he seized power in the 1960s.

Despite his past, there is consistency in Kabila's speeches and the 10-day ideology classes that Kabila's forces are offering in occupied territory to acquaint citizens with his plans.

Great stress has been placed on the need to fight corruption to run the liberated government in the occupied east. Many have extensive international experience and are far more polished with the press than Kabila himself.

One of the most influential is Deogracias Bugera, Kabila's political commissioner and head of a Tutsi party, one of four parties that compose the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo.

Bugera makes a cogent argument for government to stay out of people's way so they are free to manage their own affairs. He argues that African leaders have moved away from traditional African values and fail to trust their own people.

"We want to go back to the beginning to the democratic efforts that were held then. We must learn to trust the Congolese man. Each continent has gone through this phase. In Europe there was a 100-years war between France and England. Now they say they are the civilised world. It took some time for Africa to learn about democracy," Bugera said.

Of potentially great strategic import is the vein of anti-French sentiment among the rebel alliance. Although the United States also helped to prop up Mobutu, Kabila goes out of his way to criticise the French, even to crowds who care little for global politics.

Zaire, he says, has been used to destabilise many countries and "a great deal will change." To a French reporter, Kabila replied: "It is your government who creates dictatorship in Africa."

So far, questions of ideological consistency or even Kabila's long-term plans are far from the public mind. Bitterness over Mobutu's misrule runs so deep that anyone capable of ousting him would find a receptive public.

There is a certain delirium setting into the captured territories, with crowds excitedly likening Kabila to a saviour and a saint.

"We shall sleep. We shall wake up but our dreams will be of our father Kabila," they sang as they waited for Kabila to arrive at a soccer stadium in Kisangani.

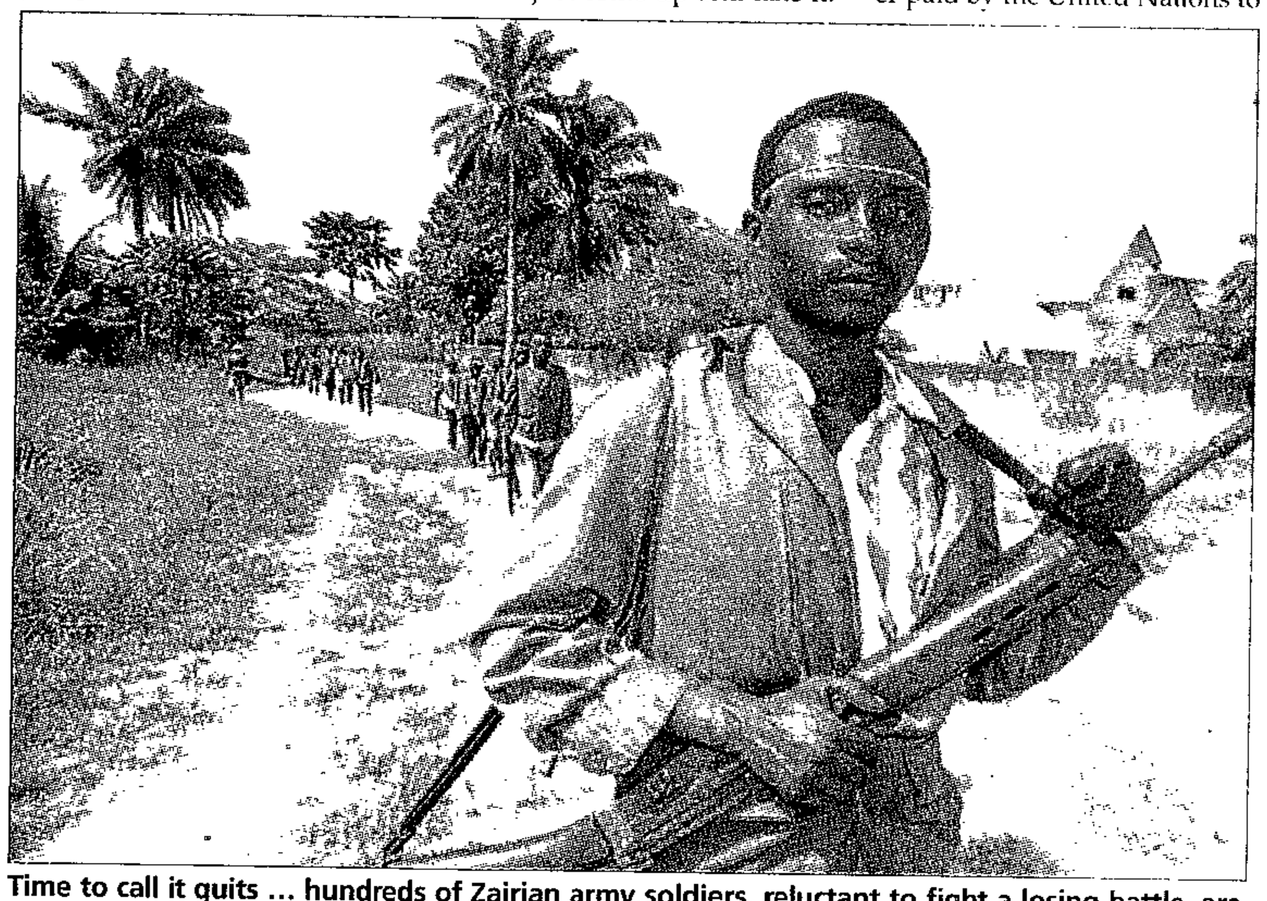
The danger is that Zaire seems ready and willing to fall into the mould defined by the next big man.

By Ross Herbert STAR
Star Foreign Service
3/4/97

When Zairian rebels fired the first mortar shells in the battle for Kisangani, Tshilumba Luboya was sitting on his porch in Kisangani watching his wife, Shamba, cut the fingernails of his infant son. A shell blew the roof off the house next door and hurled a chunk of shrapnel that struck his wife in the forehead.

"Kabila must go ahead and take Kinshasa. Even though I lost my wife, I think he must continue to fight," Tshilumba said of Laurent Kabila, leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo, which has captured nearly one-third of Zaire.

As international mediators try to cobble together a negotiated settlement to the six-month Zairian civil war, no one has yet given much consideration to the opinions of people like Tshilumba. But public opinion, at least in rebel-held areas, promises to be an important force that international deal-makers cannot simply ignore.



Time to call it quits ... hundreds of Zairian army soldiers, reluctant to fight a losing battle, are streaming into rebel-held towns to surrender rather than be shot. This column was in Kisangani.

The virtual rout of the larcenous Zairian army has stripped away a fear that hung over eastern Zaire like a heavy fog. In rebel-held areas, curfews are gone. Rebel soldiers are quiet and disciplined. Shops and nightclubs no longer close at dusk out of fear of the army.

"I am speaking to you now, but in former times if I spoke to a journalist, I would be expelled from my job," said Corneille Kirongozi (52), an administrative worker at the Kisangani court, one of thousands who came to the Kisangani airport to welcome Kabila.

In this new atmosphere, people are for the first time expressing the depth of their bitterness about President Mobutu Sese Seko's 32-year rule. Mobutu continues to argue that the rebels are foreign invaders, soldiers of the Ugandan, Rwandan and Burundian armies. But few in eastern Zaire seem to care; Mobutu, they say, is the issue.

"I am glad Kabila has come. Look, I can carry my tools and go where I want. In the past if I walked with this bar, soldiers would just come up and take it.



Any job will do, thank you ... Muhindo Maboko is part of a crew being paid by the UN to fill in the many thousands of pit latrines left at abandoned Rwandan refugee camps outside Goma.

Even a small bag like this would be taken. My last shoes were taken by the Zairian soldiers," said Muhindo Maboko, a labourer paid by the United Nations to fill in the thousands of pit latrines left at the abandoned Rwandan refugee camps outside of Goma.

Although Kisangani residents expressed jubilation at Kabila's arrival in town, it came after a wave of fear. The previous administration continued to tell residents that rebels would kill everyone. When Kisangani found Kabila's troops to be quiet, disciplined and uninterested in looting the city their attitude changed.

To shore up his support and lay out his plans to the population, the alliance has launched ideology schools in Kindu, Goma, Bukavu and Kisangani. Some 7 000 people have voluntarily come to 10-day, three-hours-a-day classes that are a mix of instruction on alliance policy, moralising against corruption and critiques of Mobutu's rule.

The classes are reminiscent of Soviet re-education sessions, but participants said they genuinely want to know about the rebels. With high unemployment, attendance is at least a good way to show allegiance to the new regime.

Despite what appears to be strong support in occupied areas, Kabila cannot sustain his support unless freedom translates into material progress. "Things are getting better but we are still starving," said Bahati Hamuli, a day labourer paid by the UN.

Kabila, a socialist in the 1960s when he was allied with Patrice Lumumba, said he wants a free-market economy.

On arrival in Kisangani he announced a dose of populist relief, including a 50% cut in income taxes and 50% reductions in the price of beer, water, electricity and fabric.

In Goma, he decreed that rent on houses should also be cut in half.

In the long term, such decrees will have limited value if Kabila cannot increase employment.

However, the general sense of order and a high-profile campaign against corruption have already brought unexpected benefits.

"Last year a fish cost 180 000 New Zaires (the currency) now it costs NZ40 000. Before there was harassment and taxes on the traders. Now there is no corruption in the market," said Allan Nzanza, a Goma resident.

Has Mobutu one last card to play?

Even as death looms, his ability to divide and rule should not be underestimated

Star 1/4/97 (358)

By Mort Rosenblum

Paris

Marshal Mobutu must have been mortified, slinking into his collapsing capital to jeers and whistles to watch three decades of triumph recede like a film running in rapid rewind.

In hilltop seclusion, with an army of dissipating loyalty, he awaits a coming judgment. Will virulent prostate cancer cut him down before his enemy Laurent Kabila drives him from power?

Or will the convoluted politics of Zaire deliver some other fate entirely?

Rebels, who daily gain more of the mineral-laced east, hold the upper hand, refusing to cease fire against a crumbling army until Mobutu takes a step backward. Kinshasa, the capital, is thick with rumours of a coup.

Humbling comeuppance is an amazing sight to those who know him. But no one who has dealt with Mobutu Sese Seko, a master at reversal of bad fortune, believes it is over until it is over.

Mobutu's strength is his ability to pit factions against one another in a bitter free-for-all while he hovers above the fray. For this he needs little real power. He only has to stay alive.

His rabble of an army may not be able to defend his capital, but the jungle might. Long neglect of the interior has left Zaire with no roads between Kinshasa and the rebels' widening territory.

Now a haggard 66, Mobutu winces when he walks, a sharp contrast to the fire-eater who inflamed followers in his early years.

CIA operatives were quick to see leadership in the young colonel with hollow cheeks and hungry eyes, a former journalist. With their help, in 1965, he seized control of the chaotic Congo.

Mobutu imposed his power the old way: he betrayed friends, co-opted enemies, and made pacts he did not keep.

He used white mercenaries to crush rebels and then discreet American help to quell a revolt by the mercenaries. Outside help put down repeated assaults on Katanga province (now Shaba), Kabila's next target.

He excoriated racist South Africans with flaming rhetoric that enhanced his standing at summit meetings, but he accepted their secret support.

Year after year, more opponents were murdered, and the amounts diplomats said Mobutu stole rose toward $6-billion (about R26,5-billion). Yet US officials privately insisted that only he could hold together Zaire and prevent bloody madness at the heart of Africa.

The answer was similar in Paris. President Francois Mitterrand welcomed Mobutu's Zaire to the club of former French African colonies, even though it had been owned by Belgium.

Justified or not, the pragmatism had a purpose. From independence in 1960 Congo has been a five-letter synopsis of Africa's worst nightmares.

Zaire's 40 million people break down into 250 tribes spread in clusters across an area as big as Europe, with little communication among them. A handful of dominant tribes have been at odds forever.

Ordinary people have fallen below any measurable poverty line, and most families survive by what was already known in the 1960s as the "Congolese miracle", a blend of barter, theft and ongoing suffering.

As cancer advanced, Mabutu settled into his French Riviera estate, from which he makes periodic forays to Zaire. He made his latest return on March 21, arriving too ill for the habitual staged welcome.

In the end, it may be the title he chose that spells final humiliation. Mobutu's full name translates to "the all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, will go from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake". – Sapa-AP.

Internet rebels lead fight against Mobutu

(358) Star 2/4/97

When officials fled Kisangani in the wake of the rebel approach, exiles loyal to Kabila were asked to step into their shoes

PICTURES: GARY BERNARD

A few months ago, Mawapanga Mwana Nanga was doing agronomy research at an American university and would have found it hard to believe that he was about to become "finance minister" of a rebel movement running a quarter of Zaire.

Nanga is a typical member of the so-called US "network" within the movement set up by Mobutu's veteran opponent, Laurent-Desire Kabila. Improbable as it may seem for a country as technologically backward as Zaire, Nanga and some of his rebel allies met on the Internet.

And like him, most of the senior members of the rebel movement were living abroad before they decided to join the "war of liberation" against the 31-year-old regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Kabila himself refuses to discuss his past participation in 1960s revolutionary movements that racked Zaire. But the background of his advisers shed important light on exactly who would man a Kabila government if it were to come to power.

Despite his "ministerial" rank, Nanga (45) still looks like the carefree student he was until very recently. He hails from Lower-Zaire province and studied first at the University of Kisangani in the

In 1978, Nanga went to the George Washington University in Washington DC on a study grant provided by USAID. He spent two years there studying for a master's degree in statistics.

On returning to Zaire, he got a job at the ministry of agriculture in Kinshasa where he worked until 1987. With another student grant, he then returned to the United States to prepare for a degree in economics at Pennsylania State University.

In 1989, on yet another grant, Nanga enrolled at the University of Kentucky for a five-year course to obtain a doctorate in agricultural economics. Since 1994, he had been a "researcher" in the university's agricultural department.

In the meantime, he had become a member of a Zairian opposition movement calling itself the "All North America Conference on Zaire (Anacoza)".

"We started on the Internet. We did not all know each other. We used to campaign for Mobutu to be denied a visa to visit the United States," Nanga said in a conversation with an AFP journalist here last week.

Nkongolo Mwenze, Kabila's Justice Minister who co-ordinated the snap elections held a week after the alliance captured Kisangani, has his family in the United States.

How such American influence [illegible] alliance is uncer-

wise remained close to its highly isolated roots in remote eastern Zaire.

In answering journalists' questions about why Kabila organised snap elections in Kisangani just a week after capturing the city, Mwenze and Mawapanga had the relaxed self-assurance of politicians who would be at home running for office in London or New York. "What else could we do?" they said.

"There is no one here. The officials have all fled the city. We have to have someone in charge before we leave (to continue the fight). This is not perfect democracy but it is the best we can do," he said.

"We tried to get in touch with the opposition led by Tshisekedi," he said referring to Mobutu's long-time political foe, Etienne Tshisekedi. "But he was acting as if he were already cock of the roost and we got fed up," he added.

"Then the people (the rebels) attacked (in September last year). The people of the RPF (the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front now in power in Rwanda) had studied with us in the USA. We asked them if they were interested in attacking Zaire.

"They said 'No, there is a man from your country, he is your leader."

The man they were referring to was Kabila, who [illegible]



stitute, 100km to the west, where he obtained an engineering degree in agronomy.

tain. Clearly the expatriates are bringing a strong dose of political savvy to a team that might other-



Serious ... Kabila is viewed as committed by his colleagues, and border post corruption has already diminished.

Mobutu ever since the latter seized power 31 years ago.

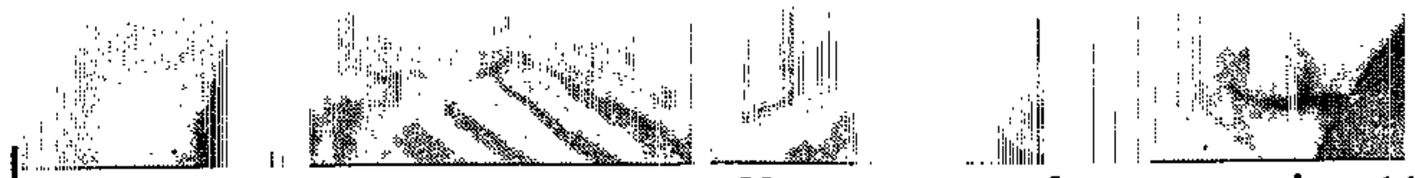
"Kabila even called me personally. Never had a leader ever called us before, and we talked.

"Before that, we had never had any contact with him. He replied calmly to our questions. He is a serious man, more serious than the others in Kinshasa. But as the front advanced, it became more difficult to get in touch with him," Nanga said.

"When Mobutu wanted to return to Zaire in December, we sent a delegation to Kabila to support him. I arrived on December 25 with Mwenze.

"We had between four and five meetings, each lasting four hours with Kabila. We told him we were leaving but would be back in two weeks. We returned from the United States with computer equipment.

"When we marched into Goma (the rebels' headquarters near the Rwandan border), everything was orderly. There were no more problems at the border like before," said Nanga, who is married to a Zairian living in the United States. - AFP and Star Foreign Service.



The American connection ... Mawapanga Mwana Nanga, a former researcher at the University of Kentucky, is one of several top advisers to rebel leader Laurent Kabila who is said to have strong ties with the US.

Refugees suffer as two sides jockey for battlefield positions

(358) Star 2/4/97

Thousands of sick and exhausted Hutu refugees straggled south of Zaire's rebel-held north-eastern capital of Kisangani yesterday after leaving a camp under rebel orders.

The Rwandan and Burundian refugees moved south of Kisangani and in the east towards Rwanda as Zaire's war rivals jockey for battlefield position with their first talks tentatively set for Saturday.

Aid workers said nearly 20 000 Hutu refugees, who abandoned their camp at Lula 7km south of Kisangani on Monday, were in poor shape, straggling nearly 20 km along a jungle path.

"It is desperate. You have people at the side of the road lying on a few bits of cloth, trying to cover themselves with leaves and blankets," said UN refugee agency spokesman Paul Stromberg.

"Now with these rains it is much worse. People are lying on their backs moaning or trying to wave to attact attention."

The rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) demanded the refugees leave Lula on Monday and move south away from Kisangani city for security reasons.

The Tutsi-dominated rebels fear the refugees include former Rwandan Hutu troops and militiamen who had a major role in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda of an estimated 800 000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates.

Stromberg said 700 of the most vulnerable refugees remained at Lula and the rest were strung out to the south, where another 60 000 Hutu refugees are trapped after fleeing rebel advances.

He said the UN refugee agency had made little progress in negotiations with rebels on a plan to move the refugees – some of whom were too weak to walk – by air, road and on foot to Rwanda.

The agency said on Monday up to 30 000 refugees had arrived at Karuba village in Masisi district west of the eastern city of Goma, which borders Rwanda, saying they wanted to go home.

It was unclear why they emerged from hiding but Tutsis in Masisi say the Tutsi-dominated rebels have been killing Hutu farmers, accusing them of siding with the Rwandan Hutus.

Ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko will send a seven-man team headed by his security adviser to represent the government in talks with Laurent Kabila's AFDL rebels in South Africa this week, Zaire's state television said this week.

The team, which includes Foreign Minister Kamanda wa Kamanda and representatives of both the opposition and the president's supporters in the transitional parliament, will travel to South Africa tomorrow, it said.

State radio on Monday reported fierce fighting around the rebel-held port of Moba on Lake Tanganyika.

Expatriates and traders in the southern mining capital of Lubumbashi said the Shaba province rail hub of Kamina – a 24-hour rail journey from Lubumbashi – fell to the rebels on Monday without a fight.

AFDL rebels took up arms in October, vowing to topple Mobutu, who has dominated the former Belgian colony in central Africa since a 1965 coup. They have seized a quarter of the country.

Mobutu, who had cancer surgery in Europe in August, has seen his grip on Zaire weaken as rebels advanced. Many Zairians, weary and impoverished after three decades of his rule, welcome rebel advances.

In New York, UN officials said the organisation's special Zaire envoy Mohamed Sahnoun would lead the talks in South Africa. Sahnoun also represents the Organisation of African Unity. – Reuters.

Arch Mobutu foe set to take reins in Zaire

Star 2/4/97 (358)

New premier likely to inherit 'poisoned chalice' on the eve of peace talks in South Africa brokered by Thabo Mbeki

REUTERS
Kinshasa

President Mobutu faces a parliamentary crisis in the Zairian capital – to add to the civil war he appears to be losing in the eastern provinces – with the nomination by opposition parties of his arch-foe, Etienne Tshisekedi, as the new prime minister.

They want him to steer the war-torn country crowded with Rwandan refugees through negotiations with rebels who hold a quarter of the nation's territory.

Tshisekedi has long favoured talks with rebel chief Laurent Kabila to end the war launched from eastern Zaire in October.

The peace talks brokered by the South African Government are due to start in Pretoria or Cape Town this weekend.

But few Zairians have any illusions that his eventual appointment could make any difference to the conflict, in which rebels have outclassed a demoralised government army.

Many Zairian politicians said they expected Mobutu to move quickly to sign Tshisekedi's appointment into law, thus handing his political rival a poisoned chalice.

"This could be the ruin of Tshisekedi," a politician said.

After a week of bitter wrangling, the leadership of the USORAL opposition alliance voted overwhelmingly last night for the appointment of Tshisekedi as replacement for prime minister Kengo wa Dondo, who resigned a week ago. The vote was 54 for and eight against with 10 abstentions.

Tshisekedi (64) has huge popular support in Zaire.

But with rebels keeping up pressure on the battlefield while preparing for negotiations, even some of Tshisekedi's staunchest supporters say he could be Mobutu's last prime minister.

Kabila has made clear he will not accept politicians who collaborate with Mobutu in a transitional government that Kabila hopes will be formed after the negotiations in South Africa at the weekend.

The rebels have captured key towns in east and south Zaire, and have now set their sights on the Shaba provincial capital Lubumbashi, Zaire's mainstay copper and cobalt mining hub situated close to Tshisekedi's Kasai tribal area.

President Mobutu, suffering from prostate cancer, is sending a seven-man team to South Africa.

Meanwhile, in the north-east thousands of sick and exhausted Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi struggled to get clear of the battle zone.

▶ **Reports and pictures** *Pages 4 and 13*

Bribe on the cards

Toronto – Accepting his soldiers cannot defeat the rebels, Zairian President Mobutu Seso Seko will do the next best thing – buy their leader.

This is the prediction of local experts, writes Scott Straus in the Globe and Mail. Reporting from Kinshasa, Straus says informed sources there all believe the bribe would, in addition to money, include a senior government post, most probably the vice presidency, for rebel leader Laurent Kabila. – Sapa.

A solution for Zaire

By supporting calls for a ceasefire South Africa is missing an opportunity to play a major part in bringing democracy to Zaire. **John Seiler** explains...



New recruits for the Zairean military board a train at Kinshasa station bound for southern Zaire to fight against Laurent Kabila's troops.
PIC: AP

ZAIRE OFFERS a rare opportunity to contribute to the end of a dictatorial and corrupt regime in a way that might also add to the prospect for democracy there. It is disappointing that South Africa does not recognise this prospect.

Instead, South Africa has joined the reflexive, wrong-headed calls for a ceasefire and negotiations between Laurent Kabila and Mobutu Sese Seko being made with varying degrees of sincerity by the Organisation of African Unity, United Nations, United States and other Western governments.

Such steps make sense when the two military forces are about equal in power and have reached something like a stalemate. Neither circumstance holds in Zaire, where Kabila has a great military advantage (barring the entry of foreign troops to bolster Mobutu) and growing political legitimacy.

No wonder Kabila refuses anything more than informal talks which would not bind him to halt his military advance or to consider any form of participation in a "national unity" government that would include Mobutu supporters.

The conventional wisdom underlying the push for a ceasefire and negotiations also argues incorrectly that a social explosion and human catastrophe would otherwise follow. In the short run, neither is likely.

"Government" throughout Zaire is ironically very local and very democratic, albeit informal and with very little economic foundation. Refugees east of Kabila's frontline need help, of course, but there are no signs that Kabila is keeping humanitarian agencies from contacting them.

Kabila well received

Kabila's troops have been well-received in Kisangani and in smaller towns and there are very few reports of arrests and none of violence or looting by them. People in Kisangani reported looting by Mobutu's "elite" troops just before they fled and Kinshasa residents fear a similar bout of violence and theft as the last of Mobutu's troops and mercenaries flee the capital.

There is bound to be some helter-skelter movement of people between the present frontlines and the major military targets of Lubumbashi and Kinshasa but the limited armaments held by Kabila and his generous attitude towards both non-combatants and former enemies suggests prudence in his final military thrusts.

Why not leave him free to complete his military campaign and to deal, even peremptorily, with Mobutu and his family and cronies who are still selling arms to Unita, according to recent reports.

Both tasks are indispensable prerequisites to the difficult efforts which Kabila and like-minded Zairean democrats will have to form an effective government and to begin the enormous task of reconstructing a nation.

If the African and non-African outsiders were as committed to these unequivocal steps as Kabila seems to be, there might be an argument for a non-Zairean force to complete the removal of Mobutu as a military and political force. Of course, they are not.

A few, including France and maybe Belgium, prefer a stable regime with Kabila tightly constrained politically. The US equivocates, not quite trusting Kabila's early efforts at political education. African governments exhibit an even wider range of preferences.

In any case, the imposition of an external military force at this time is unlikely. The demand for a ceasefire and negotiation reflects the wistful preference for a "solution" anything that might avoid bringing attention to the continued inability of most states to take a firm political stand in such conflicts, even when both the moral and practical choices are as clear as they should be in Mobutu's Zaire.

His ties and those of his senior officials with Unita are contributing in a major way to the continued unrest in Angola and need to be cut off. Taken together with reports that Unita contingents are moving into Zaire to defend Lubumbashi and Kinshasa, it is hard to believe that any ceasefire will hold – unless, and most improbably, if large troop contingents were made available from other African countries and from beyond the continent.

Far better to let Kabila's military campaign run its course. So far, in all its reported contacts with either Hutu refugees or Zairean residents of towns, there have been no reports of reprisals or punitive actions.

On the contrary, whatever its long-term problems of establishing effective governance in a country where there has been none for three decades, its immediate behaviour has been close to flawless.

Of course, something needs to be done to help those refugees milling around in Kabila-held eastern Zaire. Kabila himself has raised no objections to involvement by humanitarian agencies.

But the argument made for a ceasefire focused on refugees ahead of the present, rapidly-moving frontline is exaggerated, and may well have ulterior motives directed against Kabila, and only prolongs the military victory vital to an optimal prospect for getting rid of the deadwood at the top of Mobutu's regime.

Leave it to Kabila

Would it be amoral if Mobutu and those men, identified as profiteers in the Angolan civil war were brought to justice by a military court? Such action would leave other perpetrators quaking and serve as a constructive symbol for Zaireans who have known of such practices and may have deplored them.

Anything short of such immediate justice would muddy the prospects of democratisation. Leave it to Kabila and those elements of military and political leadership from the old regime that he decides he can work with, to deal with Mobutu and his cronies and to stifle the Unita ties and presence in Zaire.

He may fail but no outside forces – be its aegis African or UN – will have the will, the money or the manpower to carry through these vital prerequisites to the difficult task of working towards democratic governance in Zaire.

(Dr Seiler is a Johannesburg-based political analyst.)

MANDELA'S ROLE 'SYMBOLIC'

Pretoria tipped for Zaire talks

THE UN SPECIAL representative for the Great Lakes region is in South Africa recovering from illness and preparing for talks between the Zairian government and rebels.

TALKS between Zairian rebels and the teetering government of President Mobutu Sese Seko will probably take place at the end of this week in Pretoria.

South African ambassador to Zaire Mr Jan van Deventer said the talks would more than likely take place in Pretoria, although Cape Town was also a possibility. There was also a chance they could be held in another African capital.

He said Deputy President Thabo Mbeki had played a significant role in fostering the talks, and SA Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman Mr Marco Boni emphasised that SA would play only "a supporting role" by providing a venue and logistical support.

If President Nelson Mandela played any role, it would probably be only a symbolic one, diplomatic sources said.

The UN special representative for the Great Lakes region, Mr Mohamed Sahnoun, will lead the talks. Sahnoun arrived in South Africa suffering from an undefined illness but is recovering, UN officials said yesterday.

The officials said talks between representatives of Zaire's President Mobutu and the rebel movement of Mr Laurent Kabila would probably be held on Saturday but they would not be announced until both delegations were in South Africa.

Sahnoun, who also represents the Organisation of African Unity, brought representatives from Mobutu's embattled government and rebel forces together in Togo last week after visiting Kabila in Kisingani.

Kabila's rebels have been fighting Mobutu since October.A ceasefire date and the agenda remain to be worked out by the two sides.

Mandela was quoted as saying during his visit to New Delhi last week that SA would play a role, but only as an extension of broader African efforts and of initiatives of United Nations secretary-general Mr Kofi Annan.

Rebels led by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire under Kabila have taken about a quarter of the sprawling country.

During recent talks with Mandela, Kabila pressed home his view that his forces could not call a ceasefire while on a military winning streak or before negotiations.Van Deventer said he had only had communication with Mobutu's government, but the rebels were now ready for talks. — Political Staff, Reuter



ANYTHING WILL DO: A Zairian boy rides on the back of a passing car through his flooded neighbourhood in Kinshasa, after rains caused the sewage system to overflow through the city market earlier this week. At the United Nations, a spokesman said peace talks between representatives of the rebels and Zaire's government were expected to begin in South Africa at the weekend. *PICTURE: AP*

Mobutu foe chosen as prime minister

(358)

KINSHASA: Opposition politicians chose Mr Etienne Tsishekedi, a longstanding foe of President Mobutu Sese Seko, as prime minister yesterday.

The announcement ended a week of negotiations over who should replace Mobutu's handpicked prime minister.

Mobutu has accepted parliament's vote of no confidence in Mr Leon Kengo wa Dondo, who has been blamed for mishandling the war with rebels who have captured much of eastern Zaire.

In a transitional constitution, written after Mobutu bowed to demands to embark on democratic reforms, the opposition parties in parliament have the right to name the prime minister.

Mobutu has to accept the decision before it can become official.

Tsishekedi has served as prime minister twice before, but has been ousted after clashing with Mobutu.

The government, meanwhile, has denied that rebels have seized Kamina, south-east of here, although the rebels insist they have gained control.

Mobutu's son, Mr Nzanga Mobutu, repeated yesterday that a ceasefire should coincide with the talks — but the rebels have said they won't stop fighting until after talks begin. ET 2/4/97

He also said his father was committed to long-promised, but still unscheduled, elections.

"We want elections," he said. "If Kabila wants President Mobutu out of the political arena, he has to submit to elections. He's got to learn how to be democratic. He's got to stop killing people. Killing people will not bring about democracy in Zaire." — Sapa-AP

Preparations on track for Zaire peace talks in SA

(358)

ARG 2/4/97

Mandela, Mbeki praised

CLIVE SAWYER
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Preparations are going ahead for representatives of Zaire's warring sides to meet in South Africa for peace talks in the next few days .

The talks are expected to be led by Mohamed Sahnoun, United Nations special envoy to Zaire, who also represents the Organisation of African Unity in the peace initiative. Provisional plans are for the talks to be held on Saturday. A venue has not yet been disclosed.

South Africa, which has demurred from taking credit for a leading role in the initiative, has won plaudits for its role.

Issa Ganda, charge d'affaires of the Zairean embassy in Pretoria, paid tribute to the role played by President Mandela and his deputy, Thabo Mbeki, in helping to facilitate the talks.

A Zairean government delegation, including political leaders and military officers, is due in South Africa this week.

The rebel delegation is expected to be led by Bizima Karaha, who led a delegation to a previous summit in Togo – where an agreement in principle was reached to hold this week's talks. It is expected that the talks could include discussions on a ceasefire and the future of the government of ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Meanwhile, Sapa-AP reports that the rebels have achieved a series of military successes. The Zairean government denied has denied that rebels captured the strategic southern town of Kamina, a key step to Lumumbashi, Zaire's second largest city.

While the government insisted it still controlled Kamina, rebels insisted it had fallen to them. The rebels reportedly were blocking the flow of food and medicine to the more than 20 000 ill and hunger-stricken refugees displaced by the fighting, leading to a warning by the United Nations that refugees could face death by starvation.

■ Reuter reported today from Kinshasa that former premier Etienne Tshisekedi had accepted a proposal from opposition parties that he become prime minister and fill the power vacuum as rebels gain more and more territory.

Mr Tshisekedi was nominated late yesterday by so-called radical opposition parties under a procedure called for in Zaire's transitional constitution. He was named interim premier in 1992, part of a move by from a single- to a multi-party state.

Mr Mobutu dismissed Mr Tshisekedi in 1993, but he refused to go and has considered himself to be prime minister all along.

An aide said today that the appointment was just "confirmation" that Mr Tshisekedi was the "legal" prime minister.

Zaire has been effectively without a government since the resignation last month of prime minister Kengo wa Dondo.

See Page 10

Mobutu's cash may be frozen

Swiss banks thought to be holding $15-billion

ARG 2/4/97 (358)

FOREIGN SERVICE

Paris – The Swiss government, embarrassed by the scandal over its hoarding of gold belonging to Jewish victims of the Nazis, has not ruled out the possibility of freezing the supposedly fabulous bank deposits of Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko, now dying of cancer and likely to be deposed.

A Swiss foreign affairs spokesman said that Switzerland could freeze Mr Mobutu's assets if it received a judicial order to do so. That was likely only once a new government came to power in Kinshasa, which seemed increasingly likely as rebels advanced towards the capital.

Mr Mobutu, who has ruled Zaire for over 30 years with an iron fist, has now been forced to offer a power-sharing arrangement to the rebels.

The Zairian leader's personal fortune in Switzerland is estimated at anything up to $15-billion (R66-billion), slightly more than his vast country's huge national debt.

He also has several multimillion dollar properties in Europe. They include a luxurious villa overlooking Lausanne, with more than 30 rooms; La Villa del Mare, a double-storied mansion on the French Cote d'Azur, with a marbled courtyard and a view of the Mediterranean, and a huge apartment on the very exclusive Avenue Foch in Paris.

"Mr Mobutu is also said to have villas in Brussels, in Faro, Portugal, and in Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire.

Meanwhile, Zaire's national debt was $13-billion (R57-billion) at the last count in 1995, and this is not being repaid.

The possibility of Mr Mobutu's bank account being frozen by the Swiss government was evoked two weeks ago when opposition deputies began to question the government on the issue.

A socialist deputy from Bale asked the Federal Council to reveal details of the Zairian leader's fortune in Switzerland.

The Swiss government created a precedent in 1986 when it temporarily froze the assets of Philippines leader Ferdinand Marcos. However, this was after Mr Marcos had left the country and there had been a change of government, said the Swiss foreign affairs spokesman.

"There will have to be a new government in Zaire, which then asks for an inquiry," he said. "At the moment Mr. Mobutu is still the president."

The Swiss government could freeze Mr Mobutu's assets only after a judicial inquiry, he said.

"The government is following the situation in Zaire very closely," he added.

The Swiss government is very concerned about its image after the Marcos affair and after the recent scandal about Swiss banks holding money that belonged to victims of the Holocaust.

The government also doesn't want to be seen to be harbouring dictators.

Mr. Mobutu was not given another visa after his departure from Lausanne, where he had a prostate operation, in November.

Toughest battle yet to come for victorious Kabila

Law has to be restored

ARG 19/5/97 (358)

Kinshasa – Laurent Kabila faced a tough task today in giving a fresh start to Zaire after the fall of Mobutu Sese Seko under strong political and diplomatic pressure.

He will have no time to savour his victory after his forces took over the capital at the weekend and he proclaimed himself head of a country he renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo.

With the leading figures of the Mobutu own Alliance of Democratic Forces.

The leader of the radical opposition, Etienne Tshisekedi, known as "the sphinx," was keeping a low profile yesterday, but his principal advisor, Gaston Mukendi, indicated that he would play a waiting game for the time being.

"At the moment it is still a military situation,"said Mr Mukendi. "We must wait until things are secure and we will hope to make some contacts. We hope that every-



REUTER

They're going to kill me: an unidentified man speaks to journalists in Kinshasa as soldiers loyal to Laurent Kabila lead him to his death

Mobutu mystery as Kabila grip tightens

(358)

ARG 19/5/97

Lomé, Togo – As rebel leader Laurent Kabila sealed his hold on Zaire's capital, the whereabouts of the man he ousted remained unclear early today.

Togo state television reported that former Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seko had slipped out of his home village late on Saturday night in a cargo plane just ahead of Mr Kabila's troops and flown to Togo.

He had landed for a brief technical stop in Lomé airport on Sunday and left for Rabat, Morocco, at 9.35am to join a party of his entourage that had arrived earlier, the television said yesterday.

The report, citing the "Mobutu entourage," seemed credible, given Mr Mobutu's close relationship with Togolese dictator

regime having apparently left the country, Mr Kabila may have a clear hand to launch the process towards democracy by forming the promised government of national salvation and a constituent assembly.

But he will have to find his way through the political maze created in the Mobutu era to give the impression Zaire was developing into a democratic state. There are no fewer than 450 political parties, while the 738-member "transitional" parliament spent most of its time arguing over trivialities.

Mr Kabila has said he wants to bring leaders of all tendencies into a future government, but that the political parties would have to come under the wing of his one w... now begin to work together.

Archbishop Laurent Mossengwo, named parliamentary Speaker in the dying days of the Mobutu regime, said: "We must work as hard as possible for a consensus."

Analysts said that the new regime might not be as willing to achieve such a consensus as the archbishop hoped, but it would have to try to establish the rule of law in a corruption-prone country which has seen no real government for years.

Diplomats have also been cautious in welcoming Mr Kabila's arrival, while breathing a sigh of relief that Mr Mobutu had gone without the feared bloodbath in Kinshasa. – Sapa-AFP

Arg 19/5/97

It's wait-and-see for US on Zaire

FOREIGN SERVICE

Washington – After backing Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko as a bulwark against the spread of Soviet communism in sub-Saharan Africa, the United States is adopting a wait-and-see attitude to the renamed Democratic Republic of Congo.

President Bill Clinton, his senior African specialists, politicians and analysts said America would wait to see new ruler Laurent Kabila's commitment to democratic reforms, public accountability and respect for human rights during the next days and months before committing itself on any future policy and logistical or financial help.

Mr Clinton said the US wanted to see genuine democracy in Zaire, and then paid tribute to President Mandela's role as mediator in the conflict. He hoped Mr Mandela would still play a facilitating role to ensure that the war-weary country held democratic elections soon.

Meanwhile, the French government says its relations with the new government will depend on Mr Kabila's showing evidence of firm commitments to democracy, protection of foreign nationals and addressing the refugee problem.

In a statement from the French embassy in Pretoria, France also deplored the fact that the negotiated political solution supported by the whole international community had not prevailed.



REUTER

Execution: a soldier shoots the man in the back in a Kinshasa side street after he was marched through the city from a military camp

Gnassingbe Eyadema. But it did not say whether Mr Mobutu had landed in Morocco. And rumours persisted in Lome that he had stepped off the aircraft before it left for Rabat, and was still in the capital.

Those stories were impossible to confirm last night, but a check of hotels showed that three of his close advisers were in the Togolese capital: Foreign Minister Kamanda Wa Kamanda; Interior Minister Ilunga Shamanga; and Honore Ngbanda, his envoy to peace talks with the rebels.

Mr Eyadema had been one of the few international leaders to condemn Mr Kabila for capturing the capital of Kinshasa – Mr Mobutu's last stronghold – instead of maintaining a South African-brokered dialogue with Mr Mobutu.

Speculation had mounted yesterday as to Mr Mobutu's whereabouts.

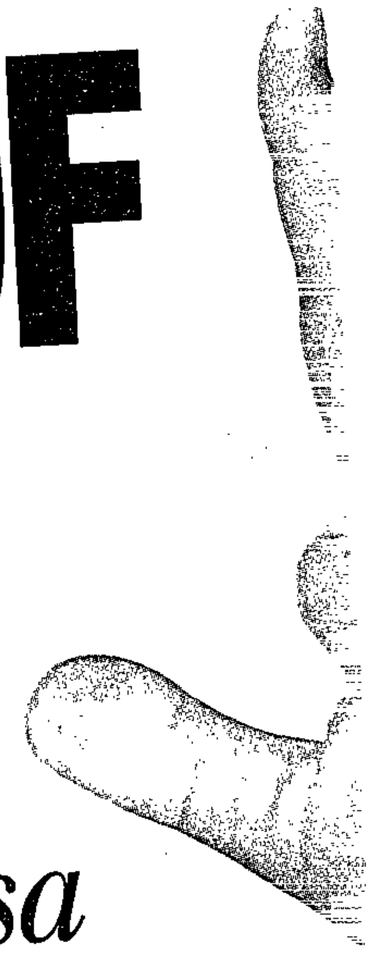
Authorities at a military airport in the Moroccan capital of Rabat said Mr Mobutu had arrived early yesterday, but a Mobutu spokesman in Paris said the deposed president was still in his home village of Gbadolite in northern Zaire.

He was said to have fled there hours before the rebels marched into Kinshasa on Saturday and gave Mr Kabila victory in his seven-month war.

Late on Saturday, a Moroccan government official said Mr Mobutu would stop briefly there and then head to Liechtenstein until after the coming French legislative elections. At that point, the deposed leader would settle into exile in France.

A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said he was unaware of that report. – Sapa

ZAIRE'S DAY OF RECKONING



Joy and revenge erupt in Kinshasa

(358) ARG 19/5/97

Joy and revenge are bubbling through Kinshasa as Zaire's new rulers cement their grip on the country and the former rebel army hunts down the last armed supporters of ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

SPECIAL REPORT



ROSS HERBERT IN KINSHASA

Today Laurent Kabila's supporters moved quickly to take control of the chaotic and corrupt economy of what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo and to form a broad-based transitional government.

The national radio, formerly Voice of Zaire and renamed Voice of Congo by the rebels, broadcast an appeal today to business leaders, and heads of parastatals, to attend a conference later today.

It was understood the purpose was to try to restore some order to an economy which has virtually ground to a halt after 31 years of gross corruption, theft and mismanagement.

Meanwhile reports continued to come in of occasional summary executions of members of Mr Mobutu's hated DSB presidential guard.

About a hundred people milled in front of the parliament around the body of a Mobutu soldier. They taunted and prodded him as a fat woman cursed and wagged her backside over his face.

Other Mobutu soldiers were killed by mobs. And the departed ruler's Marble Palace and the homes of cronies were looted.

Every time truckloads of rebel soldiers rolled through the streets, spontaneous cheers billowed up from the thousands who turned out to greet them.

Mr Kabila's army began marching into Kinshasa on Saturday morning, facing little opposition. But exchanges of machinegun fire and mortar shells exploded late into the night as Mr Mobutu's presidential guard fought its way out of the city to the south, where several fires could be seen burning.

At an army compound, hundreds of Mobutu soldiers surrendered their weapons. At Camp Tshatshi, the sprawling military camp where the president lived with his élite guard, rebel soldiers turned journalists away because several Mobutu soldiers hiding in the camp had been killed during the day.

Makongo Galenga went to surrender with his brother Willy, who was asked how the rebels treated them. "One of them actually gave me money. About 350 000 new zaires (about R10)," he said.

Kinshasa's revenge came in a number of forms. Crowds handed Mobutu soldiers over to the rebels. A group of seven Mobutu soldiers hijacked a car, but lost control of it after crowds gave chase. The soldiers were beaten and burned to death by the crowd.

There was sporadic looting yesterday, but it was selective. Looters smashed the homes of rich Mobutu allies while leaving adjoining houses untouched.

People broke into Mr Mobutu's villa, known as the Marble Palace. Beds, cabinets, refrigerators, the mounted heads of leopards and Cape buffalo, gaudy plaster statues painted gold: everything movable of value was "liberated".

"We are getting back what they owe us. It is money they have stolen from us," shouted one man, running from the palace with a bright green stuffed velvet chair on his head. As the looters raced away with Mr Mobutu's purloined goods, a car full of Mobutu soldiers raced by, spraying the area with a sustained burst of machinegun fire.

Across the street, the mob looted the lavish home of Mobutu's son, Kongulu, whose SwissAir frequent flyer card lay in the dirt, listing his home address as Lausanne, Switzerland. Nearby were a brochure for a Lamborghini and a manual for a Rolex Oyster watch.

Dried blood was splattered on the pavement in front of his home, and water gushed through the once posh house as people stole the dark-blue toilets and sinks. Boxes of deadly hollow-point Israeli ammunition were stacked in one room, Arabic ammunition in another. Machineguns were strewn around.

One man said the looting of Kongulu's house was started by his own servants. "They know he is the one who killed General Mahele," one man said, referring to a widespread rumour that Kongulu killed the general who finally told his father late last Thursday that the army could not defend the city or protect him.

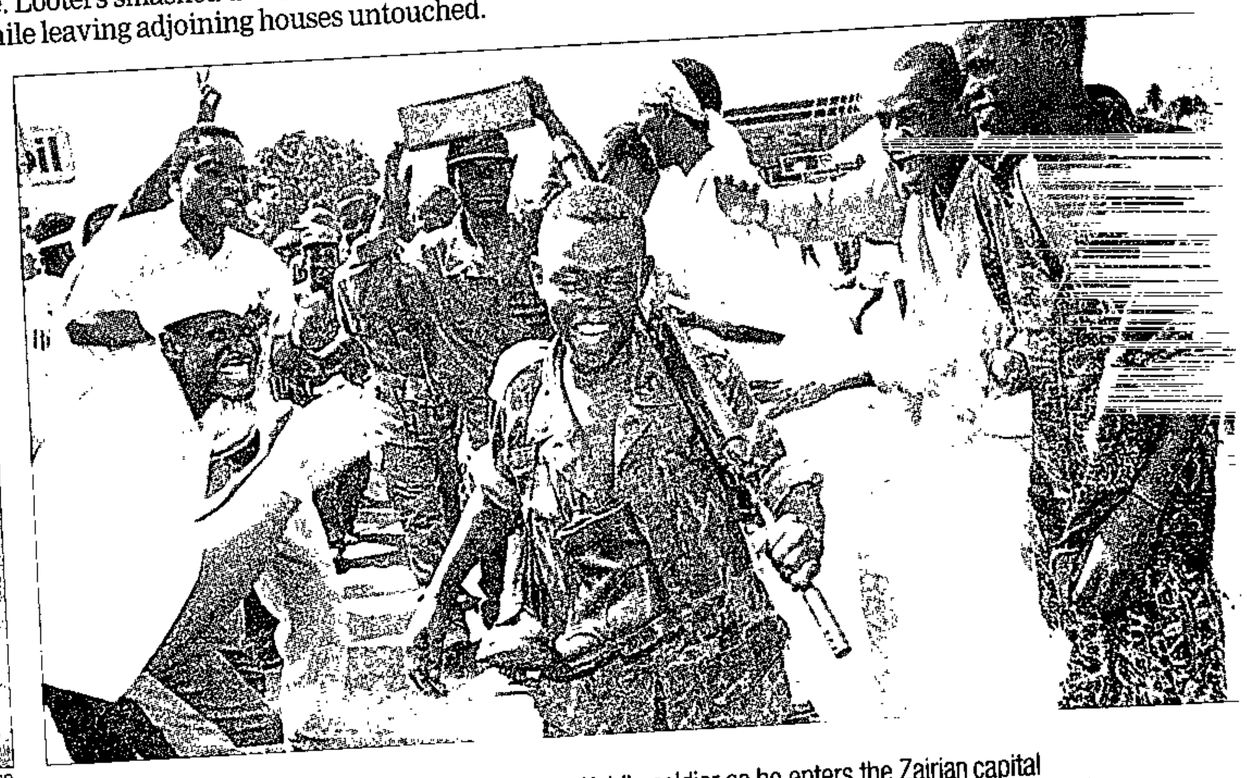
Public wrath also liberated Kinshasa's jails. On Saturday, the public helped inmates escape then thoroughly looted the prison buildings.

More reports, pictures, page



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Reflected glory: a victorious Kabila soldier marches into Kinshasa



Our hero: people in Kinshasa joyfully greet a young Kabila soldier as he enters the Zairian capital

Mbeki satisfied by Kabila's pledges

South Africa had recognised Laurent Kabila as new president of Zaire without strings, but planned to offer him advice on ensuring democracy and stability, officials said today.

"There are no 'buts' attached to our recognition of Kabila as the new president. There are no strings attached.

"The Deputy President is quite confident this process will unfold as promised," said Ricky Naidoo, spokesman for South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

After two hours of talks with Mr Kabila yesterday, Mr Mbeki said South Africa would immediately recognise the former rebel leader as head of state.

Other governments recognised Kabila, too, but many added an exhortation to institute democratic structures as soon as possible.

Mr Naidoo said Mr Mbeki would brief diplomats in Pretoria today about his meeting with Mr Kabila.

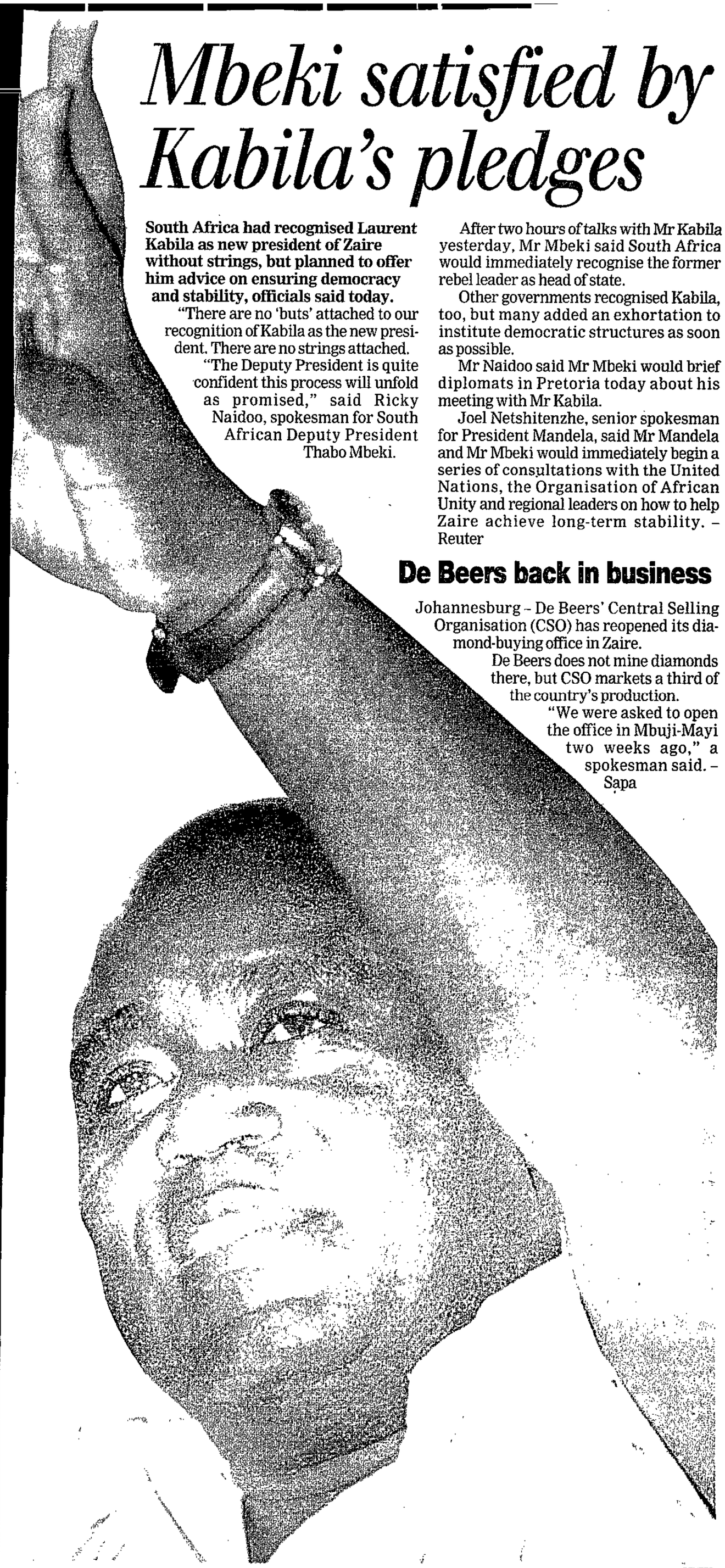
Joel Netshitenzhe, senior spokesman for President Mandela, said Mr Mandela and Mr Mbeki would immediately begin a series of consultations with the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity and regional leaders on how to help Zaire achieve long-term stability. – Reuter

De Beers back in business

Johannesburg – De Beers' Central Selling Organisation (CSO) has reopened its diamond-buying office in Zaire.

De Beers does not mine diamonds there, but CSO markets a third of the country's production.

"We were asked to open the office in Mbuji-Mayi two weeks ago," a spokesman said. – Sapa



REUTER

I'm in charge now: Laurent Kabila salutes supporters after ousting the dictator Mobutu Sese Seko as Zaire's leader

Mobutu's $4-billion rip-off

(368) M+G 16-22/5/97

Zaire could have been one of the world's richest countries, but it's one of the poorest. How did one man loot a nation? Mark Milner, Chris McGreal and Chris Barrie report

NINETEEN thirty was a poor year for vintage port. Although cheap, it has little more than its rarity value to commend it. It was a bad year for Zaire, too. It marked the birth of Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, alias Mobutu Sese Seko — for 32 years the country's rapacious president.

Port and Mobutu go glass in hand. One of the Zairean president's more mundane vices is a taste for wine of the same vintage as himself. In his Portuguese holiday home he has insured himself against a wine drought by amassing 14 000 bottles, no mean achievement for the president of a country where there is just one hospital bed for every 700 people. And at R685 a bottle the 1930 port may be cheap by the standards of London clubland but it is well over a year's salary for many Zaireans.

The Portuguese connection is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the fortune Mobutu has amassed during the three decades of his presidency. The *Financial Times* has reported United States sources calculating that at its peak his assets totalled $4-billion, not quite in the Ferdinand Marcos league but still extraordinary.

Over the past decade the mounting costs of staying in power have put something of a dent in the Mobutu cash mountain but there is still plenty left, some $2,5-billion, according to more recent estimates.

If Mobutu is forced into involuntary retirement by the rebel forces, under Laurent Kabila, it will not be into penury.

The president and his family own a property portfolio which includes some of the best addresses in Brussels; a Paris flat handily placed for the milliner who makes Mobutu's trademark leopardskin hats; a villa in the South of France and another in Switzerland; and hotels in Spain and South Africa.

That might seem a lot to some, but not to Mobutu. In 1991 he told the magazine *Jeune Afrique*: "I have a flat in Paris and small properties in France which people pompously call chateaux. I have a villa in Geneva and out of my wife's estate we have allowed ourselves to buy four or five houses in Brussels. Because we are thinking of our children's future. It is not a fortune."

Fortune or not, the property is only part of the Mobutu riches. He is said to have shares in a string of European companies. There is a coffee plantation in Brazil.

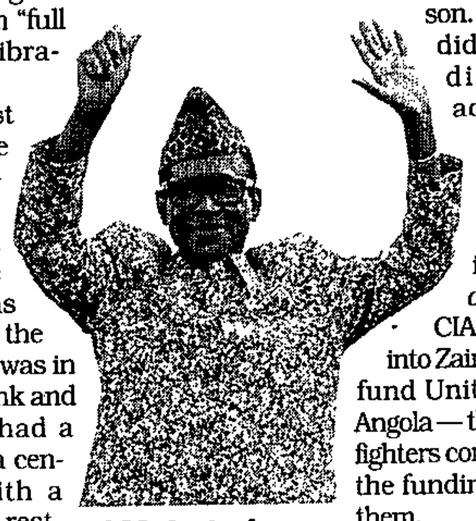
Besides his foreign villas, Mobutu maintained a range of residences around Zaire. Some, such as the lakeside home in Goma, he rarely visited. The palatial house on Lake Kivu was graced with the Zairean leader's presence only once, in 1990, when he met then president FW de Klerk there.

But like his other mansions it was kept spotless, and hidden from prying eyes. That was until the rebels seized Goma at the beginning of their war six months ago.

The villa was an early target for vengeful looters who might have imagined the Father of the Nation had more taste. At first glance his Goma mansion appeared an ornate French chateau decorated in marble and glass. But the Romanesque plinths were plastic, and the giant Ming vases imitation. The marble tables proved fake. Even the vast chandeliers were plastic, as they clattered rather than tinkled in the wind.

Mobutu kept a stock of his famed cravats to hand, and a vast selection of crocodile and Italian shoes to rival Imelda Marcos. In the corner of his office sat a massage couch with speeds varying from "full rolling" to "back vibration".

But perhaps most revealing were the his and hers bathrooms, wired with stereo speakers and buttons to call the servants. Each was clearly signalled by the colour scheme. His was in sky blue, hers in pink and burgundy. Both had a giant whirlpool as a centrepiece, hers with a gold-thread pillow resting on the edge. Each was surrounded by foot-high bottles of perfume, cologne and bath salts. One brand of perfume — "Je Reviens" or "I return" — seemed touchingly optimistic. The car park was home to the five gleaming black Mercedes and the only two ambulances in the province.



If Mobutu is forced into involuntary retirement, it will not be into penury

The great unknown, however, is Mobutu's cash stash. The *Financial Times* has quoted a Swiss member of Parliament who alleged that Mobutu had "several billion dollars" invested in Switzerland. If that is the case and if Mobutu is forced into exile, the Swiss banking industry is likely to find itself caught up in another wrangle to rank with those of the Marcos deposits and the dormant accounts of Jews murdered during the Holocaust.

Mobutu's fortune appears to have been amassed by three main routes. Zaire is richly endowed with natural resources, particularly copper, cobalt and diamonds. Substantial sums are alleged to have been diverted into Mobutu's private coffers. In 1984 a Belgian report claimed that the Zairean president had siphoned off some 60-billion Belgian francs (roughly R7-billion) over 10 years from one of the state-owned natural resources concerns.

In a paper for an Africa Studies Association conference, cited in the London-based Africa Analysis, Mobutu and his associates are said to have diverted up to 20% of the state operating budget and up to half of the capital budget for their personal use. Little wonder critics claim Mobutu treated Zaire "like his private property".

A second route to fortune was provided by Western businessmen looking for chances to exploit Zaire's resources. Stories of corruption abound. Anecdote has it that, for example, one Western company seeking a banking licence in the country was simply informed by the president that a relative needed a "soft" loan of some $12-million. The company paid the money into a Swiss account but never got its banking licence.

Zairean political folklore tells of a transport minister who protested that the $75-million he pocketed in one year was merely a modest 10% of the contracts he had signed. Those contracts include a deal for electronic equipment for more airports than Zaire possesses.

A source of funds for the Mobutu regime came from foreign aid of which Zaire has received some $8,5-billion (about R38-billion) over the past 25 years. There is little doubt that much of the money never reached the projects for which it was intended. Britain gave up providing even non-governmental aid some years ago for this reason. "Whatever you did, the money disappeared," according to a British official.

Not all the foreign aid was overt. According to the *Financial Times*, the CIA pumped money into Zairean channels to fund Unita guerrillas in Angola — though the Unita fighters complained little of the funding ever reached them.

Despite such institutionalised avarice Mobutu's fortune isn't what it was. His funding was hit by the collapse in copper prices. The diamond money had pretty much dried up to a few million dollars a month even before the rebels seized the mines.

With the government's coffers empty, Mobutu has for years coughed up from his own resources to pay his 15 000-strong presidential guard. Mostly they received about R200 a month, a magnificent sum compared to the paltry R15 given the average soldier — if he were paid at all. The presidential guard had the added bonus of real weapons and real uniforms.

His money may not have bought efficiency or fighting ability but it did buy loyalty. The Special Presidential Division is the only unit to put up anything like resistance.

Perhaps the biggest drain on Mobutu's fortune has been keeping democracy at bay. After he was pressured by foreign governments into reviving a multi-party system seven years ago, Zaire's autocrat promptly set about undermining it at every turn. That ate up untold amounts of cash. Opponents had to be bought off and the loyalty of old cronies ensured in the endless debates which went on in the 2 000-strong transitional Parliament year after year.

The greatest cost was the creation of dozens of fake political parties to sow chaos among the opposition. No one is quite sure just how many Mobutu's money backed, but it is a good slice of the 450 parties which have sprung up since 1990.

Not so long ago that looked like money well spent. Just a year ago, before anyone could have imagined rebels at the gates of Kinshasa, Mobutu looked to have every chance of creating enough chaos and division to win a presidential election.

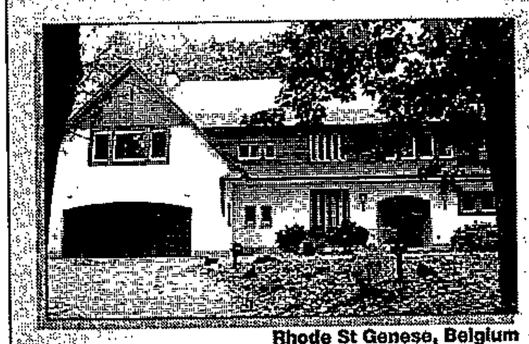
Now one of Africa's long reigning dictators looks about to depart. He will leave behind a looted country. According to the most recent figures Zaire's foreign debt amounted to $9,6-billion (about R43-billion). In recent years there has been little effort at repayment.

That begs the question as to why the Western powers tolerated Mobutu for so long. According to one old Zairean hand, the explanation is straightforward. "He simply happened to be a politically important, or considered important, person in Africa and so he

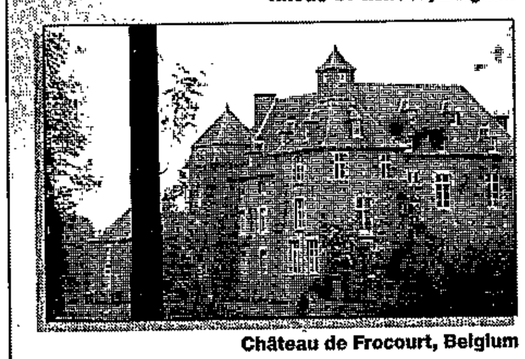
Where the money's gone

Mobutu's property portfolio

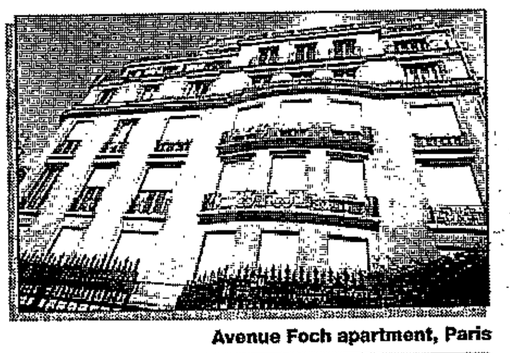
- Mobuto's overall fortune peaked in the mid-80s at an estimated $4bn
- He has substantial shares in German and Swiss companies, plus liquid assets
- After 32 years in power he also owns an impressive property portfolio with at least 20 properties in 10 countries worth an estimated $37m



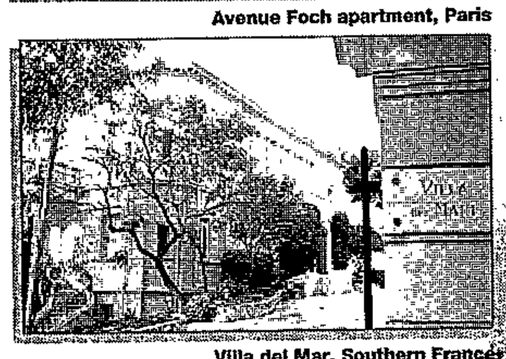
Rhode St Genese, Belgium



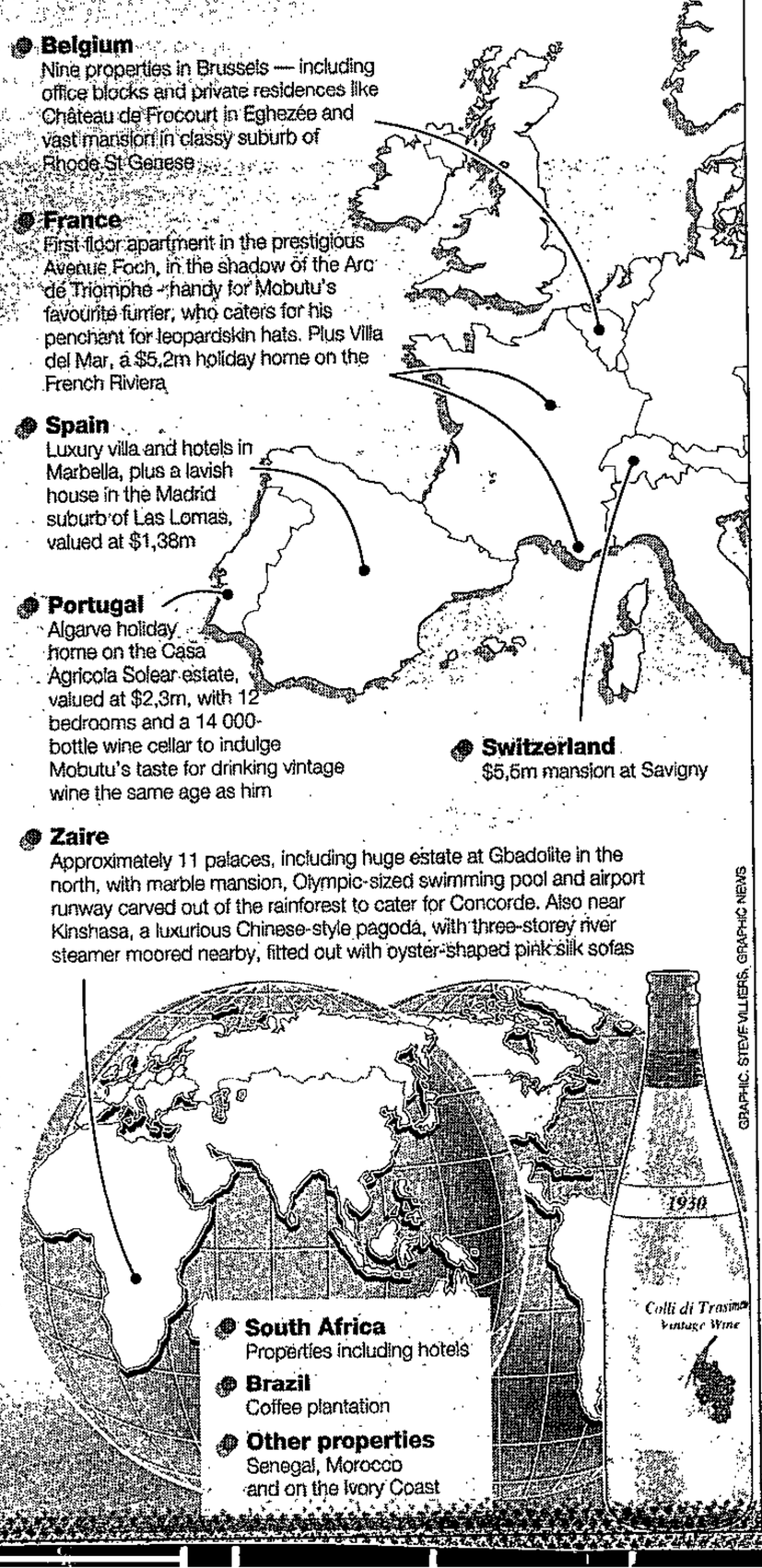
Château de Frocourt, Belgium



Avenue Foch apartment, Paris



Villa del Mar, Southern France



Women hope for dictator's demise

MHG 18-24/4/97 (358)

Chris McGreal in Lubumbashi

ONE group of women knows exactly what it expects from Laurent Kabila's rebel troops, should they ultimately be victorious in Zaire — the abolition of Mobutu's Family Code which legalised polygamy, relieved husbands of responsibility for the maintenance of wives and children, and lowered the sexual age of consent to 13.

President Mobutu Sese Seko imposed the revised law 10 years ago. Some women describe it as the greatest blow to their status in modern times, adding to the already considerable insecurities of life in Zaire.

Mafiki Yav Marie, a member of a Lubumbashi women's association, was one whose life was almost wrecked by the code.

"We lost our dignity. We lost our status in society. The code says we have no rights as women or wives and our husbands could do anything with us, even take our property, or just abandon us and take up with other wives. We'd like our dignity back," she said.

Mafiki was married with 10 children when her husband took advantage of the code to take a second wife. That was bad enough. After a while he stopped supporting Mafiki and their children. Then he wanted all her property, including the house she had bought after he abandoned her.

The law was on his side. The 1987 code gave a husband the right to claim all of his wife's property even if they were not living together.

"I went to court. It took years and years because he tried to say I didn't have any right to live in the house I had bought or any right to the things I owned when I got married. Under the Family Code even his children from his other wife can come and claim my property when my husband dies. I won the case because I had money to fight it and he gave up but I think I could have been made homeless," she said.

While husbands who take more than one wife don't necessarily abandon their first spouse, they are often less able to provide for more than one family. And in the end, Mafiki says, it is wives and children who suffer.

But for many women the most shocking aspect of the Family Code was the lowering of the age of sexual consent. It outraged many groups including Lubumbashi's Association of Christian Women. Bulakali Marie Immacule is a member.

"In Europe you talk of paedophiles but here paedophilia is legal. What else can you call it when men can take 13-year-old girls?" she asked.

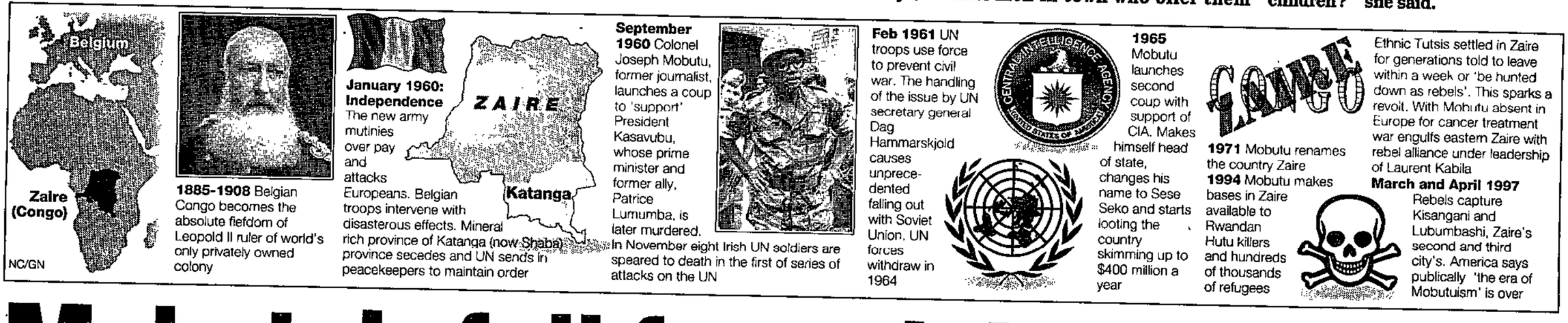
The collapse of Zaire's economy has forced more children on to the streets, to live or beg for food. Girls are the most vulnerable.

"Some will do whatever is necessary to survive," Bulakali said. "There are rich men in town who offer them money and somewhere to sleep. Some believe that if they take a virgin then they inherit her youth. Everyone knows who these men are but there's nothing we can do. If you go to the prosecutors and tell them they point to the law and say there's nothing illegal."

On top of the insecurity created by the Family Code, the collapse of Zaire's economy has added to the burdens of providing for families — especially by women on their own.

Bulakali — who works for a railway company which has not paid her in four months — says her Christian group has asked some members to leave because of what they have resorted to in order to survive.

"Some are obliged to leave the association because they became prostitutes. We cannot condone it but they ask: 'How else can we survive? How else can we look after our children?'" she said.



Mobutu's fall from riches to rags

(358) MHG 18-24/4/97

Declining copper prices and foreign investment have forced Zaire's president to scratch the bottom of the barrel, report **James Rupert** and **David Ottaway**

PRESIDENT Mobutu Sese Seko, who for years has been widely regarded as one of the world's most corrupt and wealthy men, appears to have run out of cash, according to diplomats and Zairean sources.

After 31 years of treating Zaire's state treasury as his personal bank account, Mobutu is seeing his regime crumble.

He retains a constellation of real-estate properties worth tens of millions of dollars, and scholars, diplomats and Zairean journalists who have investigated him say he has other assets secreted overseas.

But in recent months Mobutu has had trouble scraping up cash even for what have become his basic tasks of survival, such as fighting off the rebel army or keeping his personal airliner fit to fly him back and forth to Europe for cancer treatments.

United States and European sources said Mobutu appears to have spent approximately $50-million for his military campaign, to buy weapons and rent mercenaries in an attempt to defeat foreign-backed rebels who now hold roughly half of the country and all the major cities, except for the capital, Kinshasa.

Mobutu took roughly half that amount from funds that his government had committed for elections this year, a US official in Washington and a European diplomat in Kinshasa said. Zairean election officials confirmed that the money is missing.

A more personal sign of Mobutu's cash crunch is that, when he "simply wants to move somewhere, he has to go searching for the money to maintain his plane and buy jet fuel," a Western diplomat said.

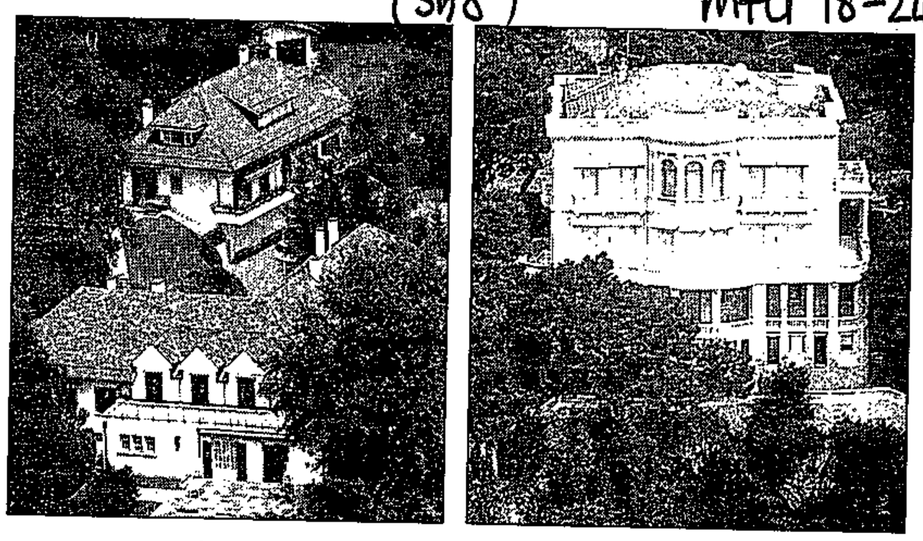
Since last year, Mobutu has flown repeatedly to Switzerland and France for treatment of prostate cancer.

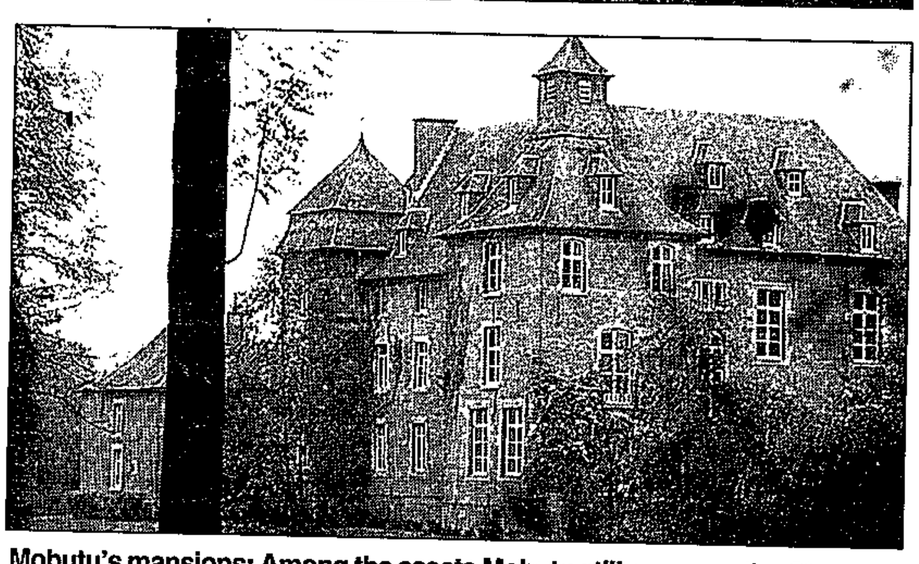
After Mobutu travelled to France in February for convalescence, his plane was flown to London for maintenance work, and "was grounded ... for a long time because he had no money to pay", the diplomat said.

In an apparent effort to raise cash, Mobutu has put some of his properties in Europe up for sale, State Department sources in Washington said.

Foreign donors last year promised to contribute more than $100-million for elections to help stabilise Zaire, on the condition that Zaire first begin making a contribution of its own. By the end of 1996, Zaire was to have placed $50-million into a United Nations trust fund for the election, but so far has provided less than $3-million, according to Tshilengi wa Kabamba, vice-president of the Zairean election commission.

A Zairean Defence Ministry official said the ministry had been given "several tens of millions of dollars" from elsewhere in the government budget to fight the war, but that he did not know from which agencies the money had been taken.





Mobutu's mansions: Among the assets Mobutu still owns are the Chateau de Frocourt at Eghezée, Belgium (above), a villa in Savigny, Switzerland (top left), and a mansion in France at Roquebrune Cap Martin (top right)

The sums that Mobutu has been scrambling for are tiny compared to those he reportedly raked in during earlier years. A 1993 article in a British journal by researchers Steve Askin and Carole Collins cited World Bank documents that estimated Mobutu had skimmed between $150-million and $400-million a year from Zaire's copper and cobalt exports throughout the 1980s. That embezzlement, while "the most lucrative pillar of Mobutu's system" of corruption, still was only a part of his income, the authors said.

Mobutu also routinely helped himself to funds from Zaire's state treasury, according to a 1982 International Monetary Fund report cited in the article. "The president's bureau makes no distinction between state expenditure and personal expenditure," International Monetary Fund official Erwin Blumenthal wrote in the report.

In 1981, the US government saw partial bank records of Mobutu that showed roughly a billion dollars in liquid assets in Europe, said Robert Oakley, a former US ambassador to Zaire. The records surfaced after the death of a Mobutu financial front man, known as Uncle Litho Maboti. Maboti's son showed the bank records to a US lawyer as part of a legal effort to get money that had been held in his father's name, Oakley said.

But 15 years after that glimpse, the size of Mobutu's fortune is much disputed, and the arguments are likely to become more pointed as Mobutu's opponents try to recover his money for Zaire. Angulu Mabengi, a spokesman in Europe for the rebel alliance headed by Laurent Kabila, told BBC radio last month that "we have asked the [Swiss] authorities to order the freezing of Mobutu's assets. ... According to our information, these — in Switzerland alone — amount to $4- or $5-billion."

Several sources said Mobutu's fortune never was as vast as the rebels claim, because he doled out much of his money to relatives, friends and political clients, partly to oil his political machine and partly to satisfy Central African tradition.

"He had to do this to keep his position," said a Western diplomat. By tradition in this region, "a chief who becomes unable to give away money becomes no longer a chief," he said.

Mobutu has "a lot of money in real estate, but I'd be amazed if he had much money in the kitty," Oakley said.

Mobutu's income dropped sharply since 1990, when world prices for copper collapsed. Zaire's copper earnings shrivelled from $1,4-billion in 1988 to $218-million in 1994, according to International Monetary Fund figures.

Also, the corruption and instability of Mobutu's rule has been killing the goose that laid the golden egg. With officials at all levels siphoning off public funds and demanding bribes, neither the government nor foreigners have invested in the economy.

Roads, rail lines, ports and telephone networks are falling apart and largely unusable.

In almost all of Zaire's main money-making sectors, "production today is no more than about 10% of what it was five years ago," a Western diplomat in Kinshasa said. "This has cut ... drastically" into Mobutu's income.

Mobutu also may find himself short on cash because of his own reported lack of financial sophistication.

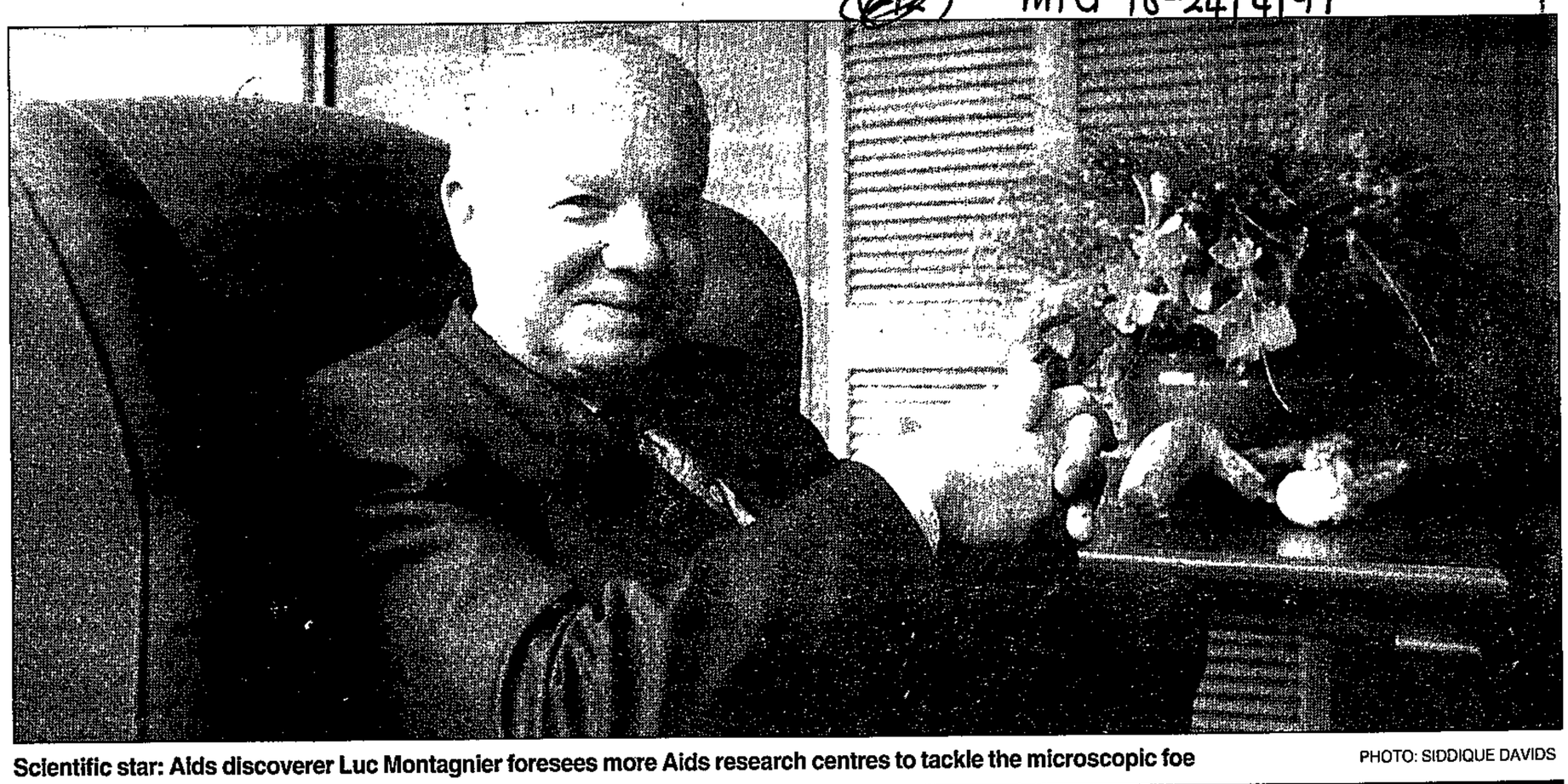
"He couldn't balance a chequebook," basically because he never had to, said a Zairean business executive. "His idea of banking was to pick up the phone and call [a top aide] and say, 'Send over 2-million.'"

"He can't keep all his money under his own name," a Western diplomat said. "He has to use other people as fronts to disperse his funds." His illness and the decline in his power have reduced the likelihood that a Mobutu aide will ever be punished for having stolen, thus enlarging opportunities for members of his entourage to take money for themselves, the diplomat said. — *The Washington Post*

Aids battle to move to 'hot spots'

M+G 18-24/4/97

Treatment for Aids barely exists for 90% of Third World patients. That may now change, says the scientist who discovered the Aids virus. Dawn Blalock reports



Scientific star: Aids discoverer Luc Montagnier foresees more Aids research centres to tackle the microscopic foe PHOTO: SIDDIQUE DAVIDS

AIDS is no longer the disease it used to be, says the man who discovered the virus that causes it. There's still no cure, but more effective treatments are transforming Aids from "a social phenomenon and a stigmatising mortal illness" to a medical problem, soon to join the ranks of other chronic illnesses, says Dr Luc Montagnier, the French physician who was catapulted to scientific stardom when he isolated the virus in 1983.

The diminutive, white-haired Montagnier toured South Africa last week, searching for a potential site to build a proposed Aids research centre to serve the whole of Southern Africa.

His grand design is for a network of Aids research centres in HIV "hot spots" to fight the virus on its fiercest front — the developing world.

"It is obvious that the world will not be rid of this epidemic if it is left to fester without intervention in ... the southern hemisphere," he says.

"Most of the spending [on Aids research] is in the developed world," Montagnier notes. "Of course, if Aids had been just an African disease, there would not have been so much public attention and research."

As more and more people manage to live full lives with Aids, and fewer people with HIV come down with full-blown Aids, the absolute death sentence appears less absolute.

Aids is "certainly serious" but treatable, if not yet curable, for patients in North America, Western Europe and Japan, Montagnier says. In the Third World, however, accessible treatment is non-existent for more than 90% of Aids patients.

That may change. With research funding in some European countries on the decline as the disease plateaus there, Montagnier's research centres could signal a change of tack to Aids research that will concentrate on and be located in endemic areas, looking at the strains of the virus and cultural issues that are unique to Africa and other developing areas.

And the continent does present some unique problems. Africans, Montagnier says, are not exactly compliant patients. The Aids "cocktail" or "triple therapy" treatments are prohibitively expensive and for them to work, patients with HIV must be treated early and often.

"It's difficult to understand that they must be treated every day, sometimes twice a day, without interruption. They say: 'But I'm not sick.'" And another version of denial — the attitude that "this is a disease for poor black Africans" — is still being battled.

Just as his research base at the Pasteur Institute in Paris is connected to a small hospital, the research centre he envisages in South Africa would be the same, so that both patients and medical researchers have ready access to one another.

Montagnier casts a disapproving eye on researchers who are "bound to the laboratory" and have little or no contact with patients. "If you are working on a virus and don't see patients, you could lose sight of the end result," he warns. "Everything has to be for the final goal: to cure people."

Compared to the rest of the Africa, HIV is a relatively late arrival here. Before 1990, there were almost no reported cases of HIV infection — a happy side-effect of South Africa's apartheid-era isolation. "Now the country is very much open," says Montagnier.

Local experts estimate that 8% to 10% of South Africans are HIV-positive — and the numbers are increasing explosively.

Though difficult to predict what will happen, Montagnier says it is likely that Aids in South Africa will follow the pattern already seen in other African countries such as Uganda and the Ivory Coast where the virus has been passed primarily through heterosexual contact: young adults are the most severely affected and the economic consequences can be dire.

Aids education campaigns are still not effective enough, and the hope that they are sufficiently advanced in South Africa to reduce transmission is "wishful thinking".

"It's very difficult to change behaviour in such a short time," he adds.

Despite increasing pressures on already squeezed charitable resources here, Montagnier is enthusiastic about the financial prospects for the centre, drawn from a combination of government funding and private sector largesse.

He says a "strong willingness" from South African health officials and President Nelson Mandela, makes South Africa a likely place for the centre's location. One has begun operating in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and Montagnier foresees a centre based in Thailand to research the epidemic in South East Asia, followed by one somewhere in South America.

In a haze of cigarette smoke in the departure lounge at Johannesburg international airport, Montagnier sips water and relaxes while waiting for his flight back to Paris.

His schedule these days includes a lot of airport lounges and is a far cry from the all-nighters he used to spend in his Paris laboratory before the bug he discovered thrust him into headlines worldwide. Though "travelling and receiving honours" cuts into his research time, he insists the discovery did not change his life. "I was existing before Aids," he says, and he believes in life after Aids.

He expects that within five years his projects and the prognosis for a viable Aids vaccine will be far enough advanced to enable him to tackle the next microscopic foe.

Cold shoulder for crime victims

M+G 18-24/4/97

Hein Marais

GROWING fears about South Africa's crime rate have failed to prompt business to finance one of the country's most successful anti-crime projects.

The Johannesburg-based Trauma Clinic, which provides free counselling to victims of crime, has had its funding requests turned down by a welter of major South African corporations. They include South African Breweries, Johnnic, Sun International, Rembrandt and Foodcorp.

Run by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, the clinic has been swamped by requests for counselling by victims of hijackings, armed robbery and domestic violence. In 1996, it handled more than 175 new clients a month.

The clinic has been forced to run on reserve funds for the past four months. It has sent out 150 funding applications to corporations this year, but has so far received less than R10 000 in pledges.

"We've been slightly distressed at the initial responses from business," the director, Graeme Simpson, says. Only three companies — Anglovaal, JCI and Standard Bank — contributed funds to the clinic last year.

The main reason cited by the companies is that they have already donated elsewhere. "Requests to support worthy causes have now increased to such an extent that it has become impossible to help even some of the most deserving causes," Rembrandt's communications office wrote to Simpson.

Simpson believes part of the problem is a perception that victim counselling is mainly remedial and does not prevent crime.

"This work is proactive — it's an important intervention in the cycle of violence in our society," he says.

Corporations contacted by the *Mail & Guardian* this week cited exhausted funds as the reason for declining the clinic's requests. But observers say many companies still devote negligible amounts to their corporate social responsibility programmes.

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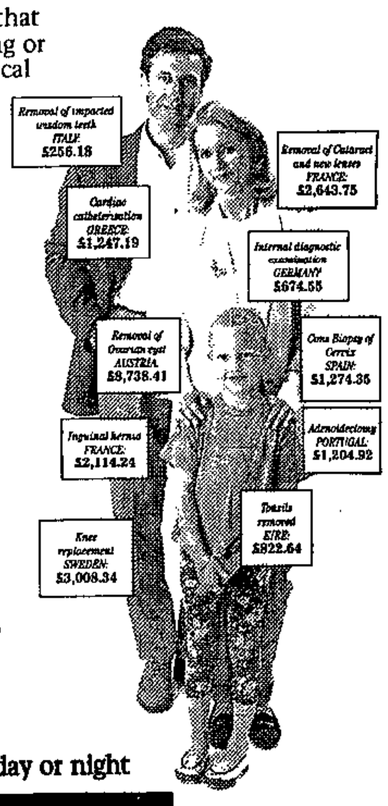

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*Source: This information is based on the average costs paid by PPP healthcare under the International Health Plan between 1/1/94 and 31/12/94 for particular European countries. The value of the claims have been converted into pounds sterling for the purpose of consistency. The exchange rates used were those prevailing at the time the claims were paid.
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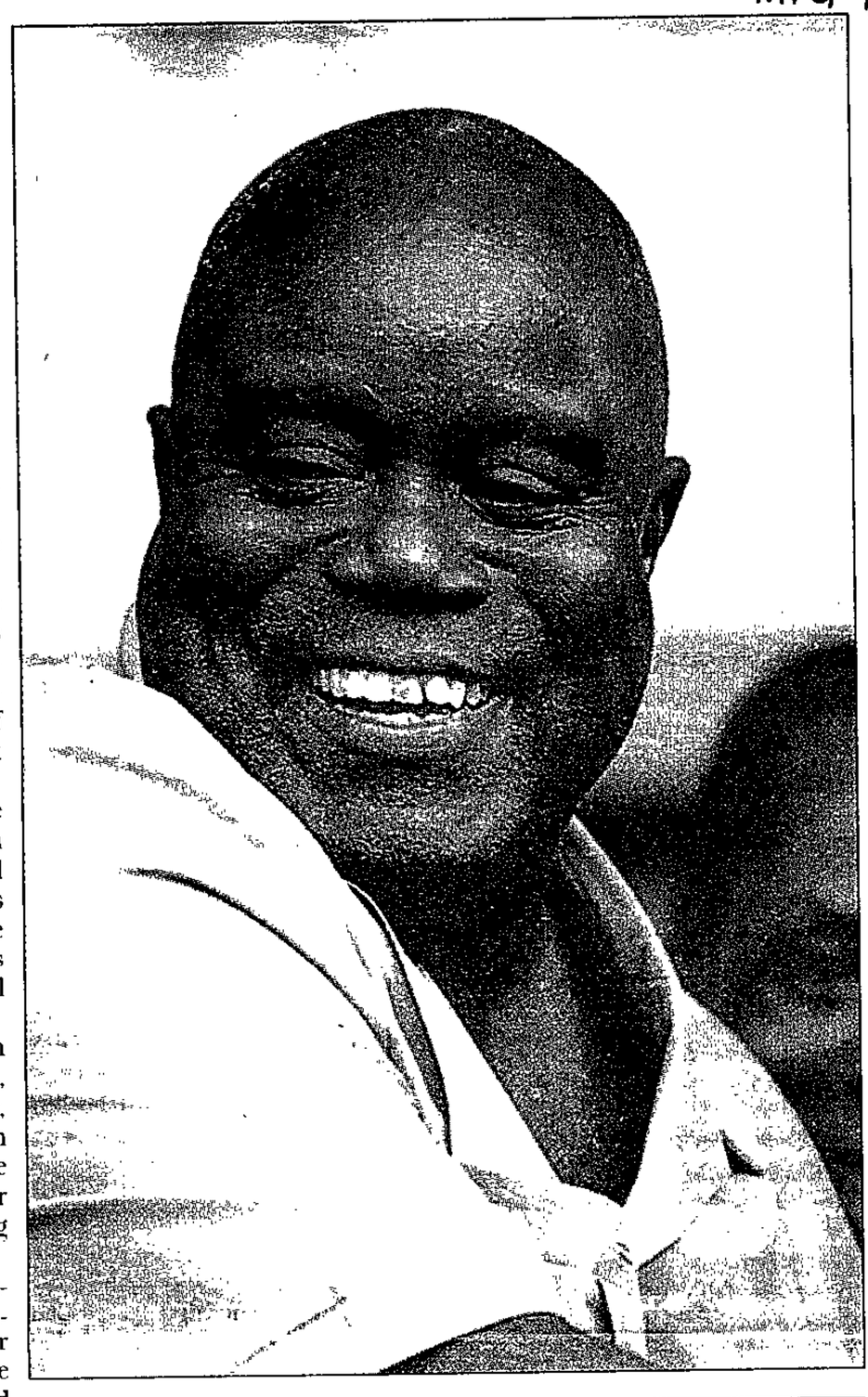
GW 6915

De Beers in secret deal with rebels

M+G 18-24/4/97 (358)

South Africa's mining giants are scrambling for the spoils of war in Zaire. But they face an uphill battle against foreign competition, report Chris McGreal and Stefaans Brümmer





Reason to smile: Laurent Kabila (top left) has laid out conditions for De Beers to negotiate continuing business in Zaire
Lost the point: Zaireans accuse Mobutu Sese Seko (top right) of sucking his country dry, and De Beers of helping him
Anglo's Julian Ogilvie-Thompson: Lost out this week on a $1-billion tender for a copper and cobalt reclamation project
PHOTOS: RODGER BOSCH, RUTH MOTAU

DE BEERS has secretly bowed to Zairean rebel demands that it sever ties with President Mobutu Sese Seko's regime, after decades of close partnership with the despot who plundered his country to the brink of collapse.

The corporation jumped the Mobutu ship as multinationals scrambled to curry favour with Laurent Kabila's rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire and divide up Zaire's vast mineral riches.

But De Beers, like its associate company Anglo American, has been slow off the mark. A Canada-based firm, America Mineral Fields, this week signed a $1-billion deal with the rebel alliance, which now controls half of Zaire and most of its mineral wealth.

The head of De Beers's operation in Kinshasa, Nicholas Davenport, accompanied by an Anglo director, flew to the rebel headquarters in Goma last week to meet Kabila. The rebel alliance laid out its conditions for De Beers even to negotiate continuing business in Zaire.

Top of the list was an end to all dealings with the crumbling regime in Kinshasa. Alliance finance minister Mawampanga Mwana Nanga told the *Mail & Guardian* the company had acquiesced.

"There was no written agreement between us saying stop seeing Mobutu, but what we told them was they would be better off if they didn't talk to Mobutu or his crowd, or give them any more money. They understood," he said.

De Beers declined to discuss the agreement, saying it was "not prepared to make any further comments on the contents of our discussions with Mr Kabila".

Despite the agreement, the rebels remain unsympathetic to the company which Zaireans blame more than any other foreign firm for helping Mobutu suck his country dry by funnelling hundreds of millions of dollars in "taxes" his way. Mawampanga said De Beers and Anglo would be free to continue working in the country, but not as a monopoly.

Existing contracts would be respected — even if they had been obtained in irregular ways — but could be reviewed. "We tell [companies] that you can work within the contract of the deal, no matter how bad it is. But for your interests and our interests, we are going to sit down and go through that contract in good faith to ensure that everyone is benefiting ...

"We want to play by the rules. That is the toughest thing for Anglo American and those to swallow. In Africa they're not used to doing business like that. If they don't like it and they think they're going to keep their monopoly, they can go to hell," he said.

Adding substance to its threat, the rebel alliance this week awarded the $1-billion tender for a copper and cobalt reclamation project and a new zinc plant in Shaba province to American Mineral. Both South Africa's Anglo and Gencor had also tendered. Initial cash injections from the deal will help fund the war against Mobutu.

Rubbing salt into Anglo's wounds, Mawampanga was quoted this week as claiming that the winning tender had been submitted in December by American Mineral, but that "corrupt politicians" of Mobutu's government — then still in control of Shaba province — had intervened in February to award it to Anglo. "We want to send a message to the world that from now on there will be open and transparent dealings."

American Mineral investor relations manager Earl Young confirmed to the *M&G* that his company had "discovered information" on the Anglo bid which it had passed to the rebels. "Kabila made the right decision."



Zaire's diamond industry alone is potentially worth about $500-million a year, although massive illicit mining makes nonsense of the official figures.

De Beers had a monopoly over the output from the largest legal diamond mining operation, the government-controlled Miba. It has an indirect 4% stake in Miba, but through its Central Selling Organisation had rights to the entire production, which made it more than $150-million a year.

De Beers also bought up diamonds from thousands of individual diggers through five buying offices.

But with almost all Zaire's diamond fields in rebel hands and four of its offices shut down, panic set in at De Beers — leading to Davenport's visit — after the rebels openly flirted with America Mineral and an associate company, America Diamond Buyers.

Recently, Kabila's alliance sold America Diamond Buyers the right to buy gold and diamonds in the rebels' conquered zone — which they dub the Democratic Republic of Congo — in direct competition with De Beers's interests.

In Kisangani, taken by the rebels a month ago, America Diamond Buyers now runs the only licensed diamond-buying office after De Beers reportedly turned down an earlier rebel request to reopen its office there, which it had closed in December. The *Wall Street Journal* this week said America Diamond Buyers rakes in about $100 000 in diamonds a day at its office.

America Minerals has been currying favour with the rebels for weeks. It has provided a jet for Mawampanga, and a company official said it had outbid De Beers in diamond auctions to "do a favour" for the alliance.

The prime mover in the company's success with Kabila is Jean-Raymond Boulle, a somewhat controversial Mauritius-born mining venture capitalist who set up America Diamond Buyers and is the principal shareholder in America Mineral.

A "fast mover" who has been involved in numerous law suits, Boulle calls Monaco home but is said to live out of hotels as he promotes his deals around the world. Young described him as "a very trusty and loyal man who has probably befriended people who have taken advantage of him".

Boulle was quoted this week as saying he supported the rebel cause and saw the alliance as the de facto government. "The reason I went in to see the rebels is that I see a new era dawning on Zaire ... It was a risk — but to us it was the logical one."

Ironically Boulle, like senior America Mineral officers Mark Collins and South African Marius Botha, cut his mining teeth with Anglo and De Beers. Another South African, former lawyer and University of Cape Town lecturer Simon Brownlie, is president of America Mineral.

What may well also have counted in America Mineral's favour with Kabila is the Canadian company's association with International Defence and Security (Idas), a Dutch-Antilles-registered security company which stepped into the shoes of South Africa's Executive Outcomes after the mercenary outfit was forced to quit neighbouring Angola last year.

Idas, which has close links with Washington, clinched a lucrative security and mining deal with the Angolan government which helped cut Angolan rebels Unita off from the support and rear bases Mobutu provided them. America Mineral has been exploiting mining concessions in north-western Angola on behalf of Idas.

To add to Anglo's woes, a deal which has been in the offing since May 1995 — to partially privatise the Zairean state mining company Gecamines to the international consortium Swipco, in which Anglo has an indirect stake — now seems uncertain while the rebel alliance maintains its distrust of Anglo and De Beers. Reportedly signed at the time between an adviser of Mobutu and, among others, Anglo's Nicky Oppenheimer, it was delayed after World Bank objections.

De Beers and Anglo have not been the only ones to lose out. Already, under Mobutu, Gencor and Iscor failed in their bid for the $1,8-billion Tenke Fugurume copper and cobalt project, also in Shaba. It went to a Canadian company.

A Johannesburg investment analyst this week said Anglo and De Beers had been hamstrung in the scramble for a post-Mobutu Zaire by their corporate nature: "They can't ever be seen to be dealing with anybody other than the appointed government ... because of their size and reputation."

But he said: "Kabila is the power now, so [they] will have to get on with him."

The scramble for Zaire highlights how central the country's vast mineral potential is to the war. It also shows South Africa is not a completely disinterested party in the negotiations it has helped mediate between representatives of Mobutu and Kabila.

But so far, even though President Nelson Mandela's government has made no secret that it wants to see Mobutu go, there appears to have been no visible spin-off for South African business interests.

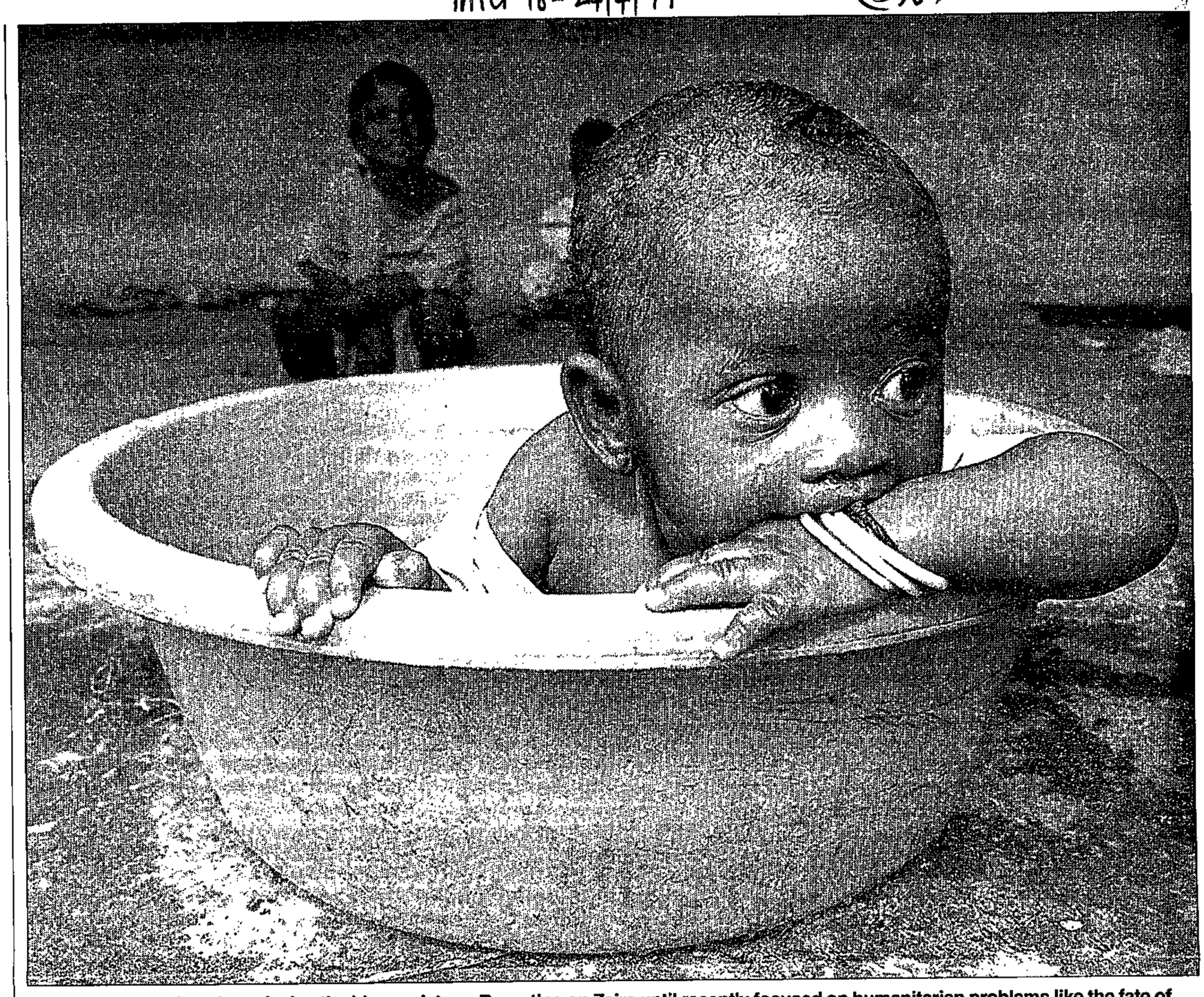
Said the analyst: "A lot depends on how Kabila gets on with Mandela."

From riches to rags, PAGE 14
Missing the point, PAGE 24

Missing the point in Zaire

M+G 18-24/4/97 (358)

The conflict in Zaire took a long time to make the news and has been poorly reported, with a few notable exceptions, writes Alison Campbell



Pulling at heartstrings but missing the bigger picture: Reporting on Zaire until recently focused on humanitarian problems like the fate of refugees such as this young child in a camp in Kisangani. But most correspondents have failed to delve into the complexities from which the conflict evolved

PHOTOGRAPH: SACHA J

SO far, there is little in the reporting of Zaire, or Congo, as the rebels have renamed it, to suggest that it is any more than another tin-pot African war.

The initial coverage was in stark contrast to that coming out of the Rwandan border town of Gisenyi late last year when hundreds of journalists arrived in pursuit of the story everyone had been waiting for — the expected return to Rwanda of the refugees, who at that stage were fleeing fighting and disappearing into the bush, or who were trapped behind armed frontlines.

Within days of the media onslaught, headlines proclaimed a million refugees faced starvation. The alarmism intensified after the evacuation of expatriates who had been working in the camps. Journalists and aid workers joined forces in priming public expectation for a humanitarian catastrophe equal to or greater than that seen during the cholera epidemic in Goma in 1994. The fighting which was causing the problems was routinely summed up at the end of reports as being between the Zairean army and a ragtag force of Tutsi rebels acting as a front for the Rwandan army which wanted to clear the refugee camps.

The humanitarian catastrophe didn't happen — not then anyway. The Zairean rebel coalition suddenly routed militant refugees who had been preventing the rest from returning to Rwanda. And return they did — *en masse* and in spectacular style they filled the world's television screens and some front pages for a week. Cynical observers, however, noted just one thing missing: the mass starvation and death which had been the subject of such clamour over the preceding weeks.

On the whole the refugees were in remarkably good shape, and although they spoke of great numbers of sick and dying in the forests of Zaire, the television cameras couldn't verify the stories.

The Rwandan government chose the moment for a canny political move, declaring after three days that almost all the refugees in eastern Zaire had returned home. The few who were left, it said, were all Interhamwe militia and soldiers in the former Rwandan army who were choosing to stay in Zaire because of their role in the 1994 genocide.

Aid agency warnings of hundreds of thousands of people still adrift amid the fighting in Zaire were dismissed as gross exaggeration. The media, forgetful of their part in the hype, turned on their erstwhile sources and joined the chorus of righteous indignation against greedy aid agencies. That done, they packed up and went home for Christmas. Coverage of the rag-tag rebel activity dropped off as though there was no continuing war and no huge population at risk from conflict, displacement, hunger and disease.

Since then, the war has seen spectacular territorial advances by the rebel army, claimed an untold number of civilian lives, and been the theatre for a multitude of largely unwitnessed atrocities. Jim Hoagland observed recently in *The Washington Post*: "Zaire is ... only one dramatic, current case that establishes the costs of letting grand abstractions obliterate human values and realities in fashioning policies". Referring to the consistent failure of United States policymakers to tackle the Zairean problem until it was too late, he noted: "What you've feared has already happened." This implies that it happened in a climate of information which failed to report a more challenging reality on the ground.

It also reflects the extent to which journalists themselves simply shared the policymakers' preoccupation with the grand abstractions of the Cold War. It was a period in which African states were regularly described in the media in terms of their association with one or the other superpower.

More recently, the continent has received media attention primarily for its conflicts and humanitarian crises, creating a basket-case image out of senseless happenings and humanitarian tragedies. In the search for powerful images of human suffering, explanations for it have been sidelined and ethnicity has become the catch-all cause.

But analysts are making new sense out of Africa, discerning meaning in social, economic and political complexities, and creating new languages to describe phenomena which seemed inexplicable in the old.

Journalists, however, have some catching up to do in bringing coherence to their African stories. The Central African situation is still being attended to on a fire-fighting basis, with little apparent understanding of the background or wider significance.

At the start of the current Zairean conflict, journalists, with notable exceptions, focused on the humanitarian crisis and attributed events almost entirely to Rwanda's desire to rid itself of its opponents in the refugee camps. They sniffed at any suggestion that the rebel alliance had any real agenda or effectiveness of its own.

Thus regular reports of large numbers of Rwandan troops inside Zaire were often based on the Tutsi appearance of the soldiers and their hallmark gumboots. This took no account of what many locals said, that these soldiers spoke Presque Kinyarwanda — a Zairean dialect rather than a Rwandan one — and that many had been refugees from the area who had joined the Rwandan army and had now defected to fight for their own country. For the journalists who remembered that the Rwandan army had done just the same thing a few years before — breaking away from Uganda's forces to march on Kigali — this shouldn't have seemed like too much of a tall story.

Coverage was regularly sceptical of the rebels' stated aim of bringing down Zairean President Mobuto Sese Seko, which may have seemed physically remote at that stage (although not unlikely now). This attitude ignored the history of resistance activities on the part of the rebel leadership, particularly the 1960s when their rebellion was quashed by the intervention of a foreign force. Those awaiting an intervention force to rescue refugees in Mugunga camp in eastern Zaire could have predicted that rebel leader Laurent Kabila would not wait around for the same thing to happen to him again.

Journalists initially expressed doubt about the alliance's potential to draw local support from areas to which the leadership did not actually belong. This reinforced the image of the rebels as an illegitimate invading force with a purely Rwandan agenda, while again ignoring the likelihood that for most Zaireans they might present a more attractive option than the dismally atrophied status quo.

This is not to suggest that the rebels have achieved their successes without assistance, but having failed to take the rebel coalition and its cause seriously at the outset, the West was surprised by the swiftness of the rebel advance and the groundswell of popular support it elicited. There has been massive death and displacement of civilians while no one was looking.

Media coverage of Africa has created a basket-case image out of senseless happenings and humanitarian tragedies

A clue to the significance of events in eastern Zaire might have been found by taking a broader look at numerous other small conflicts in the Horn of Africa which were being sporadically reported around the same time: the growing impact of the Lords' Resistance Army on the north of Uganda, the appearance of another Ugandan rebel group, the West Bank Nile Front, the progress of the Sudanese rebels based in Uganda, and their new incursions into Sudan along the Ethiopian and Eritrean borders.

The northern-most part of eastern Zaire is a confluence point for all of these. In this area, Zaire has oppressed its own minority groups, facilitated Hutu militants against Rwanda, Ugandan rebels against Museveni, and arms flows to the southern outposts of Sudan's Islamic government army. This degree of regional destabilisation would not have gone unremarked in, say, a European context where we have an understanding of, and a language in which to explain, its significance.

The rebel alliance is now in a position to stop all that, making life easier for their allies Uganda and Rwanda, and somewhat harder for the fundamentalist government in Khartoum, which may, after all, prove to be the true epicentre of the quake that is rumbling.

The French have never been indifferent to the fate of their cultural bastions in Africa, and while the flawed legacy of previous bravura actions is forcing France to keep a low profile on this one, there is no reason to suspect that there is no action below the parapet.

A last-minute scramble to bring the combatants to the table rests on the usual tenets, including cessation of hostilities, respect for the territorial integrity of Zaire, and the establishment of an electoral process. This is a derisory range of options for the rebels and their allies — a return, in effect, to the status quo against which they took up arms.

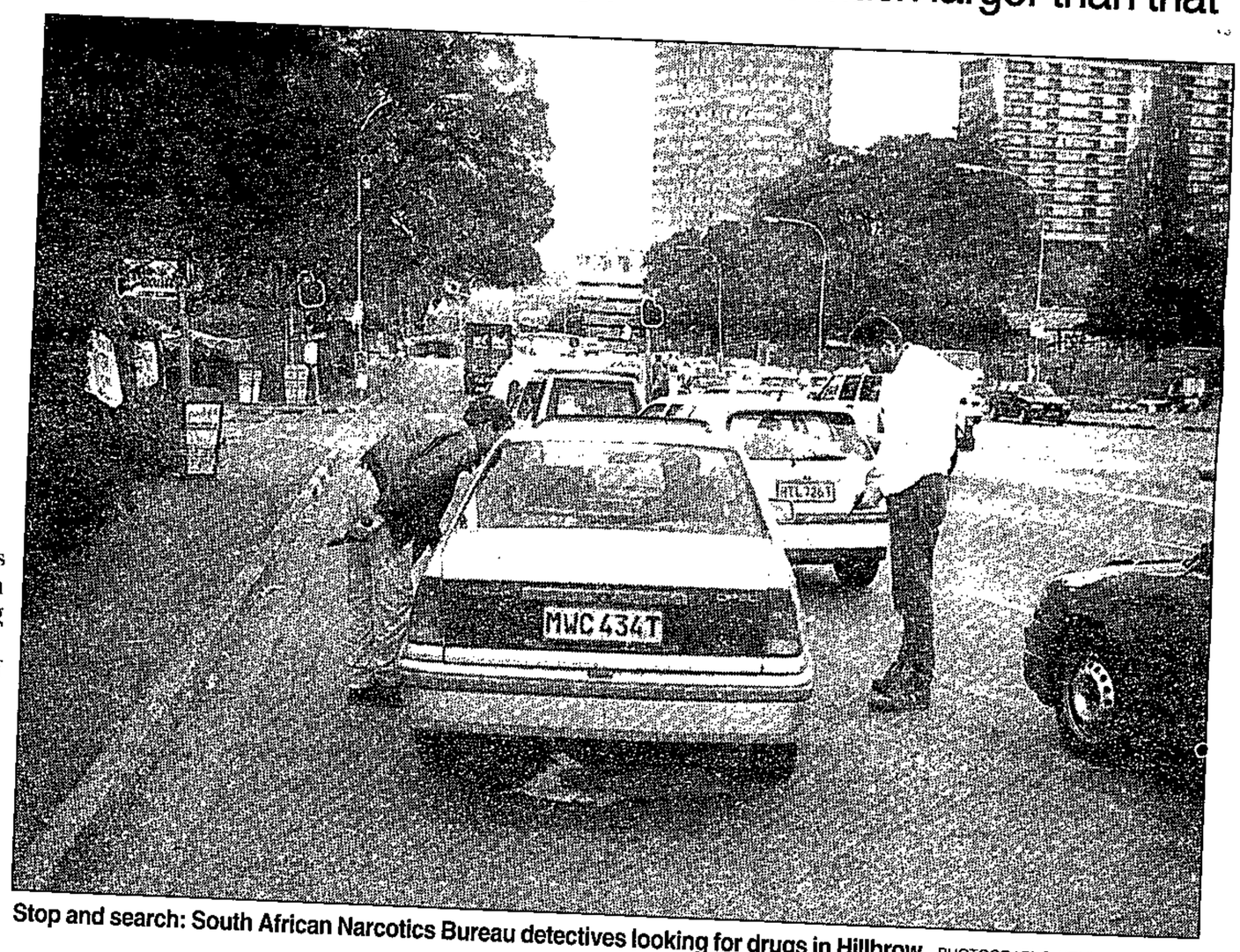
While giving the impression that something is being done, international forums have no new language in which to discuss the root problems, and so far the media tend to mirror their accepted but unconstructive vision of the continent. The post-world war emphasis on territorial integrity, for instance, was an attempt to move beyond hundreds of years of European history during which the acquisition of or control over territory was the accepted currency of conflict (to which Africa owes many of its arbitrarily imposed borders). Yet suggestions about the reworking of the African map have acquired an air of taboo.This has the effect of denying legitimacy to conflicts which have a territorial aim, and leaving them open to the tin-pot tag.

One political analyst of the situation in Zaire describes what is happening there as Africa's great undeclared war. Another has spoken of a fault-line along which is crystallising a major confrontation between Anglophone and Francophone Africa. We can expect a spate of retrospective analysis in due course, but can we expect anything new out of African reporting?

Alison Campbell of Care (UK) wrote this article for Crosslines Global Report, in association with the International Centre for Humanitarian Reporting

South African police blame it all on the Nigerians, but the drug trafficking problem is much larger than that

Searching for a 'guilty' Nigerian



Stop and search: South African Narcotics Bureau detectives looking for drugs in Hillbrow PHOTOGRAPHS: KENNETH MULLER

Tangeni Amupadhi and Miepje Commandeur

IT was detective Johan Wiese's birthday on Wednesday, and the present he wanted was to arrest a few drug dealers, preferably Nigerians. He was to be disappointed.

After three hours prowling Johannesburg's Hillbrow district, Wiese and five colleagues — the cream of the city's drug busters — had to settle for three allegedly illegal immigrants, an envelope of dagga and less than a gram of cocaine.

And getting that much took some effort. "Why do you Nigerians give us so many problems? Why do you come to South Africa," fumed Wiese's colleague as he slapped Alexander OE — who insisted his name was Mr Everest — on the back of his clean-shaven head. "Not all Nigerians do," Everest replied in a soft, polite tone. But the officer insisted.

The slapping — done both by black and white detectives —started just after 4pm, after previous frustrations. Earlier in the day, sitting in their offices at John Vorster Square, the crack squad of South African Narcotics Bureau (Sanab) detectives had decided to hit the Nigerians in "Hellbrow" — the usual fallback when larger plans are postponed. Busts in Hillbrow usually involve more than two detectives because often a shootout ensues between police and the drug dealers.

But the first stop at a block of flats produced nothing and Wiese's men believed they had been given wrong information.

Everest was found at the entrance of a Hillbrow hotel on the second stop.

It took a few slaps, pushing and shoving before he led them to his room. He initially gave a wrong name and address. A receptionist pointed out that Everest lived in the hotel, and Wiese caught him out when he discovered the names on his passport did not correspond to the asylum form, supposedly issued by the Department of Home Affairs.

Now on the fourth floor of the Mark Hotel, the Sanab men were all over Everest's room, turning the bed upside down, checking every bag and book, even removing part of the ceiling in search for drugs, particularly cocaine or "rocks" — a hardened form of cocaine going for up to R60.

As they were searching, Wiese's men discovered a dead pigeon nestled in the ceiling. Everest was surprised and disgusted by the decomposed corpse, but was not allowed to throw it out of his room. "Put it among his clothes in his wardrobe," one of the detectives said. Everest did not look happy.

Wiese's group then checked out another "Nigerian" caught with Everest, who also gave a false address. The march on which he led the detectives included a brief interlude in a room where a couple were locked in an animated afternoon sex session.

After some hard slappings, the man finally took police to a room in another hotel, The Sands. Again the ransacking drew a blank. The only evidence showing the owner of the room might deal or use "rocks" was a small plastic bag full of gauze which is used for "batting" — smoking a pipe.

As we were going down the stairs, the Sanab team found one "rock" which one officer used to try to coerce the man into admitting that he was a dealer. "Look, I found this in your pocket ... where are the other drugs? Now you are busted, and you're illegal in this country."

Asked why they were intimidating suspects, Wiese said he and his colleagues often snap because of lies and attempts to mislead the detectives. "You know that they're lying and that makes you so angry."

A third suspect, also judged to be Nigerian, had to carry with him to the police station a brand-new vacuum cleaner which he claimed he was repairing for someone else.

The Sanab detectives, admitting it was an unsuccessful day, said the "Nigerians" will be deported — it was almost their consolation prize.

Before they accepted it, however, there was a chance for one more bust.

Tipped off by concerned neighbours, Wiese's men pounced on a house in Berea. The woman occupant duly admitted that her lover often smokes dagga. Wiese confiscated an envelope of dagga and warned the man not to smoke in the house. The police were disappointed not to find Nigerians there.

Wiese says over 80% of dealers are from Nigeria. "It is only them, who else? When South Africa opened up to the rest of the world, the Nigerians started to bring the drugs."

There are 2 500 registered political refugees in the country but police estimate there are more than 50 000 illegal Nigerians in Hillbrow alone.

Sanab's obsession with Nigerians has been translated into what appears to be the unit's anthem based on Sasol's television commercial: "Windy, windy, windy, windy" becomes "Nigy, nigy, nigy, nigy".

But Wiese says Sanab's Johannesburg unit has too few staff to deal with the Nigerian drug barons. The unit has only 19 detectives and five officers — compared to 70 five years ago — and each of them works an average 15 hours a day.

And staff are leaving. Wiese and partner Inspector Jacque Botha want to quit soon, because they are "sick" of the job which, between them, they have done for 11 years. They decided on Wednesday evening rather to celebrate Wiese's birthday over drinks.

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Drugs board needs a 'new location'

Philippa Garson

PRESSURE is growing to shift the drug advisory board out of the Department of Welfare in an attempt to push its illicit drugs portfolio higher up the national agenda.

The *Mail & Guardian* understands that board officials support a move, possibly to the Office of the Deputy President. The Welfare Department said this week it would also recommend a "new location" for the board.

The board is currently drawing up a drugs master plan which aims to make the issue of drug dealing and abuse a national priority, and to coordinate the efforts of all relevant departments in fighting back.

Many in the field believe the Welfare Department is too weak to achieve such goals. "One of the biggest problems hampering the country's efforts to do something about the problem is the lack of political will," says Charles Parry, a scientist in the Medical Research Council's mental health and substance abuse division.

"It is crazy that we don't have an integrated drug control strategy ... It is unacceptable for drugs policy to sit under the Department of Welfare. It is not one of the strongest departments and won't foster collaboration. It is also not at the top of the welfare minister's agenda."

The Welfare Department 's director of community integration, Dr Eddie Harvey, concedes that the "board has its limitations under the department and we will be recommending a new location".

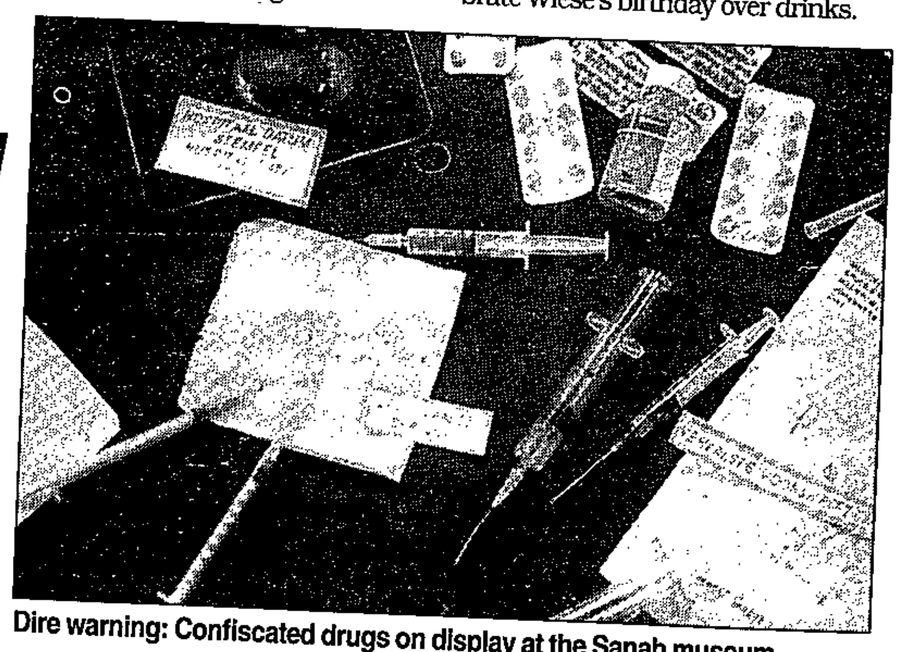
Questions also hang over the police's failure to combat drug dealing. The National Crime Prevention Strategy does not mention drugs at all, while the head of the organised crime division, which deals with drug trafficking, Commissioner Neels Venter, has recently retired.

Superintendent Ebrahim Kadwa of the South African Narcotics Bureau (Sanab) says the drugs game is largely new for the police who spent years concentrating their energies on maintaining apartheid.

"We've largely ignored the problem in the past but we now have a new manpower commitment to it. We're on a learning curve. We've undergone structural changes and we have new priorities," he says.

He adds that the absence of drugs in the National Crime Prevention Strategy was "a bit of an omission" but this does not reflect what is happening on the ground. Sanab has been restructured and separate elite squads have been set up in every major city to deal with trafficking issues.

"Communities must also realise that we are only one component of the machinery to combat drug trafficking and abuse."



Dire warning: Confiscated drugs on display at the Sanab museum

'Confidentiality' v Constitution

Individuals' access to government information is still severely hampered, argues **'Serjeant at the Bar'**

RECENT media reports suggest that government departments might be using commercial contracts in an attempt to shield themselves from the public's right to know. This is a misguided course of action, which signifies an inability to grasp the profound implications which the right of access to information has for our new constitutional democracy.

The public's right to have access to state-held information was introduced by the Interim Constitution. While the right has existed on paper for the past three years, it has been the experience of many legal practitioners that government departments are often stubbornly unco-operative when such information is claimed in practice.

The reasons for this bureaucratic coyness are not hard to identify. Disclosing information is a burdensome annoyance for administrators, and the glare of public scrutiny can make life difficult for government. Such costs are, however, far outweighed by the benefits offered by a right of access to information, which provides an important guarantee of open and accountable administration.

It is against this backdrop that one should read the recent media reports that the Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting Ministry has apparently refused to disclose the commission paid to merchant banks involved in the Telkom privatisation on the basis that the contracts with the banks include a "confidentiality clause".

In a similar vein, Democratic Party finance representative Ken Andrew is reported as saying that the DP is frequently met with "confidentiality clauses" when it requests information such as the salaries of parastatal employees.

These reports give rise to two legal questions, both of which have significant ramifications for our conception of open government. The first question is whether a contractual "confidentiality clause" can cocoon the state from the reach of a constitutional right of access to information. The answer must surely be "no".

If the constitutional right requires disclosure of a certain item of information held by a government department, it would be absurd if the department were able to override the right by the simple device of concluding a contract which required such information to remain confidential. A contractual provision cannot trump the Constitution.

The second question is more difficult, for it concerns the issue of whether or not the constitutional right does in fact apply to items of information such as the commission paid in the Telkom privatisation, or the salaries of parastatal employees. This question brings to the fore a crucial difference between the Interim Constitution and the final Constitution.

The Interim Constitution grants a right of access to state-held information only if this is required for the exercise of a right by the person claiming the information.

A government which purports to be wedded to openness should put its mouth where its money is

The final Constitution has dropped the requirement that the information must be necessary for the exercise of the applicant's rights, but unfortunately this new provision has been put on ice for a period of up to three years. For as long as the provision in the new Constitution is kept in such a state of suspended animation, we will be forced to make do with the right of access to information contained in the Interim Constitution.

The difficulties which this convoluted arrangement gives rise to are neatly illustrated by the commission paid to the merchant banks involved in the Telkom privatisation. A member of the public who claimed a constitutional right to have access to the amount of this commission would currently be required to establish that the information was required for the exercise or protection of a right.



Jay Naidoo: Won't reveal commission paid to banks involved in Telkom deal

This would not present a problem if the applicant's "right" were understood in a broad and generous sense. Unfortunately, however, some courts have interpreted this notion much more narrowly, in which case a person demanding the information may well find it impossible to get past first base.

This is a disconcerting outcome. If the government is truly committed to open and accountable administration, it makes little sense for it to adopt the formalistic view that a member of the public has no legitimate interest in knowing about the commission paid to participants in the Telkom privatisation.

The point is that the deal concerns taxpayers' funds, and a government which purports to be wedded to openness should put its mouth where its money is.

It is important that Parliament should move speedily to enact legislation regulating access to information in the manner which is envisaged by the final Constituion.

In the absence of such legislation, we should accept that the constitutional right of access to information allows for the lifting of any "contractual veil" by means of which government attempts to screen its activities from public scrutiny.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Walter,

I WRITE this from the sanctuary of my bedroom at Genadendal. I have double-locked the door and have a pot of boiling oil ready on the window-ledge in case someone finds the gardener's step-ladder. If one more person approaches me with a list of spies in the Cabinet ...!

Apart from the spies I continue to be pre-occupied by the epic struggle waged by George Fivaz, our commissioner of police, against the forces of evil and Sydney Mufamadi.

Fivaz and Mufamadi, as you probably know, have been engaged in a feud bitter enough to make a Capo di Capos sign up for a course in assertiveness training. The vendetta came to something of a head at the weekend when Fivaz, announcing that he was sick of the sniping by politicians, declared that he would teach them a lesson.

The next thing we knew he had issued orders to all available members of the police force to gather on a field outside Soweto. Several hundred policemen duly assembled, to be joined by Fivaz driving a large pick-up truck with decals along its sides exhorting: "Hang a criminal for Jesus!"

On the back of the said truck were two huge loudspeakers out of which blared wild, joyous and beguiling squash-box music along the lines of *Onward Christian Soldiers!* which set everyone's toes a-dancing on their accelerator pedals.

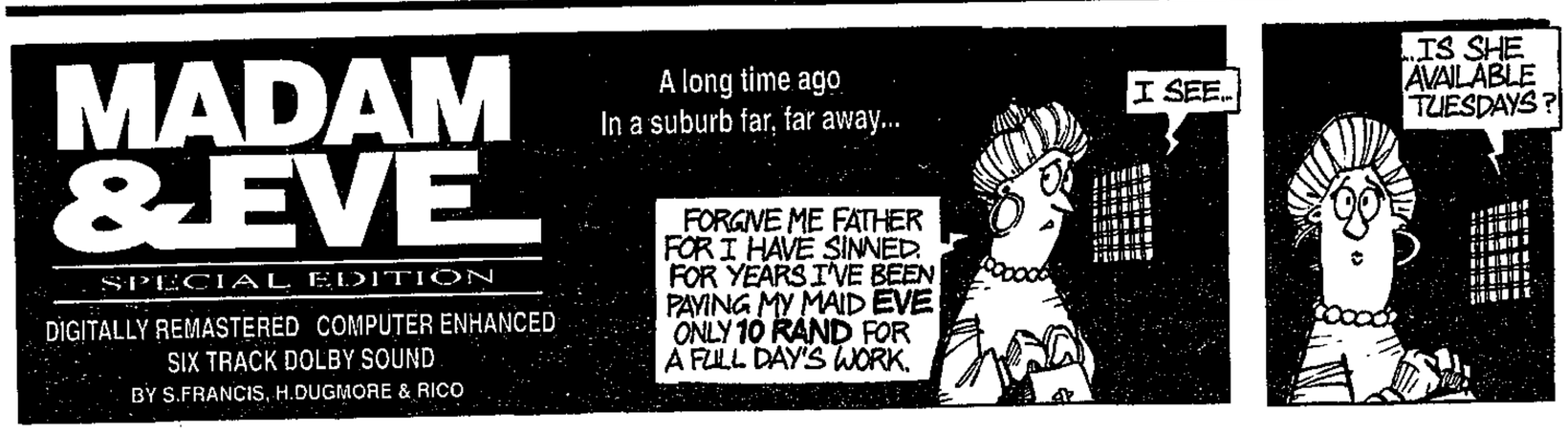
The truck led the way on to the M1. As the procession proceeded, police vehicles summoned by the intoxicating music came pouring out of every side-road and lay-by, brothel and shebeen; little policemen, big policemen, thin policemen, policemen with beer boeps, policemen in squad cars, policemen in mellow-yellows, policemen in Nyalas, policemen zooming overhead in helicopters and even a contingent of paratroopers tumbling out of the sky who turned out to be members of a South African National Defence Force peace-keeping force labouring under the misapprehension that the column was Laurent Kabila's men advancing on Lubumbashi.

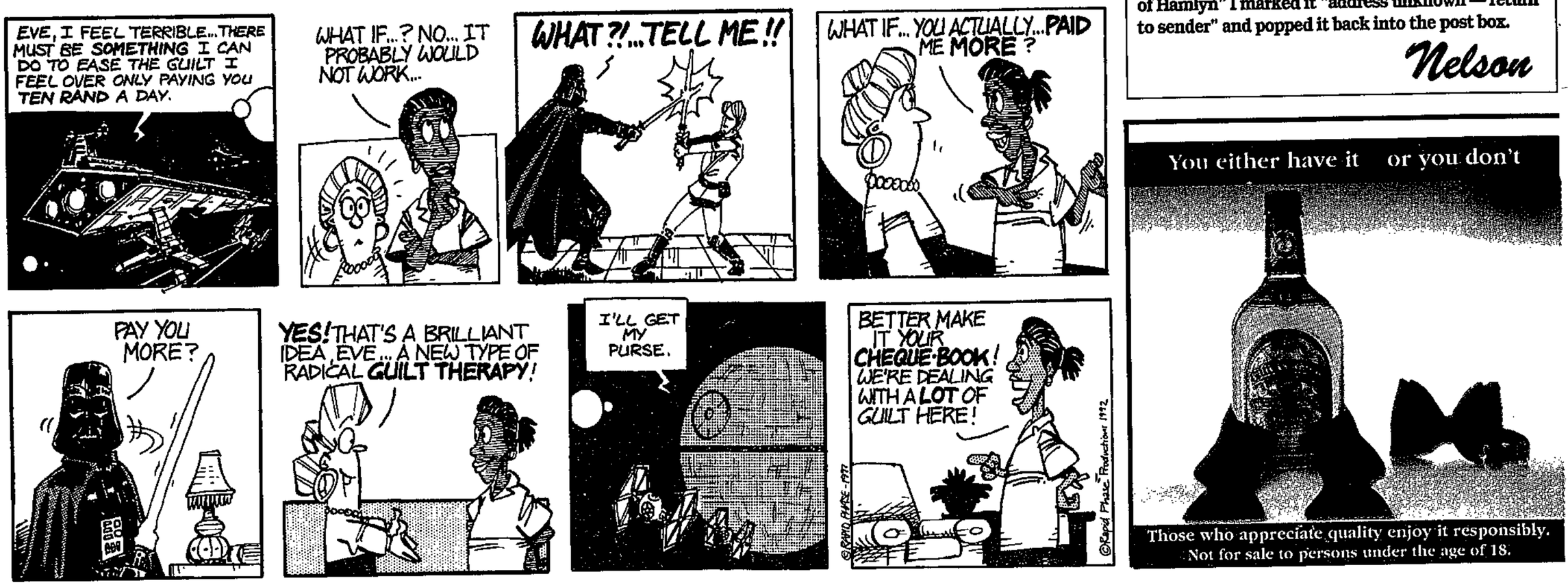
This extraordinary torrent roared down the motorway, lights flashing and sirens blaring. They sped across to Pretoria and raced through the gates of Loftus Versveld rugby stadium which crashed shut behind them. An eerie silence followed, broken only by the sobbing of a squad car driver who had been chugging along at the back of the procession in his tired BMW and arrived too late to gain admittance. Interviewed afterwards he said sorrowfuly the music had aroused the most poignant longings in him for a mystical land where criminals were stuffed down mine-shafts preparatory to their being drawn and quartered, not to mention having their extremities tickled with electrodes.

The policemen were never seen again (some would say they had never been seen before, but that is a by-the-way). Although rugby enthusiasts do claim that uniformed ghosts are to be seen on moonlit nights palely loitering in the Loftus stands, hopefully murmuring "Vrystaat?"

I did receive a letter on Tuesday in what I thought was the familiarly florid handwriting of Fivaz, demanding his R4-million redundancy pay. But as it was marked for the attention of "the goodly burgers of Hamlyn" I marked it "address unknown — return to sender" and popped it back into the post box.

Nelson





The Star ... Wed

Mobutu may be fleeing Zaire

Star 7/5/97 (358)

Mbeki to meet African leaders amid rumours that Mobutu is heading for France

BY PETER FABRICIUS AND ROSS HERBERT
Star Foreign Service

South African and American mediators insisted yesterday that the SA-led peace effort in Zaire was still alive. And contradictory reports from the battlegrounds east of Kinshasa made it difficult to assess whether Laurent Kabila's rebels were in fact observing a pledge to President Mandela to halt their advance on the capital.

In Kinshasa, an announcement from President Mobutu's office that the president would leave today for a regional presidential summit in Libreville, Gabon, on the Great Lakes crisis has sparked speculation that Mobutu is bolting.

AFP said it had been told by a presidential aide: "I'd say he plans to make this a transit stop on the way to France."

Kabila yesterday reassured Deputy President Thabo Mbeki that he was honouring the undertaking to suspend hostilities while SA-led negotiators try to broker a peaceful transfer of power, Mbeki's spokesman Ricky Naidoo said.

And after meeting Mbeki in Cape Town yesterday to reassure him of US support for SA negotiations and briefing him on his meeting with Kabila, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Rwandan strongman Paul Kagame this week, US special envoy to Zaire Bill Richardson said "the peace process is still very much alive".

Kabila's rebels are claiming to be as close as 80km from the Kinshasa, while the government is claiming to be on the verge of retaking the strategic town of Kikwit, more than 400km east of the capital, which the rebels took nearly two weeks ago.

Independent analysts dismiss both claims and believe the rebels have probably reached Kenge, some 200km from Kinshasa, where fierce fighting has been reported – apparently initiated by the Zairian army which seems to be trying to make a stand.

Kabila's pledge to halt hostilities did not preclude his forces from retaliating if attacked.

Mandela brought Mobutu and Kabila together for their first meeting aboard the SA Navy vessel Outeniqua off Pointe Noire, Congo, on Sunday.

Although neither side showed much compromise in a joint communique afterwards, a South African presidential aide told reporters the two men were much closer to agreement in private.

He said Mobutu was ready to hand over power to a transitional authority but not to Kabila himself.

Today Mbeki embarks upon a rapid tour of African countries for meetings with key leaders able to influence events in Zaire, including Angola's Eduardo dos Santos, Tanzania's President Benjamin Nkapa and Great Lakes mediator Julius Nyerere, Rwanda's Kagame, Congo's Pascal Lissouba and Gabon's Omar Bongo, culminating in meetings with Kabila and Mobutu on Friday.

At that point it should be possible to set the date for the next round of negotiations, which was set to take place within the next eight to 10 days, Naidoo said.

He said Richardson had offered Mbeki whatever help the US could give, and Mbeki had told him that his visits to the African leaders over the next few days would determine what help SA might need from the US to take the process forward.

▶ French out in the cold
... Page 15

Zaire rebels expel MD of SA company

BD 7/5/97 (368)

Stephen Laufer

LAURENT Kabila's Zairean rebels yesterday gave Patrick Claes, the MD of Spoornet's jointly owned Zairean railway company, 24 hours to vacate his office and home and leave Lubumbashi, Spoornet said last night.

The order had come in the context of attempts by the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) to return the railway to the status of a parastatal, Spoornet chairman Mafike Makwanazi said. The AFDL controls the railway's operating area in eastern and southern Zaire.

Spoornet had briefed the SA government, Makwanazi said.

The Wall Street Journal reported yesterday that the rebels had "nationalised a major railway", launching the National Railways of the Congo during a military ceremony at Lubumbashi's restored colonial station.

Spoornet executive manager for international rail, Winton Gibbs, said the AFDL had informed Spoornet it had formed a new company, but Spoornet had seen neither articles of association nor capital structures. "All it is is an edict which they have already changed a number of times."

Operations had been affected, with an initial cessation of activities in mid-April. Traffic had then resumed, but was at a standstill again. "The situation is terribly volatile and fluid."

Spoornet had made efforts to get as much of its rolling stock out of Zaire as possible. "We still have about 10 locomotives and a handful of wagons there," Gibbs said. He was certain the situation would be resolved. The Zaireans were not in a position to run the railway system alone.

Makwanazi said the AFDL had informed Spoornet it wanted a meeting to discuss the future of the Zairean railways within two weeks. Its desire to return the system to parastatal status was "not acceptable". Spoornet wanted to continue with the current structures, in which the Zairean parastatal was a partner, with Spoornet and Belgian company Transurb, in a commercially run company.

Wyndham Hartley reports from Cape Town that US ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson, after a flying visit to brief Deputy President Thabo Mbeki on latest developments in Zaire, declared that the peace process was still on track.

After an hour of talks with Mbeki Richardson emerged from Tuynhuys to declare that the meeting had been very constructive and that the peace process was "alive".

"The South Africans are taking the lead ... I would think the next thing is up to the SA government, they're doing a lot of work, a lot of good diplomacy." Richardson leaves today for Paris where he will hold talks with the French about Zaire. As Richardson arrived at Tuynhuys French ambassador to SA Tristan D'Albis was leaving.

Reuter reports that in Kinshasa Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko's spokesman said the president would leave the country for a meeting in Gabon, returning on Friday.

An aide said earlier it would be

Continued on Page 2

Zaire

BD 7/5/97 (368)

Continued from Page 1

wrong to interpret Mobutu's departure as a flight into exile, but another was quoted as saying he would go to France from Gabon, prompting speculation that Richardson had brokered a deal which would allow Kabila's forces to enter Kinshasa without bloodshed.

Kabila had earlier told Mbeki and President Nelson Mandela that he was sticking to his pledge to halt his troops' march on Kinshasa. Presidential spokesman Parks Mankahlana said that despite reports of fierce fighting close to the capital, "for the moment we believe his assurances".

A senior government source said Richardson had told Angolan President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos — whose troops have reportedly been leading Kabila's forces in their latest push on Kinshasa — that the US would not take kindly to them spearheading the march on the Zairean capital. A US diplomat confirmed contact with the Angolan government, but said: "It is not something we talk about publicly."

SA was still pushing for a meeting between the rebel alliance and Mobutu government officials, agreed to during weekend talks on the SAS Outeniqua, to go ahead, the SA government source said. While there was scepticism whether the parties would find common ground, particularly on the composition of a transitional authority to govern Zaire until democratic elections, Mobutu had to be considered a factor until he had formally relinquished his presidential powers.

Whatever Mobutu's situation, a transitional authority broader than Kabila's alliance had to be negotiated. Kabila's demand that he choose the other members of the authority was untenable — "that's dictatorship".



Court yesterday:
Shaun Lategan, 18, and Maritza van
Merwe, 21, were last seen alive about 10
on April 22 sitting in a car in Malmesbur
"Lovers' Lane".

I'm going back to Zaire, says Mobutu

Heavy fighting at Kenge

368

ANC 8/6/97

Libreville, Gabon – Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko insisted today that he would be returning home in a day or two, ignoring widespread speculation that he might tiptoe into exile to resolve the crisis in his country.

Red Cross figures released in Geneva, meanwhile, revealed that there was heavy bloodshed at this week's battle for Kenge between Mr Mobutu's trusted Presidential Guard and the advancing forces of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL).

Although Mr Mobutu's aides have consistently said he would be back, western diplomats in Kinshasa said his trip abroad would allow him to be ousted or to resign without the shame of being chased out of the country.

Today, members of Mr Mobutu's delegation in Libreville reiterated that he would be going home to Kinshasa either tomorrow or on Saturday at the latest. The cancer-ridden president flew to Libreville to take part in a West African summit on the Zairian crisis.

Kinshasa officials said earlier this week that the Presidential Guard had repulsed the rebels at Kenge, 200km east of the capital Kinshasa, and had driven ADFL forces back towards Kikwit, a further 200km away. The ADFL controls three-quarters of Zaire

Figures compiled by the Zairian Red Cross show that the fighting at Kenge between Monday and Wednesday cost the lives of about 100 soldiers and rebels, while about 200 civilians were killed. Ten Zairian Red Cross staff were killed in the battle, officials said. – Sapa-DPA

■ Reuter reports from Dar es Salaam that South Africa's Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki discussed Zaire's crisis with Tanzania's president today on the second leg of a six-nation African tour.

Mr Mbeki saw Angola's President Jose Eduardo dos Santos in Luanda yesterday and said he spoke to Mr Kabila on Tuesday night and reminded him of his promise to halt his forces from advancing on Kinshasa.

NEWS DIGEST

☐ ZAIRE

ET(BR)8/5/97 (358)

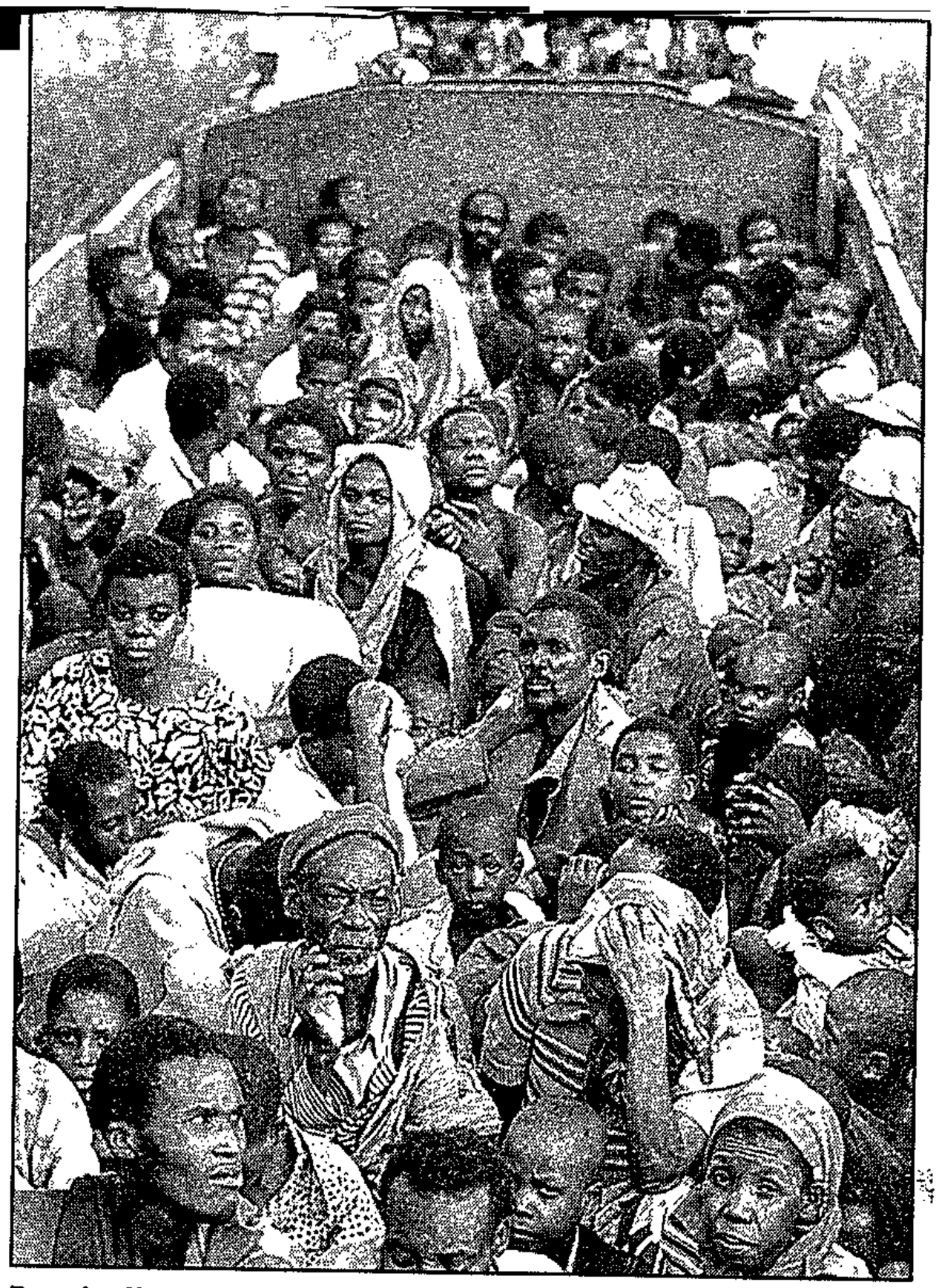
Belgian companies expect minimal effect from rebel nationalisation

Belgian companies operating in Zaire expect to be little affected by Zairean rebels nationalising assets and ending commercial contracts, because they had reduced book values as well as their dependency on Zairean units. "Belgian companies decided to have a low profile in Zaire," said Bruno Du Bus, the head analyst at Puileatco, because Zaire was three-quarters conquered by Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces fighting for the liberation of Congo-Zaire. "It is too early for opportunities with the lack of visibility on the medium and long term."

Yesterday, Kabila's rebel alliance cut exclusive contracts of De Beers Centenary, the South African holding company, with Zaire's largest diamond producer and nationalised all assets belonging to Sizarail, a joint venture of South African, Belgian and Zairean interests.

"There are no direct consequences for Sibeka," said Bruno Morelli, a board member of Sibeka, which was 20 percent-owned by De Beers. "We will still get the market price for our products even if the monopoly is gone."

Societe Generale de Belgique, Belgium's biggest holding company, holds stakes in about one-third of companies listed on the Belgian stock market with Zairean activities such as Sibeka, Banque Belgolaise and holding companies Finoutremer and Chanic. — *Bloomberg, Brussels*



Rwandan Hutu refugees are evacuated by train from the Biaro refugee camp south of Kisangani on Tuesday. The evacuations began anew after Sunday's stampede in which 91 refugees died. PIC: AP

Mobutu's exit plans unclear

REPORTED plans by Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko to make a diplomatic exit as rebels close in on his capital had yet to be confirmed early yesterday, with a spokesman saying one thing and state-run radio the opposite.

Mobutu's spokesman denied on Tuesday that Mobutu would be leaving town, yet state radio later said he was planning to attend a regional summit in Libreville, Gabon, to discuss the Zairean crisis and would return home tomorrow.

Trip aboard

The president, who has stubbornly clung to power despite having cancer, could relinquish authority without losing much face if he took a short trip abroad, diplomats in Kinshasa say.

Pro-Mobutu politicians and military leaders could then declare him ousted in his absence.

Such a move, encouraged by African neighbours and the United States, would allow Kinshasa to open talks with the advancing rebels on a peaceful handover of the city.

A battle for Kinshasa, with a population of five million, might cause major loss of life.

There were varying accounts yesterday of how far the rebels had advanced: some said to 200km, others to within 85km of downtown Kinshasa. Rebels and western military experts concur that they are within a day or two of reaching the capital if they meet no significant resistance.

Pro-Mobutu elements of the presidential guard were seen on Monday this week on the road east with heavy weapons including surface-to-surface missiles and there were later reports of clashes with the rebels.

But as of late Tuesday, there was no evidence in Kinshasa of preparations to defend the city. – *Sapa-DPA.*

> **A battle for Kinshasa might cause major loss of life**

Zaire deaths mount as SA pushes bid for more talks

(368)

Star 8/5/97

Heaviest casualties yet reported in fighting 200km from Kinshasa

By Ross Herbert, Peter Fabricius and Reuters
Kinshasa

The heaviest casualties yet in the Zairian civil war occurred yesterday during heavy fighting between government and rebel forces at Kenge, 200km east of Kinshasa, according to missionary sources in radio contact with the area and Belgian Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders).

But the South African Government continued its last-ditch efforts to broker a peaceful transfer of power. In Luanda, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki told the local news agency after meeting Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos that negotiators were planning to hold a second meeting between Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Laurent Kabila today.

An entire church choir was murdered in Kenge by retreating Zairian government troops, according to BBC radio reports that could not be confirmed.

Government soldiers yesterday tried to drive rebels out of Kenge but were driven back.

Jan Weuts, a logistician for Medecins Sans Frontieres in Kinshasa, said 200 civilians, 100 government soldiers and 15 rebels soldiers were killed in Kenge. There were also 137 civilian and military wounded.

In Mbandaka, extreme tension prevailed yesterday as the local governor and business leaders formed a crisis committee to calm 1 500 to 2 000 government troops who have retreated to the city in the past two days.

About 55 000 Rwandan Hutu refugees, including armed members of the former Rwandan army, are said to be moving south from Mbandaka.

It was not clear yesterday whether the fighting around Kenge constituted a breach of Kabila's pledge to President Nelson Mandela on Sunday to halt his advance on Kinshasa while negotiations continued.

■ Mobutu was in the Gabonese capital Libreville today for a mini-summit which is looking for a way to end fighting with rebels who threaten his capital Kinshasa,

A UN source said he doubted very much whether there would be another face-to-face meeting between Mobutu and Kabila.

"They (the, Central African presidents) will try to get Mobutu to withdraw in a dignified way," the source added.

Aides insisted Mobutu would return home by tomorrow.

But many Zairians said they did not expect, or want, Mobutu to return, and US officials said his return might be unwise. "If he comes back, it's at great risk," an official said.

SA rolling stock in Zaire is 'safe'

Spoornet's remaining rolling stock in war-torn Zaire is said to be safe and under guard in a shunting yard in the southern town of Lubumbashi after rebels nationalised Zaire's southern and eastern rail network.

The network has been operated by Spoornet subsidiary Sizarail for the past two years. Patrick Claes, the Belgian managing director of Sizarail – owned jointly by Spoornet and Transurb of Belgium – was given 24 hours to leave Lubumbashi and was replaced by a Zairian.

Spoornet spokesman Johan Hugo said Spoornet's remaining 10 locomotives, 10 passenger coaches and roughly 20 wagons would remain in Zaire pending negotiations with the rebels.

The rebel Alliance of Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire reportedly renamed the railway company the National Railways of the Congo at a military ceremony on Tuesday.

Hugo said Spoornet contacts in Zaire indicated that no rail traffic was moving in the country.

Meanwhile, the political secretary of the South African embassy in Kinshasa, Adrian du Pisani, yesterday described the situation in the capital as quiet but tense.

■ More than 2 400 Rwandan Hutu refugees were repatriated by aircraft from Kisangani in eastern Zaire yesterday, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said. – Sapa-AFP.

Spoornet to wait for new Zairean government

(358)

Kevin O'Grady

SPOORNET would not take any steps to resolve the Zairean rebel alliance's annexation of its jointly owned Zairean railway company until a new government had been installed in the strife-torn nation, Spoornet chairman Mafike Makwanazi said yesterday.

"We took a strategic decision not to talk to anybody until a new government was in power," Makwanazi said, despite a request by the rebels for a meeting within two weeks to discuss the future of the railways.

Once a new government was installed, Spoornet would "do what we did four years ago" and renegotiate the deal in which the Zairean railway parastatal became a partner with Spoornet, Belgian company Transurb and Zairean banks and businesses in commercially run company Sizarail, Makwanazi said.

Laurent Kabila's Alliance for the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire gave Sizarail MD Patrick Claes 24 hours to vacate his office on Tuesday as part of attempts to return the railway to parastatal status.

However, Makwanazi said the situation was "not as negative" as it sounded. Although Claes had been removed from his office, he had taken up alternative accommodation in Lubumbashi where "he can be called on by us at any time".

Makwanazi said there was also no concern for Spoornet rolling stock — reportedly 10 locomotives worth about R25m, 20 railway trucks and 20 passenger carriages — as they were "in safe hands" under the security of Zairean authorities.

Meanwhile, Reuter reports that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, on a whirlwind tour of six countries to discuss the Zaire crisis, said he believed a second face-to-face meeting between Kabila and ailing Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko would still take place next week.

A foreign affairs source said the meeting would, as last week, take place on the SA Navy supply vessel the SAS Outeniqua off the African west coast, probably on Tuesday.

Mobutu left Zaire's capital Kinshasa yesterday on a two-day trip to Gabon, which sparked rumours in the city that he was leaving the country for good.

However Mbeki said he believed that Mobutu would return to Kinshasa, after attending an African mini summit in Gabon's capital, Libreville, in time for Mbeki's arrival there tomorrow.

Foreign affairs spokesman Peter Swanepoel confirmed that Mbeki had spoken to Kabila on Tuesday night and was assured the alliance's undertaking to halt its advance on Kinshasa until the next round of talks was being complied with.

However, Reuter reports Kabila told Radio France International yesterday that taking the capital was "on the agenda" for the rebels. "Troops are obliged to advance," Kabila was reported as saying.

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that the SA embassy in Kinshasa's political secretary, Adrian du Pisani, described the situation in the Zairean capital as quiet but tense.

Members of the tightly knit SA community had been unofficially urged to leave the capital, du Pisani said. At present, there were 20 SA nationals registered at the embassy.

BD 8/5/97

See Pages 11, 15

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BD 8/5/97

See Pages 11, 15

ANC-IFP talks begin on optimistic note

Farouk Chothia

LONG-awaited peace talks between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) took place yesterday with members of both parties expressing optimism that agreement on Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini, power sharing beyond 1999 and a special amnesty deal for KwaZulu-Natal would be reached in follow-up talks.

Sources said the two delegations, led by ANC chairman Jacob Zuma and IFP acting chairman and KwaZulu-Natal premier Ben Ngubane, placed strong emphasis, on the need for unity among blacks in SA and for all Zulus to respect Zwelithini.

Ngubane said the ANC had tabled a package of proposals, but declined to disclose details. There had been "progress" at the talks, he said.

Zuma said both parties would report back to their principals and then "the premier will be able to elaborate".

A source said the IFP made it clear that the precondition for peace was recognition of IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi as Zwelithini's traditional prime minister.

The source said the ANC had agreed there should be "reconciliation" between Buthelezi and Zwelithini, but fell short of giving an immediate undertaking that it would yield to the IFP's request.

Denel urged to update its strategy

Robyn Chalmers

PUBLIC Enterprises Minister Stella Sigcau has challenged state-owned arms manufacturer Denel to examine the "normalisation and democratisation" of its business, saying both management and its ownership base had to be broadened.

Sigcau told Denel's bosberaad last night the process involved rectifying past mistakes, eliminating race and gender discrimination and supporting a process of equal opportunities.

Denel should also develop employees' skills, create affirmative action posts and accelerate training.

Sigau said last year she challenged Denel's "grey-haired men" to join her in the capacity building and human resources development process. She explained that in African society, grey hair symbolised wisdom and maturity.

Sigcau cited key areas in transformation, which included aligning company strategy with the change process, establishing unifying and shared values, training and development, restructuring the decision-making process and community development.

BD 8/5/97

CAPE TIMES
FRIDAY, MAY 9, 1997 ★

HECTIC SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY

Mbeki meets Kabila, Mobutu in peace bid

CT 9/5/97 (358)

KINSHASA: Diplomatic efforts move into top gear to ensure a bloodless handover of power here before clashes between various militia arise.

DEPUTY President Thabo Mbeki meets Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila separately today in his hectic shuttle diplomacy to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the central African country's civil war before its capital falls.

Mbeki is trying to get agreement from the two leaders on a formula for a peaceful transfer of power, according to President Mandela's spokesman, Mr Parks Mankahlana.

Mbeki said earlier this week that negotiators were planning a second summit between Mobutu and Kabila next Wednesday within the stipulated period of eight to ten days set after their first meeting, presided over by Mandela on Sunday aboard the SA navy vessel SAS Outeniqua in Pointe Noire, Congo.

Mr Jan Van Deventer, SA ambassador to Zaire said the military situation was moving quite fast.

"We want to press on all levels to try to get negotiations going next week," he said.

Information from the Zairian hinterlands is extremely difficult to verify, but church radio sources have been consistently relaying information regarding the presence of Unita troops fighting on the side of Mobutu's army and of Angolan government soldiers supporting the rebels.

Diplomats also expressed fears that some 55 000 Rwandan Hutu refugees, including many armed members of the former Rwandan army, will try to cross into Congo near Mbandaka.

"Our worst fear is that the refugees will ignite the same problem in Congo," Van Deventer said. — IFS, AFP

'A sad day for Red Cross'

GENEVA: The International Committee of the Red Cross said yesterday it would be unlikely to gain access to Kenge, where 10 of its employees had been killed.

"It's a sad day for the Red Cross," spokesman Mr Rolin Wavre said.

The Red Cross is desperate to resupply the hospital caring for 126 patients wounded in the fighting, which claimed the lives of 10 Zairian Red Cross workers on Wednesday in unknown circumstances.

The medical charity Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) estimated that 200 civilians, 100 government soldiers and 15 rebels of the alliance led by Mr Laurent Kabila were killed in the battle for Kenge, which is on the direct road to Kinshasa. — Sapa-AFP

C

Kinshasa waits for Kabila

(358) M+G 9-15/5/97

The citizens of Kinshasa, the sprawling capital of Zaire, await the outcome of the Mobutu-Kabila peace talks with mounting fear. Chris McGreal reports

LEOPOLD MUANDO's first venture into futuristic art sits among his realist paintings of Zairean soldiers tearing Kinshasa apart and the ever-present trauma of Aids. Muando's imagination has conjured up a vision of a skeletal Mobutu Sese Seko prostrate before a towering foe.

The grinning conqueror with his foot on the Zairean president's chest is the rebel leader, Laurent Kabila. It is a fantasy that many in the last citadel of Mobutu's regime would delight in seeing a reality.

"Do you think it will end like this?" Muando asked. "People want to see Mobutu suffer for all the suffering he has caused us. But I don't think it will be like this. Mobutu will still die better than most of us have lived."

So far there have been no takers for the painting on sale at a Kinshasa roadside. But among those drawn to its vision, it reignites the seemingly endless debate on the capital's streets about what the looming finale of the civil war will bring.

Kinshasa has its back to the Congo river. The rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire claims it is within 60km of the capital.

What remains of the regime's power is concentrated in the bunker of Mobutu's mind. Nowadays his circle comprises mostly close relatives. The wider political family has been discarded in favour of seemingly stronger, and therefore more reliable, blood ties.

But the only real influence Mobutu wields is over the immediate fate of Kinshasa's five million people. It still lies within the ailing president's hands to decide whether the capital goes down in flames or if the rebels can take their last and greatest prize with as little bloodshed as most other cities have fallen during their astonishing 1 500km sweep across Zaire in little more than six months.

Pretoria and Washington's mediation efforts are met with scepticism in Kinshasa. Muando is not alone in fearing they may all be an elaborate international plot to extend Mobutu's power even at this late stage. "We are suspicious because Mobutu is very sly and the Americans are very sly. They were his friends for 30 years. Kabila must be careful. He must know that people want him to come here and if the Americans or French try to keep Mobutu in power people will take their revenge. They must do nothing to stop Kabila coming here," he said.

Then there are those who have deluded themselves into believing that the thousands of British, American and French troops massed across the Congo river in Brazzaville are waiting to pounce and seize Kinshasa on Kabila's behalf while Mobutu is out of the country.



Fat of the land: Mobutu nephew Bundu Te Litho's home in Cape Town PHOTO: RODGER BOSCH

Still, the foreign troops give some comfort to Kinshasans. Perhaps the threat of intervention to rescue foreigners will discourage the Zairean army from one last destructive rampage in the final collapse. The greatest danger for the capital lies not in a full scale military assault but in a total disintegration in power and order before the rebels are able to move in and assert their authority.

Most people would settle for jeering Mobutu as he fled, and welcoming the rebels with open arms. But Kinshasa has become the point of last retreat for many old Mobutu loyalists and no one is certain how they will react. Kinshasans fear that those who face losing everything would rather take the capital down with them with one last, grand looting, by which the army pillaging of 1991 and 1993 would pale in comparison. For weeks now, the wealthy have been spiriting their families out of the city.

The few banks with foreign currency have been drained of American dollars and Belgian francs.

Builders are doing a flourishing trade throwing up walls around vulnerable homes. Not so many people venture out after dark anymore. Gangs of youths have taken to hijacking cars. Murders are on the rise. Pamphlets issued in the rebels' name this week appeared on Kinshasa's streets. They reassured the population that the Alliance's "valiant combatants" have already infiltrated the capital. The leaflets appealed to the population to remain calm and to demonstrate support for the rebels by wearing white headbands. And they called on people to support those elements of the army that back the rebels, and to "throw into oblivion" those who remain loyal to Mobutu.

While there is undoubted backing for the rebels in Kinshasa, as yet few people feel secure enough to demonstrate it openly by wearing symbols of support. But there was no shortage of readers to snatch up the many newspapers that specialise in wild conspiracies — from claims that Mobutu is really a prisoner on a South African ship to a report that his final act will be to bombard Kinshasa with radiation from an experimental nuclear reactor at the university.

Politicians and diplomats have been poring over what is said to be a hit list drawn up by the Presidential Guard. The politicians figure high, including Mobutu's last prime minister, Kengo wa Dondo, who the army accuses of ripping off millions of dollars in arms contracts. But he is safely ensconced in Switzerland.

■ Mobutu flew out of Kinshasa this week, after Kabila gave him three days to depart or be "chased from power". Foreign diplomats, who have been trying to massage Mobutu from office to avoid a battle for Kinshasa, cautiously anticipated he may finally have given up the struggle to cling to power after 32 years. But the Zairean leader's aides insist he will return.

Other Mobutu cronies have also left Zaire. General Kpama Baramoto, the Zairean president's brother-in-law and former army chief of staff, has bolted for South Africa.

Mobutu's high command said it would fight on and claimed to have reversed the rebel advance in what appeared a last ditch attempt to stall, if not halt, the rebel advance. Heavy fighting was reported around the town of Kikwit, about 200km east of the capital. Residents of villages in the area said the numbers of government troops had risen sharply in recent days, including Portuguese speaking men presumed to be members of Angola's Unita, which has long and close ties to Mobutu. But Kabila's rebels have also been sighted much closer to the south of Kinshasa.

Mega-rich nephew sued

Gustav Thiel

A MULTI-MILLIONAIRE nephew of Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko is being sued for child maintenance in Cape Town's High Court. Bundu Te Litho, who lives in the city's plush Fresnaye suburb, is believed to be worth at least $500-million — cash inherited from the late Litho Mabote, Mobutu's brother and the mastermind behind his schemes to suck Zaire dry.

Te Litho is being sued for $120 000 (R535 000) in maintenance arrears allegedly owed to a former New York model, Gail Kendrick, for their daughter. Kendrick gave up her career to marry Te Litho, move to Zaire and bear him a daughter in 1984.

The three then enjoyed five years of "magnificently ostentatious jet-setting in private residences (belonging to Te Litho) in Monte Carlo, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and the US" before Kendrick said she ended the relationship due to Te Litho's "escalating infidelity".

She alleges he refused to pay maintenance, and tried to kidnap the child when he visited the United States on official trips with Mobutu.

Kendrick's lawyer, Bruce Stephens, says Te Litho has made South Africa his home and has permanent residence, but has failed to appear in court, apparently blaming the civil war in Zaire. Te Litho paid R1,6-million for his Fresnaye home in 1985, and is thought to have several export companies operating in this country.

Mobutu and his other relatives also have extensive assets in South Africa, although many are registered under other names.

Mobutu's substantial property portfolio in the Western Cape includes a Clifton beach house, homes in the Boland towns of Stellenbosch and Franschhoek, and a horse-breeding farm in Tokai. His wife owns a hotel in Johannesburg.

Such assets are dwarfed, however, by the assets the family has offshore, which include a string of mansions in Europe.

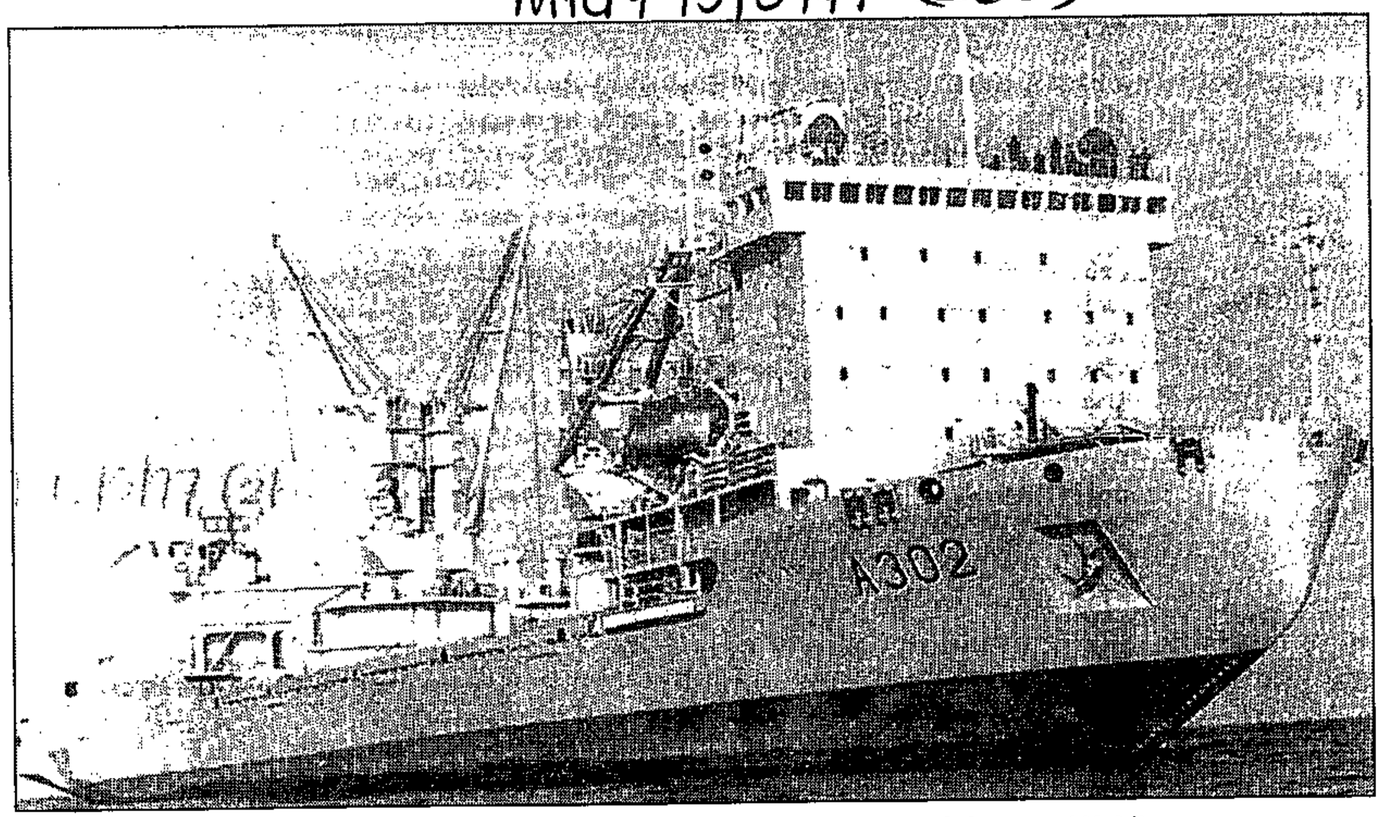
The United States got a brief glimpse of bank records in 1981 showing roughly $1-billion in liquid Mobutu assets in Europe at that time — records which Te Litho revealed to American lawyers as he sought to secure his inheritance from his dead father.

Te Litho refused this week to comment about the maintenance case, which is due to resume on June 3.

Zairean peace hits a squall

M+G 9-15/5/97 (358)

Trying to broker a peace treaty in Zaire was not plain sailing, reports Ivor Powell from the deck of SAS Outeniqua



Drama on the high seas: SAS Outeniqua, the scene of peace talks between Mobutu and Kabila

THE score or so of journalists who had been quartered on the fo'castle of the *SAS Outeniqua* for three days — exotically studded in among the winches and anchor cables and miles of rope — were feeling distinctly out of sorts.

A one-day trip to mark the conclusion of a peace treaty between cancer-ridden Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel Laurent-Desire Kabila was already stretching into its third day.

We had learnt why eating places on ships are called messes. All 22 of us, slept two nights on an open deck, with only a roof about the size of a carport between us and the sky.

Friday, the first day of waiting. Well not really the first. Foreign Affairs and the offices of the president and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki had already been dealing with the peculiarly Zairean way of doing things for months.

President Nelson Mandela arrives on board ship, around two or three in the afternoon.

The clean Americans, led by United States ambassador to the United Nations and butt-kicker at large, Bill Richardson, have also arrived. Organisation of African Unity and UN special representative Mohamed Sahnoun is also there. We all set sail for our rather romantic assignation on the high seas.

Kabila has refused to meet Mobutu in face-to-face talks in either Zaire or any of its neighbouring states. For his part, Mobutu has a doctor's letter saying he cannot travel further than X kilometres away from specified medical treatment.

Apparently Catch-22 again. But Mbeki comes to the rescue: hold the talks at sea. On a South African naval vessel. In international waters.

All that is missing now is Mobutu. Earlier in the day he had arrived in his private jet at Pointe Noire airport. Now we were waiting for the helicopter to bring him on board.

And waiting. And waiting.

Eventually a contingent pulls up at the gangplank — actually a flight of about 30 moveable stairs. They count studiously. They shake their heads. The Lion of Africa will not be able to climb 30 stairs. And so the clean Americans leave the ship to arrange helicopter transport.

They return looking glum. Mobutu will not be flying in a helicopter. He's quite willing to go ahead with the talks of course ... it's just the helicopter thing, you understand.

Heads are put together. Richardson and the clean Americans go down the gangplank again.

News gradually filters through of what the alternatives are. Mobutu can be winched up from the dockside. Or he can meet the ship by motor boat and be pulled up from the sea in a special metal cage, usually used, one presumes, for bags of mielie meal and the like.

The next time the clean Americans return they are beginning to look just a teeny bit rumpled. Uh uh. Mobutu has presumably seen in his mind's eye the front page picture in the world's newspapers the next day.

There is more head-scratching. Finally, a solution is found. The ailing president will be driven in to the ship's hold. And, *voila*, plan D proves acceptable. And Mobutu finally arrives in the early evening.

With a great heaving of ropes and cables and a song in our hearts we are finally on the high seas as darkness falls. The light of the Cabinda oil rigs shine like fairy lights to starboard.

Then, they are shining to port as the news comes through. Kabila can't make it. Mbeki, who has gone off to fetch him in Luanda, has come back empty-handed. We dock and Mobutu's cavalcade sweeps off again. And it's back to the drawing board.

Next day there are very long silences from the other side of the ship, broken only by infrequent "briefings" from hapless Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad.

But, although we don't know it, things are happening. The US ambassador to Angola has visited President Eduardo Dos Santos in Luanda, with whom Kabila is staying, with an unequivocal message that the US would be defending Kinshasa should the rebels choose to attack.

Contact is finally made. But no go. Kabila won't come on board unless the Americans are off. Exit the no longer so clean Americans.

But by this stage another Catch-22 is taking shape. Mobutu refuses to board again until Kabila is already on the ship. Kabila, of course won't board except in international waters.

It is Mandela who finally breaks the deadlock by satellite phone in satellite phone diplomacy.

Get your butt down here by nine o'clock tomorrow or I'm going home, he says, or something to that effect.

That same afternoon, Kabila's advance guard of security people flies in. And the recalcitrant rebel leader's own helicopter is not far behind.

And the next day, Mobutu's not inconsiderable pride assuaged, he rejoins the boat in a somewhat less ostentatious cavalcade. And the games can begin ...

And end just over an hour later. It's all over, bar the preparation of a joint communique that says just about nothing. It amounts to a restatement of two old and completely incompatible sets of demands, though it is spiced up with a few commendations on the willingness of the two principals to compromise and behave in a proper and statesmanlike manner.

Agreement had in fact been reached during the brief negotiation. Mobutu had agreed to step down and hand over immediately to a transitional authority which would than see Zaire to democratic elections.

So there you have it. Except that the very next day Kabila announced his soldiers would be taking Kinshasa by force. And the media reported the rebels were getting closer and closer to the Zairean capital.

So there you have it. Well, not quite. Despite their relentless advances, the rebels didn't seem to be getting any closer to Kinshasa. And on Tuesday Kabila reassured Mbeki that a ceasefire was in place after all.

Meanwhile, Mobutu has flown off to Gabon for conferences. His aides are saying he might have to proceed to France for medical treatment before returning home to Kinshasa —though he is not fleeing, you understand.

And the next round of South African-brokered talks are pencilled in for some time next week. So there you have it. Or maybe not? Who knows.

Ivor Powell is the deputy political editor for SABC TV News

Kinshasa braces for large-scale pillage

Star 10/5/97 (358)

By ROSS HERBERT
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

Kinshasa – Screams; shattering glass; soldiers bashing in doors; the rat-tat-tat-tat of automatic weapons firing; troops and civilians running helter-skelter with televisions, arm-loads of clothes and furniture.

For Kinshasa residents, that chaotic vision of the great 1993 pillage (as looting sprees are known in French) comes to mind with greater frequency as each tense day passes and rebel forces draw closer to the capital that they promise to lay siege to if President Mobutu Sese Seko refuses to resign.

Pillage is also on the minds of Western soldiers who may be called upon to enter Kinshasa by force and evacuate more than 4 000 foreign citizens. Nearly 4 000 British, American, French, Belgian and Portuguese troops are stationed in Brazzaville, in Libreville and offshore in case evacuation is necessary.

If the Zairean civil war ends in a fight for Kinshasa, chaos will be the only certainty. Twice before, in 1991 and 1993, Kinshasa was torn apart by pillages started by angry soldiers, many of whom still live in the university buildings they seized in 1993. In nearly every city captured by rebels in the seven-month civil war, Zairian government forces have looted before fleeing.

The fear of diplomats and citizens alike is that the same will happen in Kinshasa. Because the successor to Mobutu would represent the end of the gravy train for his presidential guard and top officers, people fear a pillage could be accompanied by violent political score-settling.

The sprawling city of Kinshasa, home to an estimated 5 million people, spreads more than 40km east to west and 25km north to south. For the rebels, the prize of Kinshasa is Camp Tshatshi where Mobutu, his family and most of the elite Presidential Guard live in a compound next to the Zaire River.

While rebels focus on Tshatshi, foreign troops will be looking just to its east at the wealthy Gombe section, which is home to most foreign nationals and embassies. Gombe is surrounded to the north by a horseshoe of the Zaire River and to the south, across the railway tracks, by vast slums.

In an evacuation, one of the hottest points would be embassy row along the river, which is near Camp Tshatshi and is home to the British, German, Chinese and Dutch embassies and the Belgian and American ambassadors' homes.

The British forces, 300 to 400 soldiers, would evacuate 250 citizens of the UK and 550 from Commonwealth countries using four high-speed pontoon-style boats and two hovercraft that have been airlifted into Brazzaville. The six boats can move 100 people across the 2km-wide Zaire River in two minutes.

"People are leaving by every possible device. We are literally knocking on doors to check who is still here and who has left," said Alan Dacey, spokesman for the British Embassy.

South Africa has only five of its staff members in Kinshasa and there are a further 25 South Africans in the city, whom the embassy has advised in an emergency to get to the nearest Western embassy.

There are plans to send a South African plane to Kinshasa or Brazzaville, but the embassy has intentionally kept its plans quiet because of the delicate negotiating role South Africa is playing in the crisis.

At British request, the German Embassy has paved a slipway from the embassy grounds down to the river so that the hovercraft can drive up on to the grounds.

Each embassy has defined pick-up points where their citizens are to gather in a crisis. If an evacuation is ordered, the decision would come from the ambassadors, who would likely make a joint decision to bring in their collective forces together.

The US has the largest force, which is the same force that was used to evacuate Albanians recently. It includes 150 marines in Brazzaville and 1400 marines and 600 sailors on the helicopter carrier Nassau off the coast of Congo. The French have 600 troops in Brazzaville and Libreville, the Belgians 623 paratroopers and 54 pilots.

Like the British, the French would rely on boats to evacuate. The Belgians say their plans are classified.

Commander Bob Anderson, spokesman for US forces, said the American plan called for US marines to secure the embassy, another US office building and the ambassador's residence. They would go in behind a force of attack helicopters. Once the area was safe, US forces would airlift US and Canadian citizens out with a continuous steam of Super Stallion helicopters that can carry 35 people each.

The helicopter force would be able to evacuate 500 to 600 people in an hour.

All of the Western forces say they will not fight with any Zairean forces or rebels unless fired upon and they don't plan to play any role in preventing a pillage or restoring order in Kinshasa.

"The decision is entirely up to the ambassador. It would be based on the sort of common-sense things you would expect: widespread violence, threats to American citizens," said Brigadier-General Guy van der Linden, commander of US marine forces, which have been practising mock evacuations in the past several weeks.

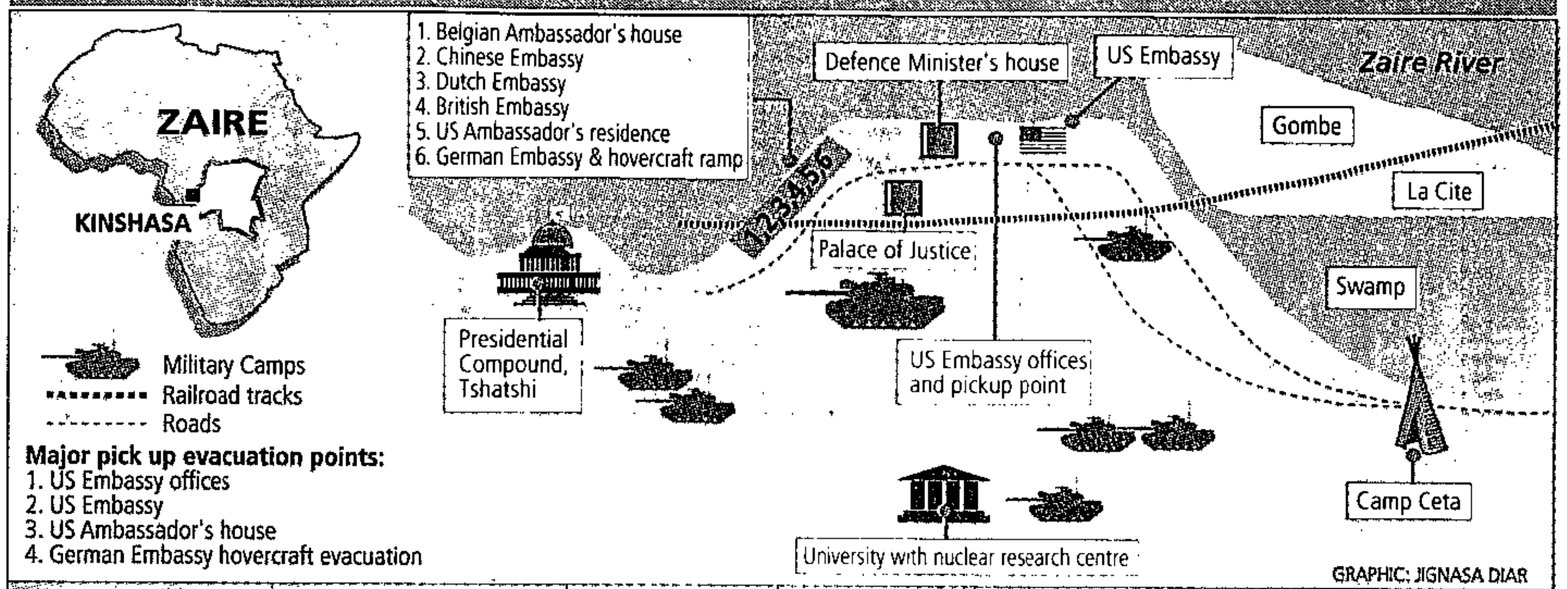
Kinshasa is dotted with 10 Zairean military camps, although most are simply living quarters without any substantial defences or heavy arms. Estimates of the size of Mobutu's forces vary widely, in part because military payrolls are notoriously padded with ghost soldiers. One analyst estimated there are about 20 000 soldiers in Kinshasa, including 1 800 in the Presidential Guard.

The closest known rebel position now is some 200km east of Kinshasa at Kenge, where at least 200 civilians and 100 government soldiers were killed in a bloody battle on Wednesday. If rebels follow the road from Kenge to Kinshasa, they would come first to Kinshasa's Ndjili airport and the adjoining Camp Ceta.

Instead of entering the city, rebel forces may just decide to surround Kinshasa and cut it off from power and food. That, said one military analyst, is the scenario to fear the most.

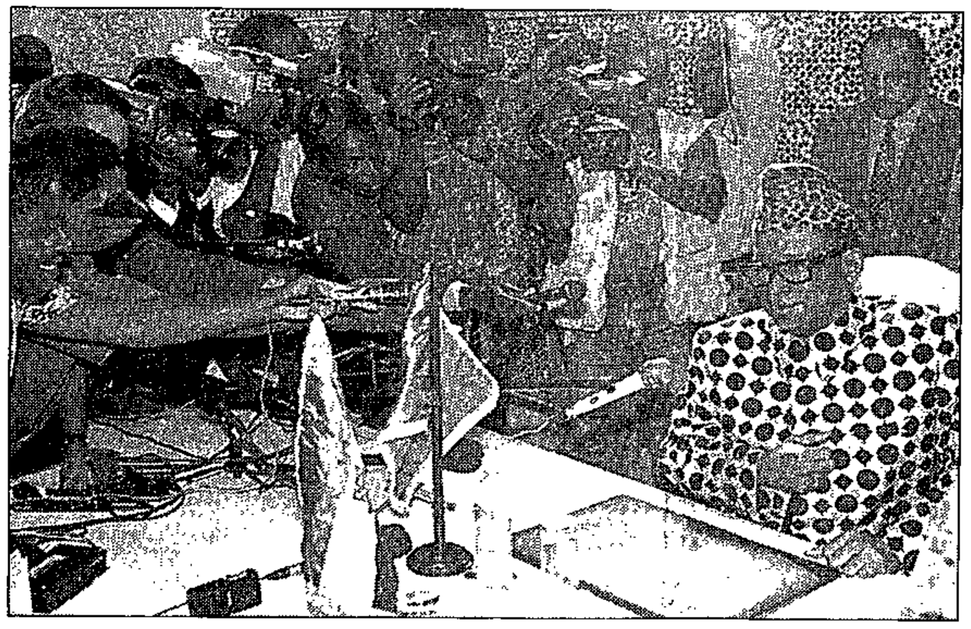
Although it might prevent a bloody fight through densely populated slums, it would also raise the chance that hunger and desperation will turn to pillage that no one can control.

KINSHASA EVACUATION POINTS



GRAPHIC: JIGNASA DIAR

FORCES CHART	USA	CANADA	BRITAIN	FRANCE	BELGIUM
Citizens	300	400	250+550 Commonwealth	900	1500
Troops	2150	None	300-400	600	677
Evacuation	By transport helicopter	By US troops	By speed boat and hovercraft	By ferry or helicopter	By helicopter or boat



LAST RITES: Mobutu Sese Seko at a press conference in Libreville, Gabon, yesterday, probably one of his last as Zairean president PHOTOGRAPH: AP

Zairean rebel alliance faces challenges

The downfall of Zaire's ailing dictator contrasts with the stunning rise of the rebel alliance. But will the uneasy coalition hold together in victory? asks Michela Wrong

BD 12/5/97 (358)

IF ZAIRE can reinvent itself after the end of the Mobutu era, it can unlock its huge natural resources and bring unparalleled stability to war-plagued central Africa. If, instead, it dissolves into the anarchy that characterised the country's independence, the entire region will pay the price.

Either way, academics will judge the ending of the Mobutu Sese Seko regime as ranking second only to the end of apartheid in its effect on the fortunes of post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa.

This will have been achieved at bewildering speed by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo — a movement no one had heard of this time last year, and whose leader Laurent Kabila rarely rates so much as a footnote in books on Zaire.

The achievement seems so remarkable it lends itself to all sorts of conspiracy theories. Many Zaireans assume that only funding by a US grown tired of an obstreperous ally and greedy for its mineral riches can explain the alliance's success.

Yet while history will almost certainly uncover heavy tactical support for the alliance from Uganda, Rwanda and Angola, it is unlikely to expose a plot on Washington's part.

The seeds of Mobutu's self-destruction were planted long ago, long before their germination in the wake of last October's announcement by south Kivu's deputy governor that local Banyamulenge Tutsis were persona non grata in Zaire.

The Banyamulenge revolt, mainspring of the rebel uprising, did not occur in isolation.

Throughout his career, Mobutu has readily played the ethnic card, exploiting divisions among Zaire's 200 tribal groups for political gain. Nor did he confine playing with fire to his own territory.

He systematically funded guerrilla movements in neighbouring countries, helping to destabilise the entire central African region.

However, by last year the geostrategic realities of Africa had changed, robbing him of his traditional western protectors. Pressure for democratic reform had left his internal hold on power more shaky than at any time since the 1965 coup in which he seized control. And his spreading prostate cancer was needing intensive treatment in Europe, making it hard to keep control.

Despite its size, Zaire's army is a fighting force in name alone. Terrified of a coup, Mobutu instituted a policy of divide and rule among the security services, destroying any esprit de corps.

"The Zairean army has never been a war machine. It is an internal security machine whose raison d'être is to protect the president," says a military analyst.

Greed in the upper echelons of the army has destroyed what little morale was left. For decades, Zairean generals have appropriated defence funds, leaving their men unpaid for months.

While the fighting was at its height, these army chiefs continued selling weapons bought for a promised "devastating" counter-offensive to the Unita guerrilla movement in Angola.

"They were sabotaging their own campaign. But you have to (see) these people as gangsters rather than politicians — and a gangster tries to make money until the very last moment," says a diplomat.

Soldiers have looted, raped and killed their fellow nationals but rarely stood and fought, despite the primitive nature of the challenge mounted.

The army has behaved the same way during the 1960s and 1970s, when Zaire's territorial integrity was challenged repeatedly by uprisings and secession attempts.

Then, however, its failings were compensated for by outside forces, as France, the US, Belgium, Morocco and the United Nations leapt to the rescue of a country regarded as a bulwark against communism.

By last year, the end of the Cold War finally registered. The US and Belgium, Zaire's former colonial master, were sick of Mobutu.

After criticism poured on France for its 1994 intervention in Rwanda, Paris no longer dared to launch a rescue operation. The mass repatriation of Hutu refugees to Rwanda in November made it impossible to disguise such intervention as humanitarian. For the first time, Mobutu was on his own and surrounded by states happy to exploit a moment of weakness to settle old scores.

Uganda crossed into east Zaire to wipe out two guerrilla movements and a Sudanese supply base, eliminating the security problem on its western border.

Rwanda pushed the hardline group of former soldiers and militiamen it blamed for the 1994 genocide further into the forest.

Angered by Zaire's support for Unita and separatist movements in its Cabinda enclave, Angola helped prepare a western front for the attack on Kinshasa. Zambia allowed rebels to cross its territory to attack Lubumbashi. Diplomats spoke of rebel training camps in Tanzania and arms from Zimbabwe and Eritrea.

By the time the conflict closed on Kinshasa, seven of Zaire's nine neighbours had signalled support for the rebels. "Kabila's greatest achievement was not the ground he covered militarily, but the territory he won in terms of public relations, how other countries viewed him and his movement," says a diplomat.

The growing anti-Mobutu consensus came as the 66-year-old president's grip was faltering. Following the 1990 announcement of multiparty democracy, Mobutu had shown enormous skill in spinning the transition process out for seven long years, aided by the opposition's squabbling.

Yet after a groundbreaking national conference, where it was accepted the president should rule but not govern, his growing absence from the political scene attested to his weakening influence.

Marooned on his riverboat or cloistered in his palace in Gbadolite, 1 200km from Kinshasa, or having treatment in Europe, he appeared to have accepted a dilution of his role as long as the mineral revenues needed to keep his entourage in style kept coming in.

By the time his regime realised negotiations were better than confrontation, it was too late.

For the rebels, the hardest part will not be the taking of Kinshasa. They will have to win the hearts and minds of the 5-million residents — who have a strong sense of national identity, and are sensitive to suggestions that their new rulers will be a Rwandan movement in the guise of a Zairean front.

"People are saying we want Kabila to bring about change, but don't want him to take power," says a businessman. "We want a real Zairean to lead the country. We are not going to be ordered around by Tutsis."

The rebel alliance will also have to take more than members of Mobutu's clique into account. Etienne Tshisekedi, leader of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, the main opposition party, still regards himself as rightful prime minister and expects a key post in a future government.

Elsewhere in the country, the alliance has shown some skill at co-opting opposition parties, but in Kinshasa the alliance will come up against some monstrous egos, backed by popular support, with a taste for legalistic wrangling.

There is also a danger that with the president gone, provinces with autonomous leanings — diamond-producing Kasai, copper-rich Shaba — will start pressing for more than mere federalism.

The challenges, analysts say, could coincide with strains on alliance unity. Led by a Marxist, but with policy apparently drafted by a group of western-educated pragmatists, the alliance appears to be a puzzling mish-mash of conflicting ideologies.

Its clumsy handling of the refugee crisis, which did the alliance enormous damage in terms of international credibility, hints at internal schisms and communications problems in a group that started triumphing on the battlefield before it had time to fuse as an organisation.

"The moment they stop moving, their internal contradictions will explode," says a diplomat.

French officials, furious at the prospect of Paris's marginalisation, like to dwell on alliance inconsistencies, Kabila's Maoist past and reports of mass graves in the east, to portray the alliance as a new Khmer Rouge, preparing to plunge Zaire into a bloodier, more regressive dictatorship than it ever knew under Mobutu.

Yet the examples set by Yoweri Museveni in Uganda and Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi — two sources of inspiration for Kabila — show guerrilla leaders are usually swift these days to abandon Marxist maxims, after winning power, to seek western funds.

Since its creation, the alliance has consistently shown up those doubting its importance and ability to deliver. — Financial Times.



Rebel alliance troops redeploy near Kisangani at the weekend. Picture: AP

Mbeki and Kabila meet in rebel town

(358)

Hope for an accord

ARG 10/5/97

Lubumbashi – Zairean rebel leader Laurent Kabila has begun talks with South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki here, a rebel official has said.

Mr Kabila went into the meeting about 3.00pm yesterday, an hour after flying into Lubumbashi airport from his former base town at Goma in north-eastern Zaire.

Mr Mbeki arrived at 9.45am for talks with Mr Kabila aimed at averting an attack on the capital of Kinshasa by the rebels, who have seized two-thirds of the country.

"Yes, certainly," Mr Mbeki replied when asked if he was hopeful for the outcome of these talks and for discussions he expected to hold later in the day in Kinshasa with President Mobutu Sese Seko. Mr Mobutu has said he will not stand in elections to be organised by a transitional authority.

However, Mr Mobutu was still in the Gabonese capital, Libreville, yesterday, where he was said to be "resting" after a regional summit on Zaire.

Mr Mbeki was met on his arrival by rebel "foreign minister" Bizima Karaha, who earlier told reporters that the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire rejected the prospect of a parliamentary speaker taking over from Mr Mobutu.

"The transition will be undertaken by the alliance and nobody but the alliance," he said.

Once in power, Mr Karaha said, the alliance would be open to other opposition politicians.

The appointment of the parliamentary speaker as acting president, as mooted in diplomatic proposals for a peaceful settlement, would be a sign of defiance, he said, and if it happened, "we will continue the struggle".

In Gabon, central African leaders called on Zaire's political leaders to hold presidential elections under the aegis of the transitional parliament to allow for a smooth functioning of state bodies and a democratic transition.

Mr Mobutu has called for a "political and negotiated" settlement. The ailing president said he would not run in a presidential election because of health concerns. – Sapa-AFP

Zaire agreement, but no guarantee

Geneva – Ailing Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko and rebel alliance chief Laurent Kabila have agreed in principle to hold a meeting on Wednesday on board a South African ship, UN sources said yesterday.

The sources said there was "agreement" from both sides but no "guarantee".

Rebel foreign affairs spokesman Bizima Karaha earlier said Kabila still intended to attend the meeting with Mobutu which was set at their last meeting for May 14.

Karaha, who was speaking just before Deputy President Thabo Mbeki arrived in Lubumbashi for talks with Kabila, said there was a "good chance" the meeting would be held, saying it had been set for 10 days after the two men's last shipboard encounter on May 4 in the Congolese port of Pointe-Noire.

The sources in Geneva also said the meeting had been pencilled in during the initial encounter between the two rival leaders.

One source said Mobutu's stance was that he would not run in forthcoming elections, adding that what he wanted was to leave Zaire as gracefully as possible, with a transitional structure in place that gave an "impression" of continuity.

Star 10/5/97

Kabila came to the meeting on Sunday equipped with a transfer-of-power plan in the shape of two letters, the UN sources said. One required Mobutu's signature, saying he had agreed to relinquish power. The second was to note the acceptance of power bestowed by Mobutu with space for Kabila's signature.

The US had great "potential" to influence events in eastern Zaire, the sources said, adding there was much that could be done by Washington.

In Paris on Thursday, US special envoy to the region, Bill Richardson, called on Kabila and "all sides to suspend hostilities and moderate their positions to lower the temperature".

Richardson has been a key figure in shuttle diplomacy between Mobutu, Kabila and other regional leaders to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The French government had been supportive of mediation efforts, pledging to use its good offices with Mobutu to end the conflict, sources said.

Central African leaders on Thursday called for a "political and negotiated" settlement to the crisis at the end of a summit meeting in Libreville.

The six presidents called on Zaire's political leaders to hold presidential elections under the aegis of the transitional parliament as Kabila's rebels appear poised to seize the capital Kinshasa.

(358)

The UN sources said a grave conflict in Zaire was a "plausible" scenario which could not be ruled out, and which could feature pillaging and torture by routed government troops.

The humanitarian disaster engulfing thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees in eastern Zaire was an "incredible" tragedy which risked continuing, they added.

An estimated 250 000 Rwandans are thought to be still in the region, with most out of reach of any humanitarian help. – Sapa-AFP

■ See Page 6

INTERIM LANDELIKE INISIATIEF VIR ONTWIKKELING

Kinshasa on edge as Mobutu comes home

(358)

Hopes for peace hang on new talks with Kabila

ST 11/5/97

CRAIG DOONAN
Kinshasa

UNCERTAINTY gripped Kinshasa as rebel forces reportedly continued to advance on the Zairian capital to which President Mobutu Sese Seko unexpectedly returned yesterday.

Sapa-AFP reports that Mobutu returned to Kinshasa from Gabon where he had been attending a summit of central African leaders. The plane carrying the ailing leader landed in a military zone of Kinshasa's airport, off-limits to waiting reporters and photographers.

Earlier, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said Mobutu had agreed in Libreville, the Gabonese capital to hold a second meeting with rebel leader Laurent Kabila. Mbeki had flown to Libreville to meet Mobutu after holding talks on Friday with Kabila, who has already agreed to a summit following the two men's first meeting a week ago.

Kabila and Mobutu have agreed to meet again on the Outeniqua at Pointe Noire, off the Congolese coast, next Wednesday, Mbeki said in Libreville.

Mobutu's return to Kinshasa put paid to speculation that he would not return to Zaire to allow a peaceful transition of power to Kabila, whose forces are said to be between 50km and 200km from the capital city of five million people.

If a transitional arrangement for handing power to Kabila can be sold to the rebel leader on Wednesday, the feeling is that Kinshasa will "go with a whimper", said one SA diplomat based there. But some diplomats fear Kabila may press ahead with his six-month campaign which has so far captured three-quarters of the country.

Word on the city's streets is just as uncertain. "Kinshasa Radio tells us the rebels have been chased out of Kenge and are now more that 400km away," said John Mila, an immigration official at the city's airport. "But we are also hearing reports that they are less than 50km away. We don't know what to believe."

Around 300 people are believed to have been killed this week in the battle for Kenge, 200km east of Kinshasa, which is believed to be in rebel control. They have since reportedly gained another 30km-50km on the capital.

Mila, like most of the city's teeming population, wants Kabila to capture the capital, hold elections and install a democratic government. But he is unsure whether Kabila will deliver.

"We don't know him, but we want change. We hope he will be the one who does that and not think only of himself and power," he said.

Mila, like the rest of the local population, is feeling the effects of the city's troubles. Inflation has sent prices soaring. Even a bag of cassava, an important staple, has rocketed from the equivalent of US$18 to $50 in a few weeks.

Foreign embassies are planning to evacuate their nationals, and scores of US, British, French and other troops are on standby in Brazzaville just across the Zaire river if needed. South Africa sent in a group of four SANDF soldiers on Friday night to help secure the embassy in Kinshasa should looting occur in the event of an imminent rebel takeover.

"What we fear is a period of non-governance when the Zairian soldiers submit and there is no official control of the city," said an SA diplomat. "In this scenario, looting is inevitable and poses a grave threat to the city."

Meanwhile, Sapa-AP reports that Kabila urged a group of foreign investors in Lubumbashi yesterday to help rebuild Zaire. "I would like to assure you that we need you to begin anew with this country," Kabila said in French during a 10-minute welcoming speech.

The gathering of about 30 representatives of US, Canadian and British investment banks and firms was sponsored by America Mineral Fields Corporation of Hope, Arkansas, which has signed a $1-billion deal with Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire to process rich copper and cobalt tailings at Kolwezi, to develop a zinc mine at Kipushi and to explore the Kipushi region.

Elsewhere, however, doubts were raised about the rebels' commitment to the free market following the nationalisation of Zaire's national railway system from Sizarail, the private management company that had succeeded in turning it around in less than two years.

The move has left carloads of copper ore sitting on the tracks since Zambia closed its borders to protest against the move. It has also angered the SA government and left mining interests wondering how efficiently they will be able to get their ores to market.

A mining executive, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said he and other investors were holding off on further moves until Kabila's alliance set up a "real organisation."

The rebel justification for the takeover is that Sizarail — a Zairian, South African and Belgian consortium — bribed members of Mobutu's regime to get the railway management contract. Company officials deny this.

The rolling stock of 10 locomotives, 20 boxcars and 10 passenger cars was owned by Spoornet and is estimated to be worth $50 million.

Zaire's rebel army on the march again as peace talks near

(358)
APR 12/5/97

Lubumbashi, Zaire – Zairian rebels adopted a tough line today and said peace talks on Wednesday would be President Mobutu Sese Seko's last chance to bow out gracefully.

The rebels, who now control three-quarters of the country, said they were fighting their way towards the capital, Kinshasa, under their new policy of coupling military pressure with diplomatic attempts to avert bloodshed in the city.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila will meet President Mobutu on board the South African navy ship Outeniqua off Congo on Wednesday in a second attempt to agree on a peaceful transfer of power.

Rebel "foreign affairs minister" Bizima Karaha said: "We have bent over backwards to accommodate a dictator – but everything has a limit, and we have reached ours. Wednesday will determine whether we make a soft landing in Kinshasa or a tough military entry."

Renouncing the standstill pledge they gave to South Africa's President Mandela on May 4, rebel commanders confirmed their forces were on the move again and were less than 200km from Kinshasa.

The rebels admit they are facing stiff resistance as they approach Kinshasa but say this is due to the presence of thousands of battle-hardened Angolan fighters from the Angolan rebel group Unita.

Mr Karaha said yesterday that government forces backed by Unita and former Rwandan Hutu troops were preparing to massacre foreigners in Kinshasa in order to trigger foreign intervention. He appealed to expatriates to leave the city.

On the humanitarian front, an aid mission to a rebel-held area of eastern Zaire said yesterday it had found thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees, many near death, about 82km from Kisangani.

Earlier it was reported that Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki was "quite confident" of a peaceful transfer of power in Zaire after intensive discussions with President Mobutu and Mr Kabila.

Mr Mbeki's spokesman said Mr Mbeki – who returned to South Africa yesterday from a hectic round of meetings with African leaders – was confident the two men would meet again as planned.

Mr Mbeki had put forward proposals for Mr Mobutu to hand over power and then had further discussions with Mr Kabila by telephone last night.

Other sources have indicated that the proposal involves Mr Mobutu handing over power to a transitional authority headed by a neutral political figure. – Reuter and Independent Foreign Service

Mining payout for rebels, page 13

Rebel leader opens Zaire to world business

Kabila 'no' to Anglo and De Beers

CT(BR) 12/5/97

(358)

GUY OLIVER

Lubumbashi, Zaire — South African conglomerates Anglo American and De Beers will not enjoy any special privileges in Zaire, Laurent Kabila, the leader of the rebel alliance controlling the bulk of the central African country, said at the weekend.

Kabila's snub of the South African mining houses came during a face-to-face chat with about 30 investment bankers and fund managers from the US and Europe, during which he said Zaire would be opening soon to international business.

The bankers were brought to Lubumbashi by American Mineral Fields (AMF), which in a $1 billion coup secured some of the vast country's prize mining concessions, wrong-footing its South African rivals, Anglo American, Gencor and JCI. AMF made an offer directly to Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL).

Kabila accused Anglo American and De Beers of exploiting Zaire in the past without contributing to the country's development. "Nobody should take anything without leaving anything. It is rape. We should share," Kabila said.

"We have talked to De Beers and Anglo and told them we have the same policies towards them. They must develop."

Kabila cited Miba, the state-owned diamond company, as an example of mining rape. "Around those immense riches there is serious poverty."

De Beers has a contract to buy Miba's diamond output and is also one of several companies with various diamond buying offices around Zaire.

A De Beers spokesman said the "situation was still fluid" in Zaire, and there were still negotiations between De Beers and Kabila's forces. A De Beers official, Nick Davenport, was in Lubumbashi at the weekend.

Florent Kambale, the rebels' mining minister, also spelled out the rebels' resentment of conglomerates, accusing them of having no social responsibility.

He said Kabila's government, which in a seven-month whirlwind offensive has overrun 95 percent of Zaire, with only Kinshasa remaining to be claimed, favoured competition.

Analysts, invited by AMF to Lubumbashi, regard Toronto-listed AMF's $1 billion deal to exploit copper and zinc reserves as a reflection of South African conglomerates' arrogant belief that Africa was theirs for the taking.

The tide of war has resulted in the positive sentiment that Anglo and De Beers once enjoyed under the regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko as turning sour.

An official of Gecamines, the Zairean mining parastatal, said Anglo was "more than upset" by AMF deal.

Jean Ramonde Boulle, the AMF chairman and a former De Beers employee, said his company planned to build a zinc smelter with a yearly capacity of 200 000 tons.

Zaire's rebel forces break pledge

ET 12/5/97 (358)

LUBUMBASHI: Zairian rebels said yesterday they were abandoning a pledge to President Nelson Mandela to halt their advance on the, capital Kinshasa, while diplomacy was being given a chance.

Rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila's "foreign minister" Mr Bizima Karaha announced the move at a news conference ahead of a second face-to-face meeting between Mandela, Kabila and embattled President Mobutu Sese Seko on Wednesday.

"Mobutu is a devil and a trickster and has used the talks to reinforce his troops, bring in Unita elements, former Rwandan troops and consolidate his position in Kinshasa," Karaha said in this rebel-held southern city.

"Our response to this is that we are abandoning our pledge and we will continue to advance. We shall now talk and fight."

The rebels were last reported to be less than 200km from the teeming capital.

Diplomatic and political manoeuvring have intensified ahead of Wednesday's meeting. Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo, tipped as a key player in any peace deal, promised personal initiatives to promote a quick, consensus transition. Mobutu supporters have voted to give him back the job of speaker of Zaire's transitional parliament.

Karaha said the rebels might pull out of the South African peace initiative and storm Kinshasa if Monsengwo accepted the job of speaker — the constitutional successor to the president in the event of death or incapacity. The rebels insist that Mobutu step down and hand power to Kabila.

Monsengwo, who is still popular in a country with a Roman Catholic majority, held the job of speaker at the height of Zaire's promised transition to democracy.

Some diplomats and politicians say he could step in and provide Mobutu with a dignified exit. Others say Monsengwo could act as a national mediator — a role he played as speaker until ousted in July 1995.

"I will only accept if I have national and international guarantees," Monsengwo told a news conference in Belgium on his way back to Kinshasa from the Vatican.

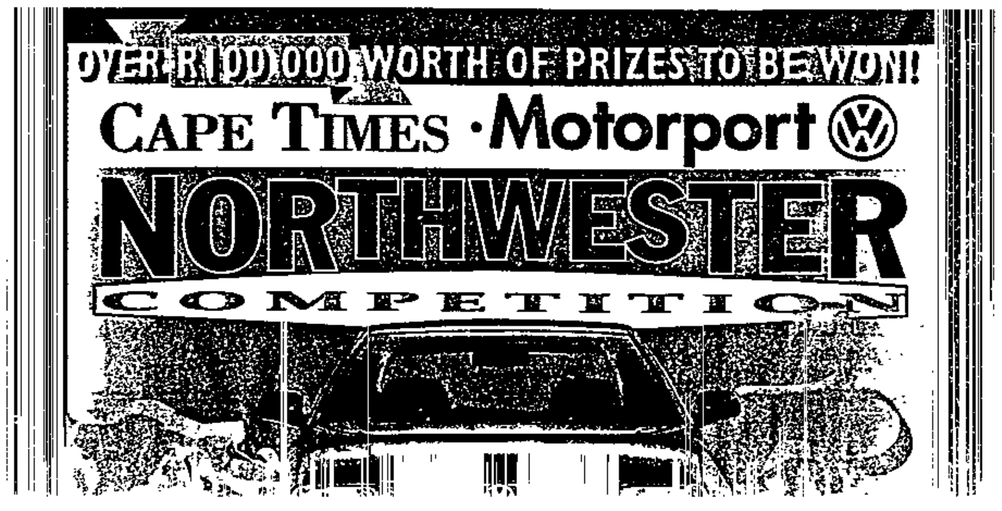
Mobutu returned to Kinshasa on Saturday after talks with fellow Central African leaders and SA Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, who said Mobutu and Kabila had agreed to attend fresh talks on Wednesday. — Reuter

● See Page 13

Pictures from a war zone



LAID TO REST: Gravediggers lower the body of a Rwandan refugee into a grave outside the makeshift refugee camp known as Kilometre 25 on the road south of Kisangani.





TRAIL OF DEATH: The decomposing body of a Rwandan refugee lies on the road where he fell, near the refugee camp called Kilometre 82 south of Kisangani. Scores of decomposing bodies lie along the trail made by Rwandan refugees retreating from Zaire

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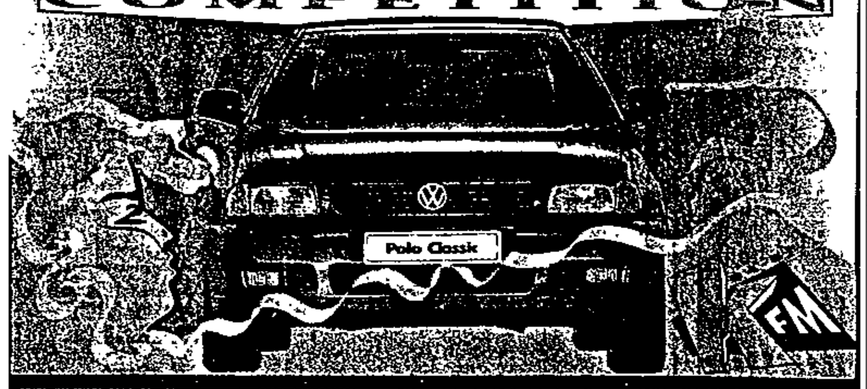

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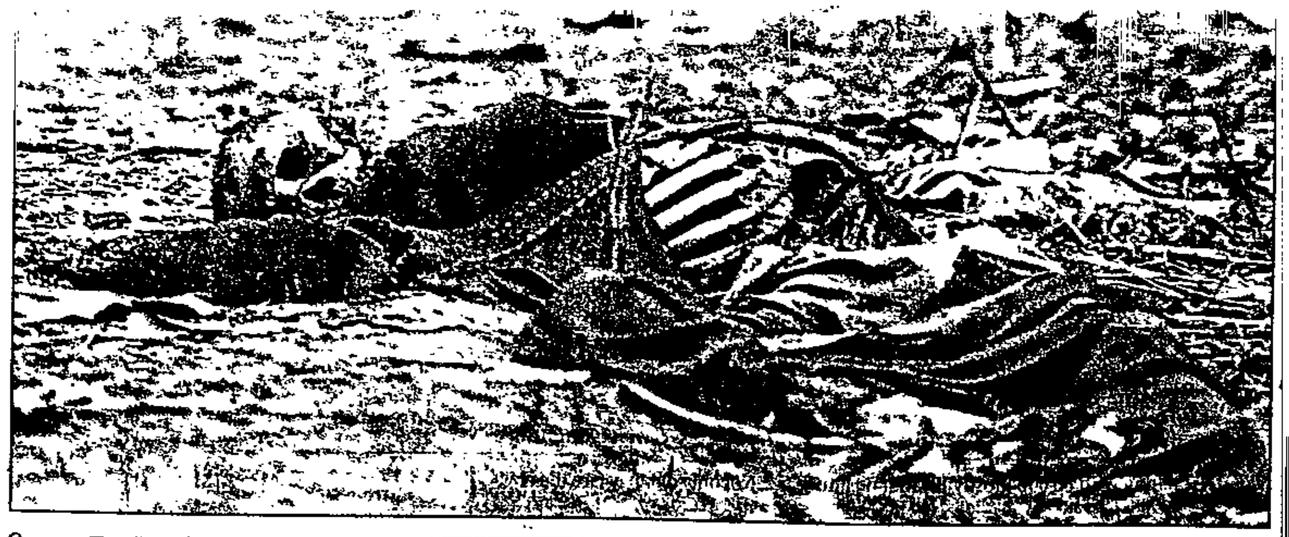


TRAIL OF DEATH: The decomposing body of a Rwandan refugee lies on the road where he fell, near the refugee camp called Kilometre 82 south of Kisangani. Scores of decomposing bodies lie along the trail made by Rwandan refugees retreating from Zaire's civil war.

Hunt on for Mobutu and his luxury villas

PETER DENNEHY

AS ZAIRIAN rebels vowed to hunt for ousted president Mobutu Sese Seko, the search for his properties around the globe has started.

In South Africa, he is rumoured to have a property in Clifton, worth about R1,3m and a Cape farm, according to the South African Press Agency and Agence France Press.

Ms Denise Dogon, Pam Golding Properties' agent for Clifton, said this was probably a rumour.

"A relative of his bought property in Fresnaye seven years ago. He and his wife have since sold it and moved," she said.

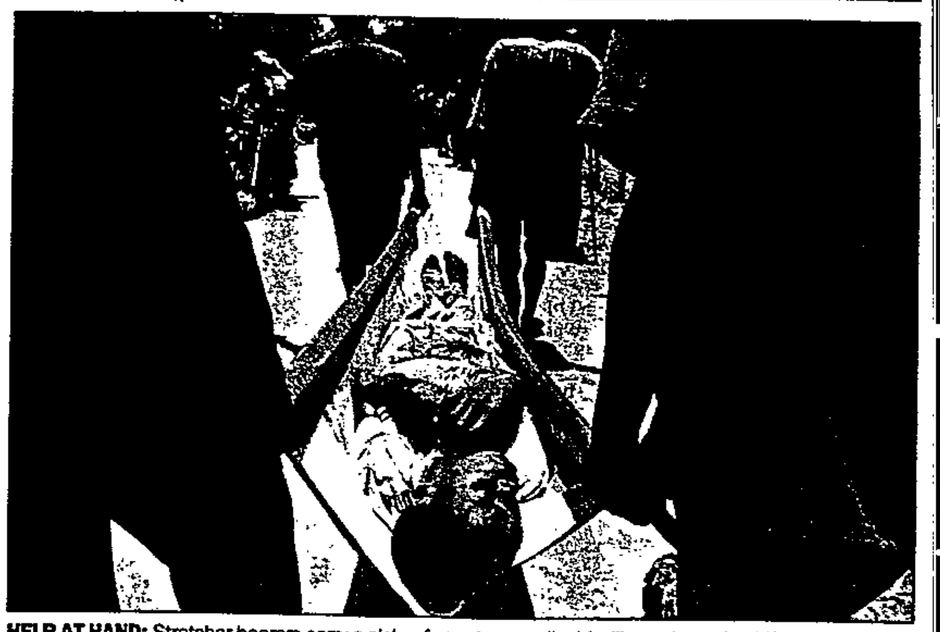
The news agency reports say: "In the wine-growing regions of Stellenbosch and Franschhoek, two R900 000 homes stand ready for the president."

The Swiss government says it has frozen all the former president's assets in the country, at the request of legal authorities in Lubumbashi, Zaire.

● Mobutu's total wealth stood at R31,5 billion in 1993, according to a French government study — 70% of Zaire's national debt.

● Mobutu slipped out of his home village in a cargo plane late on Saturday, bound for Togo, Togolese state TV reported.

He spent the night in the dictatorship run by his old friend, Mr Gnassingbe Eyadema, and departed yesterday for Morocco, it reported. — Sapa-AP



HELP AT HAND: Stretcher bearers carry a sick refugee to a medical facility at the makeshift camp called Kilometre 24. Over 80 000 Rwandan refugees are trapped by the civil war in Zaire.

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SA sees Kabila as president

CT 19/6/97 (358)

LUBUMBASHI, Zaire: South Africa said yesterday it recognised Mr Laurent Kabila as president of the renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo and that it was fully satisfied with his first steps as national leader.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki also told reporters at Lubumbashi airport that Kabila had given him assurances on democratic freedoms during a transitional period and on his government's concern for Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire.

Mbeki, an active participant in the negotiations that led up to Kabila taking power, was the first foreign dignitary to see the rebel leader since he declared himself president on Saturday.

He spent about two hours with Kabila in Lubumbashi, the temporary headquarters of Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo.

Asked if his visit meant South African recognition of Kabila as president of Congo, he said: "Yes, certainly. We support the positions that were enunciated in the communique issued yesterday and one of the elements in that was that President Kabila takes over immediately as head of state."

In negotiations between Kabila and fugitive former president Mr Mobutu Sese Seko, South Africa had tried to ensure that Kabila would set up a broad-based government including Kinshasa politicians not now in the rebel alliance.

Mbeki said that after seeing Kabila in Lubumbashi he was confident this would happen. — Reuter

RS

SA welcomes new Congo republic

(358)

Star 19/5/97

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"We are satisfied with what's happening and the steps that are being taken," Mbeki said. – Reuters.

Euphoria grips country as Mobutu takes off

Star 19/5/97

(358)

New beginning for renamed Democratic Republic of Congo as guerrillas become liberators

TIMES NEWS SERVICE
Kinshasa

In the space of a weekend, everything has changed – and changed utterly. The country known as Zaire since 1971 is now the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Laurent Kabila's alliance, who on Saturday marched into the capital Kinshasa, are no longer guerrillas but liberators. Kabila is the new head of state and Mobutu Sese Seko, the reviled dictator of 32 years, has gone for good.

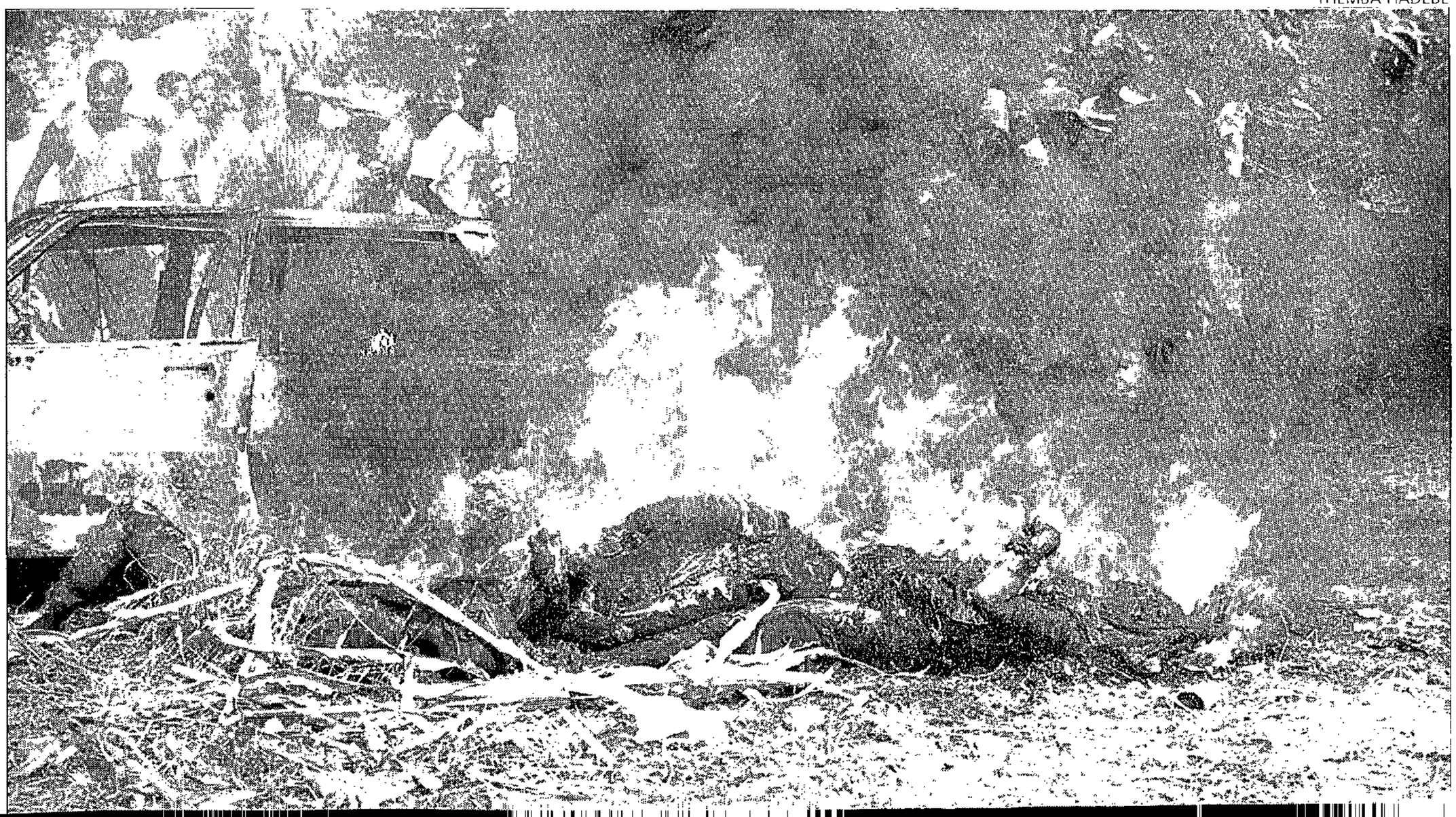
The inhabitants of Kinshasa were ecstatic as thousands of Kabila's fighters advanced through the streets yesterday and consolidated their hold on the city.

Wearing white headbands, people lined the roadsides and danced in jubilation. "We are liberated, we are liberated,' they shouted. "Vive Kabila!"

The invading soldiers had by yesterday taken Camp Tshashi, the final stronghold of the defeated Zairian army, and were mopping up the last isolated pockets of resistance.

Mobutu's palatial residence had also fallen and a commander was racing around in the open-top jeep from which the tyrant had once waved to the people.

THEMBA HADEBE



Inside the palace, looters seized the passport and cosmetics of Bobi Mobutu, the deposed president's wife, and drugs for the treatment of his cancer, but there was little else left.

Diplomatic sources estimate the force that has captured Kinshasa numbers 10 000.

Asked where he came from, one soldier said: "Uganda."

In the seven months since they started their insurgency in the remote east of the country, the fighters of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire have crossed 1 600km of bush and jungle.

They have driven the Zairian armed forces in disarray before them. There has been little engagement apart from rare occasions on which Angolan, Serb and other mercenaries have made a stand against the advancing troops.

Western diplomats said some score-settling by the new rulers was inevitable in the days ahead.

Along the roadside near the military base, the conquering soldiers lounged, weary but evidently flushed with triumph and enjoying some small spoils of their victory.

Most of them had entered Kinshasa with their weapons as their only possessions.

Some of them had marched in barefoot. All were hungry and thirsty.

Now they found themselves in the well-to-do Mont Ngaliema district, surrounded by more opulence than they had probably ever seen. The abandoned villas around them had once belonged to government ministers and members of Mobutu's entourage.

Teenage soldiers, some as young as 15, tinkered wonderingly with radios, cassette recorders and other electrical items that they had been unable to resist, despite the prohibition on looting. From one compound came the squeal of a pig as it was slaughtered; they had lit a fire in the front garden and were about to braai the animal.

Civilians streamed down the hill from the military camp, bearing their plunder aloft: chairs, telephones, computer keyboards, office files, whatever they had been able to lay their hands on before Kabila's troops had sealed it off.

One young man carried a tumble dryer perched on his head.

In another part of town, the troops glutted themselves on bottles of wine and beer.

Tins of meat and vegetables were prised open and poured down ravenous throats.

Fiery revenge ... seven soldiers of ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko tried to hijack a car but were caught and burnt by a furious crowd.

Star 19/5/97



Freedom celebration ... thousands poured into the streets of Kinshasa yesterday to celebrate the ousting of Mobutu and to welcome rebel soldiers.

Critical time for Zaire

As leading figures slipped quietly out of the country, others wait to see if the new leaders can establish order. **Jon Swain** sums up the situation...

(358) Sowetan 19/5/97

KINSHASA – Triumphant Zairean rebels seized the greatest prize in their guerrilla campaign on Saturday, strolling unopposed into Kinshasa, the capital, to be greeted by residents delighted at the departure of one of Africa's most hated despots.

Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader whose first act on assuming control of Africa's third-largest country was abruptly to change its name to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ordered government troops to surrender, and many were seen meekly handing over weapons to the invading rebels.

"I'm very happy," said Kabila in the south-eastern city of Lubumbashi, from where he conducted the guerrilla campaign. He said he would form a government of "national salvation" within 72 hours and would travel to the capital soon.

He said the takeover had been conducted with the agreement of generals in Kinshasa, who had assured him that all the military were willing to pledge allegiance to the newly declared government.

Mobutu Sese Seko, who had ruled the country for over three decades, slipped out of the capital virtually unnoticed on Friday, driving to the airport on his way into exile, first in Morocco and ultimately on the French Riviera.

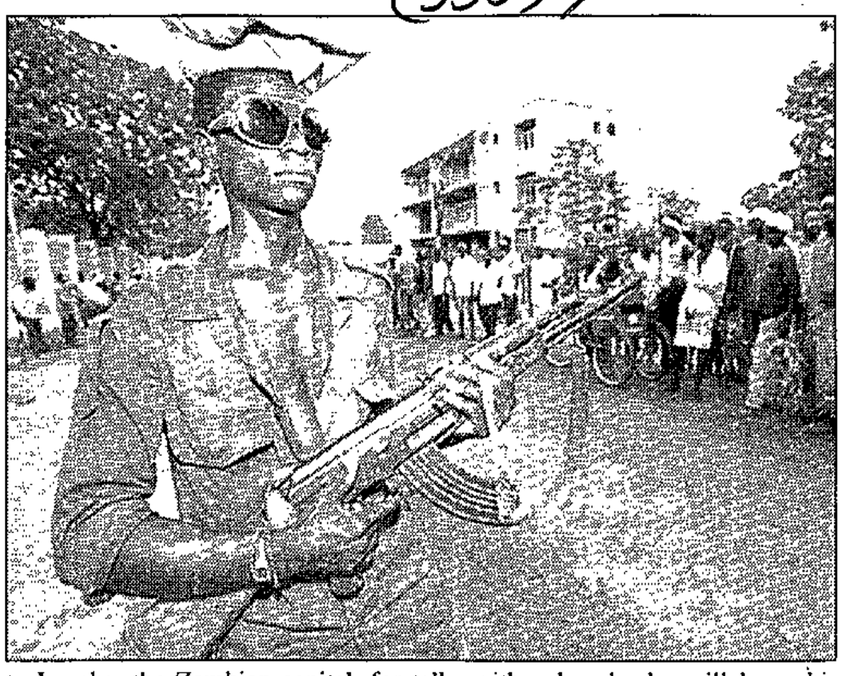
As the rebels took control of the parliament building and the main radio and television stations, the crackle of gunfire was mixed with periods of silence, when people emerged from buildings and walked in the streets.

In the centre some well-disciplined soldiers kept up their patrol. Asked if he would fight against the rebels, one, called Patrice, said: "No. Power is for the politicians. I am just a soldier trying to stop looting."

The main boulevard through the city was empty. "It is all over now," laughed a young man nervously. But just as he spoke there was the sound of more firing and everyone hugged the wall. Fears of a bloodbath in the capital as the rebels advanced on the demoralised government army kept most of the city's six million residents indoors. It is not the rebels who are feared in Kinshasa but Mobutu's routed army, whose appetite for looting is unlimited.

General Likulia Bolongo, the prime minister, ordered soldiers to remain in their barracks before himself fleeing across the river to Brazzaville, the capital of neighbouring Congo. The gunfire sent residents running for cover, but it was unclear who was firing on whom.

Adding to the apprehension in the capital was the murder of General Mahale Lioko, Zaire's army chief of staff. He was relatively moderate and one of the few members of Mobutu's entourage trusted by the rebel alliance. He was shot just as he was about to fly to Lusaka, the Zambian capital, for talks with leaders of the rebel alliance about a peaceful handover of the city. His killer was believed to have come from the ranks of Mobutu's elite presidential guard.



A Zairean rebel walks down the street in Kinshasa among Zairean civilians who came to the road to greet the rebels on Saturday.

PIC: AP

Troops from Western countries stationed at Brazzaville crossed the Zaire River to Kinshasa, standing by in case they are called upon to evacuate foreign nationals. Diplomats said on Saturday night that they still hoped it would be possible to achieve what they called a "soft landing", or peaceful transition of power.

Abandoned posts

The army was ordered on Saturday to stay in barracks but as the rebels closed on Kinshasa, hundreds abandoned posts on the outskirts of the city to make for the centre of the capital. Some laid down weapons; others begged for money.

Residents began hoisting banners proclaiming "Laurent Kabila, the liberator". Government troops appeared wearing white cloths around their heads, a sign they had gone over to the rebels.

"The day we have dreamt of has come at last," said Lambert Mende Omalanga, a leading opposition figure. "We were 32 years under Mobutu's boot and had almost lost hope. Now he has gone the air has become more easy to breathe. I need to sleep a bit to know if it is for real."

There is still a lingering doubt that the ruthless leader will leave his homeland for good; Mobutu has left so many times before and then defiantly returned that many are delaying celebrations.

The next hours are critical if a peaceful transition of power is to be achieved. Before Mobutu's departure, Mende and other opposition figures in Kinshasa sent signals to Kabila that they would be ready to collaborate.

Welcoming committees which had been operating underground met openly for the first time after the president had gone to coordinate Kabila's arrival.

Everyone's hopes of a peaceful settlement to Zaire's seven-month war are being tempered by increasing fears of looting by retreating government troops and the prospect of fighting between army units over the spoils. As the rebels closed in on the capital, the command structure of the army collapsed. At midday on Friday, General Mbimbibi Ngbale, commander of Mobutu's elite presidential guard, was seen crossing the Zaire River to Brazzaville.

Several of the country's leading political figures slipped out of the country almost unnoticed on Friday despite declaring again and again that they would defend the city to the last.

Mobutu can look forward to a comfortable retirement. It has been calculated that the despot is worth several billion dollars – enough money to live for 40 million years if he were forced to do so on the average annual income of Zaire's 45 million citizens. – *Sunday Times (London).*

ANC congratulates 'President' Kabila as govt holds back recognition

(358) BD 19/5/97

WHILE government has been careful to avoid giving victorious rebel leader Laurent Kabila any official recognition as leader of Zaire, the African National Congress (ANC) ignored diplomatic niceties and yesterday congratulated "President Laurent Kabila and the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (the rebels' new name for Zaire) on their ascendancy to power".

Sapa reports Deputy President Thabo Mbeki yesterday continued efforts to secure democracy in Zaire. He arrived at rebel alliance headquarters in Lubumbashi last night to seek assurances of a peaceful, negotiated transition to democratic rule following the weekend toppling of President Mobutu Sese Seko's government.

Mbeki's bargaining chip would be official recognition in return for a broad-based transitional authority and democratic elections.

ANC international affairs head Blade Nzimande said: "The ANC is pleased to note that the transfer of power occurred without much bloodshed, a tribute to efforts by President Nelson Mandela and deputy Thabo Mbeki. We are further pleased to note that President Kabila has committed himself to a constituent assembly to discuss a constitution for the People's Democratic Republic of Congo."

Kevin O'Grady reports Mobutu relinquished power on Friday and fled Kinshasa and Kabila installed himself as president a day later following the occupation of the capital by rebel soldiers. Kabila said he would form a transitional government within 72 hours and within 60 days there would be a new constitution. Mobutu's whereabouts yesterday were unknown.

In a statement which gave no recognition of Kabila's status as president, the foreign affairs department said Mbeki, Defence Minister Joe Modise and Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad would meet Kabila to "discuss the democratic transformation process".

There were signs that the latest developments in Zaire took the SA government by surprise and it was concerned that its peace proposals, which were expected to be ratified at last week's cancelled meeting between Kabila and Mobutu, were being ignored.

Mbeki's director-general, Frank Chikane, said: "Some of the actions people take may not be exactly as expected." However, there was no concern from SA "officially" about the manner in which Kabila seized power.

A source close to Mandela said government did "not want to reverse what has happened". Chikane said the "key issue" was that the situation did not

Continued on Page 2

Zaire

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Continued from Page 1

become violent. "That has been achieved so far. It's not as if there is a crisis because of what has happened. We are all working towards the same goal — to carry Zaire through transition with the least violence and establish a democracy." A fundamental issue in the proposals generated by SA peace brokers was that there should be a transitional authority "and Kabila has said he will form that in 72 hours".

Reuter reports Mbeki said in Lubumbashi it seemed the process of transition was on course. "It seems clear to us that the country is in the course of that process that was agreed by everybody — setting up a transitional authority."

Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo said earlier there was "no reason" why Pretoria would not support Kabila. "The people of Zaire will decide, but there is no reason why we would not support him."

Yesterday the rebels marched triumphantly through Kinshasa, cheered by onlookers. Residents reported isolated resistance. Bodies of soldiers and civilians killed in overnight shoot-outs with rebels littered the streets.

Picture: Page 4
See Page 16

Colonialism taints past SA, Zaire business deals

(368)

Why have SA interests lost out in the scramble for contracts in the new Zaire? Denis Kadima provides some answers

BD 19/5/97

SA BUSINESS leaders have been very unsuccessful in their attempts to secure major mining contracts with the new Zairean leadership.

Dozens of foreign businessmen are in Zaire trying to cut deals with the Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo/Zaire (AFDL), and North American interests have been able to secure some lucrative contracts with the alliance.

By contrast, Anglo American has recently lost a major contract for exploitation of copper and zinc, and De Beers has lost its monopoly over the purchase of diamonds.

Why have the South Africans had so little negotiating success with the rebels? It is well known that the leaders of the alliance are friendly toward the SA government. However, their seeming hostility to the country's businessmen is a result of two factors.

First there is SA business's soft attitude toward Mobutu's regime; and second, their ill-advised strategy in Zaire. AFDL leaders have condemned the contracts signed by SA companies and the Mobutu regime. It is said most of these contracts were secured under questionable circumstances.

With Zaire having little to gain from such deals, the alliance needed them to be renegotiated so that all parties could benefit meaningfully.

In addition, SA companies tended to enter the African Francophone market in partnership with France and Belgium, the former colonial powers. By doing so, they hoped to use the extensive connections these powers have built up. As SA does not have a significant number of managers who are fluent in both French and English, this partnership seemed to be ideal as it eliminated the language barrier.

What SA investors seemed to ignore was that there is a new generation of Zaireans, among them thousands who have fled the oppressive Mobutu regime and have studied and worked in Anglophone countries around the world. This generation has developed a distaste for French and Belgian neo-colonial policies in their country.

Many in Zaire think the rebellion is not only aimed at getting rid of Mobutu and his system, but also at breaking the connection between their country and the colonial powers and establishing new international relations based on mutual respect and equality.

The recent decision of the new Zairean leadership to re-nationalise Sizarail, a consortium of SA, Belgian and Zairian interests, was definitely not aimed at upsetting SA. It was the consequence of the discontentment of the Zairean part in the joint venture, mainly because foreign investors took the lion's share while investing little.

SA and Belgian partners sent the Zairean railway company 14 locomotives and 10 railway trucks belonging to Spoornet and injected only $2m.

How can SA investors expect to receive preferential treatment while rivals like the Canadian Tenke Mining Corporation and American Mineral Fields are investing, respectively, $1,8bn and $1bn in the exploitation of copper, cobalt and zinc? The alliance's finance commissioner reproached Belgian and SA investors in the Sizarail deal for refusing to re-invest profit, a violation of the contract.

The Sizarail contract enabled Belgium to secure jobs for about 30 of its citizens despite there being many competent Zaireans able to fill these positions. The alleged bombastic attitude of Sizarail's executives was an additional cause of resentment among Zaireans, as was the awarding of the management contract through former Zairean prime minister Kengo Wa Dondo, who has since fled to Switzerland after allegedly misappropriating Zairean taxpayers' money.

Zaireans welcome SA investment, but it would have to be a mutually beneficial arrangement.

☐ *Denis Kadima worked at the Banque Commerciale Zairoise, a Belgian bank in Zaire, from 1987 to 1993. He has a master's degree in political studies from Wits University, and is studying business administration at the Wits Business School.*

ZAIRE *As the new rebel government parleys with mining house suitors, it may battle to break free of plundering traditions*

Kabila gets down to the business of business

(398) CT(BR) 20/5/97

GUY OLIVER

Among the melee of diamond dealers, Western investors and rebel government officials in the market bazaar atmosphere of Lubumbashi's Karavia Hotel, two book titles would have made suitable reference manuals for the final days of Mobutu Sese Seko's 32 years of despotic rule. These were: Thomas Pakenham's The Scramble for Africa, the sweeping account of Africa's colonisation for its mineral wealth, and VS Naipaul's A Bend in the River, describing an Asian trader's experience in Kisangani during the aftermath of independence from Belgium.

Lubumbashi, which is closer to Johannesburg than Kinshasa, recently played host to Thabo Mbeki, the South African deputy president and occasional diplomat. Mbeki was trying to broker a form of peace with Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo, while elsewhere there



ANTICIPATION *Potential US and European investors, accompanied by miners, are bussed to the Kipushi mine shaft near Lumbumbashi to inspect its condition* PHOTO GUY OLIVER

the world's cobalt supplies and probably the world's largest supply of high-grade copper. When Zaire became independent from Belgium in 1960, exports of Gecamines copper and cobalt accounted for 70 percent of the state's budget and 80 percent of the country's export earnings.

But the Angolan war, which led to the disruption of the rail route to the port town of Lobito and mismanagement of the mines, also saw copper production plummet to a low in 1994 of 31 000 tons from 476 000 tons in 1986. Last year, Gecamines said, copper production improved to 39 000 tons.

AMF was the first mining company to back Kabila. Others, such as Tenke Mining of Canada and the South African conglomerates of De Beers and Anglo American, followed.

Tenke has paid $50 million for an interest in the Tenke Fungurume copper-cobalt concession. Under the agreement, Tenke has until 2002 to pay the balance of $200 million. The concession has

Grenfell and Owen Williams of the North Carolina-based Nile International, which encourages investment between African Americans and their forebears.

The dreams for the exploitation of this region under Kabila's government have not changed since the 19th century, when Leopold II, the King of the Belgians, first perused a Times of London report of the arrival of Lieutenant Cameron on Africa's west coast after a three-year trek through the continent's interior. What Cameron reported to the Royal Geographical Society has inspired generations of mining capitalists.

"The interior is mostly a magnificent and healthy country of unspeakable richness. I have a small specimen of good coal; other minerals such as gold, copper, iron and silver are abundant, and I am confident that with a wise and liberal (not lavish) expenditure of capital, one of the greatest systems of inland navigation in the world might be utilised, and from 30 months to

was business, its pledges and the euphoric expectation which comes with "the roll of the dice".

"We're here to start the process," said Michael O'Brien of the Vancouver-based investment firm CM Oliver, one of about 30 potential investors invited by America Mineral Fields (AMF) to view their $1 billion Zairean acquisitions.

"There is an incredible amount of scepticism, but people who make money are the people who are here when the wheel turns. When it turns, it is extremely rewarding," O'Brien said.

AMF's successful quest for mineral concessions against the likes of JCI, Gencor and Anglo American was greeted by accusations akin to that of jumping the starter's gun in the 100-metre dash. Anglo American, the South African mining house, appealed against the award to the Toronto-listed company.

"Regrettably, Anglo American Corporation has concluded that the tendering process for the Kolwezi Tailings Project had not been allowed to run its full course," the mining house said in a statement last month, following Kabila's announcement that AMF had secured the copper-cobalt Kipushi mine, Kolwezi tailings and an exploration area the size of Switzerland.

AMF's audacity has, however, dispelled some myths which had led the North American mining community to believe "Africa belongs to Anglo", said Dorothy Atkinson, a mining analyst with Whalen Beliveau.

Earl Young, AMF's Dallas-based financial director, found it difficult to prevent a smile when he recalled the deal. "People coming in early get a feel for things. We feel Kabila will be successful ... Dictatorships can't survive with the microchip. People can't be kept ignorant and base metals supply the world.

"Good laws is what protect the business environment, and competition is back after a 32-year hiatus."

Young, however, was suffering a slight attack of amnesia. The May 5 effective "nationalisation" of Sizarail, a South African, Belgian and Zairean joint venture to rehabilitate the rail system, called into question Kabila's respect for the business environment. Kabila, defending his rebel government's actions, said: "We should move out all of these people who were related to Mobutu and were pillaging the country."

Sizarail, whose South African stake is owned by Spoornet, was, however, one of the country's few success stories. One immediate result of the 1995 management contract was the payment of staff — for some the first wage packet in nearly three years. Rail journeys of 1 000km were cut from six months to a few days and Sizarail turned a $1 million profit last year.

When rebels moved in to close Sizarail down, the domino effect was closure of the rail system.

Michel Haubert, the financial director of General des Carrieres et des Mines (Gecamines), the country's mining parastatal, said the decision to eject Patrick Claes, the manager of Sizarail, backfired: the move resulted not only in the cutting off of fuel supplies for rebel forces but also in delaying the export of Gecamines' copper and cobalt.

The debacle led to an unwanted stockpile of 100 tons of copper and 200 tons of cobalt. Haubert said there were plans to airlift the cobalt to Belgium — the high price of the commodity at the moment would still allow for a profit.

Haubert said the decision to shut down Sizarail should be reconsidered, as private shareholders were not consulted and it had created many "difficulties for Spoornet".

But the reference to Sizarail as a Mobutu company, Haubert explained, may have come about through its tariffs. Because it was a high-risk venture, Sizarail was charging $0,12 a ton per kilometre against the international norms of about $0,08, to realise quicker debt recovery. Zaire's railway company, now rechristened Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer du Congo, owes Spoornet $22 million.

Haubert said: "Spoornet should spread its debt over a longer period. It is very important for Gecamines to have lower costs."

But some observers see the closure of Sizarail as political intrigue to cast aspersions on Kabila's fledgling administration and its business practices. Sizarail's high charges would have made those not schooled in the intricacies of international finance easy prey for subversion. Doubt may have been placed among Kabila's ministers that Sizarail was acting in the ways of Mobutuism — taking without giving.

However, the mineral scramble for the soon-to-be renamed Democratic Republic of Congo will rely, ironically, on Mobutu's legacy. His fixers will find places with the new government in whatever form it may take.

Belgian-born Generale Malan arrived in Zaire in the 1950s with Belgium's colonial army and now advises new business ventures and Kabila. Malan has spent 35 of the past 40 years in Zaire and has held positions in the post-colonial army and as an adviser to Mobutu.

He broke from the Mobutu fold in 1993 because he did not think the regime would ever transfer to democracy.

The Generale has chosen his career path wisely.

When the tide of war turned with the fall of Kisangani and it became clear that Mobutu's clan had been cut loose by traditional allies such as France and South Africa, companies were quick to change their allegiance.

Zaire has about 60 percent of estimated minable reserves of 92,6 million tons on a grading of 4,59 percent copper and 0,36 percent cobalt.

In Mobutu's final days, it seemed the business of war was playing a supporting act to the business of business. Investors, unlike Mbeki, were not kept waiting by Kabila for their appointments.

Sitting beneath the shade of palms beside a waterless swimming pool in the gardens of his Cape Dutch-styled Lubumbashi residence, with Rwandan soldiers for sentries, Kabila held an audience with AMF's potential investors eight days before the fall of Kinshasa. It was, he said, the first of many planned meetings to open the country to unfettered competition. (Tenke Mining will bring an investor delegation on June 13.)

The poolside gathering included representatives from Goldman Sachs, CIBC Wood Grundy, Deutsche Morgan

36 months began to repay any enterprising capitalist that might take the matter in hand."

Leopold II did just that and turned the region into his own fiefdom, plundering without investment. Mobutu ably followed that tradition after independence, in an indigenous reflection of the colony's founder.

Kabila — who, one Lubumbashi-based journalist cynically observed, has a worrying trait for a rebel leader of becoming fatter with each success of the seven-month rebellion — will have to buck the Leopold and Mobutu tradition if the country is to progress.

It was an opportune time for the country's development, said Philip Gaucher of the New York-based National Securities Corporation: "The world is awash with capital."

☐ *Guy Oliver was a guest of America Mineral Fields in Lubumbashi*

CT 20/5/97

'COUNTRY IN COLLAPSE'

CT 20/5/97

Early democracy 'out of question' for Zaire

CALLING an election now would destabilise Zaire, says researcher Jan van Eck, who believes the best option would be a transitional authority. Political Writer **CHRIS BATEMAN** reports.

MULTI-PARTY democracy is a distant hope in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) because infrastructure is virtually non-existent and its civil society is chaotic.

It is also for these reasons that it is essential that South Africa remain involved, says former MP Mr Jan van Eck.

Now a consultant to the University of Cape Town's Centre for Conflict Resolution, Van Eck has spent the past two years studying conflict in the Great Lakes region. He has travelled the world lobbying for a single inclusive economic development forum for the region.

Countries like the former Zaire, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda trusted South Africa far more than any Western power as the new broker for the region — and it was in South Africa's "self-interest" to build on this trust, Van Eck said.

"Having begun to treat the patient (Zaire), we must continue treating him until he is fully recovered."



'SA MUST PLAY ROLE': Jan van Eck

Instead of electrifying fences, which could kill economic refugees from neighbouring countries, South Africa needed to address the root causes of poverty and degradation on the continent, Van Eck said.

President Laurent Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo has pledged to establish a multi-party democracy, but Van Eck says this will be out of the question for at least three years.

"Zaire is in a state of collapse. There are no decent roads, communication systems or even usable landing strips. To call for an election now is just not on."

The country, unlike South Africa before democracy, had a civil society that was disorganised and politically uneducated.

"You have a *de facto* government there now. Either you force Kabila into an unacceptably short process towards multi-party democracy — which I reckon would destabilise the country — or you put in place a concurrent transitional authority representing Zairean society."

Zairean democracy would have to be a "slow, organic, home-made process".

Van Eck said the Zairean rebellion had been triggered by anti-Tutsi sentiment in Eastern Zaire.

When dictator Mr Mobutu Sese Seko — since deposed by Kabila — ordered the Tutsis to return to Rwanda, this ignited the conflict. The Tutsis' defence grew into a rebellion that was joined by Kabila and other groups, with the Rwandan (Tutsi-controlled) army controlling strategy.



PAST MASTER: A Zairean child defaces a painting of former president Mobutu Sese Seko in the deposed leader's Kinshasa home, which has been looted. *PICTURE: AP*

Businessmen fear full-scale nationalisation

CT 20/5/97 (368)

KINSHASA: There were more than a few nervous suits yesterday when Congo-Zaire's new political order started its first full day in Kinshasa by "inviting" the business community to a meeting, at just a few hours' notice.

It was impossible to get rich in the old Zaire without taking part in deposed dictator Mr Mobutu Sese Seko's corrupt, bribe-ridden system. The advisers to Zaire's new leader, Mr Laurent Kabila, know that. So did the hundreds of businessmen who dutifully stood in line yesterday to be searched for weapons before meeting their new political masters.

The fattest cats and the biggest thieves went with Mobutu. But Mr Jean-Pierre Bemba, owner of a cellular telephone company, says the country's entire entrepreneurial class was tied up with corruption.

The businessmen who have remained are afraid of being victimised.Bemba, who supports the new government's attempts to recover billions of dollars stolen from Zaire by the former president and his cronies, suggests Kabila let bygones be bygones with the businesses that remain.

"He should not come with the idea of revenge," said Bemba. "In Zaire you could not get anything done or any paper approved unless you gave money to the administration."

If they were to arrest everyone involved in corruption, he says, the jails would be full.

In Bemba's case, there is a particularly strong association with the exiled Mobutu. His sister is married to one of the former president's sons. But Bemba has still chosen to stay.

For the moment, business' greatest concern is the possibility of full-scale nationalisation. At a press conference yesterday Mr Deo Bugera, general-secretary of Kabila's rebel alliance, was short on detail about plans for resuscitating the economy.

But Kabila, a former Marxist whose professed conversion to the free market took place only recently, has already nationalised the Sizarail network run by the South Africans and Belgians.

Other businesses now fear a similar fate, saying socialist or communist solutions would be a disaster for Congo-Zaire, a country the size of Western Europe. — The Times

Zaire has 'vanished' from map

(358)

Star 20/5/97

Washington – US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright yesterday warned self-proclaimed president Laurent Kabila of the new Democratic Republic of the Congo that world support and cash aid for his rule would depend on his concern for democracy and human rights.

US officials said meanwhile they expected Kabila to arrive in the capital Kinshasa and set up an interim government within 24 hours.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the United States accepted the new name Kabila had given to the country and that Zaire, as it was known under ousted President Mobutu Sese Seko, had "vanished" from the map of Africa.

"We have hopes, but we are watching very carefully" the actions of Kabila, whose rebel forces ousted Mobutu over the weekend, Albright told a dockside news conference during a visit to the port of Wilmington, Delaware.

"We are making it very clear that it is important for the new government to be inclusive, to be concerned and do a lot about democratic practices and human rights," Albright said.

Washington has already expressed its displeasure at the way Kabila's soldiers have treated Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire.

Burns added: "We will no longer be calling this country Zaire. Zaire went away on Friday afternoon with Mobutu. That country has vanished."

He said that (Belgian) Congo had been the name of the country previously, but that it was named Zaire by Mobuto who seized absolute power more than three decades ago.

Burns advised the more than 300 Americans thought to still be in the country to stay there and "keep their heads down". Previously they had been advised to leave.

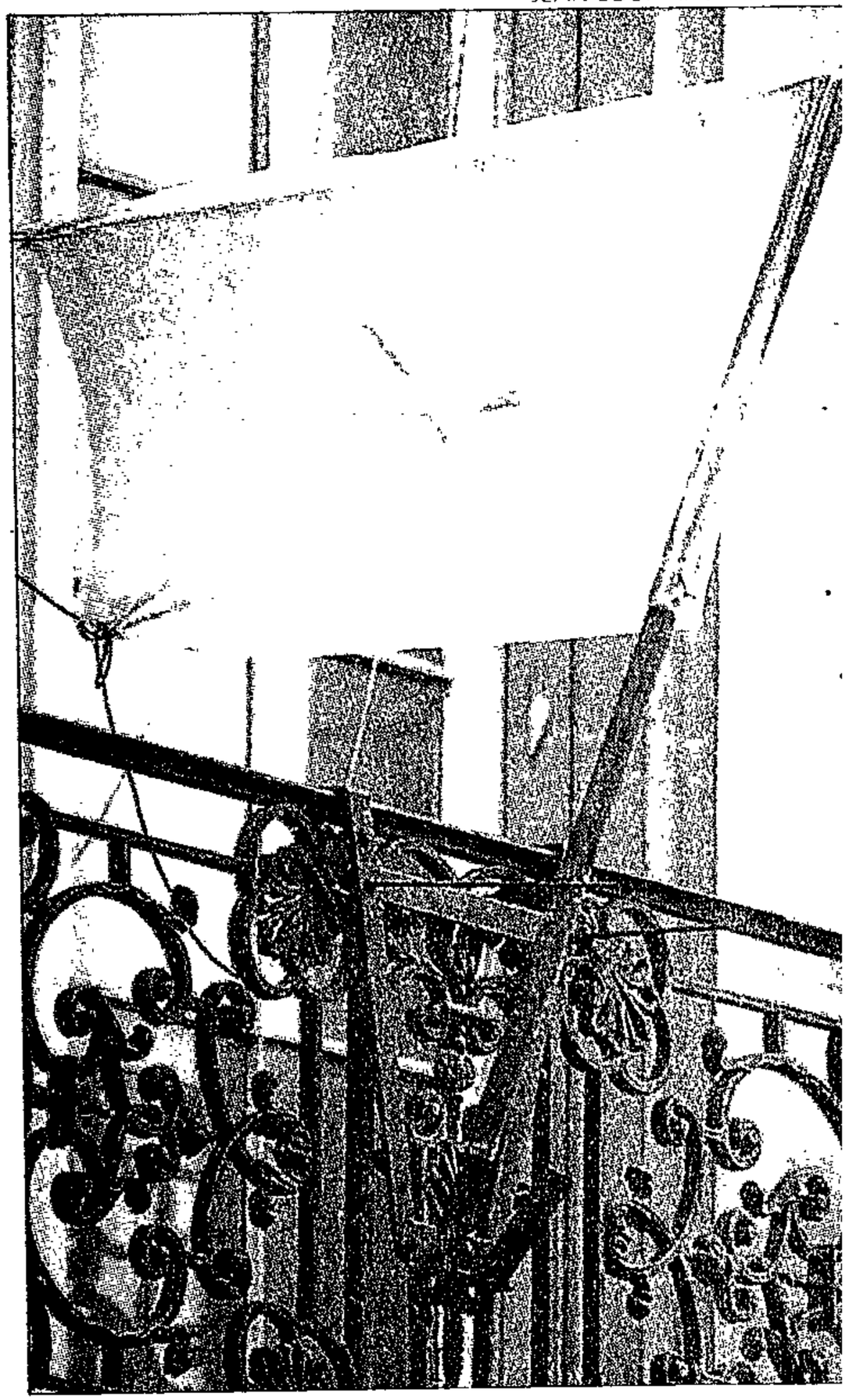
State Department officials did not believe Mobutu had significant financial assets in the United States. – Reuters.

CORINNE DUFKA/ REUTERS

JEAN LOUP GAUTREAU / AI

STAR
20/5/97





End of an era ... Laurent Kabila's [illegible] enter the opulent palace of Mobutu Sese Seko to chase away looters and journalists. Deposed dictator Mobutu has fled [illegible] village of Gbadolite for temporary exile in Lomé, Togo. Right: The flag of the new Democratic Republic of Congo [illegible] the country's embassy in Paris.

Now Congo republic faces economic war

The main battle is over; now the focus shifts to political shake-up and drafting a constitution for the people

Star 20/5/97 (358)

By Ross Herbert
Kinshasa

Peasants and intellectuals will begin drafting a new constitution and political order for the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) in 60 days, but first the nation faces a "development war", spokesmen for the new government said yesterday.

As the government laid out its political plans, Kinshasa's streets were calm yesterday and residents continued to cheer passing soldiers.

But in many peasants' hearts, vengeance was still alive.

In one street battle, witnessed by photographer Themba Hadebe of The Star, people attempted but failed to necklace a man they accused of being a security agent for ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

The man pleaded with the crowd as three tyres were forced over his head.

Despite the tyres and many punches and kicks, he escaped the mob justice that is proving more unforgiving than the rebel soldiers.

Deogratias Bugera, secretary-general of the rebel alliance who is widely considered to be the top political adviser to rebel leader Laurent Kabila, told reporters that a peasant would be the first person named to a new constitution-drafting body because the poor had been neglected for so long.

Once a constitution was agreed upon, democratic elections would be held, but Bugera made no promises on timing. Elections are "the means but not the end" goal of the new government and might be scheduled in "60 days, two years or five years", he said.

Using the Voice of the People radio broadcast, the government called Kinshasa's business leaders to a special meeting yesterday where the government urged them to support the new government's efforts to revive the economy that has been ravaged by years of neglect and corruption under 32 years of rule by Mobutu Sese Seko.

"President Kabila fought a military war. Now we have to fight a development war. That is why we will sometimes call you fighters," "minister of planning" Babi Mbayi told a gathering of several hundred business leaders.

Mbayi said the government would form a commission to sort out the currency crisis: Mobutu's government has introduced two types of new banknotes that are rejected in most of the country but accepted in other areas. The US dollar remains the backbone of the economy but is in perpetual short supply. Meanwhile, the Kasai region continues to use banknotes that Mobutu discontinued four years ago.

Mbayi admitted that the new government had not formulated its economic plans but sought to end corruption and establish the rule of law.

He said the nation would have a "social market economy" which he described as a compassionate economy concerned with people's welfare, but not an economy built on a socialist model. – Star Foreign Service.

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Mandela defends Laurent Kabila, lashes out at 'adverse publicity'

(358)

BD 20/5/97

Michael Hartnack

HARARE — President Nelson Mandela lashed out yesterday at critics of Laurent Kabila's new regime in Zaire when he became the first SA leader to address the Zimbabwean parliament.

"Let us reject the adverse publicity his movement is getting from certain quarters for pretty obvious reasons. He has lived up to the expectations of those who are patriotic enough to be guided by fact and not by fiction," Mandela said in a 36-minute address.

Addressing MPs on the first day of a three-day state visit, Mandela said "a truly African solution" had been found to the problems of Zaire. As one who had been involved in the crisis, he believed Kabila had handled the problems of assuming power, uniting his country and addressing the problems of its poor "in an excellent manner".

Later Mandela said Kabila was scheduled to enter Kinshasa today.

Reuter reports that in Johannesburg, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, a key negotiator in the Zairean peace efforts, said Kabila would announce his new government tonight. "It will be a broad-based government, as inclusive as possible of the various political forces." Mbeki said there was a general approach among political players in the country to co-operate during the period of transition. Even deposed president Mobutu Sese Seko's party had indicated to Kabila that it would work with the new government.

The US yesterday officially recognised Kabila as ruler and the country's change of name to Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mandela told the parliament the problems of the great lakes region "will not lend themselves to easy solutions, but the time has come for Africans to take full responsibility for themselves and make a reality of the African renaissance". The renaissance would see the continent refusing to be a passive observer of "the machinations of forces historically responsible for her woes. We have a moral responsibility to see Africa occupies her rightful place in the new world order," he said to repeated applause from the 150 MPs and from Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, seated beside him.

Mandela said economic efforts of the region had to be co-ordinated and redirected to the needs of the poor.

He embroiled himself in the fierce internal controversy over Zimbabwe's 1991-96 first phase of economic liberalisation, stating that it had been "imposed" — a claim denied at the outset by former finance minister and liber-

Continued on Page 2

Mandela

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alisation architect, Bernard Chidzero.

While Zimbabwe was SA's largest trading partner on the continent, "we cannot draw comfort from the fact that trade is weighted heavily in favour of one partner", said Mandela, referring to Zimbabwean threats of a tariff war over SA's R2bn trade surplus.

"Exchange of finished products could amount to beggaring thy neighbour," said Mandela, in remarks that will hearten Zimbabwean business leaders who have long been demanding protection. "We are convinced that is merely temporary."

With its strong agricultural and mining base and diverse manufacturing, Zimbabwe had potential "in due course to have a perfect balance of trade with SA".

□ Reuter reports De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd said yesterday it had reopened a diamond buying office in Zaire's diamond capital Mbuji-Mayi, which it closed earlier this year.

De Beers spokesman Judith Annakie said the buying office was reopened about 10 days ago, and De Beers recently bought two shipments of production from Zaire's Societe Miniere de Bakwanga diamond mine which were offered for sale by tender. She gave no value for the purchases.

De Beers closed its Mbuji-Mayi operation in March and its buying office in Kisangani in December after Kabila's rebels took control of the towns.

The rebels have said they want to renegotiate mining contracts.

Kabila talks compassion as people take revenge

Peasants to play key role in new order

ARG 20/5/97 (358)

ROSS HERBERT
FOREIGN SERVICE

Kinshasa – This capital, once known for the infinite patience of its people, has developed a savage, quick temper.

A squalid market here, one moment mired in the tedium of petty trade, the next alive with searing hate: a man screaming his innocence runs under a hail of kicks and punches. His pursuers, cursing him as a Mobutu security agent, try to necklace him.

This brutal scene was played out yesterday as our photographer, Thembe Hadebe, looked on. The man, tall and muscular, escaped death and ran away, but Kinshasa's citizens will continue their hunt for revenge.

Such scenes are being played out as Laurent Kabila's new government promises a new order of social compassion.

For 32 years, Kinshasa lived under the boot of the military. The city's patience has washed away as people recall how savagely they were treated.

Journalists have witnessed summary executions of former government soldiers. The public has enthusiastically supported such lawlessness.

The faces of Kinshasans tell a story of the naked brutality of Mobutu Sese Seko's's state and the powerlessness of his people: the taunts scream from faces so angry their eyes bulge bloodshot, and spittle flies from cursing mouths.

"Kill them! Kill them!" has been a frequent taunt at army bases where ex-soldiers surrender to the new ruling army.

Before Mr Mobutu was run out of town, his soldiers were a daily menace who demanded bribes, often broke into homes or shops, and casually stole from petty traders. They were backed up by an army of secret police agents, who rode in taxis or lingered in bars, waiting for anyone to speak ill of the regime – a crime which brought rapid arrest, beatings and demands for money.

Hate also flares quickly in the soldiers who now control this sprawling, desperately poor city. One group of 13 men, found at a hospital by soldiers, were dragged off to an army base as journalists watched. The men, whom soldiers accused of being former Rwandan soldiers or backers of the ousted dictator, were thrown into the back of a truck like sacks of maize.

Soldiers randomly rained punches on the men or bashed them with rifle butts in the ribs.

So far, vengeance is random and sporadic – the new Kinshasa is not a reign of terror. In a city of 5-million, workers for the International Red Cross have so far picked up 228 bodies on the streets.

At the city's Mama Yemo hospital, bodies are lying in tight rows in the hallways of the unrefrigerated mortuary. Families walk through the stench, weeping and wailing. Mobutu's rule is over – but the pain goes on.

Meanwhile spokesmen for the new government say peasants and intellectuals will begin drafting a new constitution and a new political order in 60 days, but first the country faces a "development war".

Deogracias Bugera, secretary-general of the rebel alliance, who is widely considered the top political adviser to Mr Kabila, said a peasant would be the first person named to a new constitution-drafting group, because Zaire's poor had been neglected for so long.

Once a constitution is agreed upon, democratic elections will be held, but Mr Bugera made no promises on timing. Elections were "the means but not the end" goal of the new government.

"President Kabila fought a military war. Now we have to fight a development war. That is why we will sometimes call you fighters," Babi Mbayi, Minister of Planning, told a gathering of several hundred business leaders yesterday.

He said the country would have a "social market economy", which he described as a compassionate economy concerned with people's welfare.



REUTER

Revenge: two men accused of being soldiers of Mobutu's Presidential Guard are beaten by Kabila's men

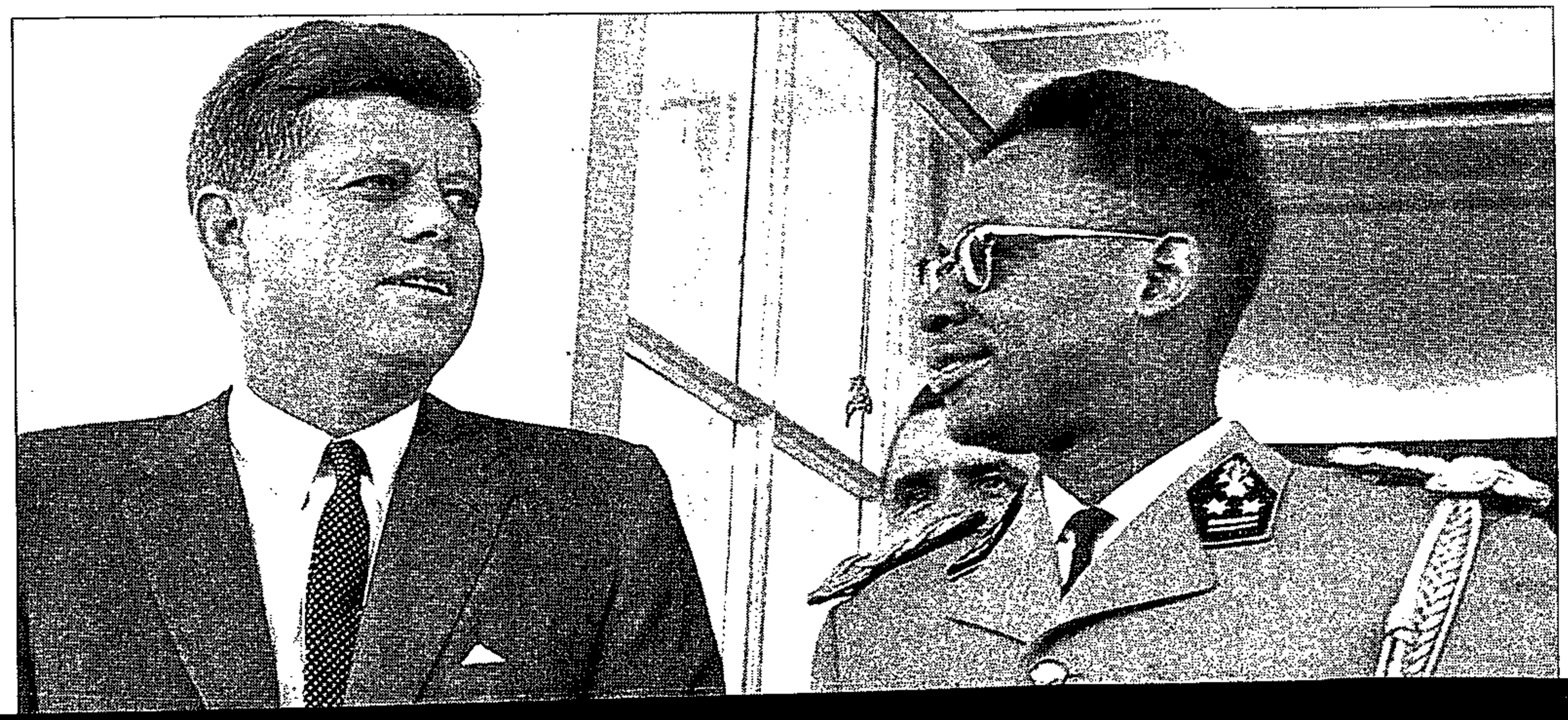
THE BIG STORY

US hovers on the sidelines over Zaire

Clinton wants democracy, but observers doubt American motives

ARG 20/5/97 (308)

AFTER BACKING ZAIRE'S MOBUTU SESE SEKO AS A BULWARK AGAINST THE SPREAD OF SOVIET COMMUNISM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, THE UNITED STATES IS ADOPTING A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE REGARDING THE COUNTRY'S NEW GOVERNMENT, REPORTS RICH MKHONDO OF THE INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE IN WASHINGTON



President Bill Clinton, his senior African specialists, American politicians and analysts have said that before committing itself on any future policy, logistical or financial help, America will wait to see new ruler Laurent Kabila's commitment to democratic reforms, public accountability and respect for human rights during the next days and months.

But Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, the first member of the US Congress to have met Mr Kabila, said she had been impressed by the new ruler of Africa's third largest nation.

our friends control the keys to the treasures that Mr Kabila will need to tap if he is going to rebuild the country – the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and those of the Europeans.So we have a tremendous amount of influence if we choose to use it with the French and the neighbouring countries," he said.

After backing Mr Mobutu for decades as a Cold War bastion against Soviet communism, the United States and other states such as France and Belgium withdrew their support and wielded their influence to persuade him to step down.

While some US government sources said Mr Kabila's government could expect no help from the United States if he opted for Mobutu-style strongarm rule, others said the United States was prepared to offer about $10-million to support a transition to democracy in Zaire.

They also said a democratic Zaire could receive relief for the country's US debt, estimated at $1,5-billion, development assistance and professionalisation of the

"If we (US) remain engaged in Zaire, we can help steer this important country toward the democratic reforms we have been advocating for the whole continent," she said in an interview.

Ms McKinney, a Georgia Democrat and the first black woman from her state to hold a congressional seat, met Mr Kabila in Lubumbashi last Saturday.

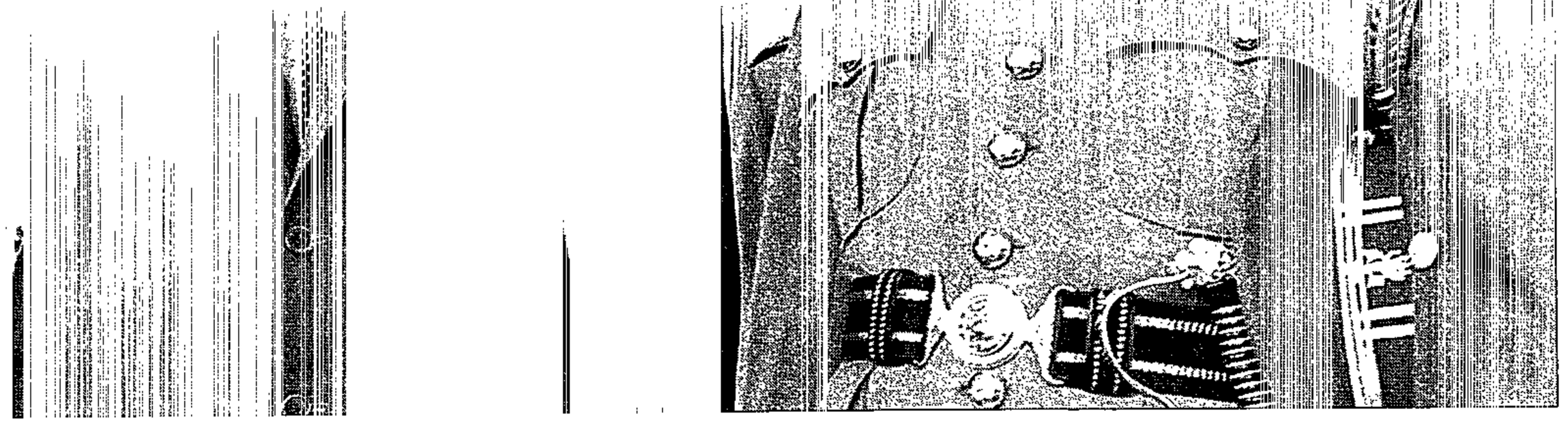
She said Mr Kabila emerged as a man who knew what the international community expected of him if it was to extend its support, adding that he appeared flexible enough to accommodate other parties.

Privately, Mr Kabila is said to have been suspicious of US involvement in the aborted peace talks with ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Asked what his thoughts were on Mr Mobutu losing power, Mr Clinton said the US wanted to see genuine democracy in Zaire and then paid tribute to President Mandela's role as mediator in the conflict.

Mr Clinton said he hoped President Mandela would still play a facilitating role to ensure the war-weary country held democratic elections soon.

"The United States' position is clear: We want to see a transition to a genuine democracy. The second point I want to make is that Mr Mandela of South Africa has done a superb job of exercising leadership in this area, and the US is supporting



Flashback: Mobuto Sese Seko – then known as Major-General Joseph Mobuto and leader of the Congolese armed forces – with then United States president John F Kennedy at the White House in June 1963

Arg 20/5/97

him and his efforts," Mr Clinton said.

"And I want the whole world to get behind the leadership that Nelson Mandela is showing there and to do what we can to support Africa in taking one of the largest and most important nations in Africa to promote a democratic transition," he added.

Mr Kabila has said he will set up a transitional government of public salvation in the country – which has been re-baptised the Democratic Republic of Congo – by the middle of this week and has also pledged a constituent assembly within 60 days to work out a new transitional constitution.

But he did not mention the democratic elections sought by Western leaders and which he called for in the early days of his revolt, which mushroomed from an October dispute over Zairian nationality for ethnic Tutsis.

George Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, said the US was ready to supplement Mr Mandela's efforts.

"We will remain engaged to help and make sure there is a genuine transition to democracy there," he said in an interview. He declined to elaborate on the precise nature of US involvement.

America has been among many nations which tried to arrange negotiations between Mr Kabila and Mr Mobutu's forces. Mr Moose tried to get the warring factions together in Pretoria in February, but the fighting continued, culminating in Mr Kabila's military victory at the weekend.

Mr Moose and his colleagues say their ultimate goal is elections leading to the end of chaos and the entrenched corruption of Mr Mobutu's 32-year regime.

Chester Crocker, who held Mr Moose's position from 1981 to 1989, said: "We and military.

Department of State spokesman Nicholas Burns could only say the US would be willing to offer financial and other assistance to support a process leading to free and fair elections.

To many observers, the US stance appears somewhat disingenuous, given that it supported Mr Mobutu's rise to power through a military coup in 1965 and then gave his regime $100 million a year in aid with barely a mention of elections.

The aid to Zaire was stopped when US strategic priorities shifted with the end of the Cold War. Cut off from his previous support, Mr Mobutu was forced to promise political reforms, including elections, but they never materialised.

Privately, France, Belgium and former Zairian government officials have accused the US of using the war to extend its influence into a huge nation long considered by France to be one of its major economic and political allies.

America is allegedly interested in the establishment of a post-Mobutu regime that offers it access to Zaire's minerals.

Africa's third-largest country has substantial reserves of copper and diamonds. American companies are producing oil off Zaire's coast, and other companies are exploring Zaire's eastern provinces, where rumours have spread of a major oil field underlying the entire region.

Now Kinshasa counts the cost

(368) ET 21/5/97

NAIROBI: Zaire's war may be over but the country must now face the heavy toll of seven months of fighting that brought the African nation new hope but at a cost of tens of thousands of lost or uprooted lives.

While Kinshasa yesterday awaited the arrival of a triumphant Mr Laurent Kabila, promising democracy after the 32-year Mobutu dictatorship, humanitarian sources were trying to assess the number of dead and missing after a crisis that further destabilised the already volatile Great Lakes region of Africa.

The victims are not only Zaireans, both civilians and soldiers killed in fighting, but also Hutu refugees from neighbouring Rwanda and Burundi who fled into eastern Zaire in 1993 and 1994 to escape ethnic bloodshed back home.

According to various humanitarian organisations, there are still more than 100 000 missing refugees.

In a report yesterday in the French paper Liberation, the relief group Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders) said the number of missing refugees could be as high as 190 000.

It charged they were victims of what it called the "extermination strategy" of Kabila's rebel alliance — allegations that Tutsi soldiers in the rebel alliance had carried out massacres and executions among refugees caught in the way of the rebel advance.

Before Kabila launched his bid last October to oust Mobutu Sese Seko, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) counted 1,2 million refugees in what became Kabila's rebel stronghold of eastern Zaire. Since then, nearly 800 000 Rwandans and about 120 000 Burundians have returned home.

If these initial UNHCR figures were correct, about 300 000 refugees have still not returned home. Some have been spotted by relief workers, notably towards Congo at the extreme west of Zaire, but many remain unaccounted for.

Meanwhile, from Kinshasa it was reported that two French businessmen were killed by men in uniform on the outskirts of the capital late yesterday, in the first such killings of foreign nationals since the takeover of the city by Mr Laurent Kabila's rebel alliance last weekend.

The businessmen were visiting a site in the Limete district of Kinshasa when two or three men in uniform intercepted them and ordered them into an office, a watchman at the site said. Shots were then heard from the office.

One of the businessmen had been established in the former Zaire for many years.

In Paris, the foreign ministry described the killings as a "double crime" and said an investigation was under way.

Two local employees of the United States embassy in the city were killed on Monday night when armed men tried to steal their car.

US State Department spokesman Mr Nicholas Burns said the incident was "an act of blind violence" not directed at US interests. — Sapa-AFP

Jean-Raymond Boulle's mission in central Africa carries the weight of expectations of Voisey Bay

Adventurer's quest for Zaire's glittering prize

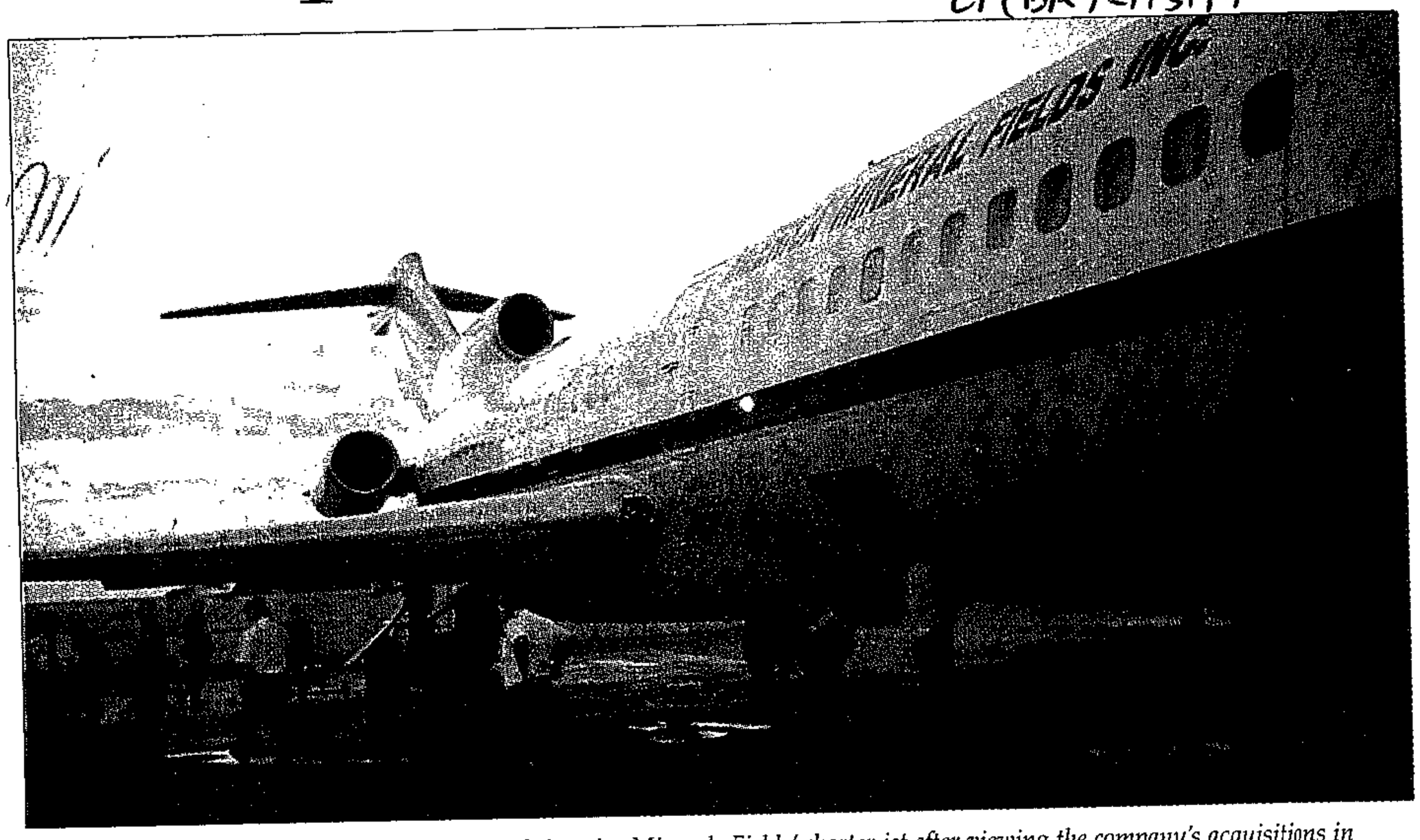
CT(BR)21/5/97 (358)

GUY OLIVER

Jean-Raymond Boulle's first love is diamonds. When his company, Diamond Fields Resources, was scratching through the vast Canadian wastes of Labrador it was, so mining legend has it, in search of diamonds. But the world's geological formations have no compassion for the smitten. As the exploration funds and hope dwindled, Joe Martin, now America Mineral Fields' acting chief executive, made one last sortie.

He did not find diamonds; he found Voisey Bay, the nickel copper-cobalt deposits near Nain, which netted the company C$4 billion (about $2,9 billion) in its effective sale to Inco. For the Mauritian-born Boulle, it raised him from the relative obscurity of a former De Beers diamond buyer in Zaire to a Monaco lifestyle and a Texan wife.

In October 1995 Boulle founded America Mineral Fields and, although he is not on the board of the Toronto-listed company, "AMF is Boulle and Boulle is AMF. Totally," says Dorothy Atkinson, a Toronto mining analyst with



INTO THE SUNSET *Potential investors board America Minerals Fields' charter jet after viewing the company's acquisitions in Zaire during the seven month rebellion*

PHOTOS GUY OLIVER

was negotiated after the fall of Goma, secured some of the country's richest copper-cobalt concessions and an all but virgin exploration area the concession, have already initiated desires for the development of a more stable market for the mineral, which AMF says will be produced below $2

Africa. We don't have time to put people on a learning curve," Martin says.

The junior mining company's top structure is already

portedly scoured for diamonds in Arkansas, South Africa and the Namibian coast. AMF has not ignored diamonds; it has been distracted by the oppor-

buying office in Mbuji-Mayi had been reopened about after closing in March.

Boulle paid the $25 000 diamond-buying licence fee, which under the Mobuto regime retailed for $125 000. On the first day in Kisangani, Martin said, diamond artisans were "waving handkerchiefs full of diamonds at us". Purchases of up to $50 000 a day have been made at the Kisangani offices since it was licensed, and the company complied with a request by Kabila to pay $1 million in forward tax. Diamond export tax is 2,5 percent.

Last year Societe Miniere de Bakanga (Miba), the state diamond company, had revenue of $80 million against a total production recorded in Antwerp of 22,7 million carats, valued at $1,27 billion. Miba is yet to declare what amount of carats is mined in Zaire and how much is smuggled from Unita territory in Angola.

AMF has the right to form a 50/50 joint venture with Idas Mining Resources to explore and develop all the Angolan concessions held by Idas. Idas has a 50/50 joint venture with

Whalen Beliveau & Associates.

Boulle, about 40, is something of an enigma. Atkinson says he has that European flair that is so attractive in North America, and although he is "a little unusual", his venture into central Africa carries the weight and expectations of Voisey Bay, she says. "In a way, Jean-Raymond is coming home."

While the rest of the world was watching the erosion of 32 years of Mobutu Sese Seko's despotic rule of Zaire, and



Earl Young, an AMF director, wants a slice of the action

other mining houses were hedging their bets on Mobutu's survival, Boulle threw his promises and Lear jet (which Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader, used to criss-cross the subcontinent during the rebellion), behind the Alliance of Forces for the Democratic Liberation of the Congo, in the embryonic stage of the seven-month rebellion.

Whether or not Boulle's Zaire experience as a De Beers diamond buyer gave him an inside track of Kabila's destiny is largely academic. The $1 billion mining deal, which

size of Switzerland in the copper belt region.

The deal provides for the exploitation of copper-cobalt tailings in Kolwezi. AMF and General des Carrieres et des Mines (Gecamines), the mining parastatal, estimate the in-situ value at $16,2 billion.

AMF has secured the rights to the modernisation of the Kipushi mine, and there are plans to construct the world's largest zinc smelter with an annual capacity of 200 000 tons. Kipushi, which once accounted for between 25 and 30 percent of Gecamines' copper output, has an in-situ value of about $4 billion.

Marius Botha, AMF's director of metallurgy, says about 400 000 tons of sulphuric acid could be produced from Kipushi. This would be used to reprocess the Kolwezi tailings and could be exported to help fuel Zambia's expected mining boom, which is likely to experience a acid shortage in the next five to 10 years.

The 100 percent exploration rights in the 62 000 km² area have been surveyed by satellite. Martin, who is responsible for AMF's grassroots operations in Africa, is "excited". And in a hurry. Ground teams and base camps were being established in the exploration area before a 30-strong group of potential investors from the US and Europe had arrived to ascertain the investment potential of Kolwezi and Kipushi.

The known cobalt reserves, not including the exploration

a pound. Yesterday cobalt was trading at $24,50.

AMF's arrival in central Africa has also brought North American greenfield policies in Africa forward by a decade. Botha says: "It's lot easier (implementing it now) than finding 10 years down the line, because that's the time it takes these days in Africa for environmental policies to catch up to Western and North American standards."

The ripple effect of these plans, apart from depriving South African mining houses of a large chunk of mineral wealth in their own backyard, will be a drain on South African personnel. "The people who work for us are going to be people who already know

skewed with experience gleaned from South Africa. Boulle, who holds no executive position although he is the acknowledged force behind AMF, left De Beers in the early 1980s. Richard Garnett, a director, held senior management positions in De Beers. Mark Collins, the executive vice-president, has worked for Anglo American, and Botha, another vice-president, was a senior research metallurgist with Anglo American.

AMF's heavy minerals slant in Africa seems a long way from Boulle's passion of diamonds. But "by his history he will definitely be after diamonds", Atkinson says.

Prior to Voisey Bay, Diamond Fields Resources had re-

tunities of riches. AMF [illegible] Brazilian subsidiary, Rio Quilombo Mineracao, with controlling interests in three diamond projects.

Soon after the $1 billion mining deal, American Diamond Buyers became the first diamond-buying venture to be licensed by Kabila's forces. The company consists of Boulle, Martin and a third member, who Martin declined to name. AMF has an option to buy American Diamond Buyers.

De Beers has closed its buying offices in Kisangani and as yet has no plans to reopen them, according to Tracy Petersen, De Beers' Johannesburg representative. On Monday this week, however, De Beers announced its diamond-

Angola's state-owned diamond mine company Endiama and will mine Luremo in northern Cuango. Of particular interest to AMF, according to its company report, is a 36 000km² region that includes stretches along the Cuango river "where large diamonds have been traditionally recovered" — one of 105,9 carats and another of 101,8 carats.

Earl Young, the financial director based at AMF's Dallas offices, says "all we want is a slice of the pie ... No bride these days walks down the aisle without a stone on her finger."

□ *Guy Oliver was a guest of America Mineral Fields in Lubumbashi*

Kabila arrives in Kinshasa to quiet welcome

Star 21/6/97 (358)

New strongman may include opposition leader Tshisekedi in transitional govt

By Ross Herbert
Star Foreign Service
and Sapa-AFP
Kinshasa

Laurent Kabila yesterday arrived in Kinshasa, the capital taken over by his troops at the weekend, and was driven to the prime minister's residence from which he is expected to announce a new government for the country he has named the Democratic Republic of Congo.

He flew into the city in darkness from his southern stronghold of Lubumbashi, after apparent security concerns had delayed his arrival earlier in the day.

He did not speak to reporters either at Kinshasa's international airport after he touched down or at the residence of former Zairian prime ministers, located in Kinshasa's Gombe district, which was sealed off by his troops.

Speculation has begun on the possibility that opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi will be included in a transitional government.

Officials say work will begin meanwhile on drawing up a new constitution.

Yesterday, crowds turned out on the city centre streets to cheer as Kabila, lionised as the central African country's liberator, entered the capital.

But it ranked as a relatively discreet arrival for the rebel leader – the groups along the dimly-lit streets were well short of the tens of thousands expected to turn out to greet him.

In Dubai, the visiting Togolese Foreign Minister Koffi Panou yesterday confirmed Mobutu Sese Seko was in Lome.

"The president (Gnassingbe Eyadema) received him for humanitarian reasons," Panou said from the Qatari capital Doha where he is on a two-day visit.

More countries meanwhile continued to recognise the new authorities in Kinshasa, but in Geneva, several African and European countries asked the UN to press the new regime in Kinshasa to authorise a mission investigating alleged human rights abuses in areas of the former Zaire.

In Kishasa, in the weeds and tall grass at the side of the airport road, along potholed streets where plastic bags blow in the wind, crowds turned out to cheer Kabila as their "Saviour".

"I am very, very happy for his coming because he has liberated us," said Embeya Okito, a petrol station attendant.

"He has come. We are set free. Liberator," people screamed as they ran barefoot after the cars and danced amid the rubbish at the side of the roads.

The only signal of Kabila's arrival was the procession of journalists and soldiers in some 70 cars that wound through the city with hazard lights flashing.

Kinshasa has been bubbling with excitement over Kabila's arrival.

"We want everything to be free: food, water, electricity," said one woman who explained that Mobutu stole so much there must be enough to pay all the country's expenses.

The Intercontinental Hotel, where Kabila's ministers have set up an interim headquarters, was jammed all day with people trying to apply for a position in with the new regime.

SA gives Kabila full recognition

Sowetan 21/5/97 (358)

By Pamela Dube
Political Reporter

SOUTH Africa was once again in the forefront of the debate as world leaders yesterday continued to send messages of support and recognition to Laurent Kabila, the new leader of Zaire – now the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

President Nelson Mandela made no bones about his support of Kabila's Alliance for Democratic Forces, referring to him as "President Kabila" and accusing the media of trying to discredit the new leader.

Mandela seemed to be on top of things as he told journalists during his state visit to Zimbabwe that he was convinced that Kabila's programme to enter the capital Kinshasa without any bloodshed was on course.

"It seems everything is going according to plan," Mandela said. "As far as (Kabila) is concerned, he will enter Kinshasa without bloodshed. His troops have been acknowledged, even by his enemies as being disciplined and have been courteous."

SACP support

The South African Communist Party also added a voice of praise and support for Kabila's infant government while supporting Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's caution against hasty elections in the Congo.

The Organisation of African Unity and South Africa's role in ensuring that power is seized peacefully was to be commended and had set a precedent of African countries settling African problems without "the heavy-handed interference of external powers," the SACP said.

AFRICAN BUSINESS

ZAIRE *Immigrant shopkeepers keep their eye on the balance sheet*

Politics is all Greek to traders

CT(BR)22/5/97 (358)

JONATHAN WRIGHT

Lubumbashi, Zaire — Political change in Africa can be trying, even for those hardy merchant adventurers who left their homes in the east Mediterranean countries to make their fortunes as shopkeepers in the heart of the African continent.

Christos Hagigeorgiou, a Cypriot from the pretty and prosperous town of Paphos, should know. In 43 years in Zaire, he's upped stakes twice in response to political crises.

But this time, when Laurent Kabila's rebel forces swept through the southeastern mining city of Lubumbashi en route to final victory in Kinshasa, it was a different story.

"We did close up shop for one afternoon but there wasn't any looting. What's really good news is that the dollar has gone down. That means our wage bill is lower and people have more money to spend," he said from his thriving shop in Lubumbashi market.

Like the 200 Lebanese and 300 Greeks who call Lubumbashi home, Hagigeorgiou has learnt to go with the flow, keeping his eyes fixed on the balance sheet and away from politics.

"We always follow the authorities and accept everything they say. We pay all our taxes and customs," he said.

Some Lebanese in the central city of Mbuji-Mayi, the heart of the diamond mining industry and a magnet for smugglers, did run into trouble with the new authorities, but those in Lubumbashi have little sympathy for them.

"They produced bits of paper signed by generals and the sons of people close to President Mobutu (Sese Seko). Some of them spent a while in jail until they paid their taxes, then they left the country," said one Lebanese merchant.

Mobutu has fled into exile, yielding power to Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces, a group which is trying to enforce higher standards in public life.

"We were pretty well used to (bribes) in the old days. Now it's all above board," said Hazaa Saad, a Shi'ite Muslim from south Lebanon.

In a sign of the times, an African workman is hastily changing the lettering of his shop name. It is a large warehouse stacked with electronic goods, clothes and crockery.

Sozadis (the Societe Zairoise de Distribution) has become Socodis (the Societe Congolaise de Distribution), in line with Kabila's decision to change the name of the country to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Saad and his cousin, Mohamed Hamoud, smile wryly at the homage they are paying to political change.

"The important thing is that things have improved. Trade is going very well. Whenever there's a change from a dictator, it's bound to have a good effect on the people," said Saad.

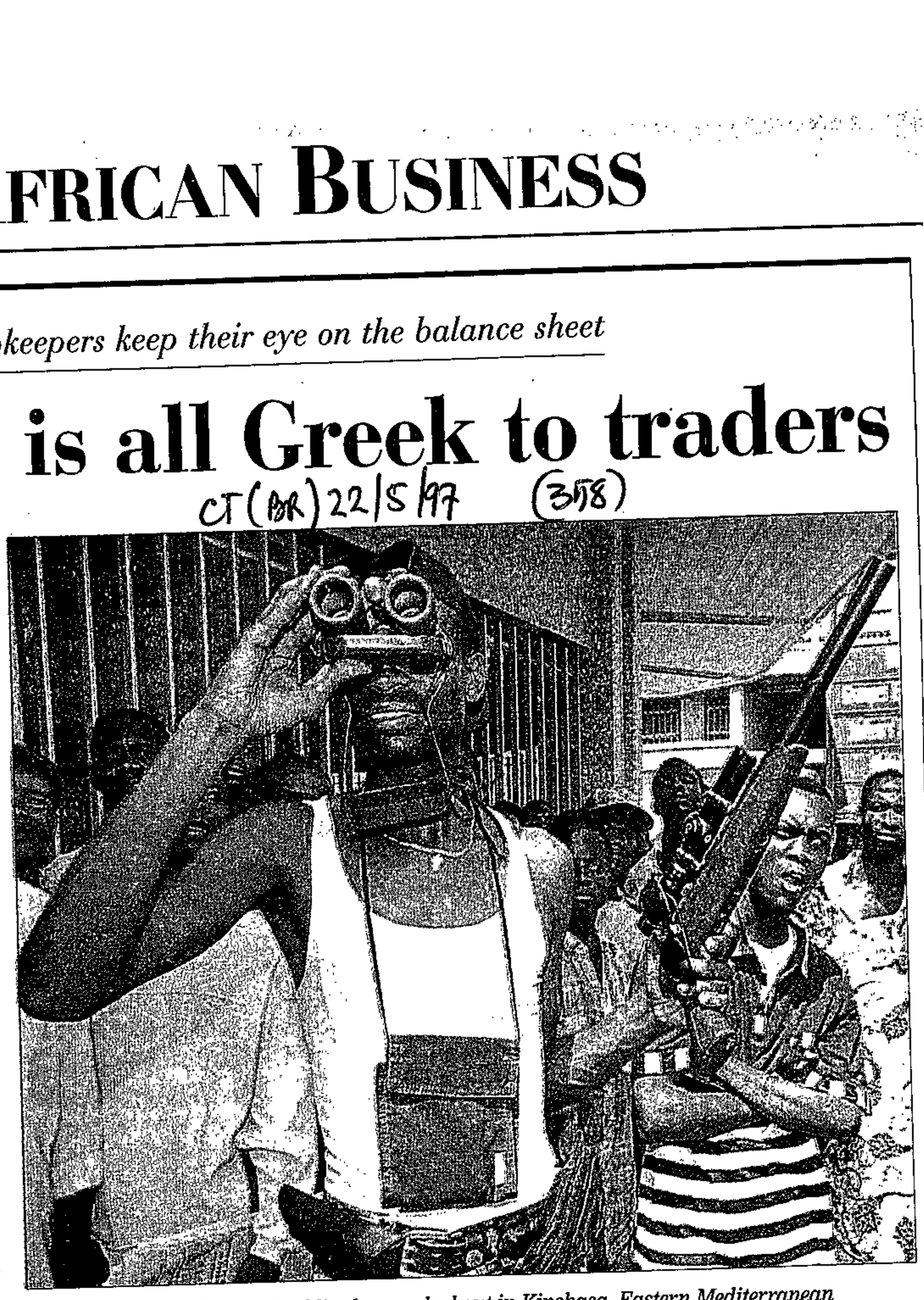
Youssef Mustapha el-Ali, a Lebanese Shi'ite shopkeeper from the village of Hariss, said the advent of Kabila, besides bringing down the dollar, really had simplified dealings with the local administration.

"In Mobutu's day, when you had a fee to pay, you went to some office in a back street and the money disappeared into somebody's pocket. Sometimes it was impossible to meet all the demands people made," he said. "Now you just go to the bank and do it properly."

Ali, whose small shop sells clothes, second-hand shoes, cassette tapes, cosmetics and other odds and ends, does have one chore to satisfy the new authorities. He is photocopying his passport to renew his residence permit, although the old regime gave him one valid till 1999.

The Lebanese said none of those in Lubumbashi were thinking of leaving. "Personally, I hope to stay a long time. It's a good country, very rich. It could be the richest in Africa," said Lebanese Naji Fayad, who left Canada four years ago to join his relatives in Africa.

"I'm not going home now," said Hagigeorgiou. "There's too much business. Anyway, when I go to Cyprus, I find all my friends have gone. Now I have all my friends here." — Reuter



WELCOME SIGHT *A rebel soldier keeps a lookout in Kinshasa. Eastern Mediterranean merchants have applauded the new rulers, who are putting an end to bribery* PHOTO: AFP

Kabila was 'urged by the west' to capture

BD 22/5/97

Kinshasa

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — Self-proclaimed president of the Democratic Republic of Congo — formerly Zaire — Laurent Kabila was urged by western diplomats to "take" Kinshasa so that looting and crime did not spiral out of control and did not break an undertaking not to invade the capital, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said yesterday.

Mbeki, who was deeply involved in efforts to mediate in the crisis, told the National Assembly Kabila's forces had been willing to stay out of Kinshasa until the departure of former President Mobutu Sese Seko had been agreed.

Western ambassadors in Kinshasa encouraged him to enter the capital as crime followed the power vacuum left by Mobutu's departure, Mbeki said.

Kabila was still committed to a "broad-based" transitional authority to run the country in the wake of Mobutu. An announcement on the composition of the transitional authority was being delayed because there were about 300 political parties and extensive negotiations were needed to form the authority.

He was convinced there would not be a revenge campaign as Kabila had said he would not tolerate retribution. Kabila had agreed that Mobutu and his family could remain in the country but Mobutu had chosen to flee. Kabila had also agreed that there should be free political activity.

SA still had a role to play in Congo, helping resuscitate a country where public finance and administration had collapsed, corruption was endemic and the state coffers were "entirely empty".

Michael Hartnack reports from Harare that President Nelson Mandela staked his reputation on Kabila yesterday, again attacking those who had doubts about Kabila's human rights intentions.

"I am confident that Kabila is an outstanding figure, a dynamic leader, who is committed to peace." Mandela told business leaders at a breakfast meeting.

Mandela said Kabila had proved his good intentions by his commitment to peace "despite spectacular military success".

"He (Kabila) says within 60 days he will establish a constituent assembly to prepare for elections in the country," said Mandela, who disclosed he intended to discuss the crisis with French President Jacques Chirac last night.

Reuter reports that while Kabila worked on his new government yesterday students in Kisangani protested in one of the first signs of popular opposition.

Officials said Kabila met his top advisers to discuss the make-up of the government and security.

Aid workers in Kisangani said more than 100 students protested against the killing of one of their peers, allegedly at the hands of one of Kabila's soldiers.

France, in the wake of the killing of two Frenchmen in Kinshasa on Tuesday "solemnly" reminded Kabila that it was his duty to protect foreign nationals.

French Co-operation Minister Jacques Godfrain meanwhile hinted France might be prepared to admit Mobutu, who has cancer, for medical treatment.

Kabila's forces further consolidated their hold on the capital yesterday, when Gen Amela Lokima, military governor of Kinshasa and deputy armed forces chief of staff, and Gen Michel Elessi, commander of Mobutu's forces in the capital, turned up at a hotel and were taken away by security officials, witnesses said.

South African finance team to assist Congo's Kabila

(358)

BEN KIRSCHLER

ARG 22/5/97

Harare – South Africa was preparing to send a team of experts, including representatives from the Reserve Bank, to help President Laurent Kabila rebuild the shattered economy of former Zaire, officials said yesterday.

Pretoria was also keen to see the Democratic Republic of Congo become the 13th member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The SADC is aiming to establish a regional common market within eight years.

Finance Minister Trevor Manuel told businessmen in Harare that Congo badly needed to establish viable monetary and fiscal authorities, and South Africa was willing to help.

"As we sit here today, Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad is convening a team of people comprising a number of key government institutions and also representatives of our independent Reserve Bank," Mr Manuel said.

"They will leave for the Democratic Republic of Congo very soon."

Mr Manuel said it was important for the whole continent that the country should be a success story.

"We see it as fundamental as part of a wider vision for an African renaissance to put effort into the country now."

Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said Congo could be a candidate for inclusion in the SADC.

"Hopefully it will be possible for them to be included in the SADC as the 13th country, although that will be up to the SADC summit," he said.

The enormous untapped hydroelectric power of the Congo River could be a boon to the whole region, Mr Nzo told the businessmen.

Analysts say Congo has huge economic potential which may at last be unlocked following the change of government.

Hopes centre on the mining industry, once the world's largest copper producer, which has sunk into chronic disrepair but is now attracting interest from international mining houses. – Reuter

Crowds flock to new seat of power

Star 23/5/97

By Ross Herbert
Star Foreign Service

Kinshasa – Like an octopus slithering and grasping to get a tasty oyster firmly in its grip, Kinshasa's politicians, business people and hopeful unemployed have wrapped themselves around the hotel that is temporary headquarters for the new government.

For the past three days, security men have blocked the doors and driveways of the Intercontinental Hotel where the new government of the Democratic Republic of Congo has taken over two floors. Outside, a crowd forms each morning as the hopefuls shout and push and plead to enter.

Spokesmen for Laurent Kabila, the country's leader, earlier said he would appoint a national cabinet within three days of capturing Kinshasa, an announcement that only added to the tension in the crowd.

At noon yesterday, a security man in cheap green wraparound sunglasses – the sort worn by villains in a bad *Dick Tracy* comic book or by members of Mobutu Sese Seko's security team – ordered the gaggle of hopefuls across the street. No one complied but many bellowed "This is just like Mobutu".

For the crowd, the Intercon is the new seat of power and they hope to schmooz.

Disciplined and capable on the battlefield, Kabila's team is far less sure footed among the slippery influence-pedlars who compose the Kinshasa political class. To maintain support, Kabila needs a broad-based government. But he has said repeatedly that all of the political establishment – Mobutists and opposition parties alike – are corrupt.

Virtually anyone who has spent time in Kinshasa agrees he has a point. Fears about Kinshasa have led to high-level but inconclusive discussions about whether to move the capital to Lubumbashi.

But Kinshasa's problems are huge and Kabila cannot afford to shun its people, who have legitimate problems.

CONGO-KINSHASA (358)

FM 23/5/97

The triumph of Laurent Kabila

SA believes the new president will deliver democracy

Among the first to recognise the Democratic Republic of Congo, of which Laurent Kabila proclaimed himself president on May 17, were SA and the US, which have both urged that democracy and human rights be honoured by the new rulers of former Zaire.

SA appears more sanguine about the prospects for democracy under Kabila, even though it failed in the end to clinch a deal between Mobutu Sese Seko (who fled into exile last Friday) and his nemesis Kabila, which was aimed at establishing a transitional government, a dignified exit for Mobutu and elections in due course.

Yet, SA's engagement probably prevented wholesale violence in Kinshasa when the triumphant Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) finally took over at the weekend.

Incidents of public executions of alleged former agents in Kinshasa have yet to be condemned by Kabila's alliance, however.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki believes Kabila's new government will be "broad-based" and "as inclusive as possible of the various political forces" in the country.

Addressing Zimbabwe's parliament this week, President Nelson Mandela spoke of a "truly African solution" having been found to the Zaire problem.

Mandela rejected "the adverse publicity (the ADFL) is getting from certain quarters . . ." adding that Kabila "has lived up to the expectations of those who are patriotic enough to be guided by fact and not by fiction."

United by the common cause of getting rid of Mobutu, the ADFL has held together up to now. Whether it will survive having achieved its goal remains to seen.

Some kind of coalition government is in the offing, says the Africa Institute's Norman Aphane, in which the Banyamulenge (Zairean Tutsis) will be dominant, though Kabila himself is a Luba from Katanga (Shaba). Aphane says though Kabila was pushed by the Tutsi leaders of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, and by Angola, "he is his own man now."



***After freedom** . . . what price human rights?*

The ADFL is made up of four groups:

- People's Revolutionary Party, led by Kabila, the best known leader who provides political experience and credibility at home and abroad;
- National Council of Resistance for Democracy, until recently led by the late popular commander Ngandu Andre Kisase, who had broken away from a group of the Lumumbist Congolese National Movement;
- People's Democratic Alliance, under Robert Bugera, its dominant military force, comprised of ethnic Tutsis, provides the link to Kigali, and will probably control the army; and
- Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Zaire, led by Mosasa Mwinytega.

Mobutu's Kinshasa-based cronies are thought unlikely to feature in any coalition.

It seems likely that the leader of the legal opposition, Etienne Tshisekedi, will be brought into the transitional government. Others in this category include Karl-I-Bond, Roger Mukedi, Mungul Biaka and Francois Lumumba (a son of Patrice Lumumba, the country's first prime minister. **Amarnath Singh**

CONGO-KINSHASA

(368)
FM 23/5/97

De Beers back in business

Winds of change blow kindly for group — at a cost

"We're back in business and they (Laurent Kabila's alliance) are happy to have us back," De Beers London-based director Tim Capon told the *FM* two days before Kabila declared himself President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, on May 17.

Capon was referring to De Beers' low-key decision to reopen its diamond buying offices in Mbuji-Mayi on May 9, closed in February "as a prudent precaution" amid the civil war, which ended with the abdication of Mobutu Sese Seko last Friday.



Tim Capon

De Beers also closed its offices in Kisangani late last December and in Kinshasa in early May, a time of unease during which the (former) rebels stepped up their "anti-monopoly" rhetoric against SA mining giants De Beers and Anglo American.

Capon admits there was "an initial suspicion" against the company because of the ADFL's determination to get rid of Mobutu. However, De Beers had had three formal, "extremely cordial and practical" meetings with the ADFL's US-educated finance chief, Mawampanga Mwana Nanga. "There was no indication of antagonism," Capon says.

In its first week of resumed trading in Mbuji-Mayi, De Beers had bought a parcel of diamonds for US$1m, having paid the alliance a "licence fee" of $50 000 — on top of other licence fees.

"We were accepting the self-evident fact of a shift of control," explains Capon, confirming for the first time that De Beers did in April pay $5m to the rebels when they seized Kisangani and a diamond shipment from Miba mine awaiting export. Its purchase had to be negotiated. "We valued it at $5m; it was a straight commercial deal," Capon says.

Miba is the country's only formal diamond mine. The rest of the stones come from alluvial diggings. De Beers operates two offices in Mbuji-Mayi: one buys from larger dealers parcels worth between $30 000-$100 000; the other caters for those with one or two stones valued at about $10 each. There are considerable alluvial diggings around the township.

In 1996, De Beers bought $150m of Zaire's $380m total diamond exports. The country is not as important a diamond source as Angola, Namibia or Botswana.

Its diamonds are also of low value, with an average price of $11-$12/carat compared with the Angolan variety's $200-$300/carat.

Having now taken control of the capital, Kinshasa, where the mineral records are kept, the ADFL is expected to start reviewing mining and mineral contracts, as it promised during the war.

Capon believes the new authorities "are people you can do business with," and expects "an open, more transparent process than in the past" when operating in Zaire was "very difficult." **Amarnath Singh**

People urged to resist Kabila's rule

Star 24/5/97 (358)

Kinshasa – Troops fired in the air yesterday to break up a Kinshasa protest by supporters of veteran populist politician Etienne Tshisekedi, who was excluded from the new government of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"A group of demonstrators were heading towards the parliament building and the soldiers opened fire in the air," one witness said. There was no immediate indication of any casualties.

Tshisekedi told a news conference: "This government simply doesn't exist for me. I am asking all the people to resist with their last energy all attempts to impose a government without popular legitimacy."

About 300 to 400 chanting Tshisekedi supporters called for the quick departure of Rwandan and other foreign soldiers in Laurent Kabila's alliance forces who captured Kinshasa last weekend and created the new Congo from the former Zaire.

On a march from Tshisekedi's house in Limete into the city centre, the demonstrators chanted slogans calling Kabila a dictator.

As the protests flared, ousted Zaire president Mobutu Sese Seko headed for Morocco from Togo on the Togolese presidential plane.

"President Mobutu has asked permission to spend a few days in Morocco, mainly for health reasons, before going to his permanent place of residence," the official MAP news agency said.

"Mobutu's stay in Morocco will be strictly private."

Reporters were banned from Rabat airport.

Kabila, whose rebels captured Kinshasa on May 17, angered many in the city of 5 million by failing to appoint Tshisekedi the prime minister of the new government announced late on Thursday.

Two days behind schedule, self-proclaimed president Kabila announced an incomplete list of 13 cabinet ministers and dropped the position of prime minister.

As soon as he took charge of Africa's third biggest country, Kabila came under intense domestic pressure and some Western encouragement to appoint Tshisekedi to a key post such as the prime ministership.

He brushed aside those calls despite warnings that Tshisekedi, a longtime political foe of Mobutu, remains a hugely popular political figure, especially in Kinshasa's teeming shanty towns.

■ The South African Government is to send a fact-finding-mission to the new Democratic Republic of Congo to assess the ruined country's needs for rehabilitation, **Peter Fabricius and James** Lamont report from Harare.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said last night that the Congolese had to rebuild their new country out of the ashes of 31 years of Mobutu's rapacious rule and eight months of civil war.

Mbeki, addressing a dinner during the World Economic Forum's fifth southern African summit here, said SA would not take an interventionist approach. It could not come as "the wise people from the south".

The Congolese would have to rebuild their shattered country their own way, Mbeki said. They would have to be inventive and he hoped that the many Congolese exiles would return to inject new ideas into the resurrection of the country.

The Congo was a "major disaster" which had suffered the complete collapse of the state system, of the economy and of morality.

Mbeki warned that if Congo continued to go wrong, it would affect all the countries in the region, but there was a new generation of Africans which had learnt from the mistakes of the past.

The African renaissance had from now to come from Africans, and not from any prescriptive international bodies like the International Monetary Fund, he added.

The real test is in what Laurent Kabila does now, and how much economic growth he can generate

Congo raises hopes for renaissance

Star 24/6/97 (358)



'Renaissance' is not a word easily associated with Africa. Thirty years after independence from European colonial rule, the continent still languishes at the bottom of the economic heap, its recent history dominated by bloodshed, political dictators and famine. The prevailing attitude about the continent can best be described as 'Afro-pessimism', a mood that prevails both abroad and among many of South Africa's whites.
WILLIAM-MERVIN GUMEDE reports

In the eyes of Afro-pessimists, the African continent is doomed to an unending cycle of corruption, authoritarianism, famine and war.

The African National Congress has run [illegible] this brick wall as it struggles to

Zaire and the Great Lakes region," he said.

Mandela added: "(I am) convinced that our region and our continent have set out along the new road of lasting peace, democracy, and social and economic development.

He continued: "The time has come for Africa to take full responsibility for her woes, use the immense collective wisdom it possesses to make a reality of the ideal of the African renaissance whose time has come."

Hah, get real, the sceptics and cynics might snort – with considerable justification.

But it would be foolish to dismiss the idea as the mere wishful thinking of an old man. Mandela's statements were rooted in realism. He himself said: "It is given that complex problems spanning decades will not lend themselves to easy solutions."

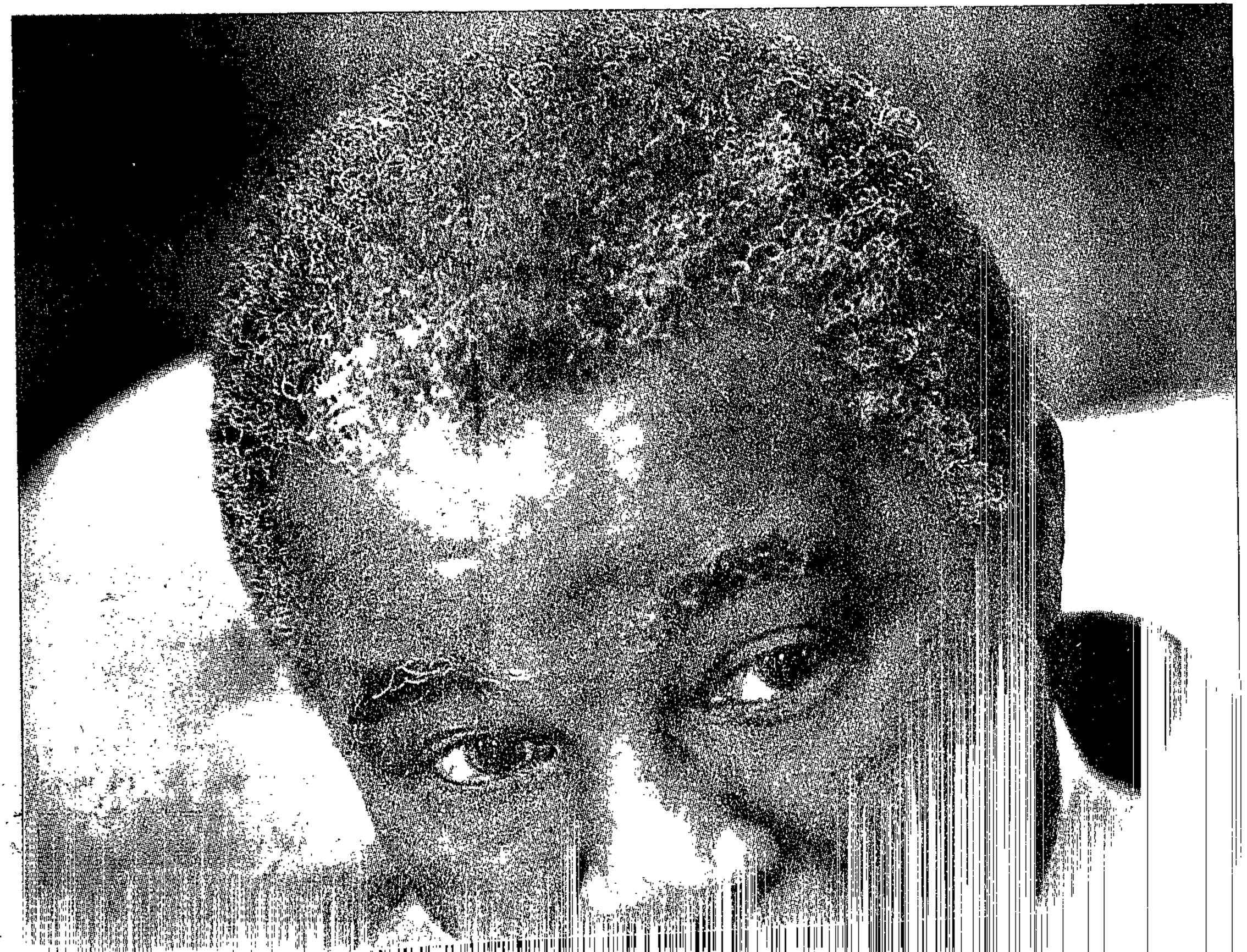
Though conceding that the white colonial powers cannot still be responsible for the littlest of wrongs, Mandela laid the long-term blame for Africa's problems fair and square on the Western colonial powers, "the forces historically responsible for her woes".

He insists that Africa is now in a position to refuse to be "a passive onlooker in a changing world".

Rather than looking towards Europe or the United States, nations in eastern and southern Africa are looking to peers to resolve their problems in what is being called the Indian Ocean Rim, stretching from India and Pakistan down through Mauritius and on to Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, South Africa and, now, Congo.

Mandela, who presided over recent peace talks between Kabila and ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, was elaborating on a theme developed by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki days after he took the official mantle as Mandela's heir-apparent.

A few months ago, Mbeki had an audience of influential American businessmen in raptures when he confidently predicted the rise of an Africa which would eventually stand on [illegible]s own two feet



The deputy president, an enthusiastic proponent of black empowerment, believes the participation of the African business sector is fundamental if the African renaissance is to succeed.

"We recognise the importance of our own, African business sector, which has a critical role to play, on its own and in partnership with international investors."

He points to the exploitation of Africa's huge mineral resources, which is currently one of the most important growth sectors of the continental economies. It "can no longer be the preserve of companies outside the continent".

Abroad, it seems, Mbeki's idea has been warmly received by politicians and financiers who envisage an end to foreign powers' expensive interventionist policies.

The World Bank's vice-president for Africa, Calisto Madavo, spontaneously lauded Mbeki and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni during a news conference as two examples of a new crop of African leaders who offered renewed hope for the continent's economic resurgence.

So, in the peace talks in the former Zaire, South Africa was beginning to assert its continental leadership, and kickstart, so to speak, the African renaissance.

South Africa's position as leader of the continent is no longer contested.

The other large African countries – Sudan, Algeria, Congo and Nigeria – are all at war or in chaos and none can begin to compete either with South Africa's economic strength or the positive international image Mandela has given his country.

In South Africa's early forays into conflict resolution on the continent – for example, in half-heartedly criticising the Nigerian government and pressin[illegible] Co[illegible]

woo local and international business to secure the economic growth it needs to overcome soaring unemployment, which lies at the root of most of South Africa's problems.

So, less than 24 hours after Laurent Kabila strolled into Kinshasa and declared himself president of the new Democratic Republic of Congo, President Nelson Mandela, announced to Zimbabweans the start of the African renaissance.

Kabila's remarkable rebellion in Zaire signals a change in Africa on a scale unseen since the continent was carved up by European powers in the late 19th century.

The end of Mobutu Sese Seko's three-decade reign of corruption and kleptocracy has opened up the centre of Africa to new economic and political alignments that have little to do with traditional European or United States interests.

Despite achieving independence in the 1960s, African nations long continued their relationship with Europe – mainly France, Belgium and Britain – as client states without independent domestic or foreign policies. During the Cold War, African countries often served as proxies in the turf wars of the United States or the Soviet Union.

The dawn of a new age was at hand, said President Mandela. Patriotism demanded that African leaders strive to find African solutions to the woes of what many regard as the world's basket-case continent.

"Thus we have striven to the best of our ability to make a contribution in finding a truly African solution to the problems of

'The time has come for Africa to take full responsibility for her woes to make a reality of the ideal of the African renaissance'

"This generation remains African and carries with it a historic pride, which compels it to seek a place for Africans equal to all the other peoples of our common universe.

"It knows and is resolved that, to attain that objective, it must restrain tyranny; oppose all attempts to deny liberty by resorting to demagogy; repulse the temptation to describe African life as the ability to live on charity; engage in the fight to secure the emancipation of African women; and reassert the fundamental concept that we are our own liberators from oppression, from underdevelopment and poverty, from the perpetuation of an experience from slavery, to colonisation, to apartheid, to dependence on alms," said Mbeki.

He asserted that Africans can govern themselves democratically and well, that they are not innately backward or violent, and that their economies can grow.

The end of the Cold War and South Africa's transition to a multiracial, democratic society made it possible for Africa to begin a new relation within itself and the rest of the world.

He argued that one of the key pillars for the success of the African renaissance is the economic regeneration of the continent.

"We want to go beyond the current situation where Africa accounts for a small portion of all foreign capital flows to the emerging markets.

"Already the success of recent reforms is apparent in sub-Saharan Africa's accelerating GDP growth, which had reached an average of 4% in 1995, compared to 1,4% between 1991 and 1994. This is still way below what we would like to see. Given the challenge we have to address, none of us should be satisfied with an average growth rate of less than 10% for the continent as a whole," Mbeki said.



TURNING AFRICA AROUND: The continent's new generation has to "reassert the fundamental concept that we are our own liberators from oppression, from underdevelopment and poverty", Deputy President Thabo Mbeki recently told a group of American businessmen in expounding his notion of the new African renaissance

Star 24/5/97 PHOTOGRAPH: TJ LEMON

...tions after the execution of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 – it quickly retreated when other African countries were slow to join in.

Good start

In helping to bring a temporary end to the conflict in Congo/Zaire, helping Mobutu to jump, Mandela and Mbeki have started what seems a reversal of their earlier style.

Although Kabila's victory was far from the velvet revolution that brought about the downfall of the apartheid regime, it's a good start for the renaissance forecast by Mbeki.

The real test will rest in what Kabila now does, how successfully Congo/Zaire's economy is reformed and the influence Mbeki and Mandela have on Kabila's thinking.

Mbeki has impressed on Kabila the significance of his position. He has, no doubt, expressed his fear that, should the country explode into further violence, it would confirm Afro-pessimists in their views, making all that South Africa wants to achieve that much more difficult.

Beyond post-apartheid South Africa, the new post-war peace that now reigns in southern Africa and the emergence of a new generation of leaders in central and east Africa bodes well for an African renaissance.

Led by Uganda's Museveni, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Rwanda are now ruled by governments characterised by strong and corruption-free administrations and relative personal freedom.

The change is important because it is African-inspired and -oriented.

Only time will tell whether the change taking place on the continent is indeed, the beginning of the great African renaissance, and whether, according to Mbeki, "Africa's time has come".

New Congo's cabinet leaves opposition leader out in cold

Kinshasa – Six days after proclaiming himself president, Laurent Desiré Kabila has announced a new government, placing the bulk of power in his hands and snubbing the country's main opposition leader.

The 13 cabinet-minister appointments, announced yesterday, included seven members of Mr Kabila's rebel alliance-turned-government, two from Mr Tshisekedi's opposition party and four from other political affiliations. No one linked to Mr Mobutu's regime was on the list. "We were open to any tendency except Mobutu's followers, those who terrorised and oppressed our people," Alliance official Gaetan Kakudji told a news conference. "We've forgiven, but we can't forget what the oppressors did."

Despite the two portfolios – agriculture and public works – given to members of Mr Tshisekedi's party, his supporters denounced the move as a Mobutu-like gesture intended to pacify the opposition with meaningless jobs while preserving real power for the president and his friends.

"He has taken men from the party to make it seem legitimate," said Mr Kongolo, one of about 200 Tshisekedi supporters who began marching from the opposition leader's home toward the prime minister's residence yesterday.

Mr Tshisekedi has held and lost the prime minister's job twice since 1991. While he enjoys wide popular support for his years as a fierce opponent of Mr Mobutu's dictatorship, Mr Tshisekedi is prone to rash moves and has shown no inclination for compromise.

His unyielding demand to hold the most powerful position in government was probably behind his failure to win any post.

"The reason why there is no Tshisekedi is political," Mr Kakudji said, following two days of consultations that failed to produce a face-to-face meeting between Mr Kabila and Mr Tshisekedi.

Mr Kakudji ousted a Tshisekedi loyalist as governor of Zaire's southern Shaba region when Mr Kabila's forces moved in there on April 11. Anti-Kabila demonstrations at the time were a taste of what might come in Kinshasa. Local newspapers reported that Mr Tshisekedi had refused to go to Mr Kabila, insisting the self-proclaimed president come to him instead.

In the end, Mr Kabila chose to eliminate the prime minister's position. He also decided not to have a vice-president and to take command of defence matters.

Despite the concentration of power in one man's hands, the Alliance said it was committed to democracy.

However, Mr Kakudji made no mention of a date for elections promised by Mr Kabila and made clear that despite Mr Tshisekedi's credentials as a Mobutu foe, the Alliance was not willing to share the credit for ending his 31-year dictatorship. "What happened today is the outcome of the struggle led by the Alliance. We've liberated the country from dictatorship. No other people succeeded in doing that," he said.

But Mr Tshisekedi's aides have argued they softened Mr Mobutu through years of non-violent resistance, including a series of hugely successful "dead-city" strikes. Sapa-AP

ARG 24/5/97 (368)

Humbled Mobutu in Morocco

ARG 24/5/97

Rabat – Ousted Zairean leader Mobutu Sese Seko has flown here from Togo and settled into an hotel overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, with his entourage. (378)

Tight security ringed the Amphitrite Hotel in Skhirat, 20km from Rabat, yesterday after about 30 rooms were requisitioned by Moroccan authorities.

An informed source here said Mr Mobutu's situation was "a human problem that needs to be handled in the context of the interests of France and Morocco".

This seemed to suggest that Mr Mobutu would proceed to France – where he has a villa on the French Riviera and an apartment in Paris – after the June 1 French legislative elections.

Yesterday, a Moroccan communications ministry statement said Mr Mobutu would stay only a few days "before heading for the place in which he plans to settle permanently".

Mr Mobutu, clad in trademark jacket and leopard-skin hat, was seen in Lomé being escorted to his flight by Togo's President Gnassingbe Eyadema and Prime Minister Kwassi Klutse.

He clearly had difficulty climbing in and out of the vehicle and mounting the steps of the aircraft, laid on by the Togolese president.

The Boeing 707 flew into Rabat-Sale military airport at 13:30 GMT, but the airport was closed and no journalists were allowed entry.

The man who ruled Zaire for 32 years was then seen riding in a motorcycle-escorted convoy along the Casablanca autoroute, heading towards the hotel.

Togolese authorities had earlier said they feared the former Zairean leader, who is 66, was too sick to travel.

Earlier this week, opposition parties and press had claimed it brought "dishonour for Togo" to have "the dictator on the soil of our ancestors". – Sapa-AFP

Food and Drink Festival '97, at the Culemborg Exhibition Centre on the Foreshore, which ends tomorrow

SA mission to assist Congolese

Mbeki calls for 'renaissance'

ARG 24/5/97 (358)

FOREIGN SERVICE

Harare – The South African Government is to send a fact-finding mission to the new Democratic Republic of Congo to assess the ruined country's needs for rehabilitation.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said last night the Congolese had to rebuild their new country from the ashes of 31 years of former president Mobutu Sese Seko's rapacious rule and eight months of civil war.

Mr Mbeki was addressing a dinner during the World Economic Forum's fifth southern African summit here last night.

"This week we should send a delegation to see the entirety of the situation ... We would go there to have a look and a discussion," said Mr Mbeki.

But he warned South Africa would not take an interventionist approach. The country could not go to Congo as "the wise people from the south".

The Congolese would have to rebuild their shattered country their own way, Mr Mbeki said. They would have to be inventive, and he hoped that many exiles would return to inject new ideas into the resurrection of the ruined country.

The Congo was a "major disaster" and had suffered the complete collapse of its state system, its economy and its morality.

For example, Mr Mbeki said, the state mining corporation, Gecamines was close to collapse and unable to export its stockpile of minerals because it was "besieged" by creditors.

He said Gecamines had offered President Laurent Kabila the use of its aircraft, but had warned that he should not fly to South Africa or the aircraft would be impounded.

Mbeki said the Congolese should develop a new culture of civil society and governance themselves, and the political process should aim to be as inclusive as possible.

He warned that if Congo continued to go wrong, it would effect all the countries in the region.

Mr Mbeki said there was a new generation of Africans emerging, who had learnt from the mistakes of the past.

He said this "African renaissance" had to come from Africans themselves and not from prescriptive international bodies like the International Monetary Fund.

Mobutu's men live the high life in SA

ST(BT)20/8/97 (368)

CORRUPTION TRAIL

BUSINESS TIMES REPORTER

FORMER government officials of deposed President Mobutu Sese Seko — who has been blamed for taking billions of dollars from government coffers — are believed to fly their private jets to Johannesburg and Cape Town regularly, where they have invested much of their ill-gotten gains.

Sources close to Laurent Kabila, the new president of the Democratic Republic of Congo — as Zaire has been renamed — are confident that international warrants for some of the former government officials will be issued once the new government is in place.

"It is outrageous that these guys are allowed to fly into South Africa and move around freely spending money that has been looted from a bankrupt country," said a leading businessman from the war-wracked country who was visiting Johannesburg this week.

"We know these men come here regularly and we know they have invested substantial funds in property and other ventures using nominee names. Kabila has already circulated a 'wanted list' of the various top officials he intends bringing to justice and freezing their worldwide assets," said the source.

Top of the list is Seti Yale, the former head of security and special financial adviser to Mobutu. Yale travels on a Portuguese passport, and is believed to be living in Faro, Portugal. He is thought to be the mastermind behind Mobutu's fortune and the network of political contracts and nominee companies that support it.

The next big name is Kengo Wa Dondo, Mobutu's former prime minister, who is said to be living in Switzerland. Wa Donda is a regular visitor to SA and is understood to have substantial property investments in Gauteng.

Another prominent name on the hit list is Bundu te Litho, the nephew of Mobutu, who is known to be a business front for him. He regularly visits Cape Town to stay at his Kloof Road, Bantry Bay, house. Mobutu's son, Manda, has property and business interests in Johannesburg and is often seen at expensive Sandton restaurants.

● **See pages 20 and 21**

The man who used a country as his personal bank

(358)

Seen at first as a bastion against communism, Zaire's dictator-president proceeded to siphon off vast resources while the West looked the other way. JIMMY BURNS and MARK HUBAND investigate

ST(BT) 25/8/97

A STONE pedestal before the private driveway of the Villa del Mar commemorates Sir Winston Churchill as an honorary citizen of Cap Martin. Off Avenue Churchill a shaded cul-de-sac leads to the French Riviera residence of Mobutu Sese Seko, the former Zairian president, which serves as a monument of a different sort.

Iron gates, and a sign warning unwanted visitors that guard dogs may be snarling on the other side of the wall, hide the villa, which a local estate agent estimated as being worth between $4- and $5-million.

"It's the children he brings with him that we see the most," said the owner of the nearby newsagent. "The seven- and eight-year-olds who come in here with wallets full of notes, and buy up everything. Even the children are richer than me. But we know how he got all that money, and we wouldn't like it if he came here to retire. We would object. The people of France would object."

The Mobutu story is about the venality and corruption of one of Africa's most eccentric dictators, and how and why he persuaded others to help him during his 32-year rule. It is about personal enrichment and the plundering of the nation, and the international complicity that made it possible.

An FT investigation has found that in spite of clear evidence early in his regime that Mobutu misappropriated and wasted funds, financial institutions, with the blessing of their governments, continued to give aid, little of which found its way to the ordinary people of Zaire.

Property is the most visible part of his overseas asset structure. The Villa del Mar is the largest of a cluster of luxury homes dominating a small hill leading down to the sea.

It is one of 20 identified properties held by Mobutu and his entourage, from Belgium to Ivory Coast, from Switzerland to Morocco, with a minimum estimated value of $37-million, according to estate agents' estimates and property records obtained by the FT. His and his family's property portfolio also extends to a hotel and residences in South Africa, as well as a coffee plantation in Brazil.

Obscuring the extent of investments financed essentially with funds embezzled from the Zairian state, much of the property is held in the names of front companies, business associates and family members not using the Mobutu name.

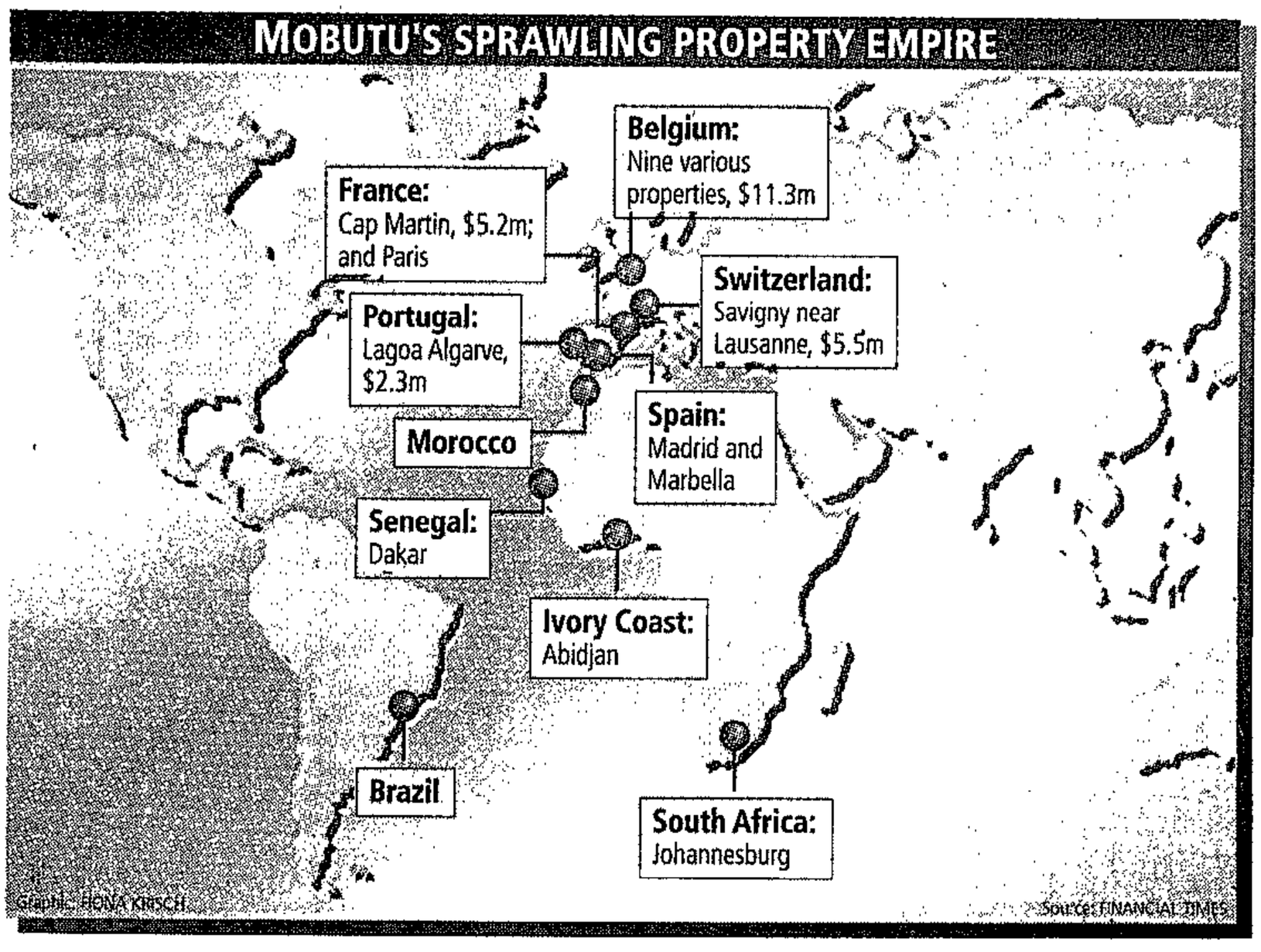
The true size of his fortune, amassed during three decades of plunder, is said by US Treasury and IMF officials to have peaked at around $4-billion in the mid 1980s. But his fortune has been trimmed as the cost of staying in power has grown.

For more than 20 years Western presidents, generals, spies and bankers had made no attempt to curb his excesses, but saw him as a necessary ally against communism. Only in the post-Cold War years has Mobutu found his fortune insufficient to retain his grip on power.

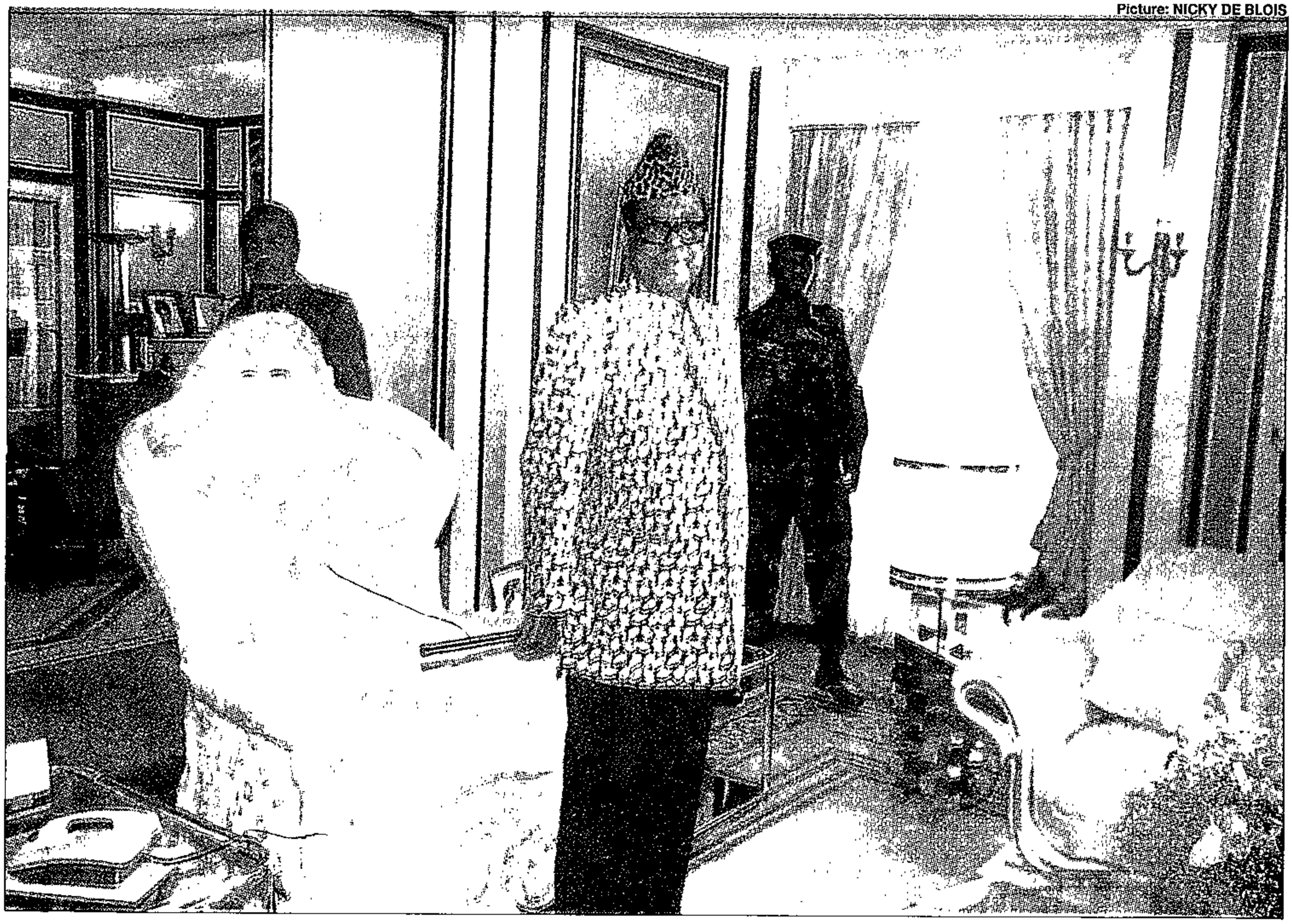
Throughout his rule Mobutu has used the promise of access to Zaire's wealth as a means by which opponents have been softened, critics silenced and henchmen rewarded.

"Mobutu used a patronage network. He had to put out a lot of money to stay in power. He has a tremendous need for cash," said a former US assistant secretary of state for African affairs who had daily contact with him. "He had to pay a 10 000-strong presidential guard. And he seems to have trusted a lot of people who stole from him, including his own children. He would give them $5-million in cash for investment, and it would simply be stolen."

Mamadou Toure, former head of the IMF's Africa department, who knew that special accounts were being used to divert export earnings by the regime, said: "In the late 70s and early 80s there were some very bizarre things going on in Zaire. For example,



Picture: NICKY DE BLOIS



MAN OF PROPERTY . . . Mobutu in his former luxury residence in Kinshasa : there are many others to enjoy

ST 25/5/97

we had discovered that some of the country's export earnings were being held in special accounts outside Zaire and not being recorded in the accounts of the central bank.

"Instead of foreign earnings being reimbursed, they were diverted to special accounts held in commercial banks outside the country.

"Orders would come from Mobutu that he needed money for a foreign trip, and some senior officials would come to Europe to pick up the money from the special account. All the Central Banks of Zaire officials were intimidated. They felt they had to do what Mobutu told them."

However, things did not all go Mobutu's way. "Two things hurt him," said a senior US official. In 1978 the bottom fell out of the copper market, and people receiving his patronage wanted to be paid in dollars instead of Zaires. Then in 1990 he ended the one-party system and started 45 parties with his money, in order to keep his grip. This took a lot of money, which he took from the productive sector — first the copper mines, then the diamond mines."

More recently he spent millions of dollars financing a disastrous attempt to use Bosnian Serb mercenaries in his campaign to confront the rebel force which has overthrown him.

However, much of his wealth has shrunk in recent years, Mobutu remains extremely wealthy, with a fortune encompassing shares in big Swiss and German companies, liquid cash and his property portfolio centred in Brussels.

A total of nine properties in Brussels range from office blocks to chateaux and mansions set in their own parklands in the exclusive residential districts of Uccle and Rhode St Genese. One property is close to the Musée de l' Afrique, built to commemorate exploits of the first plunderer of Zaire's immense wealth, Belgium's King Leopold II.

In Paris a few metres from the Arc de Triomphe, a first floor apartment at No 20 Avenue Foch, in the city's exclusive 17th district, provides Mobutu with an 80m² city residence close to the furrier who made his seven leopard skin hats, and convenient for the succession of French presidents who have been his staunch allies.

Meanwhile, his bank accounts remain hidden from view. The only attempt by Western governments to identify these accounts was made in 1991 when the US , France and Belgium examined holdings in their countries. France and the US abandoned plans to freeze Mobutu's assets on the grounds they amounted to very little in their countries, while Belgium claimed that it would have lacked sufficient legal instruments if it had pursued the seizure of assets.

One senior Swiss banker said it would be "an enormous surprise" if Mobutu was found to have any sizeable sums still invested in Swiss banks. "If he had any sense he would have shifted the bulk of his money out of Switzerland a long time ago to avoid the fate which befell the heirs of ex-President Marcos of the Philippines, whose Swiss accounts have been blocked for more than a decade," he said.

Last month Switzerland's Federal Banking Commission asked 12 leading Swiss banks whether they held accounts in the name of Mobutu. All replied they did not, but close aides of Mobutu have confirmed to the FT that the bulk of his liquid assets remain in Swiss banks.

Now, as the cancer-striken president has fled, uncertainty surrounds who will inherit his fortune. There will be no shortage of family members, aides and allies desperate to grasp a share of what is left. But the people of Zaire his clique have left behind will also be seeking to recover what has been stolen from them.

The question is whether the countries now harbouring his assets will be prepared to lift the veil of secrecy behind which they, and Mobutu, have hidden for so many years. — *Financial Times*

A poisonous legacy of poverty and decay

(358)
ST(BT) 25/6/97

AS HE embarks on the bitter life of an exile, President Mobutu Sese Seko can take comfort in one malevolent thought: the nation he leaves behind is in a state of collapse.

Nowhere is his inheritance more poisonous than in the economic sector. For Laurent Kabila and the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo, winning the war will prove far easier than reforming an economy which long ago fell off the scale of what is considered normal.

"The economic situation is disastrous," acknowledges Jose Endundo, head of Zaire's Business Association. "We will have to make a clean sweep and start again."

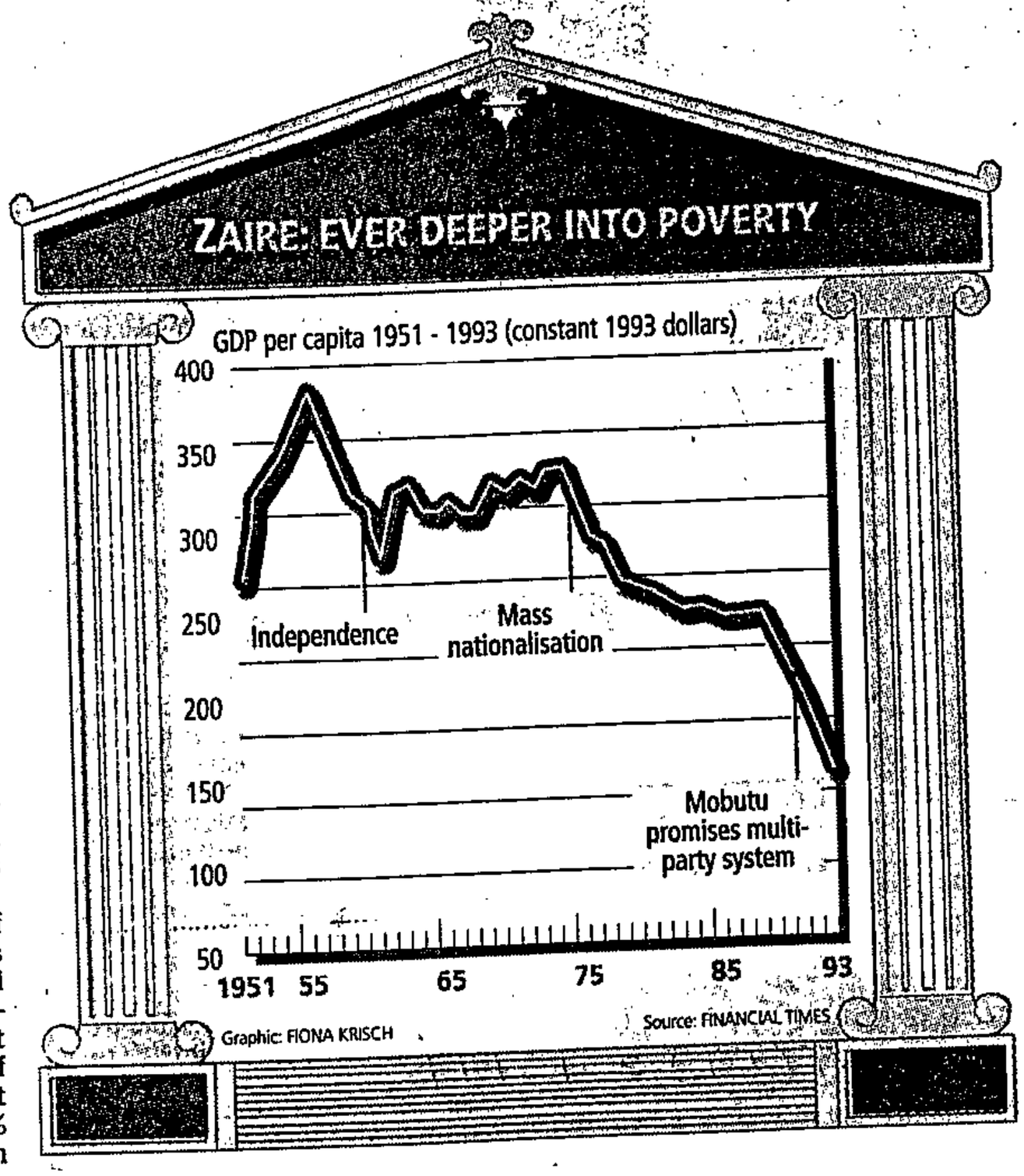
Zaire, renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo by Kabila, is the African country that gave potential a bad name. Rich in cobalt, copper, gold, diamonds, uranium, its mineral wealth dwarfs that South Africa. Its rivers offer abundant hydro-electric power and its oil reserves remain largely untapped. Its fertile land could be a regional breadbasket, its virgin forest a huge source of timber. By rights it should be one of the continent's economic powerhouses.

The reality is rather different. By 1994, World Bank figures show, Zaire's economy shrunk to its 1958 level, while the population had tripled to 45-million. If the country had sustained pre-independence growth rates, gross national product today would be $1 400 a head. Instead, it is below $100.

Bulky wads of notes that pass from hand to hand attest to the hyper-inflation that haunts the lives of Zairean's. Last year it was 750% but that paled in comparison to 1994's 9 800%, with the result that the only currency regarded as trustworthy — the dollar — is issued by a foreign country: the dollar.

Frozen in time, the economy is dominated by loss-making parastatals whose contribution to state coffers declines with each passing year. The state had become a little more than a leech on a population dependent on wheeling and dealing.

The informal sector has expanded to embrace even banking, with commercial banks holding just 8 000 accounts. This tangled mess is what the AFDL will take over at precisely the moment when it desperately needs fresh injections of cash to reward fighters kept loyal with promises of future remuneration. The movement will also come under pressure to spend on another front. Rebuilding the dilapidated roads, repairing the railroad, tackling some of the $3-billion in annual reconstruction work the World Bank estimates is needed.



But where is the money to come from? Both Gecamines, the copper-producing parastatal and MIBA, the majority state-owned diamond company, applied in recent years for tax concessions because their finances were so parlous. And although the mining contracts the AFDL recently signed with foreign companies have attracted huge publicity, few involve cash on the nose. "The only quick way Kabila will be able to raise money will be to widen the tax base, which is very, very thin," predicts a Kinshasa banker.

That will not be easy. Unable to administer a tax system boasting a European level of complexity, the state long ago confined itself to milking dry a dozen parastatals and high-profile multinationals.

But as the ANC has learnt in South Africa, changing tax avoidance habits is very hard. "Kabila cannot impose tax collection overnight without taking a high political risk," warns a leading businessman. If he doesn't have a strong political base to put an unpopular message across, he will be in trouble."

So far the signs from the AFDL have been decidedly mixed.

Assurances from Mwana Nanga Mawampanga, the AFDL's US-educated "finance minister", that the AFDL favours private enterprise and a free market economy, were welcome from a movement led by a former Marxist. On the other hand, the sacking of MIBA and Gecamines' executives smacked of interventionism.

Adds a banker: "This is probably the hardest economy in Africa to reform. But if the alliance cannot deliver on the economic front, its political gains will vanish very quickly indeed." — *Financial Times*

Kabila sends mixed signals on elections as his troops crack down

ST 25/5/97 (358)

Opposition leader warns of the dangers of a new dictatorship

LAURENT Kabila, the new leader of the Democratic Republic of Congo — formerly Zaire — yesterday set a two-year transition period before elections — but his chief of staff immediately qualified the deadline, calling it not right, but not wrong.

The confusion underscored the mixed signals on democracy Kabila has given since capturing Kinshasa last weekend, driving out despot Mobutu Sese Seko and assuming leadership of the ravaged country.

Visiting a hospital in his first public appearance in the capital since arriving on Tuesday, Kabila told CNN that elections would come after a two-year transition period.

But, within minutes, his chief of staff, Moise Nyarugabo, was backtracking. "That's not wrong, but it's not exactly right," he said.

It was typical of a week in which Kabila's alliance asked members of the country's other important political grouping to join his government — but turned away its leader — allowed protesters to march freely on Friday — and then arrested them on Saturday.

Even those closest to him seem unclear about his intentions: on Tuesday, his finance minister Mwana Nanga Mawampanga said Kabila was "still" committed to elections in 12 months. It was the first anyone had heard of that deadline.

Declaring himself president, Kabila kept the bulk of power for himself, eliminating the post of prime minister; failing to name a vice-president; and assuming responsibility for the defence ministry.

Several hundred outraged supporters of Etienne Tshisekedi, another weathered opponent of Mobutu, took to the streets for the second time on Saturday, demanding that Tshisekedi be made prime minister.

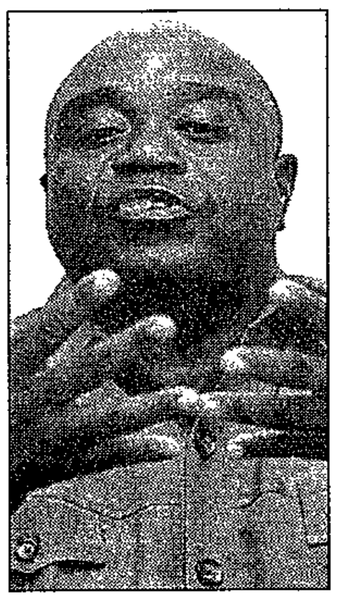
They denounced Kabila as no better than the corrupt leader he had usurped. "Kabila, assassin," they shouted.

This time, troops loyal to Kabila halted the demonstration, took the placards away from the demonstrators, and detained dozens of them.

A smaller pro-Kabila demonstration — led by a drummer — was allowed to proceed.

Just six days ago, residents were hailing Kabila as a liberator for ousting Mobutu in a nine-month sweep across Africa's third-largest nation.

After changing the country's name from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of Congo and naming himself president, the victorious rebel leader picked a new government on Friday that excluded Tshisekedi.



LAURENT KABILA
Dubious victor

Tshisekedi had been prime minister twice since 1991 — but was ousted both times by Mobutu — and his supporters want him in the job again. But while he is popular in Kinshasa — where he led a series of successful strikes against Mobutu's regime — it is unclear how widely his popularity extends.

He has a low international profile. Critics call him obstinate and say he's prone to rash moves. And Tshisekedi must compete with Kabila, who firmly holds power and controls a loyal fighting force.

Friday's demonstration was allowed to proceed and was marred by a few scuffles, but Saturday's quick action by troops loyal to Kabila showed that further public opposition to his rule might not be tolerated.

Soldiers gave varying reasons for breaking up the demonstration and arrestin the demonstrators: one said he recognised fighters loyal to Mobutu among them; another said the demonstrators lacked a permit.

The troops loaded about 50 demonstrators on trucks; it was not clear where they took them.

Another ominous sign for the opposition was the troops' insistence that journalists covering the event hand over film and tape.

"For me, he is not the president," Tshisekedi told a news conference on Friday. "He is the candidate for president."

He warned that Zairi[illegible] to make sure people are happy."

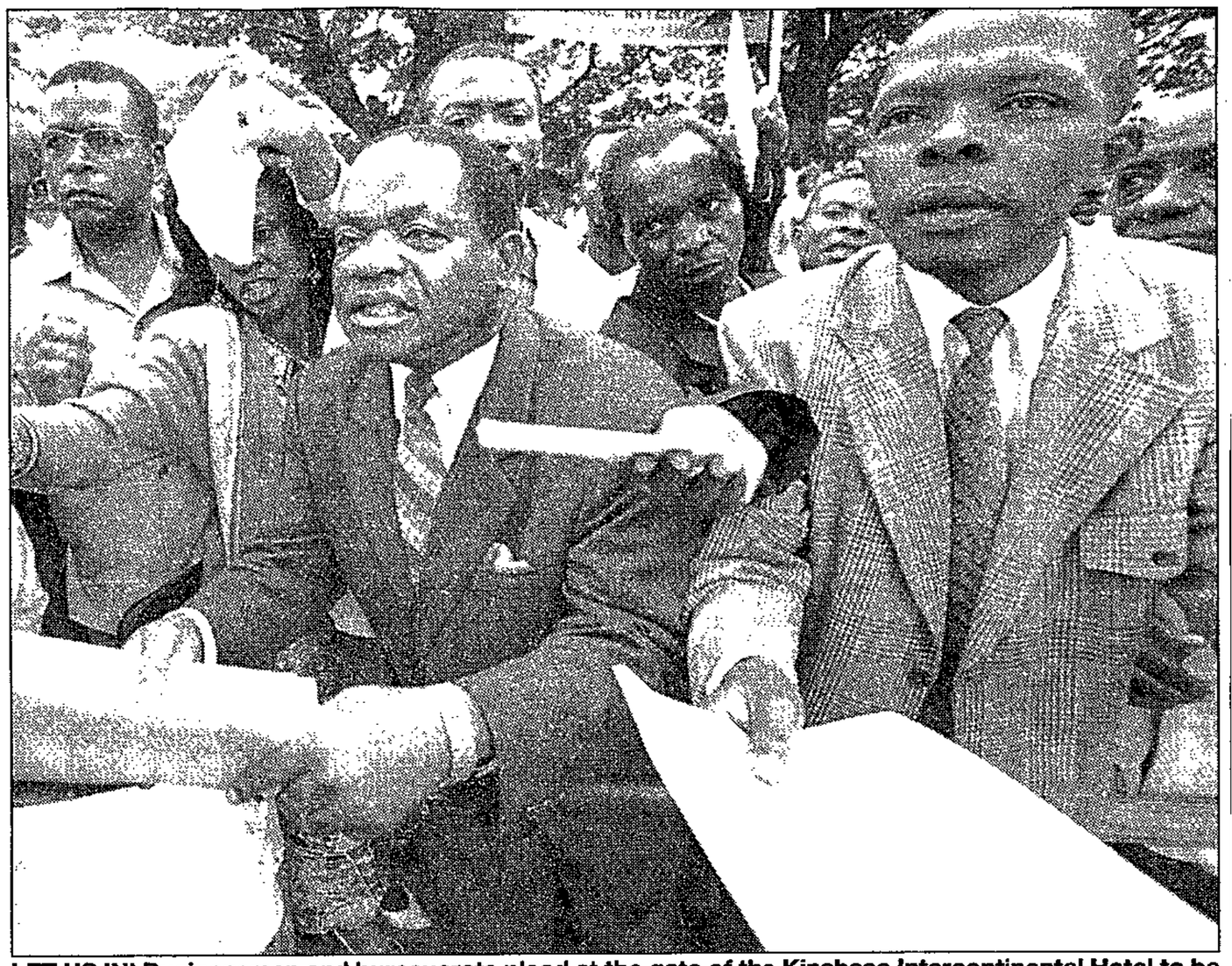
Of 13 government posts announced before dawn on Friday, two were given to members of Tshisekedi's Union for Democracy and Social Progress. Both are now considered traitors by the party.

The government includes seven members of Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo and six from other groups. Kabila won't take anyone associated with Mobutu's regime, and four posts still need to be filled.

While the country's new leader was forming his government, the former president of Zaire made another stop on his humiliating journey into exile, landing on Friday in the Moroccan capital of Rabat.

Mobutu, who has prostate cancer, had fled his home village of Gbadolite and arrived without warning in Togo. But Togo's opposition parties wanted him gone, so he went to Morocco.

His status there is temporary, too. King Hassan II made it clear that Mobutu could spend "several days" in Morocco before moving on to an unnamed permanent destination. — *Sapa-AP*



LET US IN! Businessmen and bureaucrats plead at the gate of the Kinshasa Intercontinental Hotel to be allowed inside to meet with the new rebel alliance members this week **Picture: AP**

Ominous signs cloud the new democracy's liberation celebrations

CRAIG DOONAN: Kinshasa

AS COLUMNS of Laurent Kabila's exhausted rebels marched victoriously into Kinshasa last Sunday morning, the world hailed the peaceful end to Zaire's seven-month civil war.

But behind the scenes that day and in the days to follow a disturbing picture was emerging.

By Sunday afternoon, Zaire was no more and in its place was the Democratic Republic of Congo. But observers questioned just how democratic it would be after a series of atrocities accompanied the victors' occupation of the city.

While the air was thick with jubilation as residents thronged the streets to greet those who had liberated them from Mobutu Sese Seko's 32-year dictatorship, a string of executions marked a disturbing start to Kabila's rule.

Just one of many horrific scenes witnessed by reporters happened on the banks of the Zaire River, over which one of Mobutu's sons, Kongolu — also known to locals as "Saddam Hussein" thanks to his ruthless reputation — had fled to Brazzaville the previous day.

As the rebels moved into Kinshasa, he had hastily packed his remaining relatives into a hotel before he and his allies rushed to the river in two luxury four-wheel-drive vehicles, accompanied by a tank.

Shortly before their escape, Kongolu and his henchmen shot up the vehicles to ensure the "liberators" would not share in this small part of the Mobutu opulence.

The following day I arrived at the escape scene to be greeted by one of the first platoons of rebels, or Congolese soldiers as they prefer to be called, moving through the city.

They briefly sifted through the stripped vehicles, walking over a bandoleer still full of live rounds, and eyeing the tank with almost mocking disdain.

Then three of them wandered into the nearby bush which marks the city's outer limits near the river.

Minutes later I heard a repeated thudding sound and went to investigate, only to be confronted by an angry rebel soldier who lifted his rifle and ordered me away.

Behind him his comrade was smashing something with a long, thick stick.

The three burst out of the bush, carrying a pair of army boots and a shirt and, followed by the rest of their platoon, marched off into the city.

Determined to find out what had happened, I went back into the bushes and found a bloodied stick but no immediate sign of a victim.

Then I discovered that he had been thrown down an embankment where he lay, bleeding but still alive.

He was a Zairian soldier who, it appeared, had been abandoned by Kongolu and was probably wounded when the rebels found him.

Locals later told reporters that another group of rebel soldiers had come across the pathetic figure hanging from a bush on the side of the embankment and had "finished him off".

They had stabbed him to death before tossing his body into the river.

This unnamed soldier was just one of a growing number of victims of retribution — much of which took place out of sight of the media.

But some of it happened on the city's streets, where soldiers who refused to surrender to the rebels were shot dead before locals burnt their bodies by placing rubber tyres on them. Some of the victims were still alive during this process.

By midweek the body count in the city was around 300 — excluding undiscovered corpses.

Behind the veil of a peaceful and disciplined take-over of Kinshasa, Kabila's soldiers were settling old scores.

Some victims were executed while others were lynched by angry mobs determined to vent their frustrations and anger on anyone who could be linked to Mobutu's government.

While this was taking place there was no word from Kabila or his alliance, who had earlier warned against revenge attacks.

Although the number of casualties could have been much higher, many of the victims were murdered in the type of mob justice that characterised the Mobutu regime.

Despite the jubilation on the streets after Mobutu's demise, the air of fear and uncertainty which permeated Kinshasa before the reviled dictator fled into exile remained.

Although Kabila has only just taken power, some early signs are not good.

He would do well to ensure his commitment to democracy is put into practice to prevent a return to a society where fear and suspicion are the order of the day, where the military lays down the law and where citizens are ruled by the barrel of a gun.

ST 25/6/97 (358)

West gives cautious welcome to Kabila's pledge for elections

(358)
Star 26/5/97

Kinshasa – Western diplomats gave a cautious welcome yesterday to Laurent Kabila's promise to hold elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo after a two-year transition.

And indications are that Pretoria may press Kabila, through the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), to hold elections sooner.

Diplomatic sources in Kinshasa said the two-year timescale after the deposing of Mobutu Sese Seko was no less than could be expected.

But they warned Kabila would need to be watched as he set his chaotic country on the road to democracy.

An American diplomatic source asked: "Will it clean up corruption, trying to correct the past? Or will you see all the ministers driving in Mercedes and closing down newspapers?"

Kabila has already sparked demonstrations by naming a cabinet packed with his allies and excluding popular former premier Etienne Tshisekedi. And his raw recruits are showing increasing indiscipline since arriving in the capital.

A South African diplomat said the fledgling government would need the two years to hold properly organised elections.

"They have to start from scratch. A great many people don't have the proper documentation. Think of all the people living in the forests."

However, he said Pretoria may press Kabila, through the OAU, to hold elections sooner.

"A lot depends on if they have a census first or not. A census will take them at least a year. If they do it the way we did it, they would obviously do it a lot quicker.

"We didn't have a voters' register. Our elections were organised chaos; there were a lot of things wrong with them, but at least we had an elected government in the end," he said. – Sapa-AFP.

Kabila's pledge to hold elections in 1999 welcomed with caution

(358) BD 26/5/97

KINSHASA — Western diplomats gave a cautious welcome yesterday to Laurent Kabila's promise to hold elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo after a two-year transition.

"We should prepare to have elections ... there will be democratic elections after a transition period of two years," Kabila said at the weekend.

Diplomatic sources in Kinshasa said the two-year timescale after deposing Mobutu Sese Seko was no less than could be expected, but they warned that Kabila would need to be watched closely as he set his chaotic country on the road to democracy after a seven-month civil war.

"I think people will really gauge it (the transition period) on what kind of government it will be," a US source said.

"Will it clean up corruption, trying to correct the past? Or will you see all the ministers driving around in Mercedes and closing down newspapers?"

Kabila has already sparked opposition by naming a cabinet packed with his allies which excluded popular former premier Etienne Tshisekedi.

His raw recruits are showing increasing indiscipline since arriving in the capital. Soldiers broke up a demonstration at the weekend, arresting scores before releasing them later in what Information Minister Raphael Ghenda described as a "misunderstanding".

Kabila's timescale means that the elections, to be supervised by the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), would be held before the end of 1999.

An SA diplomat said the fledgling government would need the two years to hold properly organised elections.

However, he said Pretoria might press Kabila through the OAU to hold elections sooner.

"A lot depends on whether they have a census first or not. We did not have a voters' register. Our elections were organised chaos, there were a lot of things wrong with them, but at least we had an elected government in the end."

Kabila, the latest in a long list of African guerrilla fighters to become president of his country, named an inexperienced cabinet after a delay which suggested internal wrangling.

"He's made a start ... (but) there are still at least seven positions to be filled. Most of his inner circle are already in the government. So we expect some more from the outside, maybe four of the remaining seven," a US diplomatic source said.

Much depends on the constituent assembly, which Kabila, on assuming power last weekend, promised to establish within 60 days.

"We'll want to see what its functions are, how it's picked and what its role is. How it will put a legal check on the presidency," the diplomat said.

Kabila already appears to have the tacit consent for the two-year timescale from key partners in the OAU.

In Harare, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, another former rebel, and the incoming OAU chairman, said last week that Kabila should be given time. "Give him a chance. You do not, soon after you have won a war of this nature, have the existence of an institution. Democracy needs institutions that take time to be established," he said.

In Kampala, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, who delayed elections in his own country for a decade, urged Kabila to ignore western pressure to hold early polls. "If Kabila forms a broad-based government which is inclusive, he could wait two or three years in order to put the infrastructure in place before going for elections."

Museveni, who seized power in Uganda in 1986, said that Kabila's main task was to unite his country. — Sapa-AFP.

ZAIRE *The welfare of central Africa now depends on Kabila*

Clock is running in Kinshasa

(358)
ET (BR) 27/6/97

FROM THE ECONOMIST

Kinshasa — Like watching a patient come round after critical surgery, observing Zaire, now renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo, recover after the removal of President Mobutu Sese Seko combines expectation with anxiety. Many other African countries, themselves hovering between relapse and recovery, depend on Congo's future stability.

If Laurent Kabila, the new ruler, can get his huge, rich country to function properly, the economy of the whole of central Africa would be galvanised.

If he fails, and the nation implodes, the disaster could suck the neighbours into a black hole of chaos.

With Nigeria and Sudan, Congo is one of three non-functioning giants of Africa. Its economic and political influence is crucial. Several medium-sized African countries are doing well, but it needs a huge one to give a whole region a lift. South Africa is doing this for southern Africa, and is pledging help to Kabila.

In fact, Congo's untapped mineral and hydroelectric resources make South Africa's look puny. That the potential under the soil remains just that creates immense frustration for those who live over it.

In the decade before Congo became independent in 1960, its average annual growth rate was 4,9 percent. In the 1970s and 1980s it was less then 2 percent; in the 1990s it has been negative, an average rate of minus 8,6 percent so far. The purchasing power of its people was four times greater in the 1950s than it is today; some mine-production levels are a tenth of what they were then.

Politically Congo plays a vital role in the affairs of southern and central Africa.The eastern Great Lakes region, where Kabila began his march on Kinshasa, will also be shaken by Congo's revolution. Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda will be the main beneficiaries, suddenly having an ally, not an enemy, in Kinshasa. Mobutu backed Rwanda's Hutu government, overthrown in 1994; he later helped Hutu militia in the refugee camps.

Kabila, by contrast, was sponsored by Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated government; he himself is allied to the Tutsis in Congo's Kivu province. On behalf of the Rwandan government, his forces cleared out the Hutu refugee camps on the border, chasing Hutus who would not return to Rwanda deeper into Congo.

Farther north, Kabila's victory has rescued Uganda from attacks by rebel forces that were supported by both Sudan and Mobutu's government.

Outside the continent, the shock waves are strongest in Paris and Washington. Whatever the true extent of its support for Mobutu, France is seen as having backed a monstrous dictator — even when he became a loser.

Almost to the end, France advocated some role for Mobutu in a transition regime. Yet the United States, to which Mobutu probably owed more than he did to France, has emerged looking like a Kabila ally.

There are those who see the episode as part of an anglophone conspiracy to take over francophone Africa. In Congo many people now insist on speaking English rather than French. Leaders in other francophone African countries are having doubts. Is France still a reliable ally? And France itself is carrying out a bitter reassessment of its Africa policy.



FAIR EXCHANGE *A woman swaps Zairean money, mainly for dollars, in Kinshasa's Wall Street*

PHOTO: AFP

Congo bans parties

CT 27/5/97 (358)

KINSHASA: The new leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo banned all political parties in the country yesterday, threatening to prosecute offenders "to the fullest extent of the law".

The announcement on national radio did not say how long the ban would hold.

Another measure announced in the broadcast seemed aimed at addressing grievances by Kinshasans that have dampened the initial enthusiasm for Kabila's victory.

Alliance troops were banned from the streets of Kinshasa without written orders. Some Kinshasans have complained of petty harassment by Alliance soldiers.

The broadcast repeated earlier bans on public and protest meetings.

Earlier, opposition leaders had promised to press ahead with protest plans.

Mr Dominique Kankondé, a spokesman for the opposition Democratic Union for Social Progress (DUSP), said a protest march against Kabila would go ahead tomorrow. "We weren't afraid of Mobutu, and we're not afraid of Kabila," he said.

There had been speculation yesterday that supporters of DUSP leader Mr Etienne Tshisekedi — passed over by Kabila in the government he announced on Friday — would observe one of the "dead city" strikes that had undermined the Mobutu regime.

Tshisekedi had not called a strike outright, but on Friday warned that Kinshasans might do so of their own volition. — Sapa-AP

Draconian programme needed in Congo

The former Zaire must take bitter medicine to cure the ills created by the previous government's debauching of the currency, writes Simon Barber in Washington

358

BD 27/5/97

TO PREVENT a resurgence of Weimar-style hyperinflation, Laurent Kabila, self-declared president of the new Democratic Republic of the Congo, will have to undertake, as his first priority, a draconian stabilisation programme that will test his new government's credibility to the hilt.

So suggests an International Monetary Fund (IMF) working paper, completed in April as the regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko was breathing its dying gasps. It will be interesting to see if the economic team Deputy President Thabo Mbeki has announced he is sending to advise Kabila will urge similarly tough medicine.

Steps recommended in the paper, entitled "Zaire's Hyperinflation 1990-96" and released under the standard caveat that it is a staff appraisal that does not reflect the views of the fund's management, include a complete and "abrupt" halt to the issue of new currency and "exceptional measures" to raise tax revenues.

Desperately needed external assistance "is likely to be forthcoming on an adequate scale only when clear signs emerge that the authorities have re-established control over economic and financial developments". This means when the country's inflation rate — 657% last year, down from 90 000% in the 12 months ending September 1994 — has been brought under control.

That will not happen unless the government is able to "change the rules of the game as regards the way fiscal and monetary policies are conducted" and take "systemic" steps to guarantee that it "cannot spend more than it earns". The surest way to achieve this aim is to "bar the authorities from access to monetary financing through a temporary halt of all currency issue, followed by the adoption of a restrictive arrangement such as a currency board as soon as conditions permit".

Tax and royalty revenues in 1996 — a good year by recent standards — totalled little more than half the $400m fund calculated as the minimum needed to cover public sector wages and core outlays. To make up that balance, the new government will have to take such steps as a flat tax surcharge on domestically produced and imported goods "with no exceptions allowed" — "which in turn requires that the government has the political authority to enforce them".

At the time of writing, the paper's principal author, Phillipe Beaugrand, was not optimistic that the government would have such authority, which is one reason he downplays the possibility of imposing wage and price controls — themselves a last, desperate resort under current IMF thinking — to stabilise the currency and reduce inflationary expectations.

Nonetheless, if stabilisation is undertaken in a sufficiently "forceful manner", he believes inflation could be harnessed "durably" within "no more than a few months", at which point the government could begin to focus on the larger issues of rebuilding the shattered economy, a process likely to take years.

Congo/Zaire, says Beaugrand, vividly illustrates John Maynard Keynes's dictum that: "Lenin was certainly right. There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency."

The fund is unlikely to endear itself from the way its staff apportion the blame for the debauching of the zaire, whose value fell by a staggering factor of 21-million between 1989 and 1994 while the economy contracted cumulatively by 40%. It is nowhere suggested in this analysis that Mobutu printed money to make up for resources that he and his cronies had looted from the fiscus.

What is argued is that Mobutu's tentative moves toward democracy in 1990, following the collapse of eastern European communism and the bloody end of his special role model, Romania's Nicolai Ceaucescu, unleashed a not terribly responsible opposition that made effective financial management impossible.

Unrest, coinciding with falling world commodity prices and the physical collapse of Zaire's biggest copper mine at Kamoto, wrecked the last productive sectors of the formal economy. To meet the political challenge, Mobutu tripled government workers' salaries with money that did not exist.

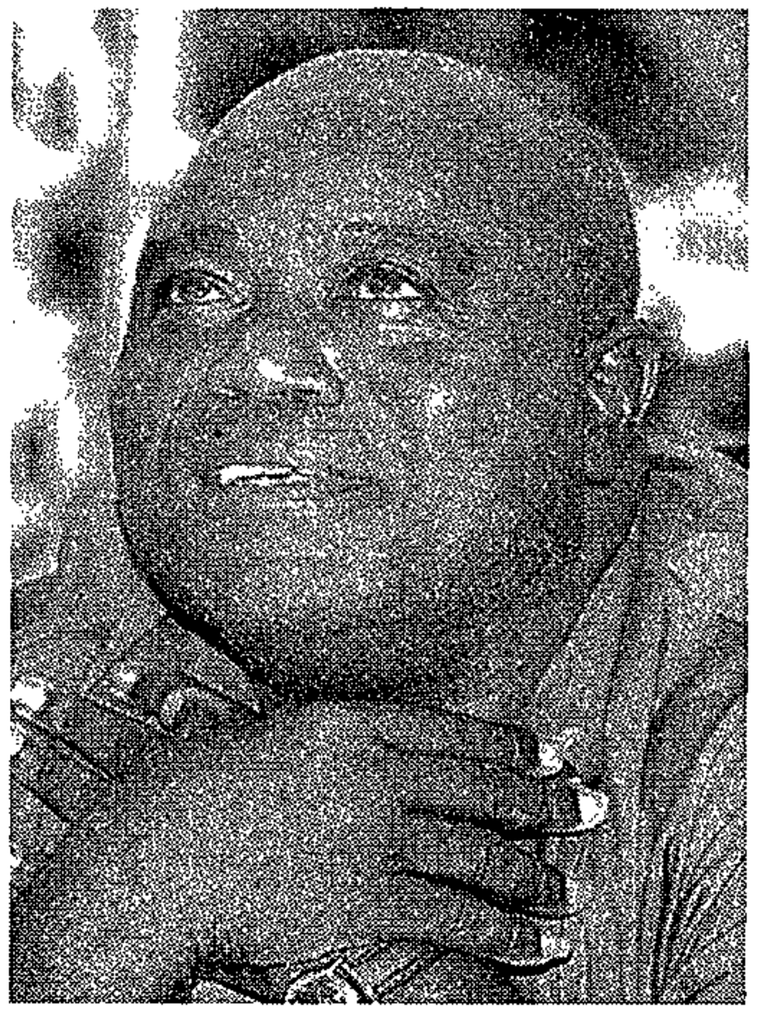
Ironically, the only obstacle to complete monetary implosion was the scarcity of currency itself, due to the narrowing margin between the cost of printing the stuff and what it was worth. That scarcity led to the extraordinary situation in which Zairean deposit holders wishing to cash out had to do so at a discount, even though their deposits themselves had become virtually worthless.

In 1995, the Zairean central bank issued banknotes which IMF staff calculate had a value in real terms at time of issue of around $180m. These notes cost $80m to produce, paid either directly to foreign makers or for imported ink and paper. "In effect," says the report, "nearly half of the currency newly issued by the Bank of Zaire in recent years was used to acquire foreign exchange in order to pay for the issuance of currency."

A result was the growing dollarisation of the economy, with prices for all but small purchases increasingly quoted in dollars or Belgian francs. Black market currency trading was facilitated by a cellular telephone network built by US companies in partnership with some of the local entrepreneurs.

"Instant and reliable communication was an important tool to ensure the timely transmittal of information in the parallel exchange market," notes Beaugrand. "In particular, currency traders in Zaire were on the watch for sudden unloading of large quantities of banknotes, which unvariably exerted an immediate impact on the parallel exchange rate."

This was called the "Corando effect", after the security company whose vehicles were seen delivering boxes of new notes.



KABILA

By the end of 1993, the stock of zaires in circulation had a value of around $46m at the parallel rate. The value of foreign currency in circulation — mostly dollars, but also CFA francs and Zambian kwachas — was estimated at between $300m and $400m.

During 1995-96, following the compromise appointment of a moderate opposition leader, Kengo wa Dondo as prime minister, there were halting signs of economic recovery and price stabilisation — prices rose by a factor of about 35, modest by comparison with the 1989-94 period.

"But even with sustained progress towards stabilisation," Beaugrand concludes, "the task ahead to rebuild the country is enormous, and the challenge of restoring the authority of the state is perhaps even greater.

"By end 1996, Zaire's infrastructure had fallen into disrepair: most roads, rails and rivers had become impracticable, the government had all but stopped providing health and education services and main public enterprises had ceased operating.

"The informal sector showed an amazing resilience, which partly buffeted the plummeting activity in the formal economy. But the development of 'survival reflexes' — with greater autonomy for provinces and generalised self-subsistence in particular — also translated into 'noncivic' behaviour, including the extension of corruption and the ransacking of the population by unpaid soldiers. Hyperinflation in Zaire in the 1990s thus left a trail of deleterious consequences on the fabric of society, which will take many years to remedy."

Kabila places ban on protests

0027/6/97 (358)

KINSHASA — Self-proclaimed President Laurent Kabila's government banned demonstrations and political party activity in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital, Kinshasa, until further notice, citing a need for security, state television reported yesterday.

The report said no unit of Kabila's armed forces would be allowed to circulate in the city without specific orders.

Supporters of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi had said at the weekend they would stage protest marches against Kabila and his government tomorrow and on Friday. Kinshasa earlier went to work normally despite opposition predictions of a stay-home protest and threats of opposition marches. Witnesses said traffic on the main roads, where students protested against Kabila at the weekend, was normal.

But mutual recriminations between the rivals proliferated at the weekend, with Kabila's administration in the former Zaire accusing opposition militants of being impatient and saying it needed time.

Kabila's ministers accused Tshisekedi of deluding the people to feed his own ambition. Posts and Telecommunications Minister Kinkela Vikansi lambasted Tshisekedi yesterday, accusing him of preaching "xenophobia and racial hatred" and of offering supporters of ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko a rallying point.

"He is spreading completely false notions" and risked becoming "an enemy of the people", Vikansi said.

Newspapers in Kinshasa, where Tshisekedi enjoys a significant and often vocal popular following, highlighted the political divide. Opposition activists say they remain open to dialogue but Tshisekedi aide Laurent Mbayo dismissed as "speculation" a report in the newspaper Le Palmares that the veteran leader had been offered the post of vice-president.

Kabila aides say there will be no post of prime minister in the new administration but Kabila plans to increase the size of his government from 13 to 20. — Reuter.

See Pages 13 and 19

CAPE TIMES
WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 1997 ★

'DAWN OF LASTING DEMOCRACY'

Mandela backs Kabila's ban

ET 28/5/97 (368)

IT WOULD BE suicidal for Laurent Kabila to allow free political activity before he has a firm grip on the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, says President Mandela.

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela yesterday endorsed self-proclaimed president Mr Laurent Kabila's ban on party political activity in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and said the country had reached the "dawn of lasting democracy".

Speaking after talks with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni at Tuynhuys, Mandela said it would be suicidal for Kabila to allow free political activity before he had a firm grip on the government.

Mandela's backing flies in the face of a South African eight-point peace plan tabled during mediation efforts between then Zairian president Mobutu Sese Seko and Kabila.

Freedom of political activity was one of the key points to be guaranteed under a transitional authority until democratic elections.

On Monday Kabila's transitional government banned all political activities and threatened to prosecute offenders "to the fullest extent of the law".

Mandela, who played a central role in the peace efforts, said Kabila had made it clear he was committed to democracy and would in due course allow parties to operate.

"I think that dealing with a country which has been under a dictatorship for more than three decades it is quite reasonable for him to ensure that law and order is stabilised before he can now say: 'I want to allow all political parties to function'."

He believed Kabila could be trusted to keep his word, and said his actions had to be judged by the specific conditions of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where there were 250 political parties.

On Kabila's refusal to offer popular opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi a post in his cabinet, Mandela said he didn't believe that anyone, however important, could insist that he wanted the position of prime minister.

"That would offend anybody. Certainly it would offend me if somebody tells me while I'm fighting and incurring casualties, however slight, to say to me: 'I want to be the prime minister of the new government'."

Speaking later at a banquet in Museveni's honour, Mandela said South Africa was full of hope that a lasting solution would be promoted by the transition in the Congo.

"We are confident too that the people of that great country have reached the dawn of lasting peace and democracy."

Museveni, an ally of Kabila, told reporters he would make a "bad commentator" on the political ban in the Congo as "I myself don't like political parties".

He too had suspended the activities of Ugandan political parties as they were sectarian along purely religious or tribal lines.

"I believe in democracy based on democracy of individuals and not parties," Museveni said.

National Party foreign affairs spokesman Dr Boy Geldenhuys said in a statement that Mandela's remarks were inappropriate for a head of state of his stature and sent the wrong signals to the world.

"The conclusion that can be drawn here is that in certain cases it is absolutely normal for a country to move into a one-party dictatorship and permit no opposition," he said.

Foreign news agencies reported from Kinshasa on Tuesday that an opposition group had urged citizens to mobilise against Kabila, saying he was no better than the dictator he deposed. — Sapa

TROOPS ARREST PROTESTERS

Pro-Tshisekedi demo broken up

CT 29/5/97 (358)

KINSHASA: Demonstrators supporting opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi were warned by the military yesterday that they were being used by politicians for their own political ends.

SOLDIERS loyal to new Congo leader Mr Laurent Kabila broke up a banned anti-government demonstration here yesterday, detaining about 100 protesters and foreign journalists.

About 100 troops swooped on the tail-end of the demonstration as a noisy, festive crowd of about 2 000 people made their way to the headquarters of key opposition leader Mr Etienne Tshisekedi.

The marchers scattered through side streets and wasteland as soldiers ran after them, one firing a brief burst from his machinegun as he chased a group.

Some of the protesters were beaten with planks and branches.

A soldier said they would be taken to Kongolo military camp.

The journalists were released after being detained for about an hour.

An officer accompanied by a group of soldiers had earlier tried to stop the march when only about 200 demonstrators were gathered at the railway station in the centre of the capital.

But the demonstrators, chiefly supporters of Tshisekedi's Union for Democratic and Social Progress, set off anyway, chanting: "Kill us, we're ready to die."

Later the soldiers' commanding officer moved through the crowd in a four-wheel-drive vehicle, climbed down and pleaded once again for the marchers to go home.

"You are being used by politicians for their own political ends," he shouted at them.

But the march went on, gathering support as it made its way through the shabby suburbs towards the Lemete area, where Tshisekedi has his headquarters.

Tshisekedi, known among his followers as the "Sphinx" or the "Charismatic Chief", has emerged as a critic of Kabila after the rebel leader ousted dictator Mr Mobutu Sese Seko on May 17.

Tshisekedi, whose enemies refer mockingly to him as the "Messiah of Lemete", has said he will not recognise Kabila's new government, from which he was excluded.

The crowd chanted "Kabila assassin" and "Kabila has sold out the country" and called for his immediate dismissal.

The military had previously kept a low profile as the march gathered steam and support. It moved briskly through the dirt-poor suburban avenues, but most passersby were unmoved and refused to join the mainly student marchers.

But as the protesters reached a roundabout, the soldiers suddenly swooped, splitting the march in two, and concentrating on the rear, rushing through side streets after the scattering youths.

'Messiah of Lemete' says he will not recognise Kabila's new government, from which he was excluded.

Some were beaten with planks.

A group was eventually forced into a tight knot, terrified small children among them, and surrounded by soldiers.

One man sat on the ground, weeping, having been slapped and beaten by soldiers.

After the initial rush, the atmosphere was calm as the soldiers waited for trucks to take away those who were arrested.

Kabila finally seized power after launching his insurrection from eastern Zaire in October, sweeping across the vast, impoverished nation to take town after town as government soldiers pillaged and fled.

His troops dispersed another anti-government demonstration last Saturday, arresting about 60 protesters.

The self-declared president has since reissued a ban on demonstrations and public dissent.

The US embassy has become a focus for demonstrators against Kabila's new government, which accuses Washington of propping up the rebel who deposed Mobutu.

Western governments have been pressing Kabila, who is due to be sworn in as president today, to form a broad-based government. — Sapa-AFP

● See Page 10

Kabila assumes almost full executive, military power

(358) Star 29/5/97

Kinshasa – Laurent Kabila grabbed sweeping powers in a decree announced here late yesterday, hours before he was due to be sworn in as president of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

State television announced that Kabila had taken practically full powers, executive, legislative and military, until the adoption of a new constitution – a legislative goal which could take years.

Only the judiciary appears to have escaped the strongman's grasp of total power in a country the size of western Europe.

The move handing himself quasi-dictatorial powers came hours after Kabila's troops swooped on a banned anti-government demonstration and detained about 100 people.

Another protest is due to go ahead tomorrow.

Kabila's style has already caused considerable disquiet in diplomatic circles here, alienating the main opposition parties, including the powerful Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS).

Dignitories from neighbouring states began arriving in Kinshasa yesterday for the swearing-in ceremony. Information Minister Raphael Ghenda said "perhaps" President Nelson Mandela would be present.

■ Envoys from at least a dozen countries plan to tell Kabila face-to-face he must take action on human rights and the treatment of Rwandan refugees, diplomats said yesterday.

A group of 21 ambassadors, mainly from the United States and Europe, but also including Canada, Japan, Egypt and South Africa, met at the United Nations after senior UN officials asked them to consider what they could do to express their concerns about the refugees. – AFP, Reuters.

CAPE TIMES
FRIDAY, MAY 30, 1997 ★

PRESIDENT KABILA INAUGURATED

New Congo will wait two years for elections

CT 30/5/97 (358)

KINSHASA: Laurent Kabila, hailed by some as a democratic freedom-fighter and condemned by others as a closet dictator, was inaugurated yesterday as his country's president.

ELECTIONS in the Democratic Republic of Congo would be held in April 1999, the country's new leader, Mr Laurent Kabila, announced here yesterday.

The veteran revolutionary consecrated a dream of three decades when he took over formally as president of the former Zaire, having swept aside Mr Mobutu Sese Seko.

Less than two weeks after his forces marched into the capital Kabila took an oath of office in the nation's top sports stadium.

The inauguration of Kabila, hailed as a freedom-fighter by some, a free-market democrat by others and a closet dictator by critics, offered many of Kinshasa citizens their first glimpse of the man who now controls their destiny.

Kabila, 57, has been widely recognised as leader of the new Congo, but Western media and governments, particularly France, a long-time friend of Mobutu, have urged him to demonstrate greater commitment to democracy and human rights.

Some aid agencies have accused his followers of atrocities against Rwandan Hutu refugees in the east and north.

Against that, he has won a solid endorsement from the continent's foremost statesman, President Nelson Mandela, who accused some Western governments of demonising Kabila and ignoring his achievements.

"What he has done in the areas he has conquered shows very clearly his commitment to democracy," Mandela said this week.

After Kinshasa's initial euphoria at Kabila's take-over, supporters of veteran opposition leader Mr Etienne Tshisekedi, enraged at his exclusion from the Kabila cabinet announced on May 22, took to the streets. Kabila's soldiers broke up protests, firing in the air and beating demonstrators. His administration banned political activity and broke up a fresh march on Wednesday.

Later that day, Kabila decreed himself sweeping powers to run the country until the adoption of a new transitional constitution by a promised constituent council.

Kabila heads an alliance of four obscure political groups formed on October 8 with Banyamulenge ethnic Tutsis as the cutting edge of their revolt against Mobutu.

"My long years of struggle were like spreading fertiliser on a field. But now it is time to harvest," Kabila, who speaks perfect English, said before moving on to Kifishasa.

Known by supporters as Mzee, the Swahili word for Grand Old Man, Kabila is not an ethnic Tutsi but he has forged close links to Tutsis over the years.

He is from mineral-rich Shaba in the southern part of the country but has lived for many years among the Banyamulenge in the Mulenge Mountains south of Uvira, from where he plotted the uprising. He has denied planning to carve out a "Tutsiland" in central Africa.

The civil war began in eastern Zaire when the Banyamulenge, a community of roughly 400 000, resisted attempts to expel them to Rwanda, a land they left up to 200 years ago.

Kabila, stocky with a shaven head, is a former comrade-in-arms of the late Argentine-born revolutionary leader Ernesto "Che" Guevara, who fought in eastern Zaire in the early 1960s.

Initially, according to a biography of Guevara, the Argentinian was impressed by Kabila. Later he became disillusioned, saying Kabila seemed reluctant to visit the front and drove around Dar es Salaam in a Mercedes Benz.

But Kabila stuck to his mission and has been a regular visitor to Uganda since President Yoweri Museveni took power there.

Kabila is married with six children, including Joseph, a military commander who captured Kisangani and Lubumbashi. — Reuter

SA sending task team to Congo to help get country up and running

Stephen Laufer

THE SA public and private sectors are to send a joint task team to the Democratic Republic of Congo within a few days to assist in the reconstruction of essential state services and a key parastatal mining company.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad had announced this yesterday, the day Laurent Kabila was sworn in as president of the former Zaire. Pahad and other SA officials are also likely to visit Congo for political talks this weekend.

Pahad said the task team would include officials from the SA Reserve Bank, the finance, trade and industry and constitutional development departments, as well as private sector experts. The final details of the team's composition and deployment would be discussed with the new government at the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit in Harare on Monday, where President Nelson Mandela will also continue his political discussions with Kabila.

Reuter reports that Kabila, who was faced with a student demonstration for democracy before his inauguration in Kinshasa's main sports stadium, announced that Congo would hold presidential and parliamentary elections in April 1999.

The task team would initially help assess Congo's needs before advising on new administrative and financial structures and on an approach to the international donor and lending communities, said Frank Chikane, the director-general in Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's office. "Normally the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund would advise in this type of situation, but the new Congo government has gained confidence in SA and asked for our assistance."

Sources said there was agreement that the re-establishment of a functioning central bank, financial administration and methods for pulling parastatal mining giant Gecamines back from the brink of bankruptcy would enjoy highest priority. An analyst said several SA mining houses — including Anglo American, JCI, Gencor, and Iscor Mining — were possible candidates for inclusion in the task team. SA's constitutional development department could help create a constitutional assembly and trade and industry would help Congo reforge business links.

SA was represented at Kabila's inauguration by the ambassador to Kinshasa, Jan van Deventer, but Mandela's spokesman, Parks Mankahlana, said the president had sent a warm message of support. Mbeki would have attended had he not been ordered by Mandela to take leave.

BD 30/5/97

(358)



REUTER

Kinshasa protest: about 150 supporters of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi demonstrate against the new Laurent Kabila government

Opposition protests against Kabila

ARG 31/5/97 (358)

Kinshasa – Supporters of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi began a demonstration yesterday against the new regime of Laurent Kabila in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in spite of a ban.

About 150 members of Mr Tshisekedi's Union for Democracy and Social Progress began a march down an avenue from the central station in the capital, heading towards the home of the opposition leader.

Mr Tshisekedi, a veteran politician and former premier, was a principal foe of dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, who was ousted by Mr Kabila's rebel Alliance this month.

Mr Tshisekedi's supporters have been protesting against Mr Kabila's failure to include the opposition leader in the new transitional government and yesterday chanted slogans accusing the new head of state of "selling our country to foreigners".

Mr Kabila was sworn in as head of state on Thursday at a ceremony where he banned all political activity after assuming quasi-total powers by decree, sparing only the "independence" of the judiciary.

He also pledged to hold free and fair presidential and general elections in two years' time, but castigated Kinshasa politicians of the old school and condemned the proliferation of hundreds of political parties.

Yesterday's march began peacefully and the security forces maintained a discreet presence.

On Wednesday, soldiers fired into the air to disperse a demonstration by about 2 000 people in Kinshasa..

At his inauguration on Thursday, Mr Kabila wiped out all the political institutions of the Mobutu era, including a long-standing national conference which had at one point foisted Mr Tshisekedi on the toppled ruler as prime minister, while he played parties off against each other.

Meanwhile, it is reported from Madrid that Mr Kabila is getting foreign policy tips from a Spanish poet.

The consultant, Luis Lopez Alvarez, is an old Africa hand and longtime friend of the new president.

The two met in Africa in the 1970s and have seen each other periodically and corresponded ever since, Mr Lopez, 67, told the newspaper La Vanguardia.

Mr Lopez, at present in Spain, but itching to get back to Kinshasa, says he talks to Mr Kabila at least once a week. During the civil war which has just ended, Mr Lopez says his role was always "to share and debate ideas" with Mr Kabila and his people.

He adds: "It is not surprising that they continue to consider me an adviser in some areas, above all in management and foreign policy." – Sapa-AFP

More misery as Congo starts rebuilding economy

(358) Star 4/6/97

WASHINGTON POST
Kinshasa, Congo

As the Organisation of African Unity – which Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni denounced as a group for "criminals" – tries to gain credibility on a beleaguered continent, there's one more headache to face.

While Mobutu, the deposed leader of Zaire, begins a life of comfortable exile, supported by his decades-long pillage of one of Africa's wealthier nations, millions of people live on the fringes of a ruined economy that is the tragic legacy of the dictator's nearly 32 years of absolute power.

In a Kinshasha street, where girls skip rope with tattered pieces of cloth and boys kick soccer balls made of refuse bound with string, the demon that threatens life itself is still called Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mary Nzenzi (53), lives in poverty. She farms a tiny plot that produces the cheapest vegetables for sale to people who can barely afford to buy them.

Nzenzi, the mother of seven, felt fortunate one recent evening to serve rice with palm oil for dinner – her family's only meal that day.

Millions of people live like this.

Although blessed with huge deposits of diamonds, cobalt, copper and other natural riches, the country became one of the poorest in the world as Mobutu and his ruling circle skimmed revenues.

Now, following his rebel forces' victory over Mobutu and installation of a new government, President Laurent Kabila has promised reform, development, investment and jobs.

Kabila's government says it will create an "economy of the social market", intended to put the needs of the people first. The reality, however, is that the needs of the people are vast and cannot be met until there is a real economy.

Socio-economic chaos is so severe that it will take years to correct it, with hardship likely to worsen before a recovery begins, said the country's new Finance Minister Mwana Mawampanga, an American-trained economist.

Nzenzi has welcomed Mobutu's demise with the humblest of hopes.

"I want to be given money to continue my business, continue working in the field," she said.

Two of her children, Tonton and Joceline, ages 14 and 13, have not been to school in six years. School budgets, like all state budgets, collapsed.

The depth of Congolese misery is evident in the protruding bones of Joceline.

In a family that has not been able to afford chicken since Joceline's father died of cancer 28 months ago, the girl has the physique of a refugee, and there are many children like her.

The country's health-care system operates like the schools, with the difference that patients unable to pay their bills often are kept in clinics until the money appears.

The finance minister said a combination of foreign and domestic investment, plus large-scale, private-sector job creation and the write-off of Zaire's debt, could boost the country's economic prospects.

(358) Star 4/6/97

Only R15-m of Mobutu's money found

Geneva – Swiss banks have found only R15,3-million in assets of toppled Zairian ruler Mobutu Sese Seko including foreign shares, bonds, securities and a safe deposit box yet to be opened, banking watchdogs said yesterday.

The sums reported by banks, after a search ordered by the Swiss government, were just a fraction of the billions that Kinshasa's new rulers allege Mobutu has stashed away with Swiss banks.

The Federal Banking Commission, Switzerland's banking supervisor, said six banks had reported assets held by Mobutu, his family, or people associated with them. It confirmed the assets had been frozen.

Federal Banking Commission deputy director Daniel Zuberbuehler said the commission considered the matter closed, although he acknowledged that returning the funds could take years.

Switzerland froze Mobutu's assets only hours after he fled Kinshasa last month.

The new rulers called on the US, France, Belgium, Austria, Liechtenstein and Portugal to follow suit. – Reuters.

FOREIGN AID *American officials hope the IMF will cancel or cut the country's foreign debt*

US resumes development plans for Kinshasa

(358)

CT(BR) 4/6/97

FROM AP-DOW JONES

Washington, DC — Six years after the country then known as Zaire was banished from the list of US aid recipients, the US is moving to resume its aid programme now that the discredited old regime is gone.

A five-member Agency for International Development team was due in the Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday for a preliminary assessment of assistance needs that is expected to last two to three weeks.

Officials said the US government is considering economic assistance as well as funds to help Congo meet the challenge of holding national elections in April 1999, the target date set by President Laurent Kabila.

Before the abrupt cutoff in 1991, the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko received about $40 million a year in US aid over a 15-year period, much of it in loans that have never been repaid.

Officials raised the possibility that the IMF will come up with a package deal involving all donor countries that could permit cancellation or a reduction of Congo's foreign debt. The officials are eager to resume the aid.

The officials said Bill Richardson, the US ambassador to the UN, planned to go to Congo this week to press Kabila to account for reported massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees by forces loyal to Kabila.

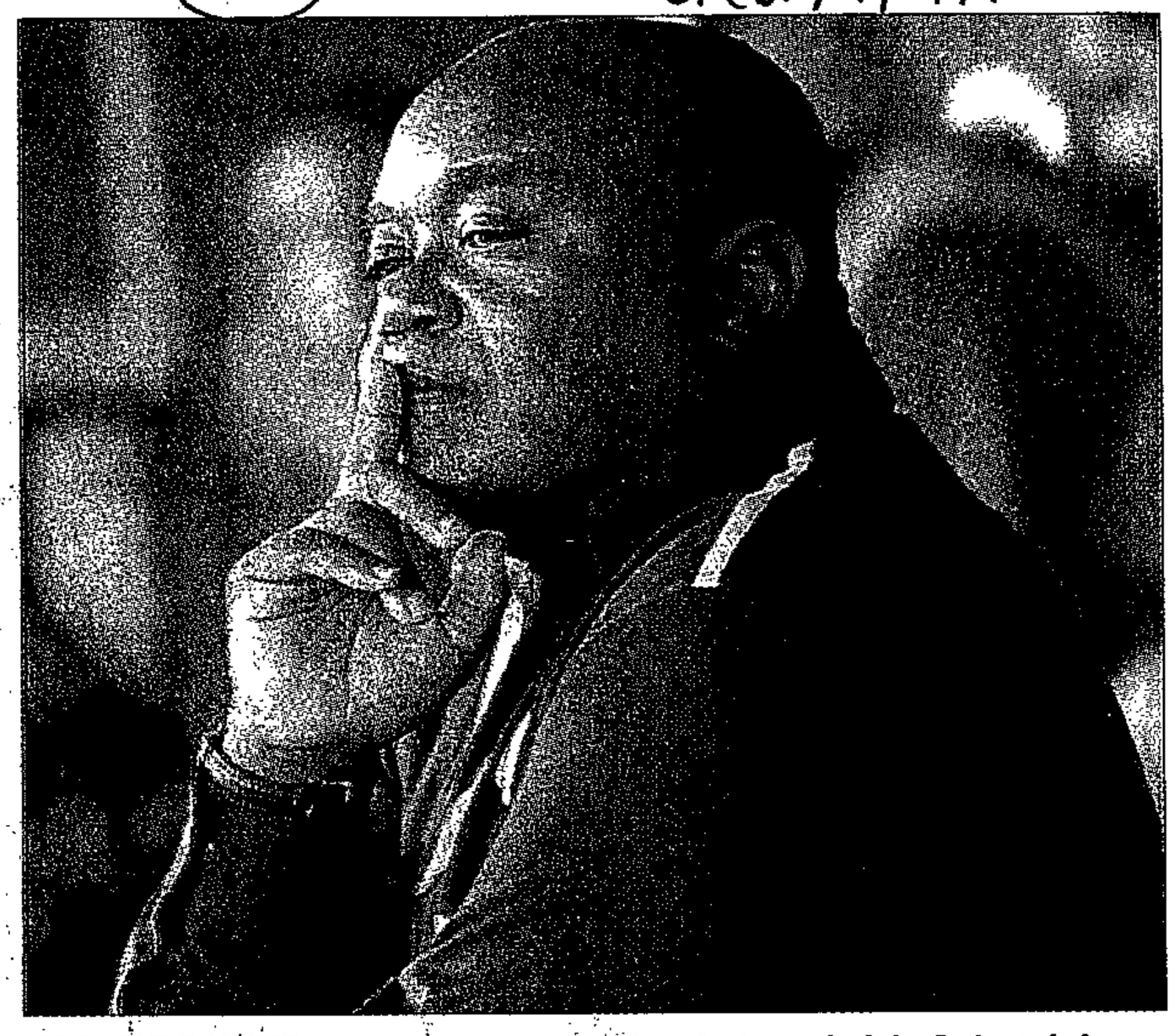
☐ The Democratic Republic of Congo's justice minister yesterday welcomed the discovery of $3,4 million in assets held by former President Mobutu Sese Seko in Switzerland, but said it was only the start.

"We say bravo, it's something, but we know there is much more where that came from. We have to suspect that it is not always in the banks' interests to reveal it," Celestin Lwangi said.

Switzerland's Federal Banking Commission said the funds, discovered by Swiss banks in accounts belonging to Mobutu and his family, have been frozen in line with Berne's orders last month.

When Mobutu was toppled from power last month the Swiss government ordered all its banks to report if they or their foreign subsidiaries were holding wealth for Mobutu, his family or their associates.

"We also have our own international commission ... investigating the amount removed by Mobutu," Lwangi said. Kabila's government has sought legal assistance from Berne in tracking down reports that Mobutu stashed billions of dollars of looted national wealth abroad.



TREASURE HUNT *President Laurent Kabila, who has asked the Swiss to help find Mobutu's hidden millions*

PHOTO: GARY BERNARD

Snaky evidence of Mobutu 'magic'

CT 5/6/97 (358)

JOHANNESBURG: The discovery of "magical" bottled snakes, tortoises and toads at the home of one of President Mobutu Sese Seko's former generals has renewed interest in the supernatural beliefs behind the Zairean dictator's 32-year regime and enveloped his rule in an aura of invincibility.

The find offers further evidence of the deep supernatural beliefs, held by Mobutu and those around him, that fostered their sense of invincibility. For much of his rule, Mobutu surrounded himself with witchdoctors and soothsayers who dispensed witchcraft and guided his actions. His trademark leopardskin hat, cane and name were integral to the mystical world he inhabited.

Officially inspired rumours said he carried a sculpted cane so heavy that 20 normal men could not pick it up. A public service announcement preceding the nightly news showed "The Guide" descending God-like from the clouds.

Born into a Catholic family, Mobutu later switched to a pre-colonial form of worship. African religion in the former Zaire is a form of animism, in which human qualities are attributed to animals and fetisheurs dispense magic potions and charms.

In 1991, fearing that his army, and even his ceremonial pygmy guard, would turn against him, he flew 25 West African voodoo priests from Benin and Senegal to his palace in Kinshasa. One told him he would never be deposed if he lived on water, so he moved his home and offices to the Camanyola, a former Belgian steamer moored on the Congo River. — The Times, London

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

FM 6/6/97 (368)

Foreign aid ready to roll

Despite reservations, US, EU and SA teams call to assess Kabila's needs

Democratic Republic of Congo president Laurent Kabila faces an uphill struggle to win over sceptical EU governments. They fear that the former rebel leader may now turn out to be another dictator.

EU Foreign Ministers meeting in Luxembourg on June 2 warned Kabila not to renege on his promise to hold elections by April 1999 and said they expected "all parties" to participate in the polls.

In a short statement, the Ministers also voiced their "extreme concern" at reports of human rights violations, particularly in eastern parts of the country. They said Kabila's forces should give international relief agencies "unhindered and secure" access to the region.



***Laurent Kabila** . . . better than Mobutu?*

EU diplomats say they will keep pressing Kabila to bring veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi into the transitional government, though the self-proclaimed president has refused to do so.

The EU has promised to put up US$40m to help organise elections. The head of the EU's special "electoral unit" is expected to visit Kinshasa in the coming months.

Behind the united public front, EU policy makers are divided in their assessment of Kabila and of the country's immediate future. Joao de Deus Pinheiro, European Commissioner for relations with African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, says the EU's emphasis must be on helping Kabila to consolidate his rule before pressing for elections.

Pinheiro agrees with SA President Nelson Mandela that Kabila's "first priority is law and order and the stabilisation" of the country. But he warns that a two-year delay in elections is the "upper limit" for the EU and says that while Europe should not demonise Kabila, "we must be sure that we are not running away from a dictator towards autocratic rule."

European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs Emma Bonino has taken a more strident anti-Kabila line. She has berated Kabila's forces for turning eastern parts of the republic into a "slaughterhouse" and said international relief agencies are being thwarted in efforts to help thousands of Hutu refugees seeking shelter in the region.

If relations between Brussels and Kinshasa are repaired, Kabila could receive millions of dollars to rebuild the country.

"As soon as we have guarantees on human rights questions and moves towards democracy, this aid could start flowing," an EU official said. "But, we will be watching carefully each step of the way."

Meanwhile, a US Aid team arrived in Kinshasa this week to begin assessing the country's needs. An SA government assistance task team is expected in Congo this week.

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THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (358)

Project delayed in one fell coup

FM 6/16/97

Logging group lumbered with civil war aftermath

The Zairean civil war has, at least temporarily, chopped the legs from under the Isle of Man-registered Gotvil group, which is establishing a hardwood logging operation in the Congolese equatorial rain forests with SA capital and equipment.

It was due to ship timber harvesting and handling equipment worth millions of rand to the war-torn country in mid-March, but the trucks and equipment — mostly manufactured by Richards Bay-based Bell Equipment in their largest-ever African export award — are still gathering dust in Durban storage yards.

The security of the logging concession negotiated under the previous regime, and the cost of interest on capital which is not getting any closer to producing a return, must be a worry.

But both Gotvil and financiers Standard Corporate & Merchant Bank emerging markets division are putting a brave face on the setbacks. They say they are confident that all contracts will be honoured by Laurent Kabila's new regime.

Gotvil CE Gil Gotfried forecasts annual revenues of US$120m/year. **Herb Payne**

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Dictators not allowed in Congo, says trade union

BD 9/6/97 (358) (3029)

Reneé Grawitzky

TRADE unions in the new Democratic Republic of Congo would not allow the country to slide back into dictatorship and would give self-proclaimed leader Laurent Kabila two months to take control before questioning his democratic principles, a unionist has said.

Addressing the Friedrich Eberty Stiftung in Johannesburg on Friday, Kaino Daniel, general secretary of Fenamiza, the mineworkers' union of Zaire, said: "We are happy that Mobutu has left and we hope Kabila will be able to rebuild the country."

Kabila was being observed closely, especially to ensure that his Alliance of Democratic Forces had democratic structures.

Daniel emphasised the people would never again accept a dictatorship, but appeared unconcerned about the recent moves by the government to ban political activity. He said this move was necessary as Mobutu had facilitated the establishment of 400 political parties, some of which he had financed.

In order to get the situation under control, Kabila had to implement certain measures.

Daniel defended Kabila's military takeover and said if he had not taken power, Mobutu would not have left the country. In terms of current opposition parties, Daniel said cohabitation between Kabila and former premier Etienne Tshisekedi would be very difficult. Elections would determine the outcome.

He was hopeful that investments would flow into the country now that Kabila was in power. Early signs were positive, with approaches made by US and SA investors. He did, however, question the signing of agreements between multinationals and Kabila. Such agreements should be signed with the new government.

He did not question Kabila's intention to implement a market economy with the prospect of privatising the mines. In fact he supported this move, as it would provide the government with much-needed capital.

The 32 years of Mobutu's dictatorship had left the people in misery and desperation.

The country was the "geological scandal" of Africa. Although one of the richest African countries in terms of resources, its people were so poor that it was a luxury to even eat once a day. Mobutu used the country's wealth as his own and turned the country into a corrupt and immoral state. With the average salary $1 a month, it was a country where only the wealthy could send their children to school or the sick to hospital.

Since the early 1970s the private sector had all but disappeared with the outbreak of riots and high levels of theft, while public service workers had not been paid for two years.

CAPE TIMES
MONDAY, JUNE 9, 1997 ★

LOCALS URGED TO BACK ARMY

Congo govt accuses opposition of coup bid

CT 9/6/97 (358)

BRAZZAVILLE: Opposition leader Denis Sasou Nguesso says he will agree to a ceasefire if security forces, among other things, confirm they are to blame for the fighting.

CONGO Brazzaville's government has accused opposition leader Mr Denis Sassou Nguesso of trying to stage a coup and has urged the population to support the security forces.

The government statement was read on national radio yesterday, the fourth day of heavy fighting between troops loyal to President Pascal Lissouba, militia allies and forces loyal to Sassou Nguesso in the capital of the former French colony.

"The government asks the Congolese people to stay vigilant and support the security forces to save our young democracy," the statement said.

The fighting began on Thursday when troops surrounded Sassou Nguesso's home to enforce a ban on private militias in the run-up to July 27 presidential elections.

Late on Saturday, Congo's government appealed for a ceasefire. In a televised speech, Prime Minister Mr David Charles Ganao said Lissouba had accepted an offer of mediation by Gabon's President Omar Bongo.

France lent its support to the mediation effort on Saturday.

Sassou Nguesso — president for 13 years until Lissouba defeated him in elections in 1992 — said early yesterday he would agree to a ceasefire, but set three conditions. These were that Lissouba's soldiers confirm they were to blame for the fighting, halt shelling the northern part of Brazzaville and stop killing opposition members.

"We were attacked and we acted in legitimate defence," Sassou Nguesso said.

Bodies strewed the streets of Brazzaville yesterday. An aid worker said that because of the intensity of the fighting, relief teams had not been able to tend to the wounded or collect bodies. It was not clear if the dead were soldiers or civilians.

A European national said government forces were using Russian-made BM-21 rocket-launchers to fire Katyusha rockets into opposition areas of the city. There was also gunfire around the airport.

Mr Ambroise Noumazalay, interim head of Sassou Nguesso's United Democratic Forces, said Sassou Nguesso's mother-in-law was among those killed.

He said forces loyal to Sassou Nguesso had taken control overnight of the government headquarters. They controlled "much more than half" of Brazzaville and had seized two strategic points in the north of the capital.

France, in a response to threats to French nationals and the death of a French soldier, announced yesterday that it would send more troops to Brazzaville from today.

Ministry spokesman Mr Yves Doutriaux did not say how many soldiers would be sent. About 450 French soldiers were posted in Brazzaville several months ago in case they were needed to evacuate French nationals from Kinshasa in the final days of the civil war that brought rebel leader Mr Laurent Kabila to power in then-Zaire.

The French soldier was killed and five others wounded on Saturday evening as they tried to evacuate a group of foreigners from a building. — Reuter, Sapa-AFP

SA citizens evacuated from Congo

BD 10/6/97

(368)

PRETORIA — Seven SA citizens were evacuated yesterday from a hotel in the Congolese capital of Brazzaville as mortar fire rocked the city.

French army spokesman Maj Alexis Jaraud said Congolese soldiers loyal to President Pascal Lissouba were believed to be manning the mortars, apparently seeking to wrench back territory seized by the militia of former president Denis Sassou Nguesso.

He said a range of other weapons were being used, including heavy machine guns and mounted artillery.

Militiamen loyal to Nguesso have been fighting government forces since Thursday, and now claim to control more than half of the city.

A shell fired during the fighting landed near the centre of Kinshasa, the capital of the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire, business sources said. The cities are only 3km apart, separated by a river. No deaths or injuries were reported.

SA foreign affairs department spokesman Marco Boni said the French military took the seven South Africans from their hotel to Mayamaya Airport in Brazzaville. They would be flown to Libreville, Gabon.

The seven are Johan Erwin, James Smit, Theodore Hill, Thomas Newman, Shaun Krost, Pieter Liebenberg, Themba Mzibi and Henry Jobo.

Boni said reports that South Africans might be trapped in other hotels could not be confirmed. "Our information is that the French have evacuated most foreign nationals."

Stephen Laufer reports the seven SA citizens were apparently in Brazzaville in connection with construction of a stadium.

SA called on all sides yesterday to implement a ceasefire and begin talks on a lasting peace. President Nelson Mandela said the unrest was being addressed by African leaders and the United Nations security council.

There had been an attempt to get Lissouba and Nguesso to discuss their problems in Cape Town, he said.

SA has no resident diplomatic mission in Brazzaville. France has had soldiers stationed in the Congo since the recent crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and rushed 800 extra troops to Brazzaville yesterday, bringing the number of French soldiers there to 1 200.

Amid reports of hostility towards French nationals, 460 French residents were flown to Libreville.

A group of 42 SA farmers in the Niari Valley, 350km from Brazzaville, were unaffected by the fighting. Sasol said it had withdrawn four employees from the Congo. — Sapa-AFP, Reuter.

Kinshasa reacts strongly to shelling by neighbour

KINSHASA — Laurent Kabila's Democratic Republic of the Congo said yesterday a shell which landed in Kinshasa from fighting in Congo's capital Brazzaville on Monday was a deliberate act of provocation.

"We consider this act as a provocation and an aggression by a foreign country," Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha said.

"We warn the two warring parties of the conflict in Congo that any repetition will be considered as an attack on the security and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo."

Fighting in Brazzaville went into a sixth day yesterday as soldiers and militiamen loyal to President Pascal Lissouba battled a political militia loyal to ex-president Denis Sassou Nguesso.

The shell which landed in Kinshasa on Monday caused minimal damage when it fell in the garden of a Nigerian diplomat.

Kabila's forces last month drove former president Mobutu Sese Seko from the capital of the former Zaire, and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Meanwhile, edgy French soldiers moved onto the streets of Brazzaville yesterday to escort foreign nationals to the French embassy for evacuation.

Convoys of civilian vehicles, driven by French, Lebanese and other expatriate volunteers, were protected by armoured cars as they moved to the city centre where foreigners were living.

Bloody fighting between the two forces has ebbed and flowed since Thursday.

For several days the French have been venturing to different parts of the capital to rescue foreigners trapped by fighting.

French embassy officials said between 700 and 800 foreigners were flown out of Brazzaville on Monday to the Gabonese capital, Libreville. They said more than 1 000 French citizens could still be in the Brazzaville area.

A column of smoke rose near to the tower housing the offices of French oil company Elf Aquitaine, and the sound of heavy firing could be heard.

Almost 200 people were gathered on the French embassy lawn, while outside soldiers, including Foreign Legionnaires and marines, kept a close eye on skirmishing which at one stage erupted near the front gates of the embassy compound.

"I'm just so relieved to be here in the embassy," said one Canadian woman, beaten up by Congolese troops who spotted her trying to film them from her flat.

Some seemed more concerned about the dogs they had brought out than themselves. Every time the sound of a shell landing outside reached the embassy one Russian couple threw themselves on their dachsund dogs to protect them.

"For us personally this has been a thousand times worse than when we were brought out of Rwanda in 1994," said Leen Jakobs, a Belgian woman.

From the embassy compound the foreigners will be taken to the airport, where the reinforced French contingent is based, and those who want to will be flown out to Libreville.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa yesterday called for an immediate ceasefire in Brazzaville, saying the situation had deteriorated, with many victims and a climate of fear in the Congolese capital.

OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim urged in a statement that Lissouba and Nguessso order their forces to stop fighting and hold talks "to consolidate peace and the rule of law".

"The political situation has deteriorated considerably," resulting in "many victims (and) creating a situation of fear and insecurity in the capital", he said.

Salim also urged the two men "to create the best conditions for the organisation of presidential elections". — Reuter, Sapa-AFP.

The misery goes on in Kabila's 'new' Kinshasa

Mobutu leaves tragic legacy

(358) ARG 11/6/97

Kinshasa, Congo – Down a dirt road as wretched as an alley, past a ditch of murky, stagnant water and behind a rotted, little house with no chairs to sit on, Mary Nzenzi struggles each day to keep the demon of the empty stomach at bay.

Some would call the demon hunger, but it is bigger, more ominous, more far-reaching than that.

In Ms Nzenzi's world along Kindongolosi Street, where girls skip-rope with tattered pieces of cloth and boys kick soccer balls made of refuse bound with string, the demon that threatens life itself is still called Mobutu Sese Seko.

While the deposed ruler of Zaire, now called Democratic Republic of Congo, recently began a life of comfortable exile supported by his decades-long pillage of one of Africa's wealthier nations, Ms Nzenzi, 53, lives in medieval poverty. She farms a tiny plot that produces the cheapest vegetables for sale to people who can barely afford to buy them.

Ms Nzenzi, a mother of seven, felt fortunate one recent evening to serve rice with palm oil for dinner – her family's only meal that day.

Millions of people live like this, on the fringes of a ruined economy that is the tragic legacy of Mr Mobutu's nearly 32 years in power.

Although blessed with huge deposits of diamonds, cobalt, copper and other natural riches, the country became one of the poorest in the world as Mr Mobutu and his ruling circle skimmed revenues and allowed the infrastructure to crumble.

Now, following his rebel forces' victory over Mr Mobutu and installation of a new government, President Laurent Kabila has promised reform, development, investment and jobs. Despite signs of stiff opposition to his rule, Mr Kabila's ouster of Mr Mobutu has awakened long-dead hopes and expectations for many of Kinshasa's poor.

Mr Kabila's government says it will create an "economy of the social market", intended to put the needs of the people first. The reality, however, is that the needs of the people are vast and cannot be met until there is a real economy.

"The state is insolvent; most state-owned enterprises and financial institutions are de facto bankrupt," a 1994 World Bank report said.

"The overall size of the economy has shrunk to the level of 1958, albeit with a population 2,9 times larger."

Annual per capita income in the new Congo is less than $150 (about R670).

Socio-economic chaos is so severe that it will take years to correct it, with hardship likely to worsen before a recovery begins, said the country's new finance minister, Mwana Mawampanga, an American-trained economist.

Ms Nzenzi, who ran into the street with her always-hungry children to hail Mr Kabila's army when it surged into the city on May 17, has welcomed Mr Mobutu's demise with humble hopes.

"I want to be given money to continue my business, continue working in the field, produce more than I am producing, because if I'm working I can sell more, I can get more money, feed my children, send them to school," she said.

Two of her children, Tonton and Joceline, aged 14 and 13, have not been to school in six years. School budgets, like all state budgets, collapsed under the weight of corruption and mismanagement that made public finances the piggy bank of the greedy.

Teachers were not paid, supplies were not provided and an education system that was supposed to be public became, in effect, privatised – beyond the reach of the people without the means to make payments to teachers and fund schools that would otherwise disappear.

The World Bank predicts a decline of primary-school enrolment to an estimated 50 percent of school-age children in 2000 from 95 percent in 1972.

Although it is a bustling metropolis of five million people, Kinshasa's formal economy practically has been crushed. Venality and incompetence, in which contracts were awarded based on familial or political connections, have left few jobs, and most of those that exist are in the phantom state bureaucracy where wages can be as low as $10 (R45) a month, when they are paid at all.

What thrives in place of a formal economy is a huge, competitive, informal sector. Mothers and fathers take their children to tiny plots of land in the middle of the city to grow cassava, corn and other vegetables that are the safety net of the subsistence economy.

Kinshasa is like a Dickens novel set in Africa, with small children forming bands of thieves who prey on adult sympathy while picking the nearest pocket. The depth of Congolese misery is evident in the protruding bones of Joceline. In a family that has not been able to afford chicken since Joceline's father died of cancer 28 months ago, the girl looks like a refugee, and there are many children like her.

About 60 percent of all children aged 5 and younger in this city suffer some form of malnutrition, with 34 percent of them having severe malnutrition, according to the United Nations children's agency, Unicef.

Routine bouts of malaria, the biggest killer here, have worsened Joceline's condition. Two of her younger sisters, Mafuta, 5, and Labanzandia, 3, have malaria now. Their neighbourhood is like a mosquito breeding farm, with no sewage system to drain standing water and waste. And here, as in most of the city, intestinal amoebas and worms are a routine part of life, as is the diarrhoea that goes with them, all caused by unclean water.

The country's health-care system operates like the schools, with the difference that patients unable to pay their bills often are kept in clinics until the money appears. While these conditions deepened with each passing year, Mr Mobutu is believed to have stolen between $150-million (R675-m) and $400-million (R1 800-m) a year throughout the 1980s from Congo's copper and cobalt revenues.

With Mr Mobutu leading the pack of corrupt civilian and military officials – most of whom have fled in fear of their lives – it is no wonder that Congo is buried under a mountain of international debt put at $14-billion (R63-bn).

Mr Mawampanga, the finance minister, has set up several commissions to find solutions to the country's financial collapse. Pledges of foreign assistance have been pouring in. – The Washington Post

CAPE TIMES
THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 1997 ★

FRENCH RESCUE CIVILIANS

Congolese leaders order ceasefires

358

CT 12|6|97

BRAZZAVILLE: Both leaders of the warring factions here declared ceasefires yesterday after a night during which mortars, machine-guns and grenades pounded the capital.

DISSIDENT Congolese militia leader General Denis Sassou Nguesso called on his supporters yesterday to observe a ceasefire after seven days of fighting with the army of President Pascal Lissouba.

Sassou Nguesso, speaking on his militia's own radio station, asked "that the arms be silenced". He was responding to an earlier announcement by Lissouba of a unilateral ceasefire.

Fighting between forces loyal to the two men broke out last Thursday when Lissouba sent in forces to disarm Sassou-Nguesso's private militia, the Cobras. Lissouba had sought to immobilise the militia in the run-up to next month's presidential election, apparently fearing Sassou-Nguesso would use his forces to foment civil unrest and hurt Lissouba's chances of winning re-election.

Earlier, an opposition leader who was mediating between the rivals said he expected both men to announce truces by the end of the day: Lissouba first, followed by Sassou-Nguesso.

"If nobody takes the first step, it is a nation that is lost," Mr Bernard Kolelas said, explaining that each man was reluctant to stop fighting first for fear of giving his rival an opportunity to strike. "Once Lissouba takes this step, I don't think Sassou-Nguesso will want to be known by the people as the man who ruined the country," he said.

Heavy fighting with mortars, machine-guns and grenades pounded Brazzaville until daylight, when it subsided slightly. French troops ventured into the city to pick up stranded civilians, including many crowded at the French ambassador's residence in a quiet neighbourhood controlled by Kolelas.

Kolelas himself is the leader of a private militia that was involved in skirmishes in 1993 that left 2 000 people dead. This time, Kolelas has stayed out of the fighting, which grew to encompass most of the riverside city and prompted thousands of foreigners to flee.

In addition to calling for a ceasefire, Kolelas said he wanted a peacekeeping force comprising representatives of all three men's backers plus French forces to patrol the city.

Yesterday Kolelas-controlled areas were peaceful but crammed with people flooding in from neighbourhoods caught in the battles.

At the French ambassador's residence, hundreds of civilians gathered to await pick-up by French soldiers who continued their perilous rescue mission.

The French said they had picked up 1 500 people from 52 nations on Monday and Tuesday, bringing them by boat or military convoy to the Aeroclub private flight club at the airport.

The French Foreign Ministry said nearly 1 000 of them had since flown on to Libreville, Gabon, on flights arranged by the French government, and then on to Paris.

In addition, a US Air Force plane that brought a team of communications and security experts into the city on Tuesday carried about 54 foreigners out.

Not everyone wanted to leave. Ms Louise Dendelet waved frantically for the French troops to come to take her away but changed her mind after they'd arrived.

"I prefer to stay here to guard my restaurant," the Guadaloupe native said on Tuesday. "It's all I have for 13 years' work."

A French military convoy of 35 vehicles drove from the airport into town, passing thousands of locals, their belongings piled on their heads as they fled to safer districts.

Barges were sent up-river to rescue civilians from Mpila, a northern waterfront stronghold of the Cobras heavily hit by fighting. — Sapa-AFP-Reuter

Kabila impounds S African Learjet

LAURENT Kabila, president of the new Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, has seized a private South African Learjet after claiming its "rude" pilot "made him wait", a Press report said yesterday.

Kabila impounded the jet in the southern provincial capital of Lubumbashi after the pilot, who agreed to fly him to a May 9 meeting with President Nelson Mandela in South Africa, left without him after waiting for six hours, Johannesburg's *Sunday Independent* newspaper said.

"The pilot was rude to me," Kabila told the aircraft's owners, according to the newspaper.

The Lear jet was chartered by a Canadian-based company, American Mineral Fields (AMF), which signed a mining deal with the then rebel leader Kabila prior to his victorious march last month on Kinshasa.

The company had a standing agreement that Kabila could use their aircraft whenever he needed it, if it was available, the *Sunday Independent* said.

On May 8, Kabila informed the mining house that he wished to use the jet at 9am the following morning to travel to South Africa to meet Mandela, who was leading a bid for a peaceful end to the Zairean civil war.

The crew and aircraft were ready at the scheduled time, but when Kabila had not shown up by 3pm, the pilot decided to resume his normal schedule and took off for Harare, Zimbabwe, the newspaper said.

Kabila's security men tried to prevent the takeoff, telling the pilot: "If you go, don't ever come back."

The pilot and crew, however, returned to Lubumbashi, a primary base for Kabila's forces, with several passengers and were told by the same security officials they should park the jet next to a runway and find other means to leave the country.

"The instruction came from Kabila himself and the pilots obliged," the newspaper quoted a source close to Kabila as saying.

Interjet of South Africa, which manages and services the plane, has retaliated by threatening to impound two aircraft – a Hawker Siddley 125 and Falcon 900 – owned by the Gecamine parastatal mining firm belonging to Kabila's administration. – *Sapa-AFP.*

No more monopolies — Kabila

(358) 20/17/6/97

MAURITIUS — The new Democratic Republic of the Congo said yesterday it would not allow mining monopolies to operate in the former Zaire.

President Laurent Kabila's Mines Minister Florent Kambale Kabila Mututulo said ahead of a sub-Saharan oil and minerals conference that some companies monopolised the mining industry under the previous government of Mobutu Sese Seko.

"One thing we do not want is a monopoly, that is why there is a clash between De Beers (Consolidated Mines Ltd) and the government," Mututulo said.

De Beers held a contract with the former government to buy up production from Societe de Miniere de Bakwanga (MIBA), but Kabila's government said before seizing control of the central African country last month that it wanted to renegotiate existing contracts.

De Beers — which controls the world's diamond industry through the London-based Central Selling Organisation — has since reopened its diamond buying office in the diamond capital Mbuji-Mayi, but faces competition from several other diamond-buying companies.

Mututulo said the government would allow foreign companies to continue their operations only if they fell in the government's guidelines.

"If they are in the guidelines of our government, we allow them to keep on working. If there is something wrong, we negotiate some terms of the agreement," he said.

The new mines minister indicated that the country was keen to do business and assist the development of its huge mineral resources — which had been left unexplored during decades of rule under Mobutu.

Analysts say Zaire holds large reserves of untapped mineral wealth in copper, cobalt, diamonds and gold, and is one of the richest potential resource areas in the world.

Mututulo said Kabila's government had discovered anomolies in mining concessions handed out by the ousted Mobutu government.

"We discovered funny things, giving a company a country the size of France," he said without elaborating. The three-day oils and minerals conference is due to start today. — Reuter.

Congo retracts SA 'rape' claims

CT(BR) 18/6/97 (358)

JONATHAN ROSENTHAL

Grand Baie, Mauritius — Florent Mututulo, the minister of mines of the Democratic Republic of Congo, this week played down his government's previous statements that mining houses Anglo American and De Beers had raped Zaire. "They cannot rape people who do not want to be raped. We don't want a monopoly, perhaps that is why there is a clash between De Beers and the government."

He said his government would allow the companies to continue operating, but it would renegotiate its contracts.

"There is no question of us saying this agreement was signed by the previous government and therefore it must fall away ... Those who are already working can keep on working, but they must show us the contract."

He said the government had found "funny things" in some contracts, and it wished to impose social obligations on companies which had found people barefoot and left them barefoot after 30 years of mining.

AFRICAN BUSINESS

COPPER *Huge increase in demand from Asia bodes well*

Rosy future for Congo mines

CT(BR)19/6/97 (358)

MARIUS BOSCH

Grand Baie, Mauritius — The Democratic Republic of Congo expects demand for its main export earner, copper, to increase in the short to medium term, Florent Mututulo, the mines minister, said this week.

He told delegates to a sub-Saharan oil and minerals conference on Tuesday night that demand for copper out of Asia augured well for his country's mining industry.

"Most analysts predict a price in the range of $1,25 to $1,30 a pound in the short to medium term.

"This is from the huge increase in demand from the Asian countries. ... This augurs well for the future of our country," Mututulo said.

He said although the country held vast reserves of copper and cobalt, lack of investment had prevented exploration.

"The potential for discovering millions of tons of new reserves is prevented only by the investment required for exploration and the willingness and determination of the foreign partners we hope to attract," Mututulo said.

He said the potential for new copper discoveries stretched beyond the traditional copper province of Katanga, formerly Shaba.

Mututulo said the country also intended to increase output of gold in a mining sector regarded by the former government as its private domain.

He said the Congo would launch serious economic reforms soon that would include reviewing the mining and investment codes.

Mututulo said the Congo was keen to do business but would not allow monopolies.

"Monopoly is a word that is banned in my country."

Existing contracts with foreign companies would be studied and, if necessary, renegotiated.

"All contracts ... need to be scrutinised and in some cases renegotiated in the light of our government's policy of fair and equitable deals," Mututulo said.

He said the state of the country's economy was alarming and that drastic action was required.

Mining analysts see the former Zaire as one of the richest unexplored mining resource regions in the world with vast untapped resources of copper, cobalt, diamonds and gold.

Mututulo said the country was devastated in the years it was under the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko, and he accused Mobuto's officials of rampant corruption. — Reuter

Congo plans sharp increase in gold production

Grand Baie, Mauritius — The Democratic Republic of Congo hopes to sharply increase its production of gold, Florent Mututulo, the mines minister, said at the sub-Saharan oil and minerals conference held this week. Societe Miniere et Industrielle du Kivu (Sominki) had the potential to become a leading producer of the metal, Mututulo said.

He said it was a priority for the new government to increase output of gold in a mining sector regarded by the former government as its private domain. — Reuter

Genocide behind Kabila's lines

358 M+G 20-26/6/97

Mail & Guardian Correspondents

KASESE, a hamlet of straw-thatched mud huts in the heart of the Democratic Republic of Congo's vast rain forest, harbours a dark secret. In mid-April — urged on by Rwandan Tutsi military officers fighting with the victorious rebel leader, President Laurent Kabila — its villagers tore through a camp of mostly Rwandan Hutu refugees, hacking and spearing groups of men, women and children.

Armed men among the Hutus fought them off. But a day later, Kabila's forces stepped in and, according to survivors and local residents, ravaged the refugee community of 55 000 for seven hours, firing wildly into the encampment in a grove of palm trees straddling a rutted jungle road. Again local villagers joined in the fray, wielding spears and machetes against the refugees.

The local residents and refugee survivors say hundreds died. Many of them were buried in a mass grave 500m up a dirt path now guarded by Kabila's troops.

The story of Kasese is just one of numerous tales of mass killings of refugees emerging from behind the tight cordon Congo's victorious rebels have drawn around the jungles south and east of Kisangani, the principal city in the north of the former Zaire.

Evidence is mounting that these are part of another brutal ethnic extermination that is under way in central Africa, this time by marauding elements of Rwanda's overwhelmingly Tutsi army and Tutsis among Kabila's forces avenging the genocide that was visited upon their people in 1994 when extremist Hutus slaughtered more than 500 000 Rwandan Tutsi civilians before the Hutu exodus into Zaire.

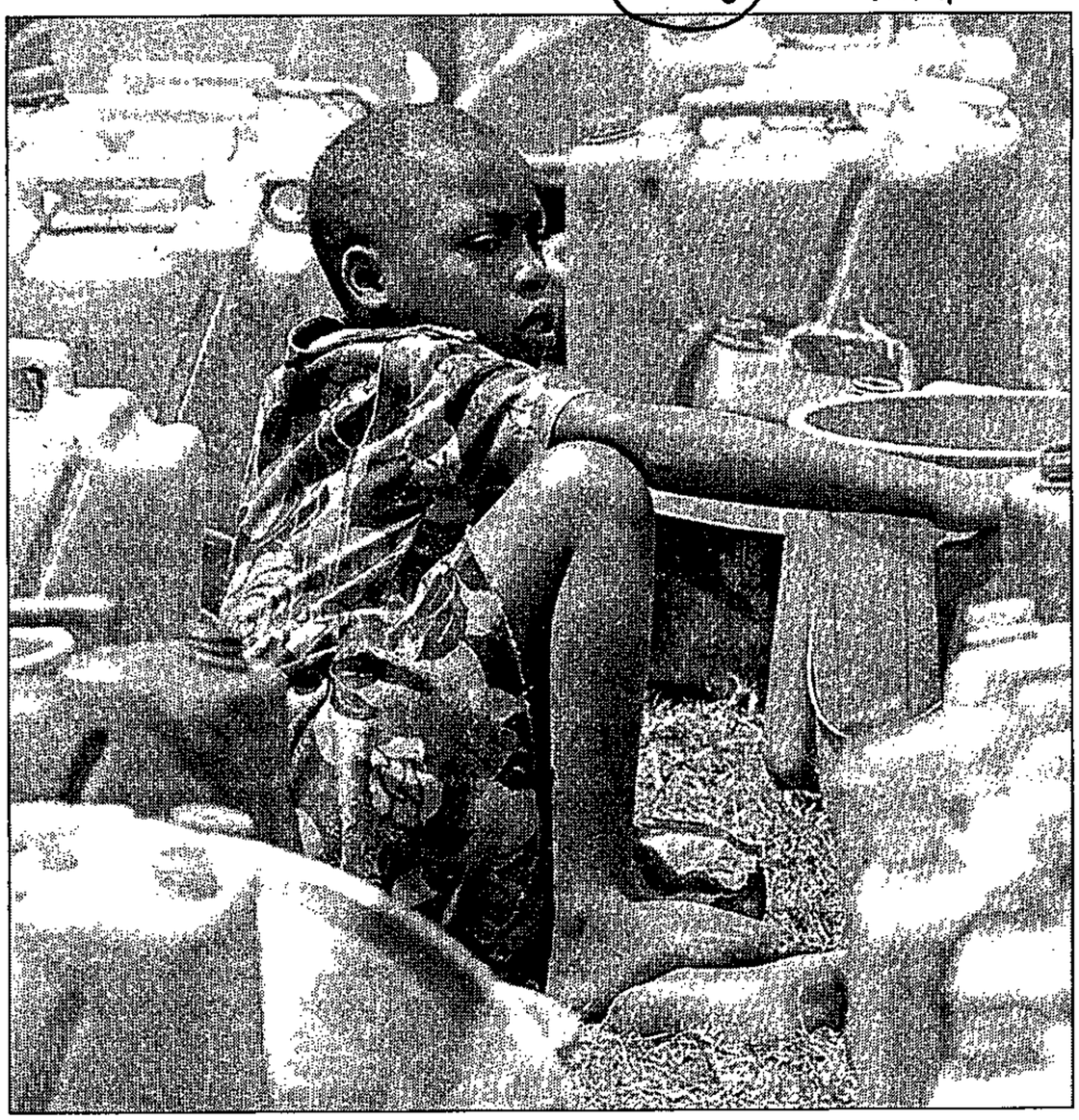
Of the 1,1-million refugees who fled into eastern Zaire three years ago, perhaps 250 000 remain unaccounted for — and there are fears that more than half this number may be dead.

The United Nations accuses Kabila's forces of obstructing access to the remaining refugees to cover up continuing massacres. Aid agencies, such as Medecins sans Frontieres, trying to bring humanitarian relief to the area are concerned that they are being used to bait the refugees from their hiding places in the jungle.

"In the Shabandu area, where access was granted, humanitarian aid was used as a lure by the military in order to attract refugees out of the forest on to the road, where according to witnesses, they were killed," Medecins sans Frontieres said.

In a message to mark Africa Refugee Day this Friday, the UN high commissioner for refugees, Sadako Ogata, said refugees have been turned back at borders and then killed.

"The ordeal of exhausted Rwandans and Burundians in forests in the heart of Africa is one of the worst dramas of our times," she said.



Fears for the future: One of the 1,1-million Rwandan refugees who fled to Zaire PHOTO: AP

The numbers of missing refugees has been in dispute since Rwanda invaded the former Zaire in November to back Kabila's rebels and to clear the sprawling camps which provided shelter for Hutu mass murderers threatening to repeat the 1994 genocide. At the time the US and the United Kingdom backed Rwanda's claim that all the refugees had returned to their homeland en masse and those left behind were Hutu militiamen. The UN disagreed.

Peter Kessler, the UN High Commission for Refugees representative in Nairobi, said large numbers of people simply went missing. "They were very carefully counted. If you allowed for 10% error rate, that's still more than 100 000 people.We hope there is no policy of genocide. The situation is very distressing."

Even as the bulk of refugees were tramping home it was clear that considerably fewer were walking back into Rwanda than had left more than two years earlier. And it was equally clear the Tutsi-dominated government regarded those who remained behind as most likely to be responsible for the genocide and therefore a fair target for attack.

As Kabila's rebels swept west, the refugees were driven before them. Some were the families of Hutu militiamen, others were effectively hostage. Most were terrified to return to Rwanda, fearing retribution for the genocide. All were ill-prepared to march hundreds of kilometres through jungle, and the weak swiftly succumbed to starvation and disease. And then the rebels caught up.

While a significant number of Hutu extremist militiamen responsible for the 1994 genocide were among the refugees, they also included large numbers of innocent women and children who are among the latest victims.

Reporters have been returning from eastern Congo in recent weeks with gruesome tales of large-scale ethnic massacres. The stories, along with mass graves and accounts of witnesses and victims in eastern, central and western Congo, paint an horrific picture of atrocities. The reported killings stretch from Goma and Bukavu, where Kabila's rebellion erupted in eastern Congo, to Mbandaka, more than 1 000km to the west. Taken together, they suggest the massacres were not isolated instances involving unruly troops.

Interviews with international aid workers, refugees and local villagers indicate Kabila's army is closely controlled by Rwandan officers who dominate its upper echelons. Kabila relied heavily on the well-trained Rwandan officers, along with Rwandan, Angolan and Ugandan troops, to push Mobutu's army aside. But in so doing he made a deal with people intent on bringing the 1994 ethnic war in Rwanda to Congolese soil.

In interviews, Congolese soldiers fighting for Kabila indicate the massacres were ordered by the Rwandan army officers who dominated Kabila's officer corps.

In Mbandaka, for example, Congolese soldiers said the order to slaughter unarmed refugees came from two men — identified as Colonel Wilson, the head of a brigade of Kabila's troops, and Colonel Richard, the brigade's operations chief. Both were identified as Rwandans. A Congolese, General Gaston Muyango, has the title of military commander in the area but has no real power, they said.

In some places, such as Kasese, the population was involved in the killing. In other areas, such as Mbandaka, on the banks of the Congo River far from the battlefields of the east, the local population said it was shocked by the mayhem.

Kabila and his officials have denied their troops have carried out massacres and summary executions of the Rwandan refugees. In interviews, several members of Kabila's rebel alliance blamed the bloodshed on armed units among the Rwandan refugees, fleeing Congolese soldiers loyal to Mobutu or bandits.

Despite earlier promises made to the UN, Kabila has instructed local officials not to assist the UN investigation into reported massacres and other human rights abuses. The first team is due in the Congo in two weeks and the investigation is scheduled to begin on July 6. Already, Kabila's forces appear to be destroying evidence of their attacks.

The Washington Post reporter John Pomfret last week saw more than 40 men moving through the Kasese camp, picking up spent cartridges and dropped machetes and spears. Two of the men said the team would later go to the mass grave site and begin burning cadavers.

A similar clean-up operation already has been reported at the Biaro refugee camp 12km away. Kabila's forces have banned UN aid workers from the camps since April 20. — *The Washington Post and M&G Reporters*

ANGOLA & TWO CONGOS

Business amid the bullets

War hasn't dampened promise of rich pickings

It's business as usual for SA and other foreign companies in Angola, despite the heavy fighting that broke out between government forces and Jonas Savimbi's Unita in diamond-rich Lunda Norte province soon after Laurent Kabila took over neighbouring Congo on May 17.

In fact, mining interests are engaged in a race to woo the new rulers of the mineral-rich African states.

Angolan Geology & Mines Minister Marcos Samondo, formerly Unita's man in New York, slipped quietly into Johannesburg this week for talks with De Beers.

He declined to disclose the nature of his business when approached by the *FM*. A De Beers spokesman said the Minister was "visiting our operations here." Samondo said he was heading for Swaziland this week where SADC Ministers were due to sign a protocol on mining co-operation.

Inviting foreign investors to participate in Angola's development at the sub-Saharan oil and minerals conference in Mauritius last week, Samondo said "progress in implementing the Lusaka Protocol has created the necessary conditions for the end of the civil war in the whole of Angola."

De Beers, together with Anglo American, JCI, Iscor, Gencor, Spoornet and several other SA companies, met Kabila's new Mining Minister Florent Kabila-Mututulo last week.

The meeting took place in the context of the new government's wish to renegotiate existing contracts. "It went well," reports De Beers director Robin Crawford.

"The Minister was nice enough to say he and others in the government had been misquoted, and that they harboured no hostility towards De Beers," Crawford says.

The Democratic Republic of Congo(former Zaire) is keen to attract competition in the mining industry, and this suits De Beers, he adds.

Mututulo reminded Crawford that Congo sold its last three diamond shipments from the Miba mine to De Beers.

Meanwhile, SA's Department of Foreign Affairs has put out several notices advising South Africans to stay out of the embattled Angolan area. Alluding to what are thought to be scores of SA diamond operators in the region, one official quips "we'll hear how many SA companies are involved in the area only if they get into trouble."

Though the fighting and intermittent violence elsewhere in Angola has abated, the entire region remains volatile.

Of greatest concern are the battles in Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of the Congo, sparked by militia of former President Denis Sassou Nguesso against incumbent President Pascal Lissouba ahead of general elections planned for July 27 (now in doubt). A June 17 truce, preparatory to the deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force, was shattered by a 90-minute artillery duel on Monday, June 23,which threatened to embroil Kabila's Congo when seven shells fired from Brazzaville reportedly hit a military camp in Kinshasa.

Foreign Affairs and the SA embassy in Luanda have not received any calls for help by SA companies in Angola, though De Beers last month withdrew personnel from the Cafunfo diamond area. De Beers' man in Luanda, Ken Kempson, says the fighting has not harmed the company's operations, which include offices at Saurimo and Lucapa.

Anglo American chief geologist for the region Cameron Moncur says operations aren't really affected as the company is working outside the northeast. Anglo has an agreement with Luanda to prospect in the southeast of Angola and expects to start work within months.

The Angolan armed forces moved in to Lunda Norte on the pretext of securing the border with Congo against incoming Hutu, ex-Zairean and Unita forces. They appear to have assisted ex-Zaire President Mobutu in the final stages of Kabila's takeover.

But the real reason, say observers, was that Savimbi has not handed over the administration of Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul to central government, as required by a 1995 Peace Protocol between the MPLA government and Unita. The action appears intended as a warning to Savimbi of the consequences of not submitting those provinces to central control. Some analysts believe hawkish Angolan generals wished to use the opportunity to crush Unita once and for all.



***Unita's Savimbi** . . .said to have a new diamond smuggling route*

Unita receives between US$300m/year and $600m/year from illegal diamonds from Lunda Norte, hence Savimbi's foot-dragging. And while his diamond sales and arms supply line through Congo have been cut with Kabila's accession, there are unconfirmed reports that Savimbi has found a new conduit with help from former Zambian Foreign Minister Vernon Mwaanga (who resigned under a cloud two years ago), and has therefore shifted his operation to the Zambia-Angola border.

Amarnath Singh

African-led rebuilding effort needed in Congo — Pahad

(398) BD 27/6/97

Stephen Laufer

AN AFRICAN-led international effort to help rebuild the former Zaire was urgently needed, Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad said yesterday. He urged SA companies not to miss the opportunity to exploit the central African country's huge economic potential.

Pahad spoke at the end of a two-day visit by a task team of SA economic, trade, and banking experts to the Democratic Republic of Congo. The team examined the possibility of SA advice and technical assistance in rebuilding its currency, economic infrastructure and infrastructural development.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's economic adviser Moss Ngoasheng, a task team member, said there was great potential for the involvement of SA companies in the country's mining, transport and energy. De Beers, JCI, Spoornet and Eskom were already involved.

Many other SA companies had a competitive advantage in areas crucial to the rehabilitation of the Congolese economy, particularly in the field of mining equipment. Trade was already running at R1,5bn per year.

Pahad warned that hesitant SA companies would find that international competitors had beaten them to the opportunities if they did not act quickly. "If they hesitate it will be to their own loss as many international countries are pouring in to seek investment and trade opportunities."

Ngoasheng said monetary stabilisation and help with the introduction of budgetary systems were key issues. President Laurent Kabila's government had set a timetable for the introduction of a new currency.

It was learned separately that the Congo was likely to launch its new currency in October, possibly with the SA Reserve Bank's help. The currency was unlikely to be linked to the Central African franc, but would instead be free-floating.

Pahad said a clear message had emerged that action on an overall reconstruction and development programme was "urgent." Because of its size and common borders with nine other countries, Congo's stability was key to the entire continent.

The cancellation or rescheduling of the country's debt and international moves to fund infrastructure development would be crucial to efforts to resurrect the economy. SA would assist in formulating proposals to international donor and creditor agencies.

Pahad said the SA delegation had discussed the massacres allegedly carried out by Kabila's troops in eastern Congo. The President had assured him that he was committed to assisting the United Nations (UN) fact-finding mission currently in the country.

SA would await the mission's report before deciding on a response. "We are not looking for quick accusations, but are happy they are cooperating with the UN." Economic and political stability were crucial if the region was to break out of its cycle of violence.

Separately, Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi announced he had agreed to give R1,5m worth of equipment to his Congolese counterpart, Mwenzi Kongolo. The gift included uniforms from defunct homelands police forces, teargas grenades, masks, handcuffs, boots, megaphones and radios.

Reuter reports that representatives of De Beers, Anglo American, Gencor, JCI and Iscor held talks with Congo's new Mines Minister Florent Mututulo last Friday. Since Kabila's takeover in Congo De Beers has been increasingly nervous about its operations in Congo, where it held a contract with the previous government to buy up production from the MIBA industrial diamond company, the agency reported.

NEWS

Congo opposition leader is freed

Tshisekedi released after warnings of a new war

ARG 27/6/96 (358)

Kinshasa – Veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi was released today, the morning after soldiers from Laurent Kabila's army arrested him at his home, a senior aide said.

Earlier, aides to the popular leader had warned that his detention could spark a new civil war

Mr Tshisekedi was detained yesterday after he defied a ban to address students.

The former prime minister, a constant thorn in the side of ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, but never able to topple him, was arrested at his Kinshasa home yesterday and driven away by soldiers.

"It's the opening shot of a civil war. We fear for his life. They could easily poison him," said Mukendi wa Mulumba, a senior adviser to Mr Tshisekedi.

Mr Kabila, who ousted Mr Mobutu in May after a seven-month rebellion, has banned political parties, marches and gatherings and has alienated opposition followers by excluding Mr Tshisekedi from his new government.

The ban has sapped support for the man who was seen as a hero for ending the dictator's corrupt 32-year rule.

Mr Kabila indicated recently that he would crack down on those who flouted the decree, after turning a blind eye to numerous pro-Tshisekedi marches in Kinshasa.

Ironically, Mr Tshisekedi's address to thousands of students at the city university had been full of conciliatory messages. He announced that he had held talks with Mr Kabila's Alliance movement to "harmonise conflicting views" on the institutions of the renamed Democratic Republic of Congo.

His contacts with the alliance could lead to a new transitional government to prepare for elections promised for 1999, and he could soon meet Mr Kabila for the first time since he declared himself president, he said. – Reuter

World Bank pledges its support for new Congo

CT(BR)27/6/97(358)

ARTHUR MALU-MALU

Kinshasa — The World Bank, ending a visit to Kinshasa in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the former Zaire, said it would hold a meeting of donors for the DRC by September and pledged support for the new government.

The leader of the first Bank delegation to hold talks with the new government said the meeting would aim to mobilise resources for the recovery of the sick economy of the DRC.

"We have discussed with the government the fact that we should try to convene an informal meeting of donors that might be in a position to support this government," Callisto Madavo, vice-president for the Africa region, said. He said the DRC was determined to move forwards.

Speaking before he left Congo late on Wednesday, Madavo said the meeting could be held in about eight weeks' time, or at the beginning of September.

The Bank delegation wound up its trip after meeting Laurent Kabila, the president of Congo, Mawapanga Mwana Nanga, the finance minister, and local private investors.

Mobutu Sese Seko, the former DRC president who fled into exile last month after been ousted by Kabila's rebels, left behind a foreign debt estimated at $14 billion.

Economists estimated unemployment at around 70 percent of the workforce in the population of over 40 million people.

Kabila, who grabbed power last month after a seven-month military campaign, said road building, monetary reform and easing unemployment were priorities.

He said a new currency will be introduced but has not set the date.

The World Bank closed its Kinshasa office in 1993, followed by the International Monetary Fund, when its debt payment arrears had reached $150 million.

Madavo said the Bank's mission was accomplished.

"We have been able to come and re-establish contact with this new government, and to tell them we are willing to work with them," he said. — Reuter

SA gives new Congo monetary advice

KINSHASA: South African officials, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to advise on rebuilding the monetary system, had a "positive" meeting with President Laurent Kabila before flying home, Pretoria's ambassador said yesterday.

Deputy Foreign Minister Mr Aziz Pahad led the group, who saw Kabila on Wednesday after a two-day visit.

"They saw him for more than an hour and got a positive reception," ambassador Mr Jan van Deventer said.

"We reaffirmed our commitment to assisting with the reconstruction of the Congo, but we haven't decided on any specific projects yet," he said.

Van Deventer said South Africa was keen to pursue possible co-operation in transport and electricity projects.

Officials from the two sides are to meet again, either in South Africa or in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Analysts say President Nelson Mandela is keen to nurture influence over the new rulers of Africa's third-largest country and potentially one of its richest.

The delegation included officials from the central Reserve Bank, the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the finance and trade departments.

Various governments, mining companies and other business interests are now knocking on Kabila's door, hoping the new government will open up the underdeveloped country and revive an economy that imploded under Mobutu's 32-year misrule. — Reuter

Kabila's troops arrest opposition leader and wife

KINSHASA: The main opposition leader in the new Democratic Republic of Congo, Mr Etienne Tshisekedi, was arrested late yesterday, together with his wife, by troops of President Laurent Kabila's army.

Witnesses said soldiers arrested the veteran opposition leader hours after he had addressed a student gathering.

"They broke into his bedroom and picked him up," said a witness.

Kabila, who toppled veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko after a seven-month civil war in May, has banned all political activity and all political parties, with the exception of his own Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo.

"They say they have been given the order to take him away; they are armed to the teeth," Tshisekedi's adviser, Mr Marcel Mbayo, said of the soldiers.

The soldiers spent several house at the house. It was not clear where they took Tshisekedi, or why.

Only hours before his arrest Tshisekedi had told a crowd of thousands of students at Kinshasa University that he was in touch with Kabila's alliance to "harmonise conflicting views" on the institutions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

"You will be pleased with the outcome of this dialogue, it will match the expectations of the people of this country.

"An eight-member commission has been set up," he said to cheers.

Tshisekedi did not elaborate on the items under discussion, but suggested the contacts would lead to the formation of a new government and that he could soon meet Kabila for the first time since he declared himself president.

"It will be a question of a transitional government to organise elections; this government will also solve the problem (of nationality) in eastern Congo," said Tshisekedi.

Ethnic strife has claimed thousands of lives in Kivu, in the east of the country. It is not clear who is "Congolese" and who is not in the provinces bordering Rwanda and Burundi.

Kabila's alliance dominates the current government. His Rwandan-backed rebellion began in Kivu in October.

Many of his Tutsi-dominated forces initially took up arms to claim the Zairean citizenship which Mobutu denied them. — Reuter

'Mobutuists' enjoying their spoils in SA

BD 4/7/97 (358)

DISGRACED politicians, defeated military and former dignitaries of Mobutu Sese Seko's regime in former Zaire have chosen SA as a refuge since the takeover by Laurent Kabila's forces.

"Now they are playing with their spoils ... that they have all acquired with money obtained from the coffers of the state," said Dennis Kadima, a professor specialising in Zairean immigration issues at Wits University.

A community of 100 "Mobutuists" and their families has moved to SA since the 1994 elections, investing in businesses and enrolling their children in exclusive schools.

In Johannesburg a former general had purchased three luxury homes where he houses his four wives and 17 children, said sources. Nearby, another former presidential adviser, thought a millionaire, manages a private air transport company based in Angola.

One of Mobutu's sons has purchased prime property in one of the city's northern suburbs. But because he does not have a residency permit, he was forced to remain in Morocco with his father, the sources said.

In Cape Town a nephew of the former president has invested in a stud farm, a wine-making operation and several properties, including a majestic villa in Clifton.

Other former high-ranking officers, including a vice-admiral, have chosen to begin new lives in Cape Town.

Last month Kabila's new regime in Kinshasa filed preliminary documents with Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad during an official visit.

"The general feeling is there has been some misuse of funds," Pahad said upon his return.

Foreign ministry spokesman Pieter Swanepoel said Congo authorities would like to see the return of "certain revenues, but for the moment we haven't received an official request".

One exile, formerly the deputy of Zairean state mining company Gecamines, who now lives in a Hollywood-style villa in Johannesburg, said he wished only to be left alone. "I do not mean any harm, I am a technician, not a politician. All that I want is to live in peace without trouble." — Sapa-AFP

A mint of new cash in Congo

(368)

FROM REUTER

CT(BL) 8/7/97

Kinshasa — The Democratic Republic of the Congo has chosen companies from the US, Luxembourg, Germany and South Africa to help produce Congolese francs to replace the discredited Zairean currency of ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mawampanga Mwana Nanga, the finance minister, told reporters at the weekend the notes would range from 1 to 100 francs and that coins would be minted as well.

Mawampanga was speaking in the presence of representatives of 15 international firms which had bid to print the new notes.

"American Bank Note of the US and Agrima of Luxembourg will produce and deliver the notes of 10, 20, 50 and 100 francs," said Noel Tshiani, a World Bank official who is advising the finance minister.

"Giesecke & Devrient of Germany and South African Banknote of South Africa will supply us with the originals of the bills of 1 franc and 5 francs to be printed at the (Congolese) Central Bank," Tshiani said.

He said though no selections had been made to mint coins, two companies were serious contenders to win the contract.

Rwanda admits to toppling Mobutu

MG 11-17/7/97

(358)

The plot to overthrow Mobutu Sese Seko originated not in the Congo but in Rwanda, before the campaign actually began. **John Pomfret** reports from Kigali, Rwanda

RWANDA'S powerful Defence Minister Paul Kagame has acknowledged for the first time his country's key role in the overthrow of Mobutu Sese Seko in the Democratic Republic of Congo, saying the Rwandan government planned and directed the rebellion that toppled Mobutu and that Rwandan troops and officers led the rebel forces.

Rwandan forces participated in the capture of at least four cities — Kinshasa, Lumbumbashi, Kenge and Kisangani, which fell on March 15 in what was considered the key battle of the war, Kagame said.

Rwandan "mid-level commanders" led Congolese rebel forces throughout the rebellion, Kagame said, and Rwanda provided training and arms for those forces even before the campaign to overthrow Mobutu began last October.

Several other African countries, including Uganda, Angola, Burundi and Zambia are also known to have supported the rebel cause. But Kagame's account suggests that the war, which began in the eastern Congo, was planned primarily by Rwanda, and that the plan to remove Mobutu originated in Kigali.

The 40-year-old major-general, who commanded the 1994 takeover of Rwanda by a rebel army, is also vice-president and Rwanda's most powerful leader.

"There are not many people who thought that Mobutu was very weak. They thought of Mobutu as a big monster who wouldn't be defeated. They thought little Rwanda and big Zaire," Kagame said with a smile. "Only when we started did they look at the map and see the possibilities."

The Rwandans' role in the rebellion has been controversial. Rebel leader Laurent Kabila, who proclaimed himself president of Congo in May, has maintained that his forces were assembled from among Congo's many ethnic groups. But the large number of ethnic Tutsis in the rebels' ranks has led Kabila's critics to claim Congo is being ruled by a Rwandan occupation force.

Kagame, a Tutsi, also responded to allegations that Tutsi officers of the Rwandan army ordered massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees inside Congo.

The refugees fled to Congo, then Zaire, in 1994 after Kagame's Tutsi-led army seized power in Rwanda and ended the massacre of Tutsis by Hutu troops and militias. Rwandan officers in Congo have said the Tutsis were given a free hand by the Congolese rebels to attack the refugees in exchange for backing the war against Mobutu.

While not denying the possibility of individual atrocities, Kagame accused United Nations officials who have levelled massacre charges against Rwandan army and Congolese rebel forces of trying to equate their behaviour with the genocide that Hutu extremists carried out in Rwanda. "It is my strong belief that the UN people are trying to deflect the blame for failures of their own making on to us."

Kagame said that months before, he warned the United States that Rwanda would strike against Mobutu's regime and the refugee camps in eastern Congo. As many as 1,1-million Hutus were housed by late 1996 in the camps.

Hutu militias used the camps as bases from which they launched raids into Rwanda, and Kagame said the Hutus had been buying weapons and preparing a full-scale invasion of Rwanda.

Kagame added that he and other Rwandan officials attempted to persuade the UN and Western countries to demilitarise the refugee camps and separate the Hutu fighters from the real refugees. But, he said, "they were insensitive. We told them clearly: 'Either you do something about the camps or you face the consequences'."

The Rwandan army had already begun training Tutsis from Congo and Rwandan agents started making contact with other Congolese rebel forces. Slowly the organisation that would be known as the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo began to take shape.

Kagame said most of the guerrillas in the alliance were Congolese, but that key units belonged to the Rwandan army. The battle plan was simple: "dismantle the camps", "destroy the structure" of the Hutu army and militias based in and around the camps and, finally, topple Mobutu.

Kagame said that "it would have been more suitable" if Congolese rebels had done most of the fighting against Mobutu's troops, but it also would have been riskier.

"I don't think they were fully prepared to carry it out alone," he said. "We did continue to take some role as we thought doing it halfway would be very dangerous."

● UN Secretary General Kofi Annan this week accepted Congo President Laurent Kabila's refusal to let a UN human-rights team investigate allegations of Hutu refugee massacres. But Annan said he would send a new team, chosen personally by him, to pursue the inquiry.

His move represents an attempt to obtain the cooperation of Kabila, while assuaging the concern of human-rights groups, who fear that allowing Kabila to veto the composition of the UN team would set a precedent that could harm future atrocity investigations.

At issue is the international demand for investigation of sites in Congo where as many as 200 000 Hutu refugees may have been massacred by forces loyal to Kabila. — *The Washington Post*

Congo promotes agriculture for growth

(3?8) BD 14/7/97

KINSHASA — Laurent Kabila's Congo, preaching self-reliance within a social market economy, plans to promote agriculture, fishing and cattle-breeding as the main motor of growth.

National Reconstruction Minister Etienne Mbaya, outlining government plans at the end of a two-week reconstruction and development conference in the capital Kinshasa, said they would resort to technology tailored to the nation's specific needs.

"We will make agriculture, cattle breeding and fishing the main source of the country's economy growth," he told 1 200 Congolese delegates on Saturday at the closing ceremony.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, the former Zaire, is Africa's third largest country and potentially one of its richest, with a wealth of minerals, rich farmland and the hydroelectric potential to light up much of the continent.

Over three decades of corruption and mismanagement under Mobutu Sese Seko left its more than 40-million people among Africa's poorest.

Economists say unemployment hovers at about 70% of the workforce.

Kabila, who proclaimed himself president in May after his Rwandan-backed forces toppled Mobutu in a lightning seven-month campaign, inherited a foreign debt of about $14bn.

Kabila has been in touch with investors interested in the potentially lucrative mining sector. Some deals have been signed but caution seems to be the watchword on both sides.

Major Western donors had forsaken Zaire for human rights violations and lack of democracy under Mobutu. They say aid can resume if Kabila improves Congo's human rights record.

The World Bank plans to convene a meeting of donors in September. The government has said that in the meantime no foreign debt will be paid back.

The government is also keen to bring home what remains of the billions of dollars reputedly stashed away by Mobutu and his cronies and use the money to revive the economy.

In the meantime, it says it wants to get the nation back to work. "What counts is to resume production," Mbaya said.

A repeat conference is planned before the end of the year. — Reuter.

Congo is a foreign policy Jurassic Park

The US administration is demanding the impossible from the new government in Congo, writes **Simon Barber** in Washington

BD 15/7/97 (368)

THE Clinton administration in 1994 promised SA $600m in aid over three years. One may quibble over the extent to which that pledge has been fulfilled or the money well spent. What cannot be gainsaid is the startling difference between the lengths the US was prepared to go to for post-apartheid SA and what it is now willing to do for post-Mobutu Zaire-turned-Democratic Republic of Congo.

The US administration is unwilling to name any sum larger than $10m, and is not even sure how it will spend that.

One could draw all sorts of invidious conclusions from this disparity. SA's developmental needs are negligible compared with Congo's, but for the development set which drives so much of US aid policy, SA is a far more attractive destination. Nor does Congo offer any seductive analogue to the US civil rights experience, and while its future may well depend on the successful management of its population's diversity, that diversity is either invisible to Americans or distasteful to contemplate.

Perhaps more importantly, though, SA, personified by President Nelson Mandela, offered US politicians a free ride: its successful and all but exclusively home-made transition was a big Indian Ocean roller for them to surf and score domestic points.

Congo, by contrast, is a steamy tropical swamp, a foreign policy Jurassic Park, the mere contemplation of which stimulates intellectual paralysis on the part of US policy makers.

That paralysis was on full display last week when Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Africa William Twadell went before the Senate foreign relations subcommittee on Africa to describe the administration's line on Congo.

Here is the meat of his prepared text: "The US is prepared to consider an expanded programme of assistance in future fiscal years, but we have made it clear to the new authorities that such assistance will depend largely on demonstrated progress in meeting benchmarks for democratic reform, respect for human rights, co-operation with humanitarian agencies, public accountability and free market economic practices. We will continue to assess the new government's progress toward those goals and will adjust the nature of our engagement accordingly."

In other words, the situation stinks and we do not have a clue what to do; all we know is that we do not want to dirty our pinafores.

The benchmarks the US wants President Laurent Kabila and his ministers — "untested and inexperienced in both governance and public administration", as Twadell called them — are all well and good. But they do not address the central issue in the new Congo: the absence of functioning state institutions. As Bizima Karaha, the 29-year-old graduate of the Medical University of SA who is Congo's foreign minister, told a Washington audience last week, "there is no state".

That might sound peachy to libertarian ideologues, but it is a substantial impediment to Kabila meeting the basic conditions of US "engagement". Lecturing the government about democracy, human rights and free markets is fruitless when there are no mechanisms in place to carry out the policies of whoever is elected, let alone uphold the rule of law.

Free markets are essential, but rather than worrying, as Twadell did, that some of Kabila's men are less than optimally committed to them, the first issue to address would be the one raised in the World Bank's latest annual world development reports: "... an effective state is vital for the provision of the goods and services — and the rules and institutions — that allows markets to flourish.... Without it, sustainable development, both economic and social, is impossible."

As for human rights, it is hard to see how Kabila could improve matters without a professional, decently paid and properly commanded police and indigenous military subject to law and civilian authority.

That is not the case now. Given the abysmal state of communications in the Congo, it is doubtful whether authorities in Kinshasa can give instructions to their men in the field, let alone make sure they are obeyed.

The US is squeamish about Kabila. They find him an unlovely character, who, as Twadell noted, lived for 30 years (after playing a part in the grisly Simba rebellion in 1965) off gold smuggling and kidnapping in the Fizi mountains of eastern Zaire. The Mobutu regime let him be because he shared his gold with its satraps.

Nor is Washington convinced about the idealism of Kabila's ministers. At last week's Senate hearing the US Agency for International Development (USAid) made sure a question was asked about Thomas Kanza, whose portfolio involves co-ordinating international assistance to the new Congo. Kanza, says USAid, was involved in a coffee-importing scam while in exile in Tennessee. A $300 000 civil judgement is outstanding against him. USAid chief of staff Richard McCall said it would be "difficult" for the US government to have dealings with Kanza.

Kabila, meanwhile, is not an authentic popular hero. Rwanda's Tutsi Defence Minister and de facto president Paul Kagame admitted to the Washington Post last week that his troops had done most of the heavy fighting in the seven-month campaign that put Kabila in power. What had started out as an attack on Hutu bases in eastern Zaire last November turned into an all-out thrust against Mobutu when it proved his regime was ripe for the picking, Kagame said. Kabila, an old friend of Kagame's Ugandan sponsor, President Yoweri Museveni was picked to make the invasion look a little more home grown.

Why Kagame, who studied at the US Army general staff college at Fort Leavenworth in 1990 and is highly regarded in US military circles, should have suddenly become so candid is not clear. Perhaps it was to remind Kabila who made him and that it would not be a good idea to let United Nations investigators probe too deeply into the slaughter of Hutu refugees during, and after, the march on Kinshasa unless Hutu atrocities were also taken into account.

The Hutu slaughter was undoubtedly obscene, and Foreign Minister Karaha did himself no credit blaming it on doctors in Medicins sans Frontieres, whom he claimed instigated the killing to ensure continued financial backing for the Congo relief mission. The question has to be asked though, should serious engagement with Congo be spiked by the fact that Kabila's Tutsi backers took their revenge on the Hutu on Congolese soil?

The main focus should be on working with whatever is available — and, for better or worse, Kabila and Co are it — to build a viable state which protects life and property, defends the value of the currency, makes it unnecessary for officials to be their own private tax collectors, and otherwise creates the conditions for investment and growth, not to mention the construction of a few roads, a feature notably absent from the Congolese landscape. That, unfortunately, is not current US policy.





The benchmarks that Clinton, left, wants Kabila, right, to accept are all well and good. But they do not address the central issue in the new Congo: the absence of functioning state institutions.

Kabila – is he truly building democracy or is he bluffing?

Should SA see the hallmarks of a tyrant in arrest of key opposition leader Tshisekedi



Flashback ... Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko, President Nelson Mandela and rebel leader Laurent Kabila after negotiations near Pointe Noire, Congo, in May.

By Stephen Ntsane

THERE IS NO WAY President Laurent Kabila of the new Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) will allow free and fair elections to take place in the next two years as promised. He is simply biding time to get rid of any serious opposition to his rule.

This is the view of Professor APJ van Rensburg, a former history professor at the University of Pretoria, who has done extensive research in many African countries, including the former Zaire.

"If Kabila was serious about establishing a democratic government in his country, he would have done it immediately," says Van Rensburg. "He would not have to wait for two years. It is obvious he does not intend to use that time to prepare for the inauguration of democracy.

"He needs that time to get his opponents out of the way by either putting them in jail for long periods or having them killed so he can install a one-party system."

However, Kabila's decision was probably not influenced by self-interest alone. There are also other factors that need to be taken into consideration.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is not an easy country to govern, as was demonstrated particularly during the government of Moise Tshombe and Patrice Lumumba after that country's independence in 1960.

The difficulty is due mainly to its size – it is bigger than all of Western Europe put together, and is therefore difficult to manage. Also, the country comprises five cultural regions and 11 administrative regions that differ radically.

There are 200 tribes with vastly different outlooks, who speak 300 languages. Mobutu Sese Seko in his attempt to unify the country made French the official language.

Added to that, the new Republic has a very poor communication system, and relies mainly on a network of rivers for transport.

Four fifths of the population of roughly 30 million live in the countryside, and survive mainly by hunting and gathering fruit. Others live by subsistence farming and by earning a little cash on the side.

Ruling with iron fist

When Mobutu took over the Belgian Congo in 1965, there were 21 provinces (which he later reduced to eight), 24 districts, eight towns and 132 areas, and he broke down the local authorities that encouraged tribalism.

To further counteract tribalism, Mobutu embarked on a process of "authenticity" in the mid-70's, an effort to return to traditional Zairean values and to create a strong sense of nationhood. However, Mobutu's success in governing Zaire for more than 30 years was mainly a result of ruling with an iron fist. Even junior officials reported directly to him through a variety of channels.

Yet some of the methods used by Mobutu, especially those involving the abuse of human rights, were ignored by countries such as the US and France because they were happy to promote Zaire as a leading African bulwark against communism.

> **Kabila should invite Tshisekedi to participate in his government. This will minimise political grudges between their followers**

Now that the Cold War is over, Kabila is not likely to enjoy any such advantage. Already the United Nations is scrutinising the excesses of his armed forces against Rwandan refugees and supporters of Mobutu who surrendered to his soldiers advancing into Kinshasa.

Also, if the arrest of key opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi on June 26 bares any political significance at all, then Van Rensburg's predictions are already being fulfilled. And that should be worrying.

But what should be of even greater concern is that the arrest took place while a team of South African financial advisers, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad, was holding discussions with Kabila in Kinshasa on how best to set his country on the road to economic recovery.

Better treatment

South Africa, which was involved in brokering a peaceful transfer of power from Mobutu to Kabila in May, saving many lives in what could easily have turned into a nasty bloodbath, deserved better treatment.

And Kabila's country is desperately in need of financial advice from South Africa, which has large investments there and possesses a wealth of business expertise.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has a long history of economic decline. Inflation rose to 100 percent in 1978, and on average reached rates of between 60 and 90 percent in subsequent years. Its currency was devalued by more than 50 percent on the advice of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to discourage black marketing and encourage exports. This situation was compounded by chaotic mismanagement and inefficiency in state enterprises.

The IMF's intervention in Zaire's economy was brought about soon after the abortive Katangese secessionist invasions of the metal-rich Shaba Province in 1977 and 1978, which must rate as the most serious blow to that country's economy.

Those invasions were carried out by the National Front for the Liberation of the Congo (FNLC) . The first, in March 1977, was widely reported in Zaire's media as the 80-day war, and later became known as Shaba 1.

Shaba 2, which followed exactly a year later, was economically more crippling. Zaire's mineral production came to a complete halt once the FNLC rebels seized Kolwezi. Consequently, Mobutu diverted badly needed funds for a military counter-attack.

The evacuation of foreign mining technicians, who never returned after the war, made pre-Shaba production levels more difficult to attain as industrial operations remained disabled by the lack of trained personnel.

Also, since those invasions, Zaire has been unable to attract any significant foreign investment or aid.

Although dissatisfaction with the state of affairs ran deep in both the private and public sectors, no effectively organised political opposition was put in place before the Kabila rebellion save for the non-violent opposition led by Tshisekedi.

Ruthlessly crushed

Students, protesting against rising inflation and government overspending, took to the streets in 1969 and again two years later. But in both instances they were ruthlessly crushed by the national secret police.

Yet the country still has enormous potential for economic growth. Zairean cobalt – used in manufacturing jet planes and jet engines – provided 65 percent of the world's total production.

There are still vast reserves of cobalt, copper and diamonds, and an enormous hydro-electric potential. And, currently, less than five percent of the arable land is being cultivated.

Because of embezzlement, smuggling and bribery, earlier efforts to stabilise the country's economy did not succeed. Then the process was organised on three levels reflecting the main groups with large interests in that country.

These were private lenders, headed by Citibank and Chase Manhattan Bank; public creditors, represented by the World Bank and IMF; and donor nations led by Belgium.

Whereas the former Zaire officially produced more than R500 million worth of coffee in 1980, as a result of "mismanagement" in its customs office the central bank received only R140 million in revenue. Nevertheless, Mobutu survived 32 years in government. Van Rensburg maintains that the reason was because he acted effectively, fast and ruthlessly in anticipation of successive crises.

Professor Dennis Kadima, a Zairean based at Johannesburg's Wits University, does not believe Kabila can institute democracy immediately. "We have just emerged from more than 30 years of dictatorship," he says.

"It would therefore be naive for anyone to expect our new government to engage in a functioning democracy now or at any time in the near future."

He believes a period of transition is necessary."To go ahead with democratic elections at this stage will only create confusion because those likely to win are supporters of Mobutu as they have money," says Kadima.

He says there are more than 200 political parties in his country – many are very small, but most participated in Mobutu's parliament and were therefore able to amass funds for themselves. Legitimate opposition parties, he says, remain poor.

"Kabila should invite Tshisekedi to participate in his government. That will minimise political grudges between their followers. Once this is done, democratic elections can be delayed while the country is rebuilt," suggests Kadima.

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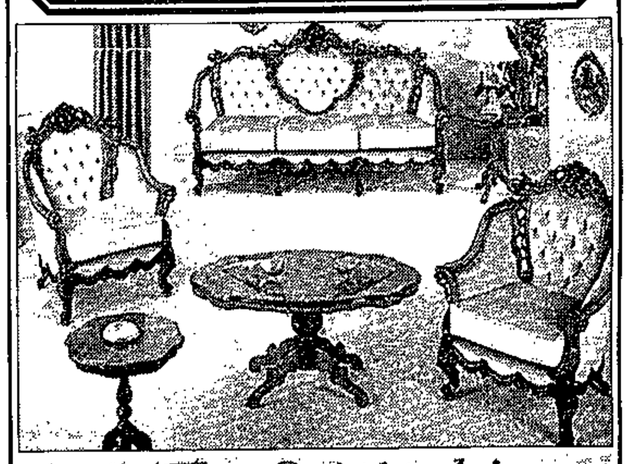
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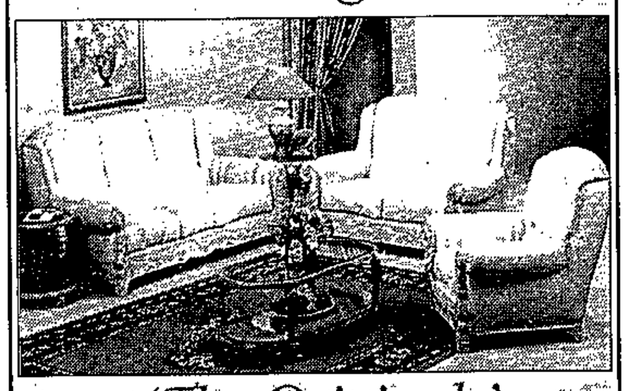
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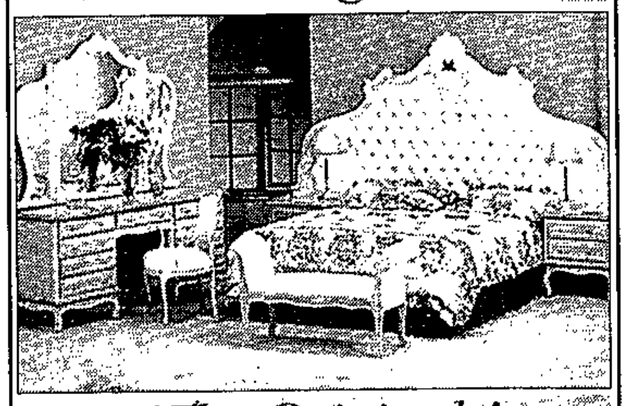
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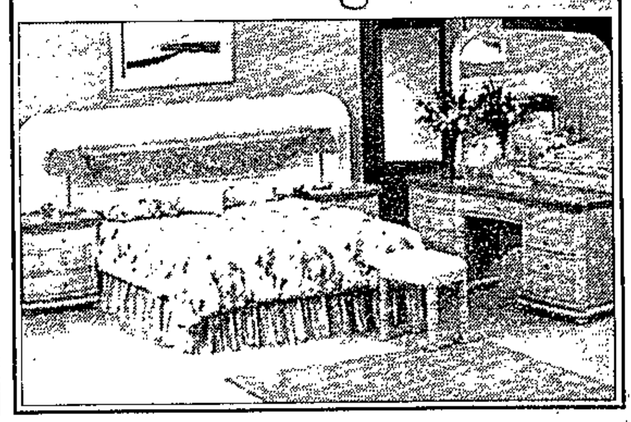


(358)

African states back Kabila

CT 22/7/97

NAIROBI: Leaders of eight African nations have backed Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) President Laurent Kabila against allegations that his troops massacred thousands of Hutu refugees in their battle for control of the former Zaire.

In a statement issued after a one-day summit called by Kabila on Sunday, the leaders "noticed with disappointment the disinformation campaign against the DRC and viewed it as an attack designed to undermine its leadership".

The United Nations says up-to 200 000 Hutu refugees from Rwanda are still unaccounted for in the DRC. The UN is to launch an investigation into possible massacres by Kabila's troops and Rwandan Tutsi soldiers who helped bring Kabila to power at the end of May.

Kabila objected to Chilean human rights lawyer Mr Roberto Garreton, who was to head the investigation, and forced UN secretary-general Mr Kofi Annan to agree to appoint a new investigator.

Heads of state from the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe signed the statement supporting Kabila and his demands for a neutral investigation that covers a longer period than his seven-month rebellion. — Sapa-DPA

Standard Bank backs Congo tailings project

BD 24/7/97 (358)

Simon Barber

WASHINGTON — International Panorama Resource Corporation, a Canadian mining and exploration company, said this week Standard Bank was arranging a $190m loan and equity package to finance a project to extract cobalt and copper from mine tailings in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Kolwezi area.

The Vancouver-based company said it had an agreement with the new Congolese government, granting it rights to about 40-million tons of tailings from old mines at Kambove and Kakanda.

The deal is to be a joint venture with the state-owned Gecamines, which holds a 49% stake in the venture to Panorama's 51%.

The agreement, originally struck last year under the Mobutu government, was ratified by the new minister of mines, Kambale Kabila Mututulo, the company said.

It included a "seven-year tax holiday" for Panorama once production had started. Panorama would pay Gecamines a 1,5% royalty on net profits from the project.

"It is the intention of Standard Bank to apply for cover under the SA export credit programme on a portion of the financing package," Panorama said.

The project, which still depends on the completion of a feasibility study, envisages construction of a $240m extraction plant designed for output of 3 500 tons of cobalt and 45 000 tons of copper annually, both in cathode form.

In an earlier announcement, Panorama said it had received a highly positive assessment of the project's prospects from Johannesburg consultants Bateman Minerals & Industrial Ltd.

Bateman was quoted as saying the project "could produce over 90-million pounds of copper and over 14-million pounds of cobalt annually over a 10- to 13-year mine life, conservatively, generating potential earnings for International Panorama of $900m after tax".

The Vancouver Stock Exchange briefly halted trading in Panorama's shares last December "pending clarification of the firm's affairs".

The suspension was lifted after the company issued a statement stressing "the preliminary nature" of Bateman's findings.

De Beers loses its monopoly in diamond industry in Congo

ARG 24/7/97

Kinshasa – The new Republic of Congo government has sold its first batch of diamonds to a buyer other than De Beers, ending an exclusive arrangement that the conglomerate had maintained with former dictator Mobutu Sese Seko's regime.

Susskind Diamonds, based in Antwerp, Belgium, bought 538 335,5 carats at tender earlier this week. It was the fourth sale since the new government took power in May, but the first in which De Beers did not make the purchase.

Under Mr Mobutu, De Beers had an exclusive buying contract with the state-run diamond producer, MIBA, which produces about one-third of Congo's total annual diamond output of roughly 20 million carats.

President Laurent Kabila's government decided to end De Beers' buying monopoly and switch to an auction system for MIBA's production.

Over the past few years, as copper production has slipped, diamonds have become Congo's most important source of foreign exchange.

Production at MIBA, which is 80% owned by the state, has been sliding since 1991 because of a lack of spare parts, fuel shortages and a fall in the grade of its deposits.

MIBA's output reached a peak of 13 million carats in 1986, of which De Beers bought 95%.

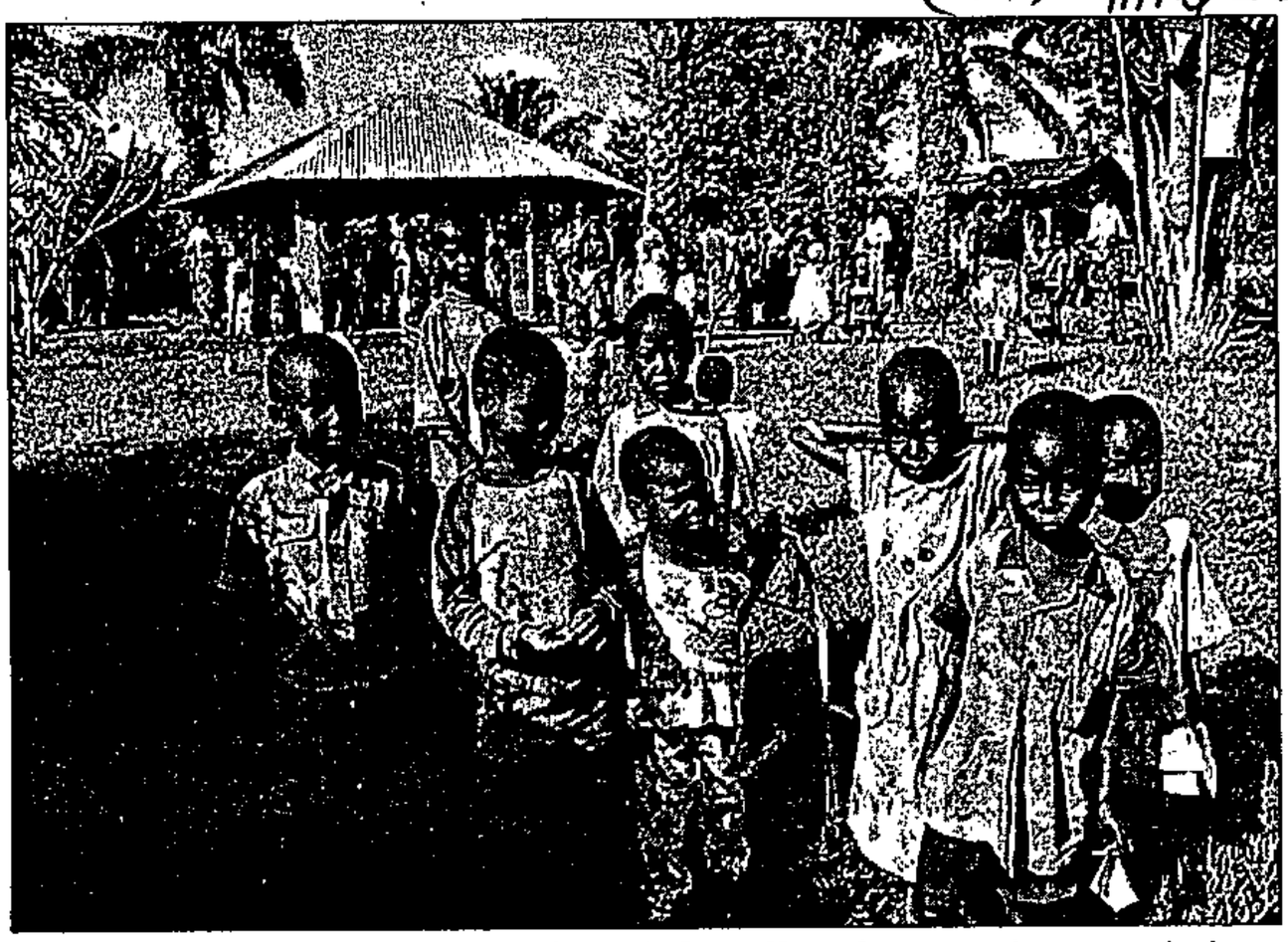
Well over half of Congo's diamonds are sold by the private sector, with a large proportion smuggled out of the country. Production at MIBA is currently estimated at about 6,5 million carats.

Congo's Minister of Mines, Kambala Kabila Mututulo, said production at MIBA had fallen below break-even, which he pegged at 7,5 million carats. – Sapa-AP

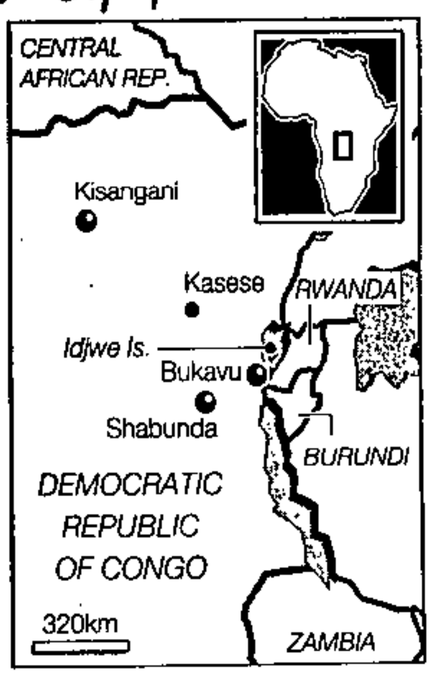
Digging up Congo's killing fields

(358) M+G 25-31/7/97

Chris McGreal in Bukavu, Congo, uncovers new evidence of genocide as mass graves are unearthed around the country



Survivors of the genocide: Refugee children in Shabunda, Congo. Many refugees are only now emerging from the forests after fleeing from rebel troops PHOTOGRAPH: DIANNA CAHN/AP



SIX villagers led the way up the narrow path off the main road about 15km from Bukavu, on the far-eastern border of the former Zaire. One carried a spade. He knew where he was headed, but the final marker was an arm which rigor mortis had slowly wormed out of the ground to beckon him towards the first of the mounds.

The man went to work with a shovel. He did not have to dig deep to uncover first one, then three, mutilated corpses.

"These ones died slowly. See, he has no eyes. They killed others just over there. Maybe 20 or 30 are buried there. We only saw these ones and then they told us to get away," he said.

Two of the villagers witnessed the killings of the three men. They said the victims were Rwandan or Burundian Hutus and the killers were foreign.

"The killers were Tutsis. They weren't from here. They did not speak like us. They had smart uniforms. I'm sure they were Rwandan," said the man with the spade.

The villagers described how the soldiers descended in January. They rounded up a few dozen people they believed to be Hutus from across the border, including women and children. Some were allowed to go. The rest were killed.

Among them was one of the men in the opened grave. He was hit about the head with a gun. His nose and face were smashed with a rock. Then one of the soldiers pierced his eyes with his bayonet. As he writhed on the ground, the "rebels" turned their attention to the other two men. The villagers were later forced to bury them.

'The killers were Tutsis. They weren't from here. They did not speak like us. They had smart uniforms'

The admission by Rwanda's Minister of Defence and Vice-President General Paul Kagame that his largely Tutsi army led Laurent Kabila's rebellion in the rechristened Democratic Republic of Congo has reinforced suspicions that his soldiers also played a leading role in the systematic murder of Hutu refugees — remnants of the one million Rwandans who fled into then-Zaire in 1994.

Most were driven home to Rwanda at the outbreak of the rebellion in Zaire in October, but more than 200 000 who headed west were hunted across 1 600km of then-Zairean territory through the eight-month war. Among them were militiamen responsible for the genocide of Rwanda's Tutsis three years ago, but there were also many women and children.

Aid workers and United Nations officials accuse Kabila's troops of sentencing thousands of people to death by exhaustion and hunger. Others were doomed by the many diseases thriving in the Congo Basin's rainforests. But there is also growing evidence of killings by military death squads, some led by Rwandan soldiers.

Roberto Garreton, the Chilean lawyer appointed by the UN to investigate allegations of massacres, issued a report this month identifying the sites of 134 mass killings blamed on Kabila's army or those backing it.

"The methods used were deliberate, premeditated massacres; the dispersal of refugees to inhospitable areas; the systematic blockade of humanitarian assistance; and the stubborn opposition thus far to any attempt to conduct an impartial, objective investigation into the very seriously allegations," said the report.

Kabila's government accuses those refugees who say they witnessed killings of lying. Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha said the only mass graves in Congo were for the victims of cholera or murders by Hutu extremists.

No one knows how many genuine refugees are missing, let alone the number dead. The UN says more than 40 000 people are unaccounted for around Kisangani alone.

The European Union and the United States have said future aid to the bankrupt country — its coffers long plundered by the exiled, ailing despot Mobutu Sese Seko — depends on full co-operation with the UN investigation.

That did not stop Kabila blocking it while demanding Garreton's removal. The UN has bowed to the pressure. A new investigator is expected to be appointed shortly, but the delay has bought more time to destroy evidence.

In some areas, the same units which led the killings later co-ordinated the disposal of the bodies. Local people were pressganged into disinterring the mass graves, which were set ablaze before the ashes of the victims were scattered.

Around Bukavu, forces fighting for Kabila killed several hundred Rwandan and Burundian Hutus at Chimanga camp, 40km from the city, in November. Foreigners identified what they believe to be other grave sites west of Bukavu. Some are latrines which give off the stench of rotting flesh.

Among the main killing fields is Shabunda, where there are eyewitness accounts of Rwandan-led squads carrying out summary executions of Hutu men.

A Rwandan army officer, known to UN officials as Commander Jackson, identifies himself as "The Exterminator". He is said to have boasted his mission was to pursue Hutu refugees.

Credible witnesses report at least three mass graves in the Shabunda area, thought to contain the corpses of thousands of people, including children and babies.

Aid agencies say they were duped into laying a trap for refugees around Shabunda by encouraging them to come out of the forest for food.

In some areas, troops backing Kabila played on deepening resentment toward the refugees among local communities to organise local gangs of killers.

In the village of Kasese, Rwandan soldiers galvanised the local population on April 22 into attacking a refugee camp which held some armed Hutu militiamen, but mostly women and children.

After Rwandan-led rebel forces followed up with a machine-gun and grenade attack, the death toll in the camp is believed to have run into hundreds. Red Cross workers say they saw militiamen herding Hutus into caves before they were driven in and left to starve.

One foreign aid team discovered a container near Minova in South Kivu stuffed with the corpses of what they believe were Zairean Hutus who had been locked inside and left to die. Others stumbled on mass burials as they were taking place.

The fate of refugees on Idjwe Island, on Lake Kivu between Congo and Rwanda, is uncertain. Local authorities say they have been repatriated, but other reports say they were driven into a cave and left to starve.

While the focus of international criticism has fallen on Kabila and his Alliance of Democratic Forces, human-rights investigators and aid workers are asking who stands to benefit most from the killing of Hutus.

"It takes a lot of effort to kill that many people and to cover up the evidence. Who has an interest in doing that? I don't think it's Kabila. His interest was in getting to Kinshasa as quickly as possible. This is not really about Zaire at all. It's about the Hutu-Tutsi conflict across the border in Rwanda, and I think that's where responsibility lies," said an aid worker who has worked in the region for three years.

Some diplomats talk of Rwanda being given a free hand in eastern Congo as a *quid pro quo* for engineering Kabila's sweeping victory. It is doubtful that Congo's new president could have stopped the slaughter even if he wanted to. There is little evidence he exercised real control over his army.

On a visit to Kisangani shortly after the alliance seized it, Kabila's orders were ignored by the English-speaking soldiers he supposedly commanded.

Kagame, who admitted that his army played the leading role in seizing four key cities in the former Zaire, has conceded that atrocities may have taken place. But he blamed them on individuals, not a systematic strategy to exterminate Hutus.

● Leaders from 10 African countries, including Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia and Mozambique, gathered in Kinshasa this week to denounce what they termed a "disinformation campaign" designed to undermine Kabila's government.

They also called for an independent investigation into massacre allegations stretching back to 1993. South Africa turned down an invitation to the summit.

Kabila accuses ex-officers of treason

358 BD 28/7/97

KINSHASA — President Laurent Kabila on Saturday accused former Zairean army officers of planning to topple the new Democratic Republic of Congo.

Speaking to soldiers and officers of the defeated Armed Forces of Zaire (FAZ) who had just completed rehabilitation training at the nearby Kitona camp, Kabila said: "Our army must understand that there are individuals who are seeking ways of regaining power, including general Baramoto (Kpama) in SA."

Baramoto, the chief commander of the civil guard under dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, fled to SA before Kabila's rebellion ended in victory in May. Kabila claimed Baramoto had disposed of $80m to back his power bid.

Kabila pledged to rid the new army of members opposed to his regime and warned that mutiny would be crushed because investors needed "peace and national concord".

The press in Kinshasa reported recently that ex-FAZ soldiers had complained of mistreatment by Kabila's troops during their "re-education". — Sapa-AFP.

Kabila gets US reminder that aid has a price tag

BD 30/7/97 (358)

NEW YORK — Major nations will withhold economic aid to Congo President Laurent Kabila if he "plays games" with a United Nations (UN) investigation into alleged massacres in his country, says US ambassador Bill Richardson.

"The jury is still out on Kabila," Richardson said on Monday.

"The US and the international community are prepared to help him but only if he pursues significant political, economic and social reforms."

Richardson said a major test for Kabila, who seized power in May, would be whether he co-operated with a UN team which planned to investigate allegations that Kabila's forces massacred thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees during their seven-month rebellion that deposed Mobutu Sese Seko.

"If he is reluctant to give them full access and plays games with them, as he has in the past ... he is going to be isolated and he is not going to get help."

In June, Richardson won a pledge from Kabila to allow a UN team to investigate the allegations starting on July 7. But the UN is still struggling to put together a team which meets Kabila's approval.

Several key African countries have rallied behind Kabila, claiming the west is using the threat of a human rights investigation to undermine the new government. — Sapa-AP.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO (ZAIRE GENERAL)

1997

AUGUST – DEC,

Mobutu a pariah in all his former playgrounds

BD 7/8/97 (358)

WASHINGTON — Things are going badly for Mobutu Sese Seko, and the SA government is quietly trying to find a country that will accept him, according to a report in a US newspaper.

The former Zaire leader, who over the years acquired a string of luxurious properties in Switzerland, Belgium, France and Portugal, has nowhere to go. Portugal and Egypt turned him down and he is not welcome as a long-term guest in Morocco, where he is being treated for cancer.

Ironically, the only country that does want Mobutu is the one he ruled for more than three decades, renamed Democratic Republic of Congo by victorious rebel leader Laurent Kabila. Kabila, now president, has been quoted as saying he would love his predecessor to return and face trial.

Making matters worse, at Kabila's request, Switzerland and Belgium immediately froze Mobutu's assets within their borders — the equivalent of R16m in Swiss banks, a villa and a Belgian castle.

Mobutu, 66, was originally expected to move into his villa on the French Riviera. But France's new socialist government does not want him either. According to the report, Paris has joined Pretoria in a quiet behind-the-scenes effort to find him a home somewhere, anywhere. — Sapa.

Kabila calls on SA to expel generals

RAY HARTLEY and MARLENE BURGER

(358) ST 10/8/97

THE Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, has demanded that South Africa repatriate generals and officials who stole "hundreds of millions of dollars" from its treasury and fled Zaire when it fell to rebels in May this year.

In a statement on the eve of Congolese president Laurent Kabila's first official visit to South Africa, his foreign minister, Bizima Karaha, said: "We do not understand what they are doing here unless they are on holiday. If someone is a criminal in Congo, he remains a criminal in South Africa."

He said the money was part of a total of between R37- and R47-billion which was estimated to have been taken by officials fleeing Zaire for their new homes in Europe and Africa.

Speaking after a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alfred Nzo, in Pretoria this weekend, Karaha named three officials of ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko — General Pama Baramoto, Ngabanda Nzambo Ko Ayumba and a General Nzimbi — as being among those who should be sent home.

The generals were in South Africa illegally as their diplomatic passports had been cancelled, he added.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, said: "All of them would have been here on diplomatic passports."

But he said the government would not act until it had completed an intelligence investigation to establish "on what basis they are here".

Joe Nhlanhla, the Deputy Minister of Intelligence, said yesterday the investigation was at an advanced stage and a report would be given to President Nelson Mandela within a week. It would then be up to the cabinet to decide on what action, if any, to take.

Nhlanhla said "under no circumstances" would expatriate generals be allowed to use South Africa as a springboard for attempts to topple Kabila.

"We are monitoring the situation very closely and we will not allow our hospitality to be abused," he said.

Nzo said: "We are examining the issue and shall keep in close touch with the Congolese government."

Earlier this month, Kabila accused former Zairian military officers living in South Africa of plotting to overthrow his government using an estimated R373-million illegally flown out of the Congo for this purpose.

Among the former Zairian officials said to be residing in South Africa are:

- General Ilunga Shamanga, who reportedly lives in Pretoria's upmarket Waterkloof suburb;
- Former Zaire Reserve Bank governor Shabani Nyembo, who is believed to own property in both Bryanston and Midrand, north of Johannesburg;
- A General Vumbo and a Vice-Admiral Mavwa, who is reported to have a beachfront house in Cape Town.

Some of their families appear to have lived in luxurious mansions in South Africa since well before Kabila took power, with their children attending local schools for as long as five years.

Zaire's lost billions 'may be in SA'

(358)

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

ARG 11/8/97

Johannesburg – A report on an investigation into whether South Africa is harbouring generals and officials of former Zairian dictator Mobuto Sese Seko is expected to be presented to President Mandela this week.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad said yesterday that the investigation was due to be concluded "as soon as possible". His comments follow a meeting between Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo and Congolese Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha.

During Friday's meeting Mr Karaha reportedly raised concerns about the presence in South Africa of the generals and officials, who allegedly stole hundreds of millions of dollars from Zaire's treasury before the country fell to rebels in May.

Zaire was renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo by the victorious rebels led by Laurent Kabila.

Mr Karaha said the money was part of about R40-billion estimated to have been taken by officials fleeing Zaire.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is demanding the officials be repatriated.

But Mr Pahad said his department first had to investigate the matter because many former Zairian officials had been living in the country for a long time.

He said the Government was investigating how the officials and generals had entered the country.

Mr Pahad said while the Government was also concerned about rumours that the refugees were using South Africa as a springboard to topple Mr Kabila – who declared himself president after taking control – they would follow international methods for dealing with the matter.

He stressed that diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Congo were not strained because of the alleged presence of the generals.

INESS

No easy walk after freedom

(358) CT(BR) 12/8/97

Kinshasa — Even as the joy of liberation wears off, Congolese are grateful Laurent Kabila ended Mobutu Sese Seko's nearly 32-year dictatorship. But they're not convinced the new president's rule will be any better.

Kabila, who swept to power on May 17, promised big reforms: new roads, economic development, an end to corruption.

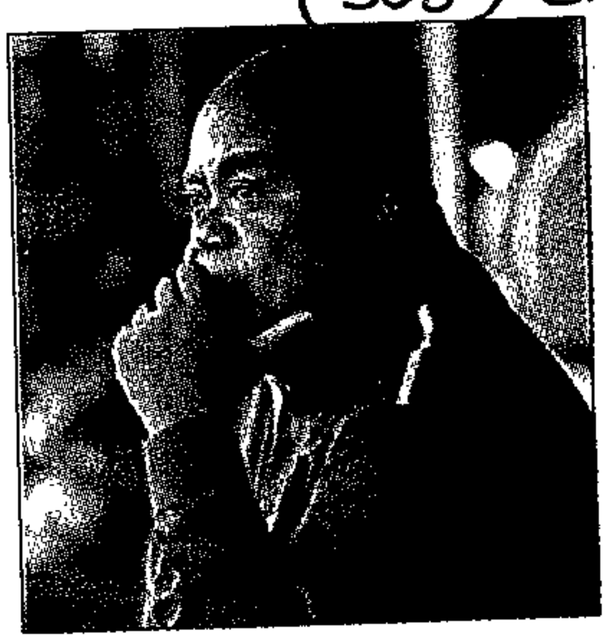
"Mobutu said the same things. He promised us roads, schools. Everything. We got nothing," said Georges Ilunga, who is unemployed. "Kabila can talk all he wants, but we want to see real change."

For Louis Patrick Musamba, 37, the quandary is basic: "We're free, but we're still hungry."

In the months since Mobutu was deposed, Congolese have celebrated. They sing rude songs about his mother at soccer games. They've prised his wife's name, "Mama Bobi Ladawa", off a hospital in Mbuji-Mayi.

Most noticeable is an easier atmosphere — Mobutu's military no longer prowls the streets stealing and demanding brides from passersby.

Kinshasa taxi drivers say they've stopped taking detours to avoid the corrupt soldiers. "Now it only costs me bus fare to get to beauty school," said Alphonsine Bora, 29.



ANOTHER MOBUTU? *Kabila has yet to prove himself as a democratic leader*

Though still unpaid, bureaucrats may not use their posts to extort money. An airport, for example, is no longer a maze of hands held out for bribes that added up to $100 on the cost of a ticket.

But at a small diamond market in south-central Mbuji-Mayi, traders worry Kabila is just another dictator. "There's no democracy here. We can't even demonstrate," Yousouf Kalonji said.

Many people wanted to protest against Kabila's arrest of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi in June, but were afraid of being attacked by soldiers, he said.

Across the country in southeastern Lulingu, Victor Kingombe, a nurse, voiced a similar sentiment. "We had hoped once we were rid of the dictator we would have a democracy, but we don't. It was a big mistake not to have given a job to Tshisekedi. He was our hope."

The unconvinced also complain: the economy is still a mess, most bureaucrats still haven't been paid, many roads are still little better than goat trails, and it's still impossible to post a letter or make a call cross-country from Bukavu to the capital.

Noel Obotela Rashidi, vice-governor in Kisangani, sympathises. "Since the war of liberation, people have been patient. But they are still waiting for their next pay cheques, and that is difficult when they are hungry."

Provincial governments are busy trying to improve life under Kabila. Road improvements are the top priority for most. Jean-Charles Magabe, the vice-governor for South Kivu, wants better roads so his people can stay on their farms to produce goods for export — and also so they stop flooding to the regional capital of Bukavu, where there are no jobs. — Sapa-AP

Congo buys tractors in a bid to revive agriculture

368

KINSHASA — The Democratic Republic of the Congo said yesterday it had ordered 2 000 tractors to help revive the former Zaire's abandoned farming sector.

Agriculture Minister Paul Bandoma said the tractors would be distributed in all 11 provinces to help boost production in line with rapid population growth. He said further purchases would follow under a three-year plan.

He did not specify where the tractors were coming from, when they would arrive or how much they had cost.

Bandoma said President Laurent Kabila's government was negotiating with an SA company to import fertiliser as part of the same project.

Kabila has said his government's first priority is to rebuild roads. At present, many regions are isolated and the cost of transporting farm produce is prohibitive. — Reuter.

BD 25/8/97

SA to probe Kabila's claims — Mandela

BD 26/8/97 (358)

Stephané Bothma

PRETORIA — Congolese generals and corrupt officials loyal to ousted president Mobutu Sese Seko were recruiting mercenaries and buying weapons in SA to destabilise the Democratic Republic of Congo, President Laurent Kabila said yesterday.

Although he did not elaborate, Kabila, after meeting President Nelson Mandela, told reporters he had proof that Congolese nationals living in SA were using the country as a base.

Generals and politicians who sought asylum in SA "ought to go back home. They have no reason, with stolen resources, to use your territory as a base to destabilise our country," Kabila said. The issue topped talks with Mandela, who said it was being investigated. A report was being drafted by SA's foreign affairs department.

Mandela told reporters Kabila, who arrived in SA with his finance, communications, foreign affairs, and economy and mines ministers yesterday, would meet SA ministers to discuss technical aid for his government. They would discuss monetary reform, restructuring Congo's central bank, its debt crisis, grants and investment promotion.

Mandela said he had also discussed claims that Kabila's troops had massacred Rwandan refugees. "President Kabila briefed me on these allegations and assured me that at no time were his people involved. I have no reason to doubt Kabila's word," Mandela said.

Kabila said his forces attacked only armed soldiers in the service of Mobutu. "Everybody knows there is no such thing in the world as armed refugees."

A foreign affairs spokesman said SA believed Congo was a key country in central Africa, and its stability was important for the whole region. The challenge it faced could met successfully only if there was "a co-ordinated, African-led international effort to assist the country". SA was committed to making "a substantial contribution to the restoration of peace and stability in the great lakes region" and to encouraging its economic development.

Picture: Page 5

Congo's 100 days of Laurent Kabila

Laurent Kabila has been in power in the Democratic Republic of Congo for 100 days. **Claire Pickard-Cambridge** and **Tim Cohen** look at his achievements and the challenges facing his rule

BD 27/8/97 (358)

LAURENT-Desire Kabila won power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo 100 days ago after a magnificent dash across his huge country, but the sense of purpose and organisational vigour of his movement's military victory have yet to be transmuted into civilian government, analysts say.

In his short time at the helm, Kabila's touch in civilian government has been less than certain, but governments around the world were happy to see him granted a certain amount of slack — at least for the time being.

This was the case not least because he replaced Mobutu Sese Seko, a man despised as the grossest example of the rampant corruption endemic of Cold War-generation Africa, but also because he opened a window of opportunity which dare not be lost.

Diplomats say this guarded extension of goodwill towards the new government will have a limited lifespan and Kabila will know he cannot afford to play fast and loose with such tentative support.

Analysts agree that since taking power, Kabila has faced three main challenges — to deal with charges of human rights failings, to develop a positive relationship with investors and creditors and to keep his ruling alliance together.

Tara O'Connor, Africa analyst at risk consultants Control Risks Group, says Kabila's progress has been uneven in his first 100 days in office.

As far as human rights are concerned, he has, on the one hand, promised to draft a constitution for public referendum by December 1998 and to hold elections the following year. On the other hand, he has banned political gatherings.

More serious have been claims that Kabila's Tutsi-backed army killed thousands of Rwandan Hutus who fled into eastern Zaire in 1994 to escape reprisals for the genocide of Rwandan Tutsis.

Kabila's government denies the charges, and has co-operated, up to a point, with a UN team charged with investigating the massacre allegations.

Progress has been better in improving relations with the investment community.

Discussions will take place next month on the rescheduling of Zaire's $14bn debt with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). According to Investec analyst John Clemmow, the market is already anticipating a positive response, trebling the cost of the debt.



KABILA

Clemmow said he was upbeat about investment opportunities in the Congo, dismissing fears about Kabila's Marxist past.

African governments now, in fact, welcomed the relinquishing of responsibility implicit in IMF structural adjustment programmes with cries of "rejoice, rejoice, we have no choice", Clemmow said. Politics had essentially been removed from the equation, and Kabila's government would prove no exception.

In the past, all investment, however well intentioned, ultimately benefited Mobutu exclusively. Mobutu was dropped by the IMF, but, incredibly, remained in power for five more years, at the cost of decimating his once-massive personal fortune.

Investors could now at last take advantage of opportunities that were artificially restricted under Mobutu, who had created an investment black hole which sucked in the whole region.

Consequently, a host of new deals were being signed, Sizarail's nationalisation was being worked on, and De Beers was back, Clemmow said.

O'Connor said Kabila seemed to have jettisoned the old ideas of "seek ye first the political kingdom" and had recognised that political success was dependent on a functional development agenda.

It was significant in this context that Kabila's first state visit was to Uganda, because Kabila seemed inclined towards the economic empowerment agenda that has worked so well for Uganda.

But the economic challenges facing the country remained huge. According to Willie du Bois, the southern African representative for Belgolaise Bank, which runs the largest bank in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bank Commerciale de Congo, hyperinflation led to a shortage of notes and a fear of depositing money in banks. As a result, the banking sector had been controlling no more than 15% of the notes in circulation and the country essentially had a cash economy. Changing this would be a long-term challenge for Kabila.

On the political front, analysts were unanimous in expressing concern about the state of Kabila's ruling political alliance.

Richard Cornwall, head of current affairs at the Africa Institute, said that after gaining power with extensive aid from Rwanda, Angola and Uganda, it was still to be seen whether Kabila was his own man.

At present, Kabila's entourage was dominated by Luba from Shaba province and Banyamulenge Tutsis, which might not enable him to achieve full influence over the entire territory, Cornwall said. Rwanda still appeared to be playing an important role with about 10 000 troops still in the country.

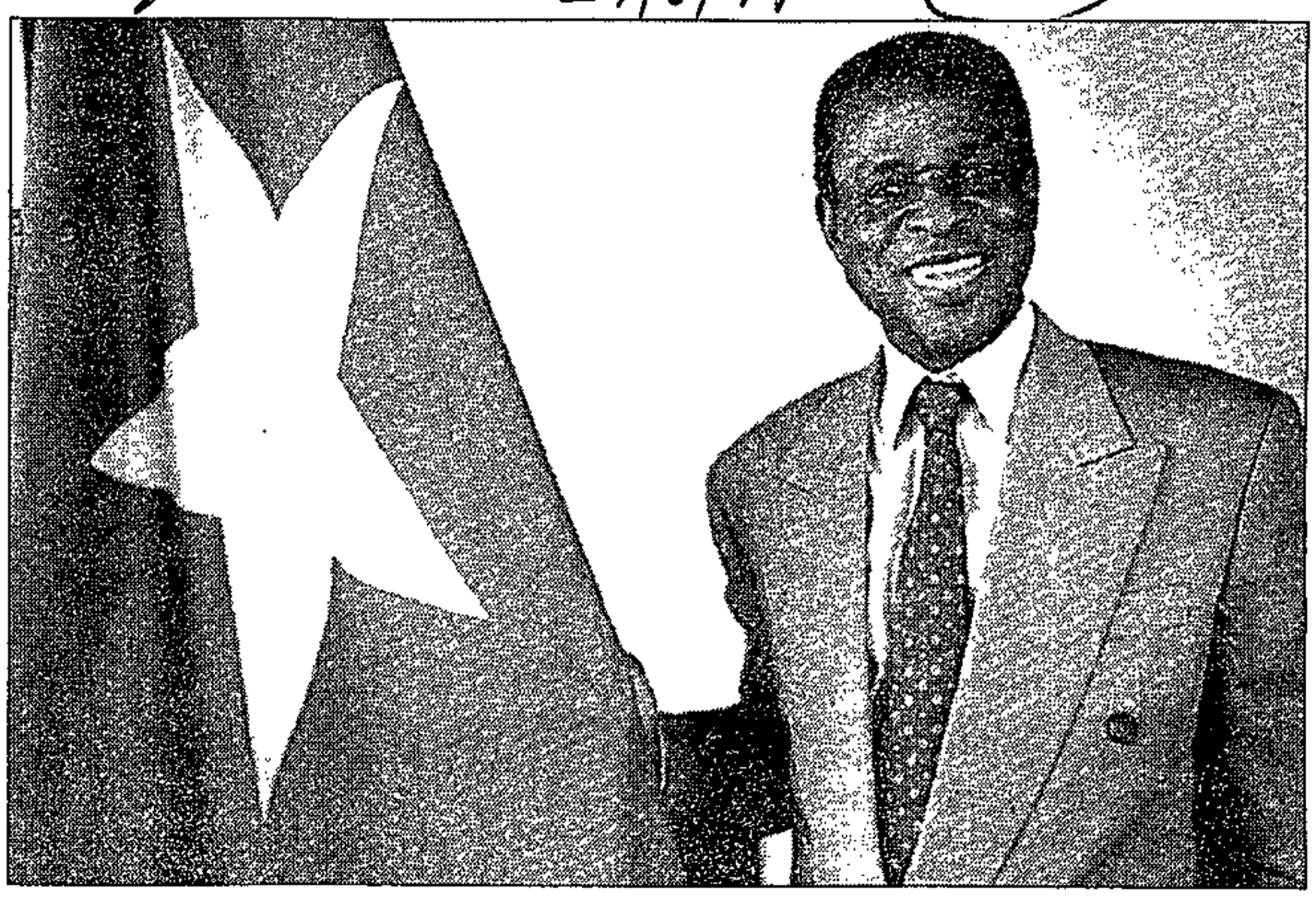
Kabila's future was also complicated by developments in Angola, because civil war there might spill over the border into Kasai where people are still upset about the way opposition leader Ettienne Tshesikedi was treated by Kabila. He could end up with a dual civil war on each side of the border.

Despite the huge obstacles facing the Congo, analysts agreed the advent of the Kabila's government provided opportunities that seemed inconceivable at the start of the year. For this, at least, he deserved a chance to get it right.

SA aids reborn Congo

The DRC, with help from SA, is aiming to rebuild a nation destroyed by greed, corruption and nepotism, **Themba Molefe** explains...

Sowetan 29/8/97 (358)



Emmanuel Dungia is the Democratic Republic of Congo's new ambassador to South Africa. PIC: LEN KUMALO

A WINDOW has gradually opened on the Democratic Republic of Congo, the central African country ravaged by three decades of dictatorship and years of devastating civil warfare.

A world reminiscent of the 18th century France – and especially of Queen Marie Antoinette, who sneered "let them eat cake" when the people begged for bread – has been revealed.

Sowetan was this week given a glimpse into the plundering of one of Africa's richest nations by leaders posing as liberators.

"In 1960 we celebrated our independence from France, a colonial power, and thought we were truly free, only to be plunged into a dictatorship," said the DRC's new ambassador to South Africa, Emmanuel Dungia.

He was referring to the authoritarian rule of former Zairian president Mobutu Sese Seko, who was forced into exile in Morocco in June when guerrilla leader Laurent Kabila's forces marched triumphantly on the capital Kinshasa.

The DRC's embassy is the latest foreign mission in South Africa, and the ambassador took up residence in Pretoria's leafy Sunnyside Park suburb only three weeks ago.

Also, last week President Nelson Mandela welcomed President Laurent Kabila to South Africa. Their discussions resulted in several joint ministerial task teams being established to make recommendations on the reconstruction of the DRC's socio-economic fabric.

A number of South African companies, including Transnet which stopped its crucial service to Kinshasa because it was owed more than R200 million by the Mobutu regime, are already poised to re-enter the DRC.

Said Dungia: "We are looking at rebuilding a nation that was wilfully destroyed through greed, corruption and nepotism.

"What is worse, unlike the South African situation in which blacks fought white oppressors, we were subjugated by our own black brothers."

Dungia compared Mobutu's Zaire to the period when Hitler ruled Germany and "walking in the street meant fear of being stopped and your papers being demanded".

He has written a book, *L'argent du Zaire* (The Zairian Economy), in which he catalogues the plundering of his country's riches by Mobutu, his family, aides and generals.

A stark revelation is about how the copper-rich DRC's economy rapidly declined, especially from 1972.

Dungia, who completed the book while in exile in Belgium, wrote: "In 1972 a Zairian dollar was equivalent to a United States dollar but in 1992 it required 55 000 Zarian dollars to buy one US dollar."

He also wrote that a director of a government department in the former Zaire earned the equivalent of R160 a month, which could sometimes take as long as eight months before reaching the earner.

Poverty vs luxury

And as the people wallowed in poverty while Mobutu's few lapped up the luxury, said Dungia, it was not uncommon for Mobutu's wife to dispatch a special plane to Belgium to buy her favourite chocolate.

But, more ominously, Dungia claims in his book that on three occasions Mobutu financed former French prime minister Jacques Chirac's election campaigns: in 1981, 1986 and 1988.

Coming nearer home, the DRC authorities are concerned about 40 of Mobutu's former aides presently living in South Africa.

According to the embassy, they occupy houses in the affluent Johannesburg northern suburbs of Wendywood and Sandton. One of these houses was allegedly bought with money previously set aside for the establishment of an embassy in Pretoria.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has confirmed that investigations into the presence of the former aides were initiated following Kabila's demand that they be expelled from South Africa.

Kabila said the chief reason for the call was that former generals were using South Africa as a base from which to destabilise the DRC. He also claimed that Mobutu helped Unita's Jonas Savimbi in Angola to destabilise the MPLA-led government.

Dungia also pointed out: "These generals initially tried to enter some European countries but failed because they are regarded as criminals. They then looked to Africa – Morocco, Chad, Togo and now South Africa, where access is very easy."

He also claimed that these people entered South Africa with "bagsfull" of US dollars and bought valid visas from certain Department of Home Affairs officials. This claim is being investigated by a Department of Foreign Affairs task team.

Acknowledging that the reconstruction of the DRC will be an arduous task, Dungia said: "We are grateful for the assistance that President Mandela and his government are offering.

"Stability in our region will go a long way towards ensuring a stable Africa."

Kabila attacks foreign action

BD 1/9/97 (358)

KINSHASA — Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire) President Laurent Kabila denounced "foreign" interference in his country's affairs during a rally by 5 000 people on Saturday against the presence of a United Nations (UN) team probing alleged refugee massacres.

Kabila told the rally, organised by groups close to his ruling Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo, that there was interference by "foreign powers in our internal affairs", although he did not refer to the UN by name.

Brandishing banners reading "No to French and American interference in our internal affairs" and "No to the UN investigation mission", the protesters marched through the centre of the city, with the apparent authorisation of soldiers and police, who kept to the sidelines.

The demonstration followed the arrival last Sunday of a UN team led by Atsu Koffi Amega, a Togolese, which is to investigate allegations that Kabila's former rebel Alliance massacred Rwandan Hutu refugees in eastern Zaire while waging their civil war against Mobutu Sese Seko's regime.

Amega's team was brought in by UN secretary-general Kofi Annan when Kabila refused access to another UN group led by Chilean Roberto Garreton, who disclosed the existence of graves of suspected massacre victims.

Leaders of the protest peeled off halfway into the five-hour march to deliver letters to the French, US and UN diplomatic offices in the city. The text attacked Amega's "reliability and the objectivity of the investigations", Pasi Makayabu, one of the organisers said.

She said Amega had had close relations with Mobutu, and his team had begun working without first getting in touch with the Congo authorities.

Amega said on Friday his team had not been able to start investigations as hoped and Congo officials had been uncontactable since the team's arrival. The team was waiting for the arrival later in the day of UN and Organisation for African Unity envoy Mohamed Sahnoun.

Annan has rejected new conditions regarding the investigation set by Kinshasa and said Sahnoun would discuss the matter with Kabila.

The resistance to the probe mission has prompted a warning from US envoy to the UN Bill Richardson that the US would reconsider its support of the new administration in Kinshasa. — Sapa-AFP.

South Africa wants Kabila's Congo to join the SADC, but at what price?

Star 3/9/97 (358)



By Peter Fabricius Star Foreign Editor

Blantyre's infrastructure has been stretched to breaking point to host next week's annual summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Hotels, despite major refurbishing, have brimmed over, some delegates may have to commute 250km by charter plane from Lake Malawi, chefs are being flown in from Johannesburg, rutted roads have been hastily repaired and the telephone system is congested and almost always busy.

That in itself says something about the need for the SADC to rethink its methods and goals, as it plans to do at this meeting, to make a real contribution to the prosperity of its members that it has so far not really done.

The SADC remains still too much a theoretical concept with a bureaucracy in Gaberone, Botswana, and sectoral headquarters in the governments of each of the 12-member states, a host of projects on the drawing board but not much in the way of concrete achievement to show for it all.

The summit will consider proposals to rationalise and integrate the institutions and policies of the SADC to make them more businesslike. A SADC review process has concluded that the SADC is overburdened with projects, many of them national or binational, rather than genuinely regional in scope and most of them are dependent on foreign donor funding which is unlikely to materialise.

The review process concludes that the project list must be cut down to the essentials and genuinely regional exercises and that ways must be found to fund them from within the region. It also recommends that policies and infrastructure must be harmonised to make the region a more attractive destination for investment.

At institutional level, it has proposed streamlining the clumsy bureaucracy. At present the responsibility for the 20-odd sectors of activity dealt with by SADC – such as energy, transport, water, trade etc – is distributed among the 12 countries. Co-ordination is poor – aggravated by bad communications among many member countries – and the result is that the overall aim of integrating members into a single market and economic entity is often thwarted.

The review proposes instead that the sectors be grouped into a few clusters – perhaps only five – to be based either in five different member states or at SADC headquarters in Botswana. A new planning and co-ordination directorate would be created and probably based in Botswana.

The chief obstacle to be overcome is that seven countries will almost certainly be unhappy about losing their status as headquarters for various SADC sectors, but it is something they will have to do.

This dilemma is neatly summed up by the centre for Southern African studies' Peter Vale who says that while most regional organisations are characterised by an agreement to share sovereignty for the sake of the greater economic and political good, the SADC has so far been characterised rather by the goal of enhancing the sovereignty of its members. Hence the allocation of sectoral responsibilities to all members.

This may be the moment when SADC leaders have to decide whether to cross the important Rubicon of surrendering some national (and personal) sovereignty for the greater good of their people.

The benefits of doing so should be obvious. An important part of the recommendations is that the SADC should move from being an organisation devoted to functional co-ordination to one devoted to development integration.

That means that richer countries – especially South Africa – would carry a greater burden of the costs of developing the region, replacing the dwindling flow of donor funds to projects. But more importantly this approach is evident in the recent South African proposal for an asymmetrical phasing out of trade tariffs, whereby South Africa would remove its barriers within five years while the rest of the region would only have to so in eight years as proposed in the trade protocol agreed to by the SADC last year.

But at the very moment when the SADC is beginning to discover the ways and means of realising its vision of greater integration, the summit will also be faced with a major decision that seems to go the other way: that is whether or not to admit two new members, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the island state of Seychelles.

It is not yet clear how all the 12 SADC states feel about the potential new members but it is obvious by now that South Africa is very keen to admit Laurent Kabila's Congo. Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said as much as the recent World Economic Forum conference in Harare.

South Africa has thrown itself enthusiastically into the reconstruction of the Congo as a sort of test case for Mbeki's vision of an African renaissance and it's unlikely that it would not approve Congo's membership.

It is also likely that Kabila's other friends, including Angola and Zimbabwe, will want to admit him. Smaller states may not be so keen and many reservations have been expressed within the SADC bureaucracy and the bureaucracies of member states.

Some officials say that expanding membership runs contrary to the decision taken by the SADC when the last member, Mauritius, was admitted, to deepen rather than broaden membership.

One official said that if the SADC agreed to rationalise its bureaucracy and funding, it might be overburdened by taking on a country like the Congo with its huge development backlog.

However, Rob Davies, ANC MP and chairman of Parliament's trade and industry committee, downplayed these concerns. He said that the Shaba province of the Congo had always been part of the southern African economy and the economic benefits of Congo joining would not be one way. Congo's contribution to the region's power pool from the Inge hydro-electric project, for instance, would be enormous.



A new member? ... SA are backing Laurent Kabila's Congo for the SADC.

In theory, the debate about Congo's membership could include some doubts about whether Congo meets the condition that a member state "must be a democracy observing principles of human rights and rule of law".

The fastidious might argue that Kabila does not quite meet these conditions. But by all accounts the SADC members will not be in fastidious mood in Blantyre. And although the organisation's rules stipulate that a new member should only be admitted 12 months after application, do not be surprised if the SADC admits the Congo as a new member in Blantyre.

A despot who led his country on path to ruin

Star 8/9/97 (358)

French politician called him a 'walking bank account in a leopard-skin hat'

SAPA-AP
Rabat, Morocco

He was the ultimate African despot, a Cold War relic in a leopard-skin hat who lived like a king while leading his potentially magnificent country down a ruinous path.

In the end, his excesses ruined him, and former Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko died in exile yesterday in Morocco with neither a title nor a country.

The fall from supreme autocrat to displaced dictator was swifter than anyone – certainly Mobutu himself – could have imagined. After an eight-month sweep that shed harsh light on Mobutu's pathetic army and Zairians' lack of loyalty toward their president, rebel chief Laurent Kabila seized power in May and ended a nearly 32-year reign strewn with broken promises and bloody revolts.

Joseph-Desire Mobutu's rule began with a military coup in November 1965, five years after the mineral-blessed colossus in the heart of the continent gained independence from Belgium. Those who remained in Zaire eventually fled into exile, were imprisoned or publicly executed after sham trials. Mobutu co-opted those who remained, seducing them with gifts of limousines and luxurious villas and entwining them in his net of corruption.

Mobutu sought to shake off the remnants of colonial rule with a fierce policy of "Zairianisation," which included nationalisation of mining and other major industries, ordering all government workers and ministers to wear Mao-style jackets and outlawing Christian names.

Donning his trademark leopard-skin cap, he changed his own Christian surnames to Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa za Banga, which loosely means: "The all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, will go from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake."

In a 1980 speech, Mobutu said he would never authorise another political party, dashing any hopes of allowing Zaire to become a democracy. The last presidential elections were held in July 1984, with Mobutu as

ENRIC MARTI / AP



Then a colonel and the army chief-of-staff, Mobutu had earned his soldiers' loyalty by building up the military forces and crushing post-independent secessionist revolts that grew to encompass nearly half the country. The country, known as the Congo, was renamed Zaire.

The coup was welcomed by Zairians weary of their long-bickering civilian government and by the West, always on the lookout for new leaders to counter Soviet influence in Africa. The pro-western Mobutu promised democracy and a return to civilian rule.

Instead, he declared himself head of state, founded the Popular Revolutionary Movement party, banned all other political parties, and embarked on a pursuit of absolute power. To cement his dictatorship and keep potential rivals at bay, senior politicians from the previous government were appointed to overseas diplomatic posts, where most were then accused of anti-Mobutu activities and dismissed or arrested.

Powerful opponents who received

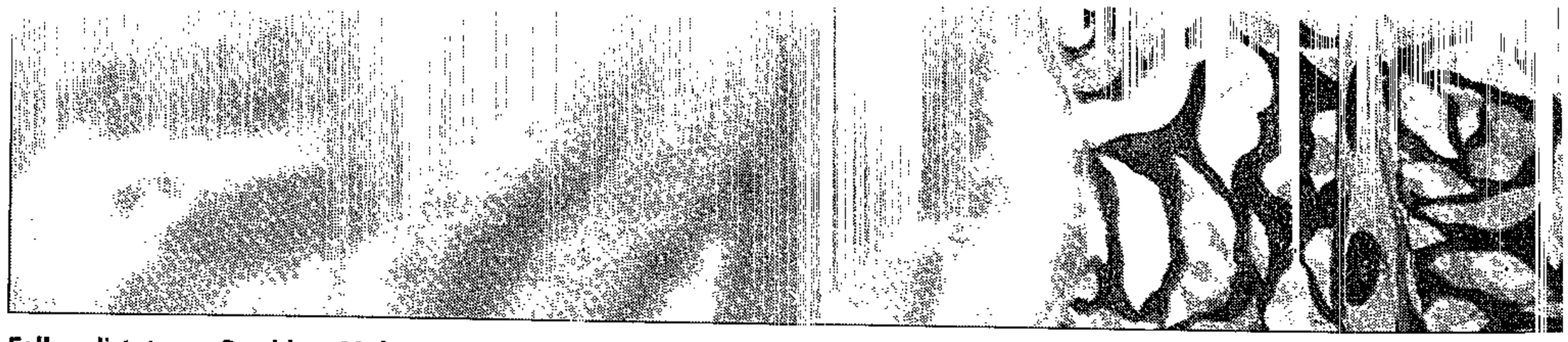
elected to a further seven-year term by 99% of the vote.

Through it all, Mobutu maintained Western support because of the region's strategic importance as a Cold War battlefield. In return for arms and aid, he allowed the US to use Zaire as a conduit for arms for rebels fighting Angola's Soviet-backed government.

But as the Cold War waned, so too did Mobutu's glory days.

The country's deteriorating economic situation and refusal to respond to pro-democracy sentiments sweeping the continent fuelled civilian protests and military riots in 1991 that required French and Belgian intervention to crush. Another such uprising in 1993 killed hundreds of civilians in the capital, including the French ambassador.

As the former Soviet bloc began competing for Western aid, money to Zaire dried up, with the United States, France, Belgium and the European Union suspending military and financial assistance to protest corruption and human



Fallen dictator ... President Mobutu in a photograph taken at a meeting with other African leaders in Libreville in May 1997.

Star 8/5/97

rights abuses.

After the 1991 riots, France's secretary of state for humanitarian affairs, Bernard Kouchner, referred to Mobutu as a "walking bank account in a leopard-skin hat" and challenged him to spend some of his personal fortune – most of it allegedly stolen from state coffers – to feed his people.

Mobutu denied stealing anything. "No, I have a clear conscience. I am an honest man. I have not pocketed one dollar of the people's money," he said. As neighbouring countries traded one-party rule for democracy, Mobutu hung on with promises of reform. Public impatience was growing, however, and it snowballed with Laurent Kabila's bold military incursion into eastern Zaire in September 1996.

Mobutu was in the south of France receiving treatment for prostate cancer as cities began falling to the rebels, who quickly trounced Zaire's ill-equipped, ill-trained, and barely paid soldiers.

In clearly declining health, Mobutu returned to Kinshasa to a hero's welcome in December and made an emotional speech to the nation, promising to crush the rebellion and rejuvenate the army. But he did little more than name a new army chief before quietly heading back to France.

When he returned again in March, few turned out to greet the longest-ruling dictator in Africa. Kabila's men had taken Kisangani, Mobutu's main eastern stronghold, and set their sights on Kinshasa.

By the time he left Kinshasa for the last time, May 16, even Mobutu's own generals had abandoned him. Mobutu headed to the solace of his palace in the northern town of Gbadolite, relinquishing power to his government but keeping the title of president.

That fell the next day, when Kabila's army marched into Kinshasa virtually unopposed. Mobutu fled Gbadolite days later – by some accounts in a cargo plane under fire from rebel forces – to begin a lonely search for a country willing to accept him.

Though Mobutu asked to return to France for medical treatment and possibly to spend his final days at his French Riviera villa, France refused him a visa, so he remained in Morocco in one of several lavish homes he had kept while ruling Zaire.

Mobutu dies of prostate cancer – might be buried in Congo

Star 8/9/97 (358)

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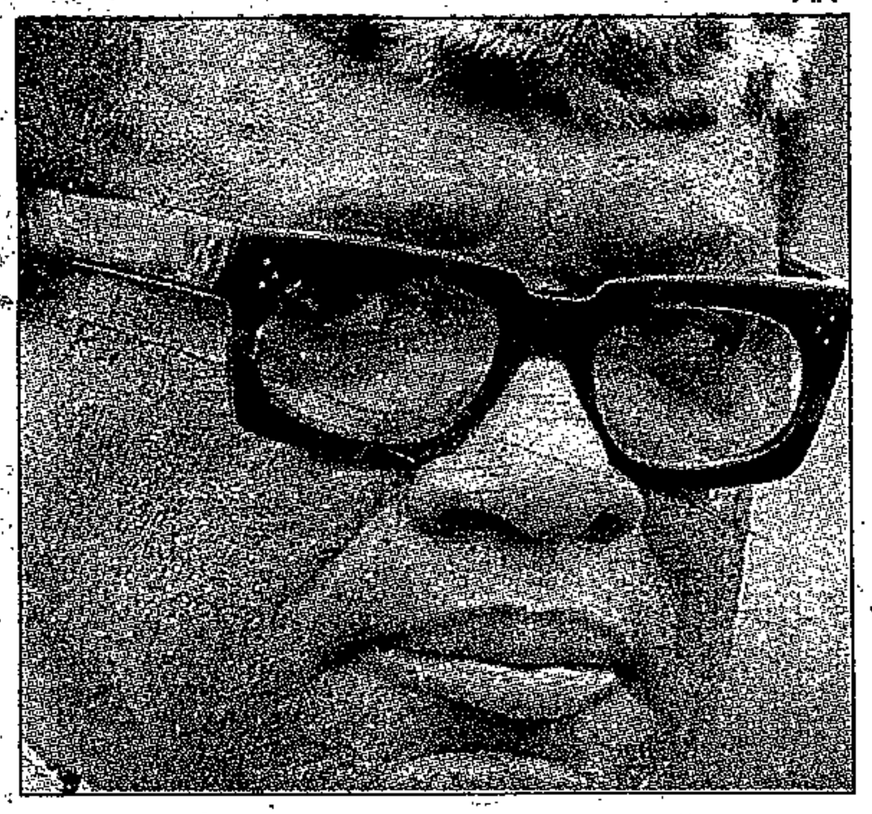
AFP



Absolute power ... ex-Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seko (66), who died in exile yesterday.

Rabat – Mobutu Sese Seko, ousted as president of Zaire in May after three decades of absolute power, has died in exile in Morocco after losing a long battle with prostate cancer.

The official Moroccan news agency MAP said the 66-year-old ex-president died last night at Mohamed V military hospital here.

A diplomatic source said that Mobutu, a Catholic, was expected to be buried in Rabat's Christian cemetery.

However, a minister in President Laurent Kabila's government in Kinshasa, capital of what is now called the Democratic Republic of the Congo, did not rule out burial for Mobutu in his home country.

"Why shouldn't the body be repatriated?" asked Information Minister Raphael Ghenda, adding: "While he was alive we said we were happy for him to return."

A source close to the Mobutu family in Rabat said all his relatives had gone to the hospital from their new home in a residential area of the Moroccan capital.

Access to the military hospital is carefully controlled and a news blackout has been imposed since Mobutu was moved there on July 1.

King Hassan allowed him into Morocco on humanitarian grounds after Mobutu had rapidly found after his overthrow that a despised dictator loses his so-called friends.

After the former president's arrival in Morocco on May 23, diplomatic sources said several attempts were made to find him another host country.

A change of government in France, where Mobutu has property and where he had earlier convalesced from treatment in Switzerland for his cancer, saw the door there close against him.

Diplomatic sources spoke of his going possibly to Portugal or South Africa, but as his illness worsened it became increasingly clear he would not leave Morocco.

Mobutu was one of Africa's longest-serving strongmen who used the Cold War to cement his hold on power as the West and Soviet Union vied for influence in Africa and control of Zaire's uranium.

He enjoyed virtually absolute power since a 1965 coup. – Reuters

▶ **Despot who left country in ruins**
Page 4

Kabila wants all 'criminals' in SA

(36)

Sowetan 9/9/97

By Themba Molefe

THE Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has cancelled all former Zairean diplomatic and official passports and has begun a manhunt for military and civilian "criminals" now living in South Africa who helped Mobutu Sese Seko's dictatorship.

The provisional list released by the DRC's embassy in Pretoria includes the names of five generals and four colonels, as well as 11 civilians who formerly occupied high-ranking posts in the Mobutu regime.

The embassy said the "faithful criminals" were now refugees in South Africa. It said that it had suggested to all accredited diplomatic missions in this country and international organisations not to grant visas to anyone who held a "Republique Zaire" passport.

The statement also claimed that the "criminals" became refugees in South Africa "with huge fortunes stolen from public treasury in Zaire and with this money they are initiating actions to create civil war in the DRC".

● During his official visit to South Africa last month, DRC president Laurent Kabila appealed to President Nelson Mandela to expel the generals living in Johannesburg and Cape Town's upmarket suburbs.

The military "criminals" being sought include a General Baramoto, Mobutu's commander of national police who allegedly killed several politicians.

General Nzimbi is Mobutu's cousin and former general commander of the former dictator's special army. He is alleged to have been responsible for several murders and incidents of torture in underground jails in Kinshasa.

Civilian "criminals" include Ngbanda Nzambo ko Atumba, former special intelligence adviser, allegedly responsible for the murder of several kidnapped Congolese citizens.

He is said to possess millions of US dollars stolen from public coffers. He lives in Sandton.

Former agriculture and international co-operation minister Mrs Wivine N'landu lives in Cape Town with her husband, Mr Karl-I-Bond, a former foreign minister and prime minister.

Lonely, miserable death for Mobutu

(358) Sowetan 9/9/97

By Tina Susman

HE was the ultimate African despot, a Cold War relic in a leopard-skin hat who lived like a king while leading his potentially magnificent country down a ruinous path.

In the end, his excesses ruined him, and former Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko died in exile on Sunday in Morocco with neither a title nor a country.

The fall from supreme autocrat to displaced dictator was swifter than anyone – certainly Mobutu himself – could have imagined.

Shed harsh light

After an eight-month sweep that shed harsh light on Mobutu's pathetic army and Zaireans' lack of loyalty towards their president, rebel chief Laurent Kabila seized power in May and ended a nearly 32-year reign strewn with broken promises and bloody revolts.

Joseph-Desire Mobutu's rule began with a military coup on November 24 1965, five years after the mineral-blessed colossus in the heart of Africa gained independence from Belgium.

Then a colonel and the army chief of staff, Mobutu had earned his soldiers' loyalty by building up the military forces and crushing post-independent secessionist revolts. The country, known as the Congo, was renamed Zaire.

The coup was welcomed by Zaireans weary of their long-bickering civilian government and by the West, always on the lookout for new leaders to counter Soviet influence in Africa. The pro-Western Mobutu promised democracy and a quick return to civilian rule.

Instead, he declared himself head of state, founded the Popular Revolutionary Movement party, banned all other political parties and embarked on the pursuit of absolute power.

To cement his dictatorship and keep potential rivals at bay, senior politicians from the previous government were appointed to overseas diplomatic posts, where most were then accused of anti-Mobutu activities and dismissed or arrested.

Powerful opponents who remained in Zaire eventually fled into exile, were imprisoned or publicly executed after sham trials.

Mobutu co-opted those who remained, seducing them with gifts of limousines and luxurious villas and ensnared them in his net of corruption.

Mobutu sought to shake off the remnants of colonial rule with a fierce policy of "Zaireanisation", which included nationalisation of mining and other major industries.

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In a 1980 speech, Mobutu said he would never authorise another political party, dashing any hopes of allowing Zaire to become a democracy.



Mobutu Sese Seko ... he died in exile with neither a title nor a country.

PIC: AFP

The last presidential elections were held in July 1984, with Mobutu the sole candidate. He was re-elected to a further seven-year term by 99 percent of the vote.

Through it all, Mobutu maintained Western support because of the region's strategic importance as a Cold War battlefield.

In return for arms and aid, he allowed the United States to use Zaire as a conduit for sending arms to rebels fighting Angola's Soviet-backed government.

But as the Cold War waned, so too did Mobutu's glory days.

The country's deteriorating economic situation and refusal to respond to pro-democracy sentiments sweeping the continent fuelled civilian protests and military riots in 1991 which required French and Belgian intervention to crush.

Another uprising in 1993 killed hundreds of civilians in the capital, including the French ambassador.

As the former Soviet bloc began competing for Western aid, money to Zaire dried up, with the US, France, Belgium and the European Union suspending military and financial assistance to protest against corruption and human rights abuses.

After the 1991 riots, French secretary of state for humanitarian affairs Mr Bernard Kouchner referred to Mobutu as a "walking bank account in a leopard-skin hat".

Denied stealing anything

Mobutu denied stealing anything. "No, I have a clear conscience. I am an honest man. I have not pocketed one dollar of the people's money," he said, insisting his wealth was no more than R25 million, far less than the R25 billion often estimated.

As neighbouring countries traded one-party rule for democracy, Mobutu hung on with promises of reform.

Political opposition and public impatience were growing, however, and they snowballed with Kabila's bold military incursion into eastern Zaire in September 1996.

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Kabila's Congo enters SADC

ARG 9/9/97 (308) (~~225~~)

PETER FABRICIUS
FOREIGN SERVICE

Blantyre – The new Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) and the Indian Ocean island state of Seychelles were yesterday accepted as the 13th and 14th members of the Southern African Development Community at its annual summit here.

Their applications for membership were accepted unanimously, the SADC heads of state and government said in a communiqué as the summit ended.

It said they satisfied the criteria for admission and had tremendous potential to benefit the region. And the Congo had key strategic significance to the region because it shared borders with several SADC countries and had great potential to co-operate in key sectors such as energy, water, tourism, transport and communications.

Afterwards President Mandela was asked if the SADC leaders were not worried that Congo, which has yet to establish democratic government, did not meet the SADC's criteria of respect for democracy and human rights.

Mr Mandela said he was convinced Congo President Laurent Kabila and his government were committed to establishing democracy after two years as promised.

They first had to restore law and order to the country, he said.

He based his confidence on Mr Kabila's holding of local elections in the town of Kisangani after capturing it, and his statement after capturing Lubumbashi that he would form a broad-based government that included the opposition.

In his chairman's address to the summit, Mr Mandela had caused a stir by launching an attack on unnamed SADC members he said suppressed democracy and human rights, and suggested the SADC should deny them the right to host its sectoral functions , which are dispersed among all 12 members.

Most delegates took him to be referring particularly to Zambia and Swaziland.

'LESSONS TO BE LEARNT FROM HIS DEMISE'

Mobutu, despised even in death, leaves residents cold

CT 9/9/97 (358)

KINSHASA: "If they bring his coffin back here we will hurl stones and insults at it," says a resident here. Others are more forgiving.

THERE were few signs yesterday of mourning here, the capital of former Zaire, following the death in exile of ousted dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko.

But the bitterness towards one of Africa's longest serving despots, felt by many downtrodden inhabitants of this sprawling city, was in evidence at many street corners and meeting spots.

"We abandon him as he abandoned us," said an unemployed man. "If they bring his coffin back here we will hurl stones and insults at it."

Others joining in the debate around a news stand in central Kinshasa said there were important lessons to be learnt from the slow and lonely death on Sunday from prostate cancer which Mobutu suffered in exile in Morocco.

Mobutu fled there via Togo after being ousted last May by rebel forces of Mr Laurent Kabila, now president of the renamed Democratic republic of the Congo.

"The death of Mobutu is a lesson for us all, but for President Kabila in particular. He should learn from the way Mobutu governed," a young Kinshasa resident said.

"If he too does not conform to the wishes of the people the same fate will await him."

Mobutu fled his jungle palace at Gbadolite, in the northern riverine province of Equateur, last May after Kabila's troops had steamrollered across Africa's third largest country in a seven-month military campaign.

There has yet to be any official statement from the government on whether it intends to allow Mobutu a state funeral or the nation a period of mourning. Kabila himself left along with five ministers yesterday morning on a scheduled visit to neighbouring Rwanda.

A Kinshasa daily said Mobutu had asked that his body be incinerated and the ashes returned to his country "when conditions were favourable".

State radio said there was nothing to prevent his being buried in the country. It depended on his family.

Many Kinshasa residents were characteristically forgiving. And the death of the man who was estimated to have personally accumulated billions of dollars of the nation's plundered resources, proved an occasion to forgive.

A group of students, some of Mobutu's fiercest opponents while he was alive, offered condolences to his vast family.

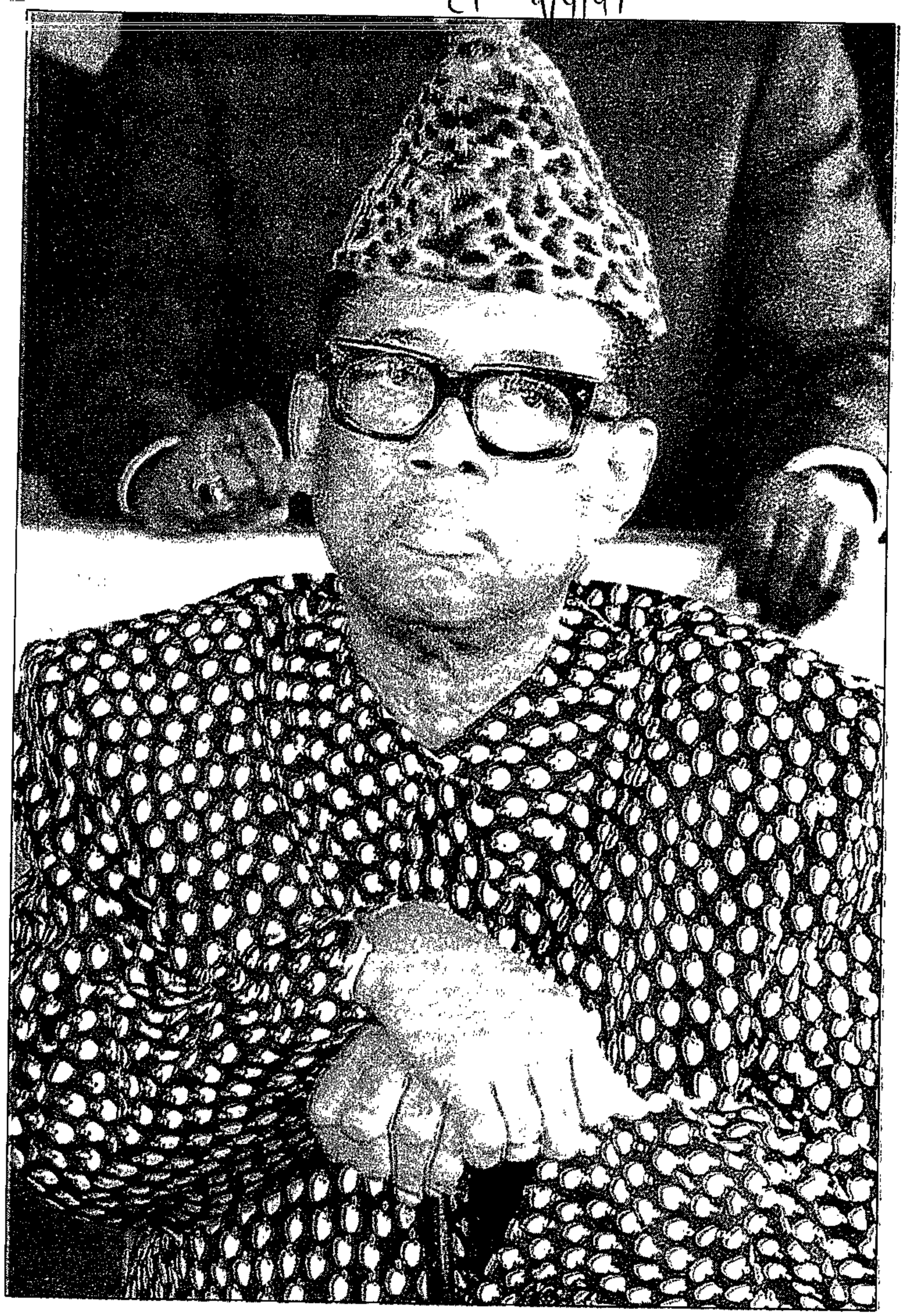
They said that, as the former head of state, and an unavoidable figure in the country's turbulent post-independence history, his body should be brought back home for burial.

"We can't celebrate the death of



REJECT: A Zairean defaces a painting of Mobutu Sese Seko in the looted house of the leader in Kinshasa in May 1997 after he had fled the country.

CT 9/9/97



LAST STAND: Former Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko pictured during a press briefing on board the SAS Outeniqua in Pointe Noire harbour after talks with the then rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, in May. ***PICTURES: AP***

Mobutu. We pardon him like God regularly pardons us. Despite the terrible things he did in Zaire we should not be looking to the past. Now is the time to reflect on how to rebuild the country," Mr Didi Ngoy, a student at Kinshasa's National Institute of Commerce said.

She, like most of the five million residents in the sprawling capital, was carrying on her normal Monday activities.

The streets were full of usual bustle, and there was no sign that business would halt in last respects for the fallen despot.

Many residents appeared curiously indifferent to the death of a man who, during 32 years in power, stamped his image all over the country.

His significance for them died when he abandoned his three-decade grip on power and fled the country last May.

For others Mobutu's death could dissipate the rancour and desire for vengeance both against his former cohorts, and by the new government against all those who served Mobutu during his years in power. — Reuter

Hunt on for missing billions

BERN, Switzerland: The hunt for the assets of Mr Mobutu Sese Seko will continue after his death, but co-operation between Bern and the former Zaire will become even more difficult, government officials said here yesterday.

Swiss authorities have frozen about six million Swiss francs (R19m) in their banks, and have impounded a luxury villa near the lakeside city of Lausanne.

However Mobutu is thought to have illegally amassed a personal fortune of more than R33 billion, ($7bn) channelled into foreign bank accounts and property worldwide. Some R19bn ($4bn) of this are believed to be in Switzerland.

Bern reacted comparatively swiftly after Mobutu was overthrown in May, freezing whatever assets it came across.

"Mobutu's death doesn't change a thing," ministry of finance spokesman Mr Hugo Schittenhelm said.

The hunt for his assets is continuing, and banks have been given a May 1998 deadline by the government to complete the exercise, though more time could be granted, Schittenhelm said.

But the justice and police ministry, heading the judicial co-operation effort between Bern and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) admits that the death of Mobutu, 66, has complicated the task.

"A judicial co-operation process means criminal law procedures. But you cannot instigate criminal proceedings against someone who is dead," federal police spokesman Mr Folco Galli said.

It is not only Mobutu himself who is the focus of the search, but his family and a dozen or so of his cronies, accused, like their leader, of massive state theft and corruption during his 30-year reign.

Switzerland has asked DRC legal authorities for information to help them track down Mobutu's assets.

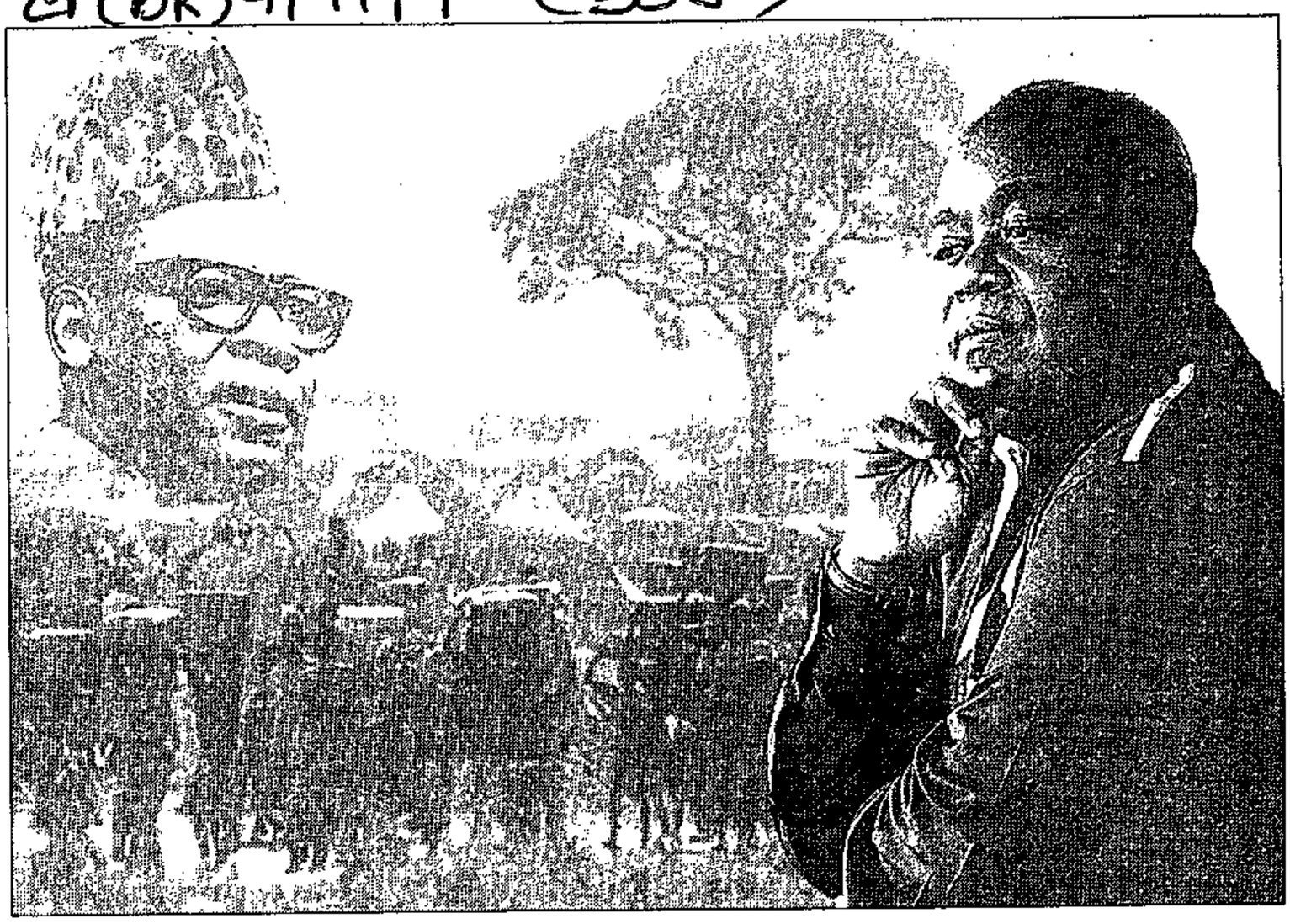
Documents believed to be relevant and handed over to the Swiss embassy in Kinshasa are now en route to Bern. — Sapa-AFP

CONGO *A hundred days on, Laurent Kabila's fledgling government is losing support*

Period of grace fast coming to end

CT(BR)9/9/97 (358)

WILLIAM WALLIS



Kinshasa — An opposition newspaper in Laurent Kabila's Congo prints daily the political timetable he announced at his inauguration as president just over 100 days ago.

Dates listed in the newspaper have slipped by without so much as a murmur from the government on why a constitutional commission was not set up by September 1 as pledged.

Readers are left wondering whether elections and a lifting of the ban on political parties promised for 1999, and a dozen other Kabila pledges on the future of the country he symbolically renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May, are more than distant illusions.

"Kinshasa inhabitants are not easily fooled. We learnt that during years listening to Mobutu's promises," says Pierre, a taxi driver whose taxi, like the rest of the country's infrastructure, could use a major overhaul.

Besides Kabila's timetable, there have been government promises of a reconstruction boom, with road building and investment in the collapsed agricultural and mining sectors as priorities. Civil servants have been told they will be paid, yet their meagre salaries remain blocked.

"Just because we face all these problems doesn't mean we will fold our arms," Kabila's education minister, Kamara Waka Ikara, who presides over this week's cash-strapped start to the school year, has pleaded.

Schoolchildren are hungry and political opposition to Kabila remains vocal despite a crackdown on opponents. Yet these are the least of his worries.

"We are not so concerned about opposition as we are about divisions within the government and the army," confided a government official.

He says the alliance of interest groups that joined forces under Kabila to overthrow dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, who died in exile in a Moroccan hospital on Sunday, has barely survived the first few months of the post-Mobutu era intact.

The most obvious split is between the Katangese soldiers from Kabila's native province in the south, and the Tutsi troops, from neighbouring Rwanda and from the east of the former Zaire. Their differences are frequently settled with shootouts. The government, which political analysts say is increasingly divorced from the armed wing that brought it to power, has no noticeable military hierarchy to lean on for control.

If stability and peace is Kabila's real priority, that too is still a distant promise. In the east, there has been an upsurge in conflict. Disaffected local ethnic groups have re-emerged to join forces with Hutu militia from Rwanda and Burundi. They fight emerging Tutsi dominance in the country's traditionally volatile eastern flank.

In Kinshasa, arbitrary killings and arrests, racketeering by soldiers and the use of guns to quell opposition unrest are all too familiar to the downtrodden population, who developed an acute allergy to despotic rule during Mobutu's 32-year rule.

"We fought Mobutu's dictatorship for 20 years. For most of those, Mobutu had the money, the means and support from all corners of the world," said Mukendi Wa Mulumba, an adviser to Etienne Tshisekedi, Mobutu's most prominent opponent. "We are relieved now to be fighting a new dictatorship that does not have those means."

Controversy over a delayed United Nations' investigation into alleged massacres of Rwandan refugees may prove a real headache for Kabila. Western countries who applauded his revolt now express reservations over support. They continue to back the government's efforts at stabilising the "zaire" currency, but are taking a pessimistic overall view. Several say they are not so worried about strict adherence to political timetables as about a perceived arrogance by government in the face of potential chaos.

In Europe and the US, support to Kabila has been linked to his co-operation with the UN mission. The investigating team in Kinshasa remains blocked as a new set of government obstacles bar its path. The dilemma foreign partners face is whether to sanction the government for its poor human rights record or to extend Kabila's "period of grace".

"The danger is that if the government were to be isolated, it might become even more paranoid. The consequences for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the rest of the region could be grave," said a Western diplomat. — Reuter

The cracks begin to show in Kabila's

BD 9/9/97 (358)

Congo

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"The inhabitants of Kinshasa are wolfish and not easily fooled. We learnt that during years listening to Mobutu's (Sese Seko) promises," says Pierre, a taxi driver whose taxi, like the country's infrastructure, could use a major overhaul.

Besides Kabila's timetable, unveiled at his inauguration on May 29, there have been government promises of a reconstruction boom, with road building and investment in the collapsed agricultural and mining sectors as priorities.

Public servants have been told they will be paid regularly although their meagre salaries remain blocked.

"Just because we face all these problems doesn't mean we will fold our arms and do nothing," Education Minister Kamara Waka Ikara, who presided over this week's chaotic and cash-strapped start to the school year, pleaded on state TV.

Schoolchildren are hungry and political opposition to Kabila remains vocal, despite a sometimes brutal crackdown on opponents. Yet these are perhaps the least of his worries.

"We are not so concerned about opposition as we are about divisions within the government and the army," a senior government official confided.

He says the alliance of interest groups that joined under Kabila to overthrow dictator Mobutu, who died in exile in a Moroccan hospital on Sunday, has barely survived the first months of the post-Mobutu era intact. The most obvious split is between the Katangese soldiers from Kabila's province in the south, and the Tutsi troops, from neighbouring Rwanda and from the east of the former Zaire.

Their differences are frequently settled with shoot-outs. The government, which political analysts say is increasingly divorced from the armed wing that brought it to power, has no noticeable military hierarchy to lean on for control.

In the east there has been an upsurge in conflict. Disaffected local ethnic groups have re-emerged to join forces with Hutu militia from neighbouring Rwanda and Burundi. They fight emerging Tutsi dominance in the volatile eastern area.

In Kinshasa killings, arrests, racketeering by soldiers and the use of guns to quell opposition unrest are all too familiar to the downtrodden population, who developed an acute allergy to despotic rule during Mobutu's 32-year rule.

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Controversy over a long-delayed United Nations (UN) investigation into alleged massacres of Rwandan refugees may prove a real headache for Kabila. Western countries who applauded his revolt now express serious reservations over future support.

They continue to support efforts at fiscal reform, and the success in stabilising the value of the currency, but diplomats have come back from summer holidays with a pessimistic view. Several say they are not so worried about adherence to timetables, as about a perceived arrogance in the face of potential chaos that has emerged in the government.

In Europe and the US support for Kabila has been linked to his co-operation with the UN mission. The investigating team in Kinshasa remains blocked by obstacles the government set in its path. The dilemma foreign partners face is whether to sanction the government for this and its poor human rights record, or to extend Kabila's "grace period".

"The danger is that if the government were to be isolated, it might become even more introverted and paranoid, and the consequences ... for the region could be grave," said a senior Western diplomat.

See Page 12

Ethnic conflict flares in Congo

BD 11/9/97 (358)

KINSHASA — Conflict has again flared in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, with President Laurent Kabila's army and its Tutsi allies caught up in ethnic clashes, and ambushes along the roads increasingly common, United Nations (UN) officials say.

Kabila's army and Rwandan army allies have been fighting disaffected local ethnic groups who have joined forces with former Rwandan Hutu soldiers and Rwandan and Burundian Hutu militia to combat Tutsi dominance in the Congo, they say.

Aid officials said fighting had intensified in recent days inland from Bukavu, provincial capital of South Kivu, and towards North Kivu's Masisi region.

A senior aid official said Kabila's army was setting up heavy artillery positions near Bukavu after reports that the rebels were closing in.

He said UN workers were under orders not to use the escarpment road south from Bukavu to the town of Uvira, 100km away. Several vehicles were ambushed and women raped by Rwandan Interahamwe Hutu militia there last week, he said.

It was unclear how organised the new alliance was, but sources in the region said there was widespread resentment at growing Tutsi hegemony since Kabila toppled Mobutu in May.

Local Tutsi, along with Tutsi from neighbouring Rwanda, spearheaded Kabila's revolt. Tutsis are now dominant in the local administration and have begun resettling on farmland they were forced to flee during ethnic fighting in preceding years.

Mai Mai local warriors have fought almost every other armed group in the region in a bid to protect their traditional land from both Hutus and Tutsis who originate from Rwanda.

Aid officials said Mai Mai local militia involved in recent fighting met local authorities in Bukavu last week, and gave a list of grievances to the governor of South Kivu.

"The Mai Mai admitted they were siding with the Interahamwe and ex-FAR (Rwandan Hutu army), but they have now pledged to renounce all military activities," the official said.

The provincial capital of North Kivu has also become increasingly tense, with gunfights occurring almost nightly.

□ Kabila appointed a new national intelligence chief and deputy, Severin Kabwe and Leta Mangassa Sala Koso, yesterday after the previous head of security was arrested.

Kabila made the appointments by published decree after the August 23 detention of the former head of the National Intelligence Agency Paul Kabongo Misasa, who was placed under house arrest in western Kinshasa. — Reuter, Sapa-AFP.

Mining in the new Congo seen to be growing slowly

BD 12/9/97 (358)

MINING in Laurent Kabila's Democratic Republic of the Congo was growing slowly, with cash-strapped state mining company Gecamines trying to find takers for at least 20 projects, analysts said yesterday.

The new Congo is potentially one of the richest mineral resource areas in the world, but decades of dictatorial rule under Mobutu Sese Seko forced a collapse in the mining industry.

"Gecamines is in a penurious state, finding it very difficult to find sufficient money for day-to-day operations," a London-based mining analyst said.

The analyst said Gecamines is trying to lure foreign companies to invest in scores of projects. "There are probably 20 projects that Gecamines is trying to get off the ground. Many of them are good projects indicating high returns on investment." The new Congo was once one of the biggest producers of copper in the world and is still the largest source of cobalt.

Kabila's government has made it clear it will not tolerate mining monopolies. The latest foreign company under threat is Barrick Gold, which had its gold concession in the north slashed to between 5 000km² and 20 000km² from 83 000km².

"What we want is no more monopolies. Where there was only one company, we can have a dozen and then we will know who is really working," said Jean-Claude Miyambo, legal adviser to Mines and Energy Minister Florent Mututulo.

De Beers Consolidated Mines now buys diamonds from the state mine La Miniere de Bakwanga (Miba) at auctions in competition with other diamond buyers, after Kabila's government said De Beers held a monopoly on Miba's production.

Analysts said they did not see the new government cutting back on concessions in the copper and cobalt province of Katanga (formerly Shaba). "So far all the copper transactions awarded prior to the handover have been honoured and are continuing," said Investec Securities analyst John Clemmow.

Among the copper projects were the huge Tenke Fungurume project in Katanga, being developed by Tenke Mining, and the Kolwexi copper/cobalt project being developed by American Mineral Fields.

Jim Lennon, analyst at Macquarie Bank in London, said the cobalt price was edging higher, partly because of production problems in Zaire.

"They don't seem to be doing that well at the moment and it is hard to see them making too much progress in the short term," Lennon said.

Kabila's Congo still had tremendous potential and vast unexplored areas, Clemmow said. Among those interested were SA mining houses Gencor, Billiton, Anglo American, Iscor and JCI. — Reuter.

MAIL & GUARDIAN
September 12 to 18 1997

OBITUARY

The man who stole a country

M+G 12-18/9/97 (358)



Carole JL Collins and Steve Askin

So he finally kicked the bucket! Zaire's former despot Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga (the cock who goes from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake), one of the world's quintessential symbols of excess and venal corruption for the past three decades, has finally departed this world.

And as we sum up his life and legacy, we must appreciate what a consummate thief this man was. During his 66 years, Mobutu — whom French former co-operation minister Bernard Kouchner once called a "walking bank vault in a leopard-skin hat" — managed to steal not only much of his country's wealth but also its political credibility, its morality, even its very name.

The man who slept with a volume of Machiavelli next to his bed became a consummate practitioner of double-speak and double-dealing, which helped him retain power for 32 years and amass a fortune in misacquired wealth variously estimated at between $5-billion and $10-billion.

Recruited by Belgian and United States intelligence services in the late 1950s, Mobutu was appointed to head the newly independent Congo's army in July 1960 by the charismatic Patrice Lumumba, the Congo's first (and only) democratically elected prime minister. Mobutu promptly betrayed him, using CIA funds — channelled through the United Nations — to turn the army against him and to overthrow him by year's end.

In early 1961, Mobutu helped contrive Lumumba's death. In following years CIA covert aid helped him suppress regional rebellions in which hundreds of thousands died. In late 1965, Mobutu seized power for good.

It was in 1971 that he stole his country's name. Striving to shore up his dubious political legitimacy by playing on nationalist aspirations, Mobutu decreed an old Portuguese mispronunciation to be an authentic African name, imposing it on his country and people. He even stole peoples' names, demanding that they adopt "authentically African" ones instead. And in a unique political fashion statement he declared a Mao-style suit, the abacost, the new national dress.

It was a morality play come to life when a follower of Lumumba, longtime rebel adversary Laurent Kabila, finally chased Mobutu from the Congolese capital Kinshasa in May and restored Zaire's original name, the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mobutu parlayed Western anti-communism into a virtual licence to pillage Zaire's public sector. The West cynically touted Mobutu as a democrat even as he created a cult of personality and a one-party state which enrolled all Congolese as party members at birth.

In return for aid, loans and outright bribes, Mobutu effectively rented out his country to various Western governments and enterprises: to the US for covert arms flows to Angolan Unita rebels; to France for its Chad and Central African Republic operations; to a German company for rocket tests.

At his death, he left almost 70% of Congolese unemployed. The World Bank now estimates Zaire's per capita income has dropped almost two-thirds since independence, to the lowest of all 174 countries listed in the UN Development Programme's 1996 Human Development Report.

When Mobutu finally fled the country for good in May, so did many close family members and friends. These "designer refugees", with cash-filled briefcases and cell phones, choked airport lounges as they scrambled to find a haven for themselves and their ill-gotten wealth. One whole plane-load landed in South Africa, suitcases bulging with cash from ex-Zaire's Central Bank.

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund lenders who helped fill Mobutu's pockets will no doubt distance themselves from the late thief, claiming they have always favoured "good governance" and bear no blame for ex-Zaire's current chaos. But their past collusion with his kleptocratic feats have led some to ask if good governance shouldn't be a two-way street.

Isn't the legacy of poverty and $14-billion in foreign debt that Mobutu bequeathed the Congo equally their legacy — and responsibility? Shouldn't a dictator like Mobutu come with a money-back guarantee from the Western governments and international institutions which helped him steal so much?

Even prior to his death, many Mobutu critics had begun urging Western governments to back a systematic global search to locate and reclaim for the Congolese people the bank accounts, palaces and villas, and other wealth that Mobutu and his cronies have stashed around the globe.

When Mobutu died on September 7 after a year-long battle against prostate cancer, he left many survivors to enjoy what remains of his loot, including some 30 family members in Rabat and other relatives and cronies scattered in exile worldwide. He also leaves $14-billion in debt and numerous villas, hotels, investments and bank accounts, not only in Europe, but also Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Morocco, Kenya, Chad and South Africa.

Wanting to avoid the outpouring of anger his burial in the Congo might provoke, Mobutu's survivors have wisely chosen to lay him to rest in Rabat's Catholic cemetery.

Mobutu men live in SA luxury

Ann Eveleth

Dotted around South Africa's exclusive suburbs a string of modern cubic compounds — luxurious villas set in flowering gardens — house the elite of Mobutu Sese Seko's Zairean kleptocracy.

Tucked away with their extended families and domestic entourages behind high walls and electric gates in Sandton, Pretoria and Cape Town, at least 20 of the new Democratic Republic of Congo's "most wanted" suspects are flourishing in the freedom their government never granted to the former Zaire's 40-million citizens.

Mercedes Benzes and satellite communications are the attributes of the deposed, as the country they left behind scrapes the bottom of its empty coffers and pleads with its new ally, the South African government, to help retrieve its purse.

Attempting to trace these alleged kleptocrats this week, the *Mail & Guardian* established that not only are they moving their families and money freely around South Africa, but many are travelling outside the country without hindrance, despite the withdrawal of their passports.

These include the young smartly-clad Zairean who emerged from the leafy garden path leading to the home of a General Vungbo and civilian corruption suspect Jean Mopotu: "I'm on my way to Mozambique. [Vungbo and Mopotu] are out of the country. No, I don't know where they are but I will give them your message when I get there," said the man who refused to identify himself before driving away.

A French-speaking Zairean woman answered the door at former Zairean minister of defence Admiral Mavua's home on Oranje Avenue in Gallo Manor, Sandton. She also refused to give her name, but said Mavua had gone to Morocco to attend the funeral of Mobutu, who died of prostate cancer there last week.

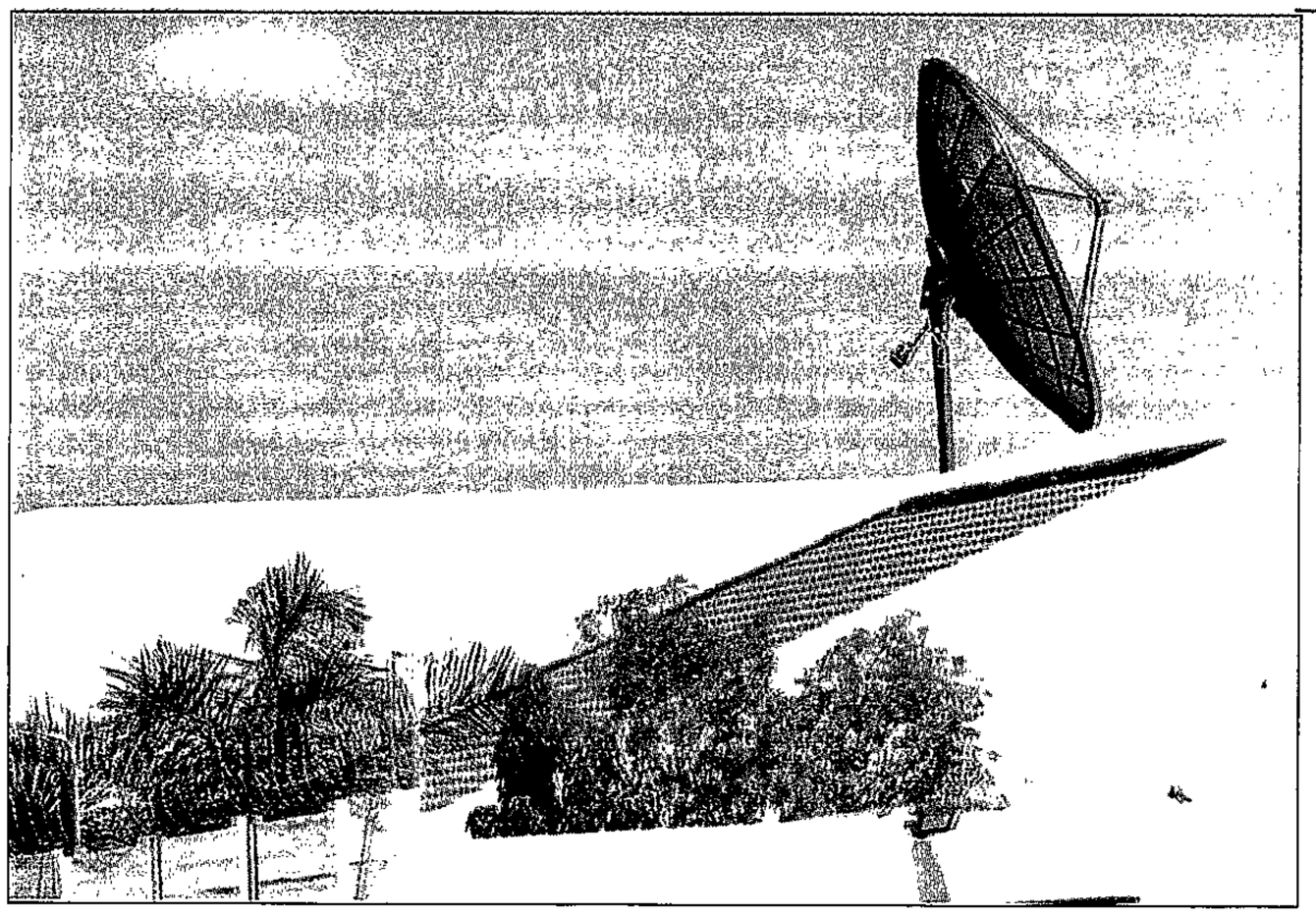
Employees at the Orchidea Hotel in Braamfontein, owned by Richard Nzuzi, the son of Mobutu's alleged lover, Nzuzi wa Mbombo, said she had also gone to Morocco: "I don't know if she will come back. We haven't been paid for three months," said one who gave his name as Sipho.

A domestic worker at the vast beige compound in Sandhurst of the Congo's number one civilian suspect, Honoré Ngbanda, said she had returned from three weeks' leave to find her employers had "gone overseas", but said she did not know where.

And Sylvie Atundu, the sister of Andre Atundu, former managing director of Gecamines and general administrator of Zaire's security division, said her brother had gone to Europe. He is alleged to have stolen from both institutions.

Congo vice-consul to South Africa John Lambert-Ibula said his government had requested that South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs and other diplomatic missions refuse travel visas to holders of old Zairean and diplomatic passports currently held by members of the Mobutu regime.

"Those people ran away [from Zaire] in May, many of them with diplomatic passports, but they are no longer diplomats. We want to know who gave them visas to come to South Africa and why. Our country is very rich but these people have run away with the money. We didn't find anything in the bank. Nothing," he said.





Home from home: Former Zaire officials have big properties in South Africa. PHOTOS: SIDDIQUE DAVIDS

Speaking from the Congo's musty, sparsely-furnished two-storey embassy across from Pretoria's Loftus Versveld stadium, Lambert-Ibula sifted through the pile of demand letters that confronted the new diplomats on their arrival.

"We found Mobutu's family here in the embassy. We had to pay R400 000 to Telkom, R70 000 to one bank, and other debts they left us," he added.

Lambert-Ibula said former embassy staff and other corruption, torture, kidnapping and murder suspects were still living in South Africa. The *M&G* confirmed this week that top military suspect and former army chief of staff General Kpama Baramoto has at least two sprawling homes in the Sandton suburb of Wendywood.

Baramoto, who has been linked to Mobutu's final efforts to hang on to power by hiring South African mercenaries, and whose wealth rivals that of most of the other suspects, did not reply to repeated messages this week.

But the Safenet security officer guarding Baramoto's white masterpiece on Acacia Street offered proof of a connection long alleged between the former general commander of Zaire's police and former South African Defence Force Captain Mauritz le Roux, who admitted to *Africa Confidential* in June that he runs Safenet. Le Roux had also admitted to being privy to discussions about mercenaries to shore up Mobutu's power, but said this did not materialise.

And the big black satellite dish on the roof of Baramoto's Aloe Street address, adjacent, back-to-back, to the Acacia Street home, recalls claims that he remained in daily contact with Mobutu after his flight to South Africa in May.

In Pretoria's exclusive Lynwood suburb, the niece of Tshimbombo Mukuna, one of Mobutu's former political advisers, said she could not remember when she came to South Africa and had no idea where her uncle was, but confirmed that "he stays here".

Also in Pretoria, former general and one-time interior minister Shamangu Ilunga is living a quiet retirement at the age of 46. He moved to South Africa in 1992 with his family to run a clothing business in Cape Town. Ilunga, who is also wanted by the Congo, but for unknown charges, claims he has funded his extremely comfortable existence solely on his earnings as a military man.

"Don't you think I deserve to live in a comfortable house after working my whole life?" he asked.

Whether Ilunga and the other suspects will continue their currently comfortable lives in South Africa or be returned to Congo to face their accusers is still unknown, despite pleas from Congo officials and promises from the South African government since July.

Investigations by the National Intelligence Agency into the activities of these suspects in South Africa and by the Department of Home Affairs into the legality of their current visas are expected to be completed and handed to Cabinet in the coming weeks.

But, in the meantime, said Swanepoel, Zaireans resident in South Africa had certain rights under the Constitution: "People can settle in South Africa and bring money in provided they do it legally. They can also travel freely unless they are doing so illegally," he said.

Congo blocks UN massacre investigation

M+G 19-25/9/97

Chris McGreal

(358)

The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo has blocked the United Nations' latest attempt to investigate massacres of refugees during this year's rebellion against Mobutu Sese Seko, throwing into jeopardy the entire mission and crucial foreign aid.

Congo refused to permit investigators to travel to the northern town of Mbandaka this week where hundreds of Rwandan Hutu refugees were slaughtered on the docks of the river port, 500km north of Kinshasa, as Laurent Kabila's rebel army neared victory in May.

"The government has maintained objections which exclude our going to Mbandaka," UN spokesman Jose Diaz said after talks with the government. The UN's 23-person investigation team has waited fruitlessly in Kinshasa for a month for permission to travel to an estimated 100 massacre sites, mainly in eastern Congo, reinforcing charges that the government is buying time to destroy the evidence.

UN officials say that unless permission is granted swiftly for the investigators to begin work the whole mission is likely to pull out. "It's in peril," Diaz said.

The final decision lies with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The UN investigation was ordered amid growing evidence of the slaughter of Rwandan Hutu refugees who failed to return to their homeland after the invasion of Zaire by Rwanda's overwhelmingly Tutsi army in support of Kabila's rebellion.

The continuing rift over the massacre investigations is likely to cause Washington and the European Union to reconsider aid to the vast, beleaguered nation. The United States says it is keen to resume aid to Congo but it has publicly tied new money to respect for human rights and proper investigation of the alleged massacres.

"I don't believe it's reached a stage where drastic action is needed, but we're close," Washington's UN ambassador, Bill Richardson, said. Both sides accuse the other of breaking agreements, but most of the roadblocks have been thrown up by Kabila's administration, which has openly challenged the UN's impartiality.

"We don't trust them, I can tell you that," said the interior minister, Mwenze Kongolo.

The government insists the UN only investigate alleged massacres in the eastern part of the country and that it include crimes committed by Hutu extremists and others during Mobutu's rule.

Kabila's hostility to the UN is a reflection of general bitterness in the region at perceived double standards. While the international community turned its back on the genocide of hundreds of thousands of Tutsis in Rwanda three years ago, it is now focusing on the killings of those the Congolese and Rwandan administrations hold responsible for the slaughter.

ANC 'sheepish' over exit

M+G 19-25 19/9/97

The ANC in the Western Cape did not jump. It was pushed.
Andy Duffy *reports*

The African National Congress in the Western Cape is struggling to justify a decision that has opened the door to the party's eviction from the provincial Cabinet.

Senior party members are putting a positive spin on the ousting, talking about the "principled" stand against Premier Hernus Kriel's move to enlarge the provincial Cabinet — a stand that led Kriel to scrap the government of provincial unity, and with it his obligation to entertain four ANC MECs.

Several insiders have also suggested that the party's enforced status as formal opposition might goad it into seriously attempting to challenge the National Party in the province.

"The situation could be just what is needed to reignite a power hungriness which has been absent until now," one insider says. The forced smiles aside, however, it is clear that the party in the province is reeling, unsure of its next move and pointing fingers.

There has been debate in the ANC-Congress of South African Trade Unions-Communist Party alliance for months about whether to leave the provincial Cabinet. But until now, the overriding view was that it would be unwise to relinquish strongly performing portfolios so close to the election. The party is having enough trouble winning support in the province with four Cabinet posts; without them, the task would be daunting.

There are also claims that provincial party leader and Minister of Justice Dullah Omar failed to give a lead on the issue; that personal vendettas by some MPLs against provincial ANC caucus leader Health and Social Services MEC Ebrahim Rasool neutralised Rasool's arguments for cutting a deal with Kriel; that the party at national level is failing to take the problems of the Western Cape seriously.

"We didn't leave (the provincial Cabinet) on principle," one insider concedes. "We left by accident. It's called a strategic fuck-up."

The party is now scrambling around, looking for a way to salvage something from the mess. The initial prognosis does not look good. Omar decided on Sunday night that the party should produce detailed reports of what its MECs have achieved, which can then be used to used to "mobilise" popular support against the eviction — a strategy that inspires few.



Dullah Omar: Did Western Cape provincial leader fail to lead?

"How about that for a bright idea," one office-bearer says.

The party is calling on business to argue the case for the government of provincial unity before Kriel, and has contacted the Institute for a Democratic South Africa (Idasa) to see if it can help change Kriel's mind. All of which is humbling for a party whose MECs will control close to 60% of the province's budget, until Kriel dumps them.

Kriel's intentions have been known for some time. Earlier this year, the *Mail & Guardian* reported that Kriel wanted to reshuffle the provincial Cabinet, and that he was eyeing Rasool's portfolio and Chris Nissen's Economic Affairs and Reconstruction and Development Ministry. Both are high profile delivery portfolios — Kriel himself has admitted that Rasool has performed well.

The ANC's other provincial Cabinet posts are in Sport and Recreation (Lerumo Kalako) and Leonard Ramatlakane at Transport and Public Works.

Kriel's hand, however, was stayed while the Constitutional Court judged the merits of his proposed provincial constitution. Two weeks ago it rejected the constitution on minor technical grounds. These should have been cleared up when the province's constitutional affairs standing committee met last Monday.

Instead, the ANC decided to oppose the clause expanding the number of MECs from 10 to 14. The party had previously voted the clause through, but then decided the increase could not be justified, given the province's R247-million budget deficit.

Kriel's response was blunt: to remove the clause in the constitution that guarantees the government of provincial unity through to 1999. Rasool tried on Wednesday to cut a deal with Kriel. But the wily Nat only needed the Freedom Front, the Democratic Party and African Christian Democratic Party to get the majority required to push the revision through. And as they all stood to gain from the posts the ANC would lose, they duly complied.

Once the Constitutional Court passes the province's constitution, Kriel can dump the four ANC MECs. "We're all feeling rather sheepish, to say the least," says one ANC member.

The question the ANC now faces is: what next? Kriel has indicated that at least one position in his new Cabinet could be available to the ANC, possibly to Rasool. The debate about accepting has still to take place, but several insiders say the party is unlikely to play ball.

The party has also suggested attempting to persuade Kriel to reopen negotiations on the constitution. Many party members, however, believe the ANC has little choice but to get on with the job of opposition. With less than two years to the election, it looks a tall order.

Nevertheless, insiders put a brave face on their prospects. "The provincial government, apart from our portfolios, has achieved stuff all," one official says. "There are good issues that we can take up."

Provincial ANC members are also quietly investigating what went wrong last week. It is an issue expected to be discussed at the party's national executive committee (NEC) meeting next month. The province also wants the NEC to draw up strategy for dealing with the issues of the Western Cape.

"It's no good going to this province with what's going on at national level — it has to be played out here on the ground," an office-bearer adds.

Shenanigans over Gauteng premier continue

M+G 19-25/9/97

Wally Mbhele

The number of African National Congress branches in Gauteng has risen dramatically from 400 to about 500 in recent weeks, a development interpreted by some members as a bid "to load the dice" against their favourite contender for the position of a new provincial chair, advocate Mathole Motshekga.

This startling growth came as the ANC's leadership decided to extend the period for nominating a new ANC provincial chair — sparking another storm among branches who this week described it as yet another attempt by the leadership to influence the outcome of the process. This has come after several senior ANC leaders, allegedly approached to replace MEC for Health, Amos Masondo, as candidates in the race for the ANC chairmanship, declined to take up the offer.

Masondo is seemingly losing the election and has become reluctant to continue contesting the position. At one stage he asked to step down from the previous premiership race but was persuaded not to. The process to choose the new Gauteng premier was postponed when the ANC provincial executive committee refused to endorse Motshekga as the new premier after he was overwhelmingly voted for by most of the branches.

Subsequent to this political fiasco, the provincial general council meeting of all Gauteng branches decided to start the process from scratch. This time it was agreed that the process will have to start with the election of a new provincial chair, who will likely become premier automatically, subject to such a decision being taken at the ANC's December conference.

Motshekga was widely nominated by Gauteng ANC regions to take over from Tokyo Sexwale as premier but his ascendancy was not supported by his provincial executive colleagues.

Among those who have declined to stand, according to *Mail & Guardian* sources, are chair of the Finance and Fiscal Commission, Murphy Morobe, Deputy Minister of Education Smangaliso Mkhatshwa and a leading ANC parliamentarian, Thenjiwe Mthintso. Another surprise candidate to emerge this week is MEC for Safety and Security, Jessie Duarte. She has been serving on the ANC task team assigned to co-ordinate the previously aborted election of a premier to replace Sexwale.

The process of nominating the new chair started in earnest last weekend among 300 branches. It is understood that at the close of nominations on Monday, it was clear that the branches continued to favour Motshekga when a decision to extend nominations was taken.

Critics of the decision told the *M&G* that the decision was not taken at a proper political meeting of ANC structures in Gauteng — "it was an administrative decision".

"With nominations, you don't need a 100% response from the branches, so the argument that there was a poor response lacks substance and logic," said a senior member of the ANC.

"If the reason is to get another candidate to challenge Motshekga, then there is no possibility of someone surfacing at such a late stage to do that," said a source from the branches.

According to a statement from the ANC provincial office, the decision was deferred because of the poor response from the East Rand, Vaal Triangle and Greater Johannesburg branches.

Representative Reuben Saunders could not say why names have not been forwarded for election, but said a number of branches had held meetings during the past few days to finalise their nominees. But impeccable sources have told the *M&G* that suspicions have been heightened by the fact that since the decision to postpone the "selection" of a new premier, more branches have mushroomed in Gauteng.

"The balance of power was not in their [the leadership's] favour. That is why there's a call for the extension of the nominations. This process is still being manipulated from within," said a source from the East Rand.

With only one week left before the crucial election, it remains to be seen if the democratic process will be allowed to continue with only Masondo and Motshekga in the running.

Mungo Soggot

VIEW FROM THE GALLERY

The Portfolio Committee on Minerals and Energy basked in bonhomie as minister Penuell Maduna and the Democratic Party's Kobus Jordaan exchanged chuckles over a Zulu proverb.

"It is only the dog who goes on the hunt who can hope to catch anything," the Minerals and Energy Minister told the committee.

"I know that proverb," Jordaan noted with his toadish grin, triggering a patter of warm laughter.

It was the glossy end to the minister's second committee briefing since taking over from Pik Botha last year. For such a polemical minister, who has gone head to head with the auditor general, Maduna had had an easy ride, and even managed to generate fresh controversy with some fiery outbursts.

The main target for the minister's vitriol was none other than Jordaan, who wrote this week in a letter to *Business Day* that the African National Congress-dominated portfolio committee had been forced, "in desperation", to seek an audience with Maduna.

The committee's ANC chair, Duma Nkosi, started the meeting by inviting discussion of the letter. "I'm a humble bantu, a piece of filth in the past according to some of you," the minister blazed. "But let me tell you I will deal with your past publicly." When Jordaan replied, the stocky minister stared at him, his eyes darting, his cheekbones bouncing.

Jordaan, whose party now wants a parliamentary probe into the attack, spluttered disapproval, but was cut short by Nkosi, who wanted the minister to get on with explaining exactly what he was doing with his unenviable portfolio.

Ironically, Nkosi himself had also just received a ministerial drubbing. Maduna had chided the formidably calm committee chair for allowing anyone to nurse the impression he had ever neglected the committee.

"I am a tolerant person basically," the minister said. "I tolerate even real and far-right racists, but I don't think I will ever tolerate lies and innuendo. You, chairperson, have never had any problem seeing me in my office. I don't know how many times I have had meetings with you. I didn't notice any desperation on your part."

Nkosi, who treated Maduna to a sustained, impassive glare, endured more sniping before Maduna finished for the afternoon, assuring the committee he would meet Nkosi regularly.

Only the National Party's Maans Nel mentioned Maduna's fight with the auditor general over the accounts of the Strategic Fuel Fund — the highlight of his reign. Nel — who prefaced his question by accusing Maduna of calling him a racist — wanted to know if the minister still believed the auditor general had covered up the theft of R170-million of oil and whether Maduna would resign if the Public Protector found he was wrong.

Maduna promised to resign if he was found to have been involved in the theft of public funds. As for the racism point, he consulted his acting director general to check he had never made such a comment before smilingly telling Nel: "You don't even look like a racist."

It was one of several bouts of diplomacy that brought smiles to most of Maduna's audience — a notable exception being deputy auditor general, Bertie Loots, who failed to show any amusement as he sat throughout the meeting, across the room from the minister on the hunt.

CAPE TIMES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1997 ★

JOY OF LIBERATION FADES

Honeymoon over for Laurent Kabila

CT 22/9/97 (358)

LONDON: Seven months after thousands of singing Zairians thronged the streets of their capital to welcome the soldiers of Laurent Kabila, the joy of liberation has faded.

THE successor of the Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, President Laurent Kabila, is being cursed by the families of those caught up in a wave of arrests and summary executions.

The parents of Jean-Baptiste Kombo are typical. They are mourning their son, a 19-year-old student, little more than 100 days after he took part in that victory procession.

Kombo was shot by three of Kabila's soldiers as he played football last week.

There is no rational explanation for his death. Relatives said the fact that he continued to kick his ball while the soldiers' jeep was crossing the playing field angered them.

Such incidents still occur regularly in Kinshasa, the capital of this vast African state, now renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Human rights organisations say people continue to be seized and taken into custody. Others have been summarily shot.

The random killings are only part of the reason why Kabila's honeymoon has ended.

The rotund rebel leader swept to power promising big improvements, including new roads, economic development, an end to corruption, and rule of law. Little of that has yet come about.

It is not all Kabila's fault. His government's coffers are almost bare. Even with unlimited resources, it would take years to rebuild Kinshasa and eradicate three decades of rule by Mobutu's government of thieves.

The dictator left his country with an international debt of R60 billion — about 200 times its gross domestic product.

But Kabila's assumption of sweeping powers and ban on all political activity are giving rise to concern at home and abroad about his commitment to human rights.

Even if there are fewer greedy officials siphoning off public funds and taking bribes, the social inequality remains.

At the Inter-Continental Hotel, Kabila's associates tuck into meals washed down by wine costing the equivalent of a month's wages for a civil servant.

A five-minute drive away, an Argentine team of forensic anthropologists sits frustrated in its offices awaiting permission to begin investigating the graves of people allegedly massacred by Kabila's forces.

The victims are thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees who fled to Zaire in 1994. The United Nations refugee agency still lists 200 000 as missing.

There is an irony here: Ms Patricia Bernardi, one team member, found Che Guevara's body buried in a grave in Bolivia last July.

She now finds herself in the Congo being rebuffed by the very same figure, Kabila, who 32 years ago had rebuffed the South American revolutionary.

Kabila fought alongside Guevara in the Congo in the 1960s. He found Kabila an unreliable partner "addicted to drink and women" and soon left the Congo disillusioned.

The government has hindered the progress of a 23-strong UN investigation team, which includes the Argentinians, since it arrived in Congo a month ago.

Kabila's hands are tied because the killings were mainly carried out by Rwandan Tutsi soldiers, who backed his rebellion in return for being able to slaughter Hutus in revenge for the massacre of up to half a million of their own people in 1994.

In the next few days the UN team may well be forced to leave Congo with its mission in tatters. If Mr Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general, and the security council give final approval to withdraw, however, it could have troubling consequences for Congo's future relations with the West.

America and the European Union have made aid to Congo conditional on the success of the UN mission.

Without a substantial injection of international funds to rebuild the economy, Congo may become further isolated. It may even slide back into the chaos many predicted would persist when Mobutu was overthrown. — The Sunday Times

'Bandits' go on killing spree

BUJUMBURA: Assailants with guns, axes and machetes have gone on an overnight killing spree, leaving about 20 people dead in a town in Burundi, according to survivors.

The rampage, which was a burst of apparently random violence and in which dozens of people were wounded, occurred in Gitaza, about 20 kilometres south of here.

"The bandits attacked around 1am in the centre of Gitaza," a survivor said. "They started shooting, then they attacked homes and shops. They stole and they killed anyone they came across."

Burundi has been torn by civil war since October 1993, with Hutu rebels fighting the Tutsi-dominated army and government. The fighting has left about 200 000 dead, most of them civilians. — Sapa-AFP

NEWS NATIONAL

Sowetan 24/9/97 (358)

Is Mobutu's wealth stashed in SA?

By Rafiq Rohan
Political Correspondent

INVESTIGATIONS are still underway into allegations that South African intelligence agents were involved in helping deceased former president Mobutu Sese Seko to smuggle money and diamonds out of Zaire into South Africa.

Minister of Justice Mr Dullah Omar confirmed in Parliament yesterday that the investigation's report on the allegations had not been completed.

"It is not possible to say when it will be completed. Every attempt is being made to complete the investigation speedily."

He said he could not make public any information at this stage regarding details of the investigation but that the report would be made available to the joint standing committee on intelligence when it was completed.

The investigation into Mobutu's diamond and cash smuggling followed allegations made in June that South Africans had been involved.

The matter is being investigated by members of a task team which includes members of the National Intelligence Agency.

According to Omar, the team has to investigate "whether any member of the intelligence services has been involved directly or indirectly with officials of the former Zairean government in the alleged smuggling of large amounts in US dollars".

It is also investigating allegations that Sese Seko's generals asked the SA operatives for assistance; the chartering of aircraft to assist the Zairean generals; and the "transporting of cash and diamonds in packed cases and the unloading from aircraft into waiting cars".

Omar said action would only be considered once the task team report had been completed.

The minister was reacting to a written question on the matter by the Democratic Party's Mr Jacobus Jordaan.

Congo curses Kabila after wave of terror

Fresh allegations of atrocities

ARG 27/9/97 (358)

Kinshasa – Seven months after thousands of singing Zaireans thronged the streets of their capital to welcome the soldiers of Laurent Desire Kabila with palm fronds, the joy of liberation from the corrupt regime of Mobutu Sese Seko has faded.

While Mobutu died unlamented in exile in Morocco, his successor at the helm of this vast African state – now renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo – is being cursed by the families of those caught up in a wave of arrests and summary executions.

The parents of Jean-Baptiste Kombo are typical. They are mourning their son, a 19-year-old student, little more than 100 days after he took part in that victory procession.

Kombo was shot by three of Kabila's soldiers as he played football last week. There is no rational explanation for his death.

Relatives said the fact that he continued to kick his ball while the soldiers' jeep was crossing the playing field angered them. They blasted him with their AK-47 rifles, killing him and wounding two of his friends.

Such tragic incidents still occur regularly in Kinshasa. Human rights organisations say people continue to be seized and taken into custody. Others have been summarily shot. The random killings are only part of the reason why Kabila's honeymoon has ended.

The rotund rebel leader swept to power promising big improvements, including new roads, economic development, an end to corruption, democratic reforms and rule of law. Little of that has yet come about.

It is not all Kabila's fault. His government's coffers are almost bare. Even with unlimited resources, it would be hard to rebuild Kinshasa and eradicate three decades of rule by Mobutu's government of thieves.

The dictator left his country with an international debt of $14 billion, about 200 times its gross domestic product. But Kabila's assumption of sweeping powers and ban on all political activity are giving rise to concern at home and abroad about just how committed he is to human rights and democratisation.

The transition has been bizarre and often contradictory. Even if there are fewer greedy officials siphoning off public funds and taking bribes, the social inequality in Mobutu's day remains palpable.

The killings were mainly carried out by Rwandan Tutsi soldiers

At the Inter-Continental hotel, Kabila's associates tuck into meals washed down by wine costing the equivalent of a month's wages for a civil servant.

A five-minute drive away, an Argentine team of forensic anthropologists sits frustrated in its offices awaiting permission to begin investigating the mass graves of people massacred by Kabila's forces: they are accused of massacring thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees who fled to Zaire in 1994.

The United Nations refugee agency still lists 200 000 as missing in the eastern region after their camps were emptied a year ago.

If it were not so tragic, there would be an irony here: Patricia Bernardi, one member of the team, found Che Guevara's body buried in a grave in Bolivia last July.

She describes the find as "a deeply emotional experience".

She now finds herself in the Congo being rebuffed by the very same figure – Kabila, who, 32 years ago had rebuffed the Argentine-born Cuban revolutionary whose mortal remains she had discovered.

Kabila fought alongside Che in the Congo in the 1960s. However Che found Kabila an unreliable partner "addicted to drink and women" and soon left the Congo disillusioned.

The government has repeatedly hindered the progress of a 23-strong UN investigation team, which includes the Argentinians, since it arrived in Congo a month ago.

Kabila's hands are tied because the killings were mainly carried out by Rwandan Tutsi soldiers who backed his rebellion in return for being able to slaughter Hutus in revenge for the massacre of up to half a million of their own people in 1994.

A request for access to all detention centres has gone unanswered

In the next few days the UN team may well be forced to leave Congo with its mission in tatters.

If Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general, and the security council give final approval to withdraw, however, it could have troubling consequences for Congo's future relations with the West.

America and the European Union have made aid to Congo conditional on the success of the UN mission.

Without a substantial injection of international funds to rebuild the economy, Congo may become further isolated.

It may even slide back into the chaos many predicted would persist when Mobutu was overthrown.

Even as Kabila's government was involved in an angry showdown with the UN investigators last week, fresh allegations of atrocities were coming to light in different parts of the country.

One concerned a massacre of refugees near Mbandaka, 480km north of Kinshasa. There, a doctor who reported the killings to humanitarian organisations in Kinshasa and called on them for help, has disappeared. It is thought he has either been arrested or gone into hiding.

Humanitarian organisations are also concerned by so far unverified reports that the regime is running a grim detention camp for 45 000 former soldiers of Mobutu's army at a military encampment at Kitona, in the extreme west of Congo,

As many as 10 or 12 soldiers are said to be dying each day from hunger and disease in degrading conditions.

The soldiers, who had surrendered their weapons to Kabila's men at the time they took Kinshasa, were sent to the camp ostensibly to be retrained for integration into a new Congolese army.

Instead, according to well-informed sources who have debriefed one or two escapees, they are being subjected to a slow and painful process of extermination by being fed a small can of uncooked rice and beans every four days.

The International Red Cross has also heard alarming reports of a humanitarian catastrophe at the camp. But a request for access to all detention centres has gone unanswered.

Officially, no prisons exist any more in Kinshasa; they were closed when their inmates escaped after liberation. But many detainees are being held in centres run by the ubiquitous ANR, the security police.

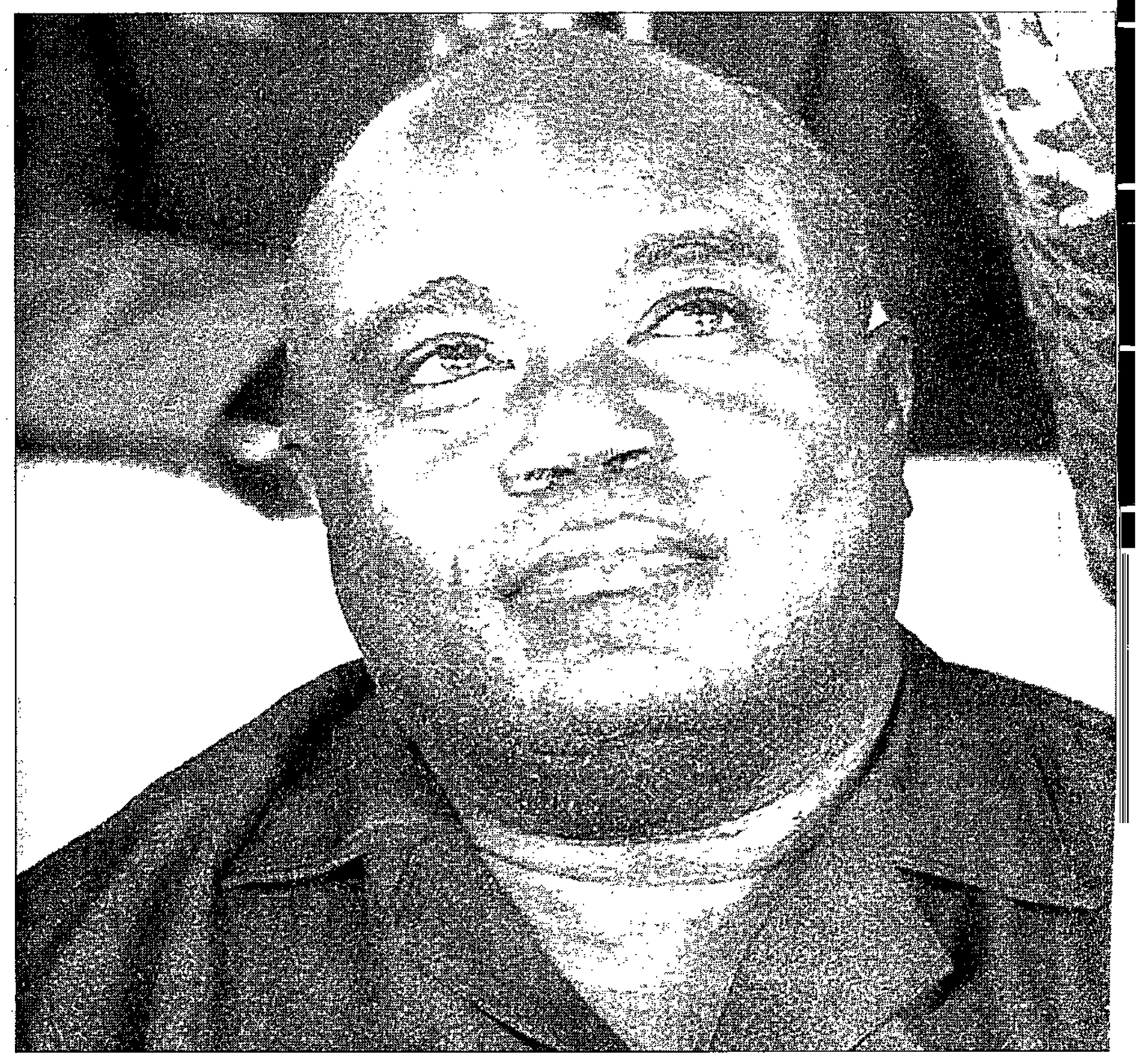
The dilemma facing Africa and the West is whether to turn a blind eye to the murder of refugees and give aid to Kabila.

Denying such aid could intensify popular discontent and even bring military rebellion, leading to the destabilisation of the heart of Africa.

– The Sunday Times, London



Retaliation: an unidentified man is lead to his death by rebel soldiers in Kinshasa shortly after the takeover



What now? Laurent Kabila's ban on all political activity is raising questions about his commitment to democratisation

Kinshasa govt blocks UN mission, may expel NGOs

(358) BD 29/9/97

KINSHASA — The government of former Zaire on Saturday renewed restrictions on a United Nations (UN) inquiry into alleged massacres and threatened to expel international bodies working in the region bordering Rwanda.

Democratic Republic of Congo Interior Minister Kongolo Mwenze told a news conference that a travel ban on a UN mission in Kinshasa would be maintained and that foreign nongovernmental organisations in the eastern Kivu region on the Rwandan border would be expelled.

Many of the organisations set up camp in the region in 1994 to help Rwandan refugees, but "today there are no more refugees", the minister insisted, implying they no longer served a purpose.

"The nongovernmental organisations which don't have any useful function will be thrown out," he warned, and added the others would have to "renegotiate their stay in the Congo".

Mwenze also said there was no question that three UN investigators would see their request to visit the northwestern Mbdandaka region allowed.

The team, which has seen its mission stalled several times by President Laurent Kabila since its arrival on August 24, has received reports of serious human rights abuses in the region.

"It's not responsible for the UN to ask that the mission deploy over the entire territory. It is against the protocol agreement. The UN must respect our country's sovereignty," Mwenze said.

He complained that the UN was victimising his country. "There are blacks who are killed in the US and people exterminated like flies in Congo-Brazzaville but there is never any inquiry. Why do they have to hound us?" he asked.

The UN team's Jose Diaz said on Friday they were awaiting instructions from Secretary-General Kofi Annan. — Sapa-AFP.

CAPE TIMES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1997 ★

KABILA HURRIES HOME

More shells land as Kinshasa mourns dead

CT 1/10/97 (358)

KINSHASA: Democratic Congo President Laurent Kabila cut short a visit to Zambia yesterday to return here to chair an emergency cabinet meeting on the shelling from Brazzaville.

SHELLS fired from the Congo Republic capital Brazzaville landed in Kinshasa again yesterday as the former Zaire held a national day of mourning for 17 people killed by shellfire on Monday, witnesses said.

About 20 shells hit the capital of the renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo during a second day of heavy artillery exchanges in Brazzaville between supporters of President Pascal Lissouba and his predecessor, Mr Denis Sassou Nguesso.

It was not immediately clear who was firing the shells.

Democratic Congo's President Laurent Kabila, denouncing Monday's incidents as "a sign of provocation", cut short a visit to Zambia, and returned home to hold an emergency cabinet meeting.

Witnesses reported shells landing near Kabila's office.

Kinshasa itself was deserted. Shops, banks, schools and markets remained closed, in part as a tribute to Monday's dead but mainly because of the shelling. Flags flew at half-mast. State radio said the mourning was nationwide.

Witnesses reported reinforced pockets of troops stationed on the Kinshasa bank of the Congo River with orders to fire at any craft on the river. The river was deserted.

Witnesses said five shells fired from the Congo Republic landed in two bursts yesterday morning in the Bandalungwa district of Kinshasa. Houses were destroyed. Witnesses later reported at least 20 hits in Kinshasa.

An interior ministry official said there were no immediate reports of deaths yesterday.

The interior ministry in Kinshasa blamed Monday's shelling on supporters of the ousted president of the former Zaire, the late Mobutu Sese Seko.

Unconfirmed reports suggest that they and Hutu hardliners from Rwanda have rallied to help Sassou.

Kabila's Interior Minister, Mr Mwenze Kongolo, said on Monday that those responsible for that day's shelling had been arrested by Lissouba's government.

The army in Kinshasa retaliated on Monday with several hours of artillery fire at Brazzaville. It shelled the city again yesterday morning.

The power struggle between Lissouba and Sassou, the oil-producing former French colony's former Marxist military leader, began on June 5 when troops surrounded Sassou's home as part of a pre-election crackdown on private militia.
— Reuter

CAPE TIMES
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1997 ★

UN TEAM STYMIED IN KINSHASA

Annan recalls rights abuse investigators

(358)

CT 3/10/97

NEW YORK: The Democratic Republic of Congo says it will co-operate, but after two months the UN rights abuse investigators are still kicking their heels in Kinshasa.

UNITED NATIONS secretary-general Mr Kofi Annan has ordered the immediate withdrawal from Kinshasa of the UN team deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to investigate human rights abuses.

Annan recalled the team's leadership to New York on Wednesday after reports that DRC President Laurent Kabila wanted them to leave the country.

The report is the latest in a series of setbacks for the team which, after over a month in the Congo, has yet to begin its work outside the capital.

Annan's spokesman, Mr Fred Eckhard, said the withdrawal of the international members of the team was not necessarily permanent and was only for "consultations pending final clarification of the DRC's position" on the team's presence.

While it was not a security-based decision, there was also concern for the safety of the team after shells fired from neighbouring Brazzaville on Tuesday landed near a hotel the team is staying in, and more shells rocked Kinshasa yesterday.

The team's presence in the DRC has been a constant source of tension between Kabila and the international community, with Kabila accusing the team of having a political agenda and trying to undermine his four-month-old government.

Part of the team's mandate is to investigate allegations of gross human rights abuses by his liberation army against refugees. The international community has withheld urgently needed aid, making any aid conditional on full co-operation with the UN team.

Kabila maintains enemy forces were often masquerading as refugees and any acts his soldiers undertook were aimed at legitimate enemy forces.

While publicly promising full co-operation, he has stymied the team's efforts to travel beyond the capital to carry out its work — particularly in the east of the country.

Addressing the UN's General Assembly yesterday, DRC Foreign Minister Mr Bizima Karaha pledged "full co-operation" with the team, but questioned its motives, saying it should not be "transformed into a political mission".

He said the UN team "will have to tell us why the refugees were armed, who armed them and why they were not disarmed".

It would also have to tell how many among the refugees were really refugees and how many were pseudo-refugees and how many Congolese people were "butchered" by people who had been called refugees.

"But more importantly the team will tell us if there had been any continuation of Rwandan genocide on Congolese soil." — IFS

Aid 'helped spark Congo conflict'

(358) M+G 3-9/10/97

NGOs and the UNHCR not only loomed large in the conflict, but may have helped start it. **John Pomfret** *writes from Goma*



Caught up in the fray: A Congolese man sits in hospital with his son, who was shot in the head when unpaid Rwandan Tutsi soldiers rampaged near Goma. PHOTOGRAPH: BRENNAN LINSLEY

Rebel forces loyal to Laurent Kabila were plotting their attack on the key southern city of Lubumbashi earlier this year when a glitch surfaced in their battle plan: Kabila's army needed fuel to airlift troops to the town, recalled a Rwandan officer who participated in the operation.

They found it at a depot maintained by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Goma, a Congolese town in central Africa's Great Lakes region that had already fallen to Kabila's men. More than 57 000 litres of fuel were seized to ferry 300 crack troops southward. Within days of the airlift, Lubumbashi was in rebel hands.

The fuel theft was just one of a series of episodes that illustrate the central, if unintentional, role the UN

them, and today gun-toting toughs can still be seen at the helm of blue and white UN vehicles in Bukavu, Goma and other Congolese towns.

As a Western ambassador put it: "The failure of the West to deal with the Rwandan refugee crisis led directly to the fall of Mobutu."

After the camps were smashed by the rebellion, UN and Western aid agencies continued to play an unintended role in the war, luring Hutu refugees out of hiding in the jungle with the promise of succour. Many of the refugees — not only gunmen, but women and children as well — were subsequently slaughtered by Kabila's men, Western aid officials and Congolese witnesses have said.

In Congo and several other post-Cold War regional crises, humanitarian action has become a substitute for Western military and diplomatic intervention. Yet the aid agencies lack the tools or the clout to handle the explosive situations they are confronting. As such, the aid they bring often becomes a resource in a conflict, helping to fan its flames rather than damp them down.

The Western reaction of deploying food and money — but not troops or diplomatic pressure — has, mili-

...ugee agency and other aid agencies have been playing in regional crises in the aftermath of the Cold War. War lords, rebel leaders and imploding governments from Bosnia to Brazzaville now manipulate aid agencies as never before — using their food to feed troops, their fuel to power airplanes and their logistical infrastructure to conquer or occupy vast territories.

In the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly known as Zaire, the role of NGOs and the UNHCR not only loomed large in the conflict, but arguably helped spark it.

Laurent Kabila's successful bid to topple Mobutu Sese Seko was aided in large part by Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated government, which — as many of its leaders and officers have acknowledged — sought to use Kabila's rebels to eliminate a problem on Rwanda's western border.

In 1994, the Hutu-extremist government ruling Rwanda tried to eradicate that country's Tutsi minority. After soldiers, militiamen and ordinary citizens had killed more than a 500 000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates, a Tutsi rebel force halted the slaughter, toppled the Hutu government and sent hundreds of thousands of Hutus fleeing across Rwanda's borders. About 1,1-million — including perpetrators of the slaughter — poured into Congo, where refugee camps were built and supported by the UNHCR and other aid agencies.

Within weeks, the UN agencies and NGOs had allowed Rwanda's ousted Hutu government to reconstitute itself in eastern Congo, using the refugee camps as a political base. In some cases, UN officials and other aid workers actually encouraged Hutu radicals to take control of the camps, reasoning that it was easier to rely on a government-in-exile to distribute aid and keep order, UN officials acknowledged.

"That effectively is our policy," a senior UN field worker said in Goma. "We always work through governments. Mobutu's government was nowhere to be found. It was natural to turn to the Hutus."

Starting in 1994, Sadako Ogata, the UN high commissioner for refugees, issued pleas for international military help to separate the killers from the innocents. At one point, her agency even considered hiring private security firms to do the work. But, Ogata said in an interview, the idea was shelved because it was too costly.

Ultimately, the UN refugee agency hired Mobutu's presidential guard to provide security for the camps — a decision that had further unintended consequences once the rebellion broke out. Mobutu used the guard members to lead Hutu refugees on counter-attacks against Kabila's rebels.

Mobutu's guard refused to disarm the Hutus; thus many of the refugee camps became armed camps, organised to support the radical Hutu leaders in their desire to reconquer Rwanda or at least destabilise it. Military training was commonplace. Weapons purchases were public. Hutus who expressed the wish to return to Rwanda peacefully were harassed and sometimes killed.

M+G 3-9/10/97

In the end, the aid agencies were never able to disarm the Hutu militias that controlled the camps, nor could they stop the Hutu gunmen from sneaking back into Rwanda to stage revenge attacks against Rwanda's new, Tutsi-dominated government. Paul Kagame, Rwanda's vice-president and defence minister, said he planned what became Kabila's rebellion as a means of keeping the camps from destabilising his fledgling government.

Kagame ordered the rebellion to begin in October because, he said, Rwandan intelligence had learned that the Hutus were planning a major offensive against his country. The rebellion spread quickly as Mobutu's army crumbled, but the swift success of Kabila's troops also posed logistical headaches. Aid agencies provided unwitting assistance.

Mobutu's army hijacked UN-chartered planes to transport guns for its futile fight against the rebels. Under the gaze of international aid workers, the planes — chartered by the UN and other groups and emblazoned with their insignia — flew into UN-run refugee camps packed with weapons. The arms were distributed to Rwandan Hutu refugees who had become Mobutu's first line of defence.

"It made us all pretty sick to see those planes fly in with all those guns," said Mike Deppner, a Canadian physician who worked with the UNHCR. "It was our camp, but we were powerless to do anything."

The anti-Mobutu rebel army flew on stolen aid fuel, rolled in stolen aid trucks and grew strong on stolen aid food. Kabila's forces pilfered scores of aid trucks, which helped improve their transport capacity. In many cases, they did not bother to repaint

...tary scholars argue, become an important component in the tactics of these local warriors.

It has also given aid workers cause to question two once sacred tenets of their trade: that every disaster deserves a humanitarian response and that aid agencies must remain strictly neutral. Last month Ogata announced that the UNHCR was suspending its operations in Congo — a decision that highlighted the UN's frustration.

Aid agencies have been subject to manipulation and intimidation in the past. But the logic of the Cold War often drew US or Soviet advisers to direct and control those conflicts. Today, the UN and other NGOs more commonly operate in a political, military and diplomatic vacuum.

"The Zaire crisis signals that our tools are inadequate to deal with these types of crises, and these types of crises will be more likely in the future," said Lionel Rosenblatt, head of Refugees International, a Washington-based humanitarian advocacy group. "I unfortunately don't see much hope for improvement ... Whole regions will go up in smoke with the international community unable and unwilling to take any type of decisive action." — *The Washington Post*

[redacted]

Growing ethnic conflict a blow to Kabila's backers

BUKAVU, Congo: Five months after he seized power, President Laurent Kabila has yet to gain military control over the eastern province of the vast Democratic Republic of Congo.

Nor has Kabila's rise to power brought to Central Africa the peace for which the regional leaders who sponsored his rebellion hoped.

From the Ruwenzori Mountains in eastern Uganda to the hilly farms of Burundi, rebels of various stripes are still spreading terror, ambushing soldiers and killing civilians. Many rebels are fleeing into the Democratic Republic of Congo to escape retribution.

Most of the fighting springs from the age-old animosity between the Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups as well as between the Tutsi and other groups in Congo.

It is the same conflict that fuelled the frenzy of killing in Rwanda in 1994, set off the revolution in Congo last year and continues to feed civil war in Burundi.

The continuing warfare has been a major disappointment to Congo's neighbours. Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi supported Kabila's rebellion last year because the former Zaire, under dictator Mr Mobutu Sese Seko, had harboured rebel groups intent on overthrowing their governments.

"We recognise the constraints Kabila is under," Defence Minister Mr Amama Mbabazi of Uganda said recently. "We appreciate the little he's been able to do. We still have a few problems. Kabila has to come to grips with his situation."

In private, officials in Uganda and Rwanda say both countries have urged Kabila to pour more military resources into the eastern region or allow his neighbours to do so. Fresh units of Rwandan troops have already been seen crossing into Congo around Bukavu in the past three weeks, aid workers say.

Tutsi farmers spearheaded Kabila's revolt a year ago after Mobutu's government threatened to expel the Tutsi, resident for centuries in eastern Zaire. As the rebellion grew and gathered other allies, Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated government stepped in to arm and back the rebels.

For the Rwandan government, Kabila's rebellion provided a chance to end the simmering guerrilla war in its western half by closing down Hutu refugee camps across the border. In the camps, tens of thousands of Hutu militia and soldiers of Rwanda's former Hutu-dominated government had been retraining and preparing to invade. To this end, several hundred Rwandan soldiers fought alongside Kabila's army.

Since Kabila's victory, Congolese Tutsi have become increasingly dominant in local administrations and in the army. Resentment has grown among other ethnic groups, many of whom regard the Tutsi as invaders from Rwanda.

The fighting in western Rwanda has increased since Kabila took power. In the past five months at least 4 000 people, many of them civilians, have died in a guerrilla war between Hutu rebels and the army of the Tutsi-dominated government.

One reason is that thousands of Hutu guerrillas, many of whom took part in massacres of Tutsi in 1994, have filtered back into the country and taken up arms, Rwandan officials and diplomats say. The civil war that was halted in 1994 when a million Hutu refugees fled into Zaire has resumed.

"The Rwandan army is winning the war, but at a terrible cost," said a diplomat.

To the north in Uganda, a rebel group in the Ruwenzori Mountains has continued a campaign of raids along the border to destabilise President Yoweri Museveni's government. Known as the Allied Democratic Force, the group says Museveni is a Rwandan Tutsi who has confiscated their motherland.

To the south in Burundi, the main Hutu rebel organisation that used to find a safe haven in Congo has survived by shifting its bases to refugee camps in Tanzania. A few Burundian rebel groups are waging a violent campaign against Burundi's Tutsi-led government.



NO END: Kabila struggles on.

In Kivu, two formidable guerrilla movements have sprung up to challenge Kabila's troops. In the Masisi area of North Kivu, armed bands known collectively as the Mai-Mai are terrorising Kabila's Tutsi soldiers.

They also control much of the countryside around the town of Bunyakiri. Two weeks ago they pressed as far south as the Bukavu airport, 32km north of the heavily defended town, aid workers and local officials said.

During the civil war, the Mai-Mai briefly joined forces with Kabila's army to oust Mobutu.

In recent months their ranks have been swelled by indigenous tribesmen angry about the large number of Tutsi soldiers from Rwanda and Uganda still on duty in the Congo.

Further south, in the Fizi area, a second rebel movement, drawn mostly from the Babende ethnic group, has been harassing and ambushing Kabila's Tutsi cadres. Led by a longtime rebel leader, Mr Charles Simba, once an ally of Kabila, the Babende guerrillas say they consider the Tutsi soldiers foreign invaders. — New York Times

ONAL

Rocket deaths add to tensions in Congo (358)

KINSHASA — Political rivalry in Congo Brazzaville prompted new tension with neighbouring Democratic Congo when rockets killed two soldiers at the gates of President Laurent Kabila's office in Kinshasa.

"This is a declaration of war. We cannot see it otherwise," Kabila's Junior Interior Minister Faustin Munene said. BD 18/10/97

The Kinshasa government had previously said rockets fired from Brazzaville were deliberately launched by former soldiers of the late president of the former Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko, toppled by Kabila in May.

Industry sources said Kabila's government halted all flights between Kinshasa and Congo Republic's economic and oil capital, Pointe Noire, the country's most important city after the devastation of the capital, Brazzaville.

Kinshasa troops traded rocket fire with Brazzaville fighters across their River Congo frontier.

A spokesman for Kabila's government, Raphael Ghenda, condemned renewed artillery attacks from Brazzaville and criticised the United Nations for failing to intervene in the four-month civil war in the country next door.

"We have been proposing that the international community put together an intervention force, but they've failed to move. Is the UN waiting for the whole region to explode?" Ghenda said.

The conflict in Brazzaville pits forces backing President Pascal Lissouba against the private militia of his arch-rival and former military ruler, Denis Sassou Nguesso. — Reuter.

Bechtel Corp is set to help rebuild the former Zaire

BD 15/10/97 (368)

Simon Barber

WASHINGTON — Undisturbed by continuing chaos in the former Zaire, US engineering giant Bechtel Corp is manoeuvering to play a key role in rebuilding the former Zaire's shattered infrastructure and developing the country's huge mineral reserves.

The San Francisco-based company, which specialises in designing and managing major capital projects — from roads, airports and dams to mines, pipelines and power plants — has been tapped by President Laurent Kabila to draw up development plans for the Democratic Republic of Congo for presentation to donors.

"We are conducting a broad development study for the government which will be used as the basis for future studies," John Gersuk, a spokesman for the company, confirmed yesterday.

The Wall Street Journal reported that Bechtel, which wields considerable influence in Washington and is a major government contractor, had paid for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to perform a detailed satellite survey of Congo. As a result, the Journal reported, Bechtel now owned the most comprehensive set of geological data on Congo yet put together.

Bechtel was helping the Kabila government without charge, according to the newspaper, and its assistance had included turning over "militarily useful" images.

Gersuk said Bechtel was treating its work for Kabila "as a business investment", but scoffed at the Journal's other claims. He said the only satellite images the company had obtained of Congo were publicly available pictures taken off the Internet. But he said the company was "exploring" means of obtaining higher-resolution images.

He also said that Robert Stewart, identified as Bechtel's point man on the ground, was not an executive of the company, as the Journal reported, but a "consultant". Stewart was described by the newspaper as having become a trusted adviser to Kabila, a point Gersuk did not dispute.

Bechtel claims its worldwide operations generated $8,2bn in 1996 and that it booked a further $11,3bn worth of contracts.

Meanwhile, an international donor conference on the Democratic Republic of Congo, which had been planned to take place later this month in either Paris or Kinshasa, was now unlikely to take place because of Kabila's refusal to let the UN investigate refugee massacres, Eric Chinje, a spokesman for the World Bank, said yesterday.

Kabila fails to bring peace

(358) MtG 17-23/10/97

The fighting in Central Africa has outlasted the defeat of Mobutu.
James C McKinley Jr
reports from Bukavu

Five months after seizing power in the former Zaire, President Laurent Kabila has yet to gain military control over the eastern province of this vast country, and his rise to power has not brought peace to Central Africa as the regional leaders who sponsored his rebellion hoped.

From the Ruwenzori Mountains in eastern Uganda to the hilly farms of Burundi, rebels of various stripes are still spreading terror, ambushing soldiers, killing innocent people and in many cases fleeing into the country now called the Democratic Republic of Congo to escape retribution.

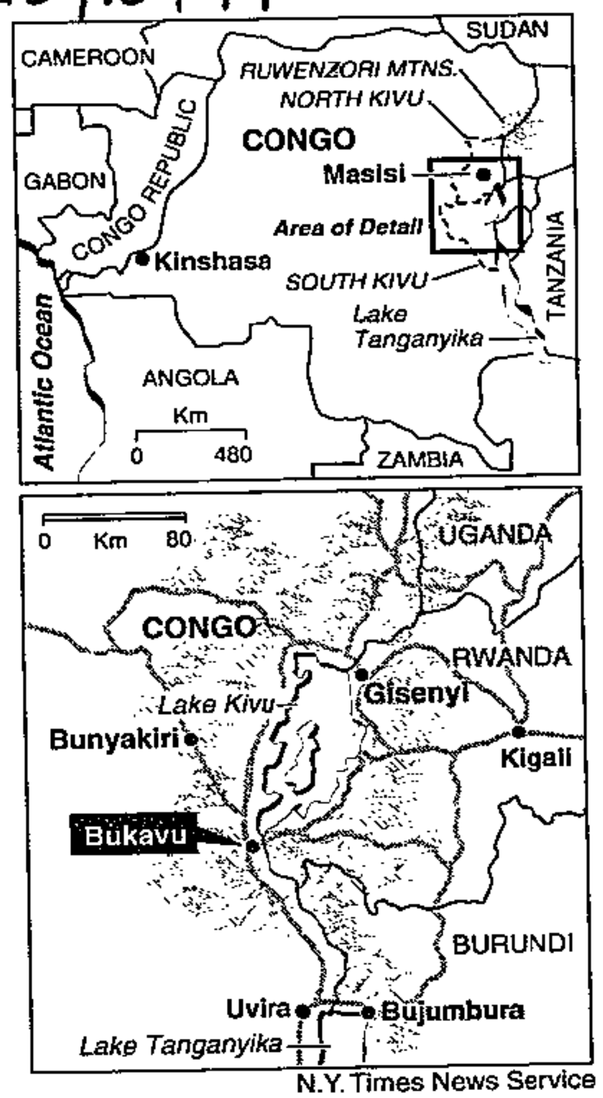
Though the situation throughout the region is chaotic, most of the fighting springs from the age-old animosity between the Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups, as well as between Tutsis and the other Bantu groups in Congo who resent what they see as the recent Tutsi hegemony.

It is the same conflict that fuelled the frenzy of killing in Rwanda in 1994, set off the revolution in Congo last year and continues to feed civil war in Burundi.

The continuing warfare has been a major d[illegible] Con[illegible]'s



Young rebel: Zairean fighters helped Laurent Kabila seize power, but [illegible] in milita[illegible] of eastern Con[illegible]o. PHOTO: SACHA J



N.Y. Times News Service

refugees fled into Zaire has resumed.

"What's happening in Rwanda now is the end of the war in 1994," said a diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "The Rwandan army is winning the war, but at a terrible cost."

The growing nature of the Rwandan conflict was clear last week, when more than 1 000 rebels mounted a major attack on the Rwandan border town of Gisenyi and were driven back into Congo after seven hours of fighting.

used to find a safe haven in Congo has survived by shifting its bases to refugee camps in Tanzania. A few Burundian rebel groups are reported to be still operating in Congo, though. The rebels continue to direct a violent campaign against Burundi's Tutsi-led government.

Even here in Kivu, where Kabila's rebellion began, two formidable guerrilla movements have sprung up to challenge his troops.

In the Masisi area of North Kivu, dozens of armed bands known collectively as the Mai-Mai militia are terrorising Kabila's Tutsi soldiers. They also control much of the countryside to the west of Lake Kivu around the town of Bunyakiri. Two weeks ago they pressed as far south as the Bukavu airport, only 30km north of the heavily defended town, aid workers and local officials said.

The Mai-Mai were an established group before the civil war. They believe that sprinkling magic water on themselves makes them immune to bullets, and they take their name from the Swahili word for water. They fought for years against Hutu and Tutsi immigrants from Rwanda to protect their ancestral lands.

During the civil war, the Mai-Mai briefly joined forces with Kabila's army to oust Mobutu. But in recent months their ranks have been swelled by indigenous tribesmen who are angry about the large number of Tutsi commanders and soldiers from Rwanda and Uganda still on duty in the Congo, local officials said. Since May they also appear to have joined

Kabila must learn, first, to do as he is told

There is concern that the US and UN approach to Laurent Kabila's government might further damage a ravaged economy, writes **Simon Barber** in Washington

(358) BD21/10/97

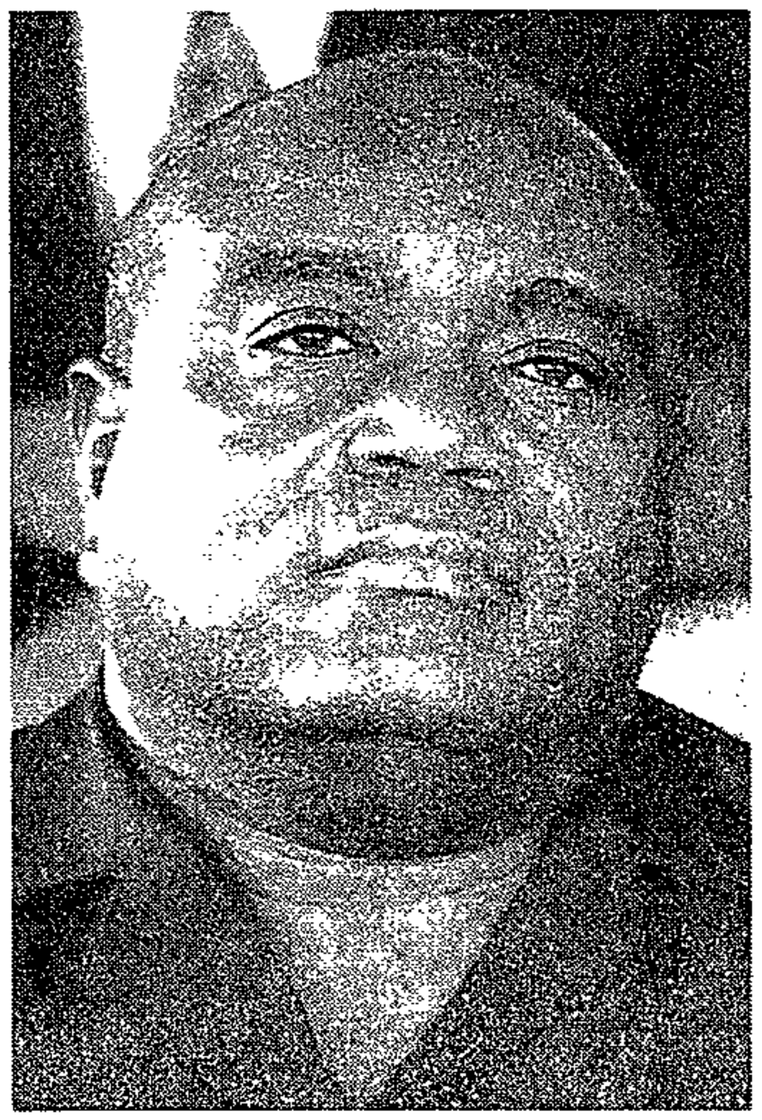
THERE is nothing more exhilarating, Winston Churchill once said, than to be shot at to no effect. That is a sentiment Luca Barbone has come to appreciate. He was safely back in Washington last week after leading a World Bank mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Having never been in a war zone before, he found the fortnight he and his team spent in Kinshasa, well, stimulating.

The mission had come close to evacuating after only a couple of days in the country when artillery shells starting raining down on Kinshasa from Brazzaville across the Congo River. President Laurent Kabila, whose own palace was being targeted (it was unclear by whom), sent troops over to silence the guns. The incoming shells slowed to a sporadic drizzle. Barbone and company decided to stay put.

Things remained hairy, though, especially when Pascal Lissouba, then vainly clinging onto the Congo-Brazzaville presidency against the Angolan-backed militias of Denis Sassou Nguesso, checked into the Kinshasa Intercontinental hotel where the World Bankers were holed up. Gunners on the other side of the river evidently learnt of Lissouba's whereabouts, but a little late. They opened up on the hotel five minutes after his departure.

The bank team braved shot and shell to help Kabila's government prepare an economic plan for an international donor conference originally planned for later this month. To the evident frustration of Barbone and his colleagues, the conference is now on indefinite hold pending resolution of a separate fight, this one pitting the United Nations and major western powers, especially the US, against Kabila and his regional allies, Rwanda's Paul Kagame and Uganda's Yoweri Museveni.

UN secretary-general Kofi Annan has staked his reputation on forcing Kabila to accept a UN investigation into the massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees which undoubtedly occurred while and after Kabila's Tutsi-led alliance was marching across the old Zaire in the first half of the year.



KABILA

Kabila and his allies have balked at permitting UN investigators into the suspected killing fields. They do not trust the UN, which they see as having preserved the Rwandan Hutu genocidaires by providing them with bases and cover — refugee camps in eastern Zaire — from which to counter-attack after Kagame drove them out of Rwanda and took power in 1994. This time, the two men are not going to let the UN interfere. Clearly, their intention has been to finish the job of exterminating the perpetrators of the 1994 Rwandan Tutsi genocide even if it means a great many innocents have been, to put it gently, caught in the crossfire.

Perhaps Washington's UN ambassador Bill Richardson will be able to break the logjam when he arrives in Kinshasa this week with his fellow special envoys, former Congressman Howard Wolpe and present member of the Congressional Black Caucus Donald Payne. But the omens are not good: Annan's spokesman, Fred Eckhardt, said the trio were going in with a UN-supplied list of "non-negotiable" demands.

"We have provided the Americans with the nonnegotiable elements of the mission and, as I understand it, the Americans will try to convince Kabila and other members of his government, and possibly other leaders in the region, of the wisdom of allowing the UN to go forward with its investigation."

Implicit in all this is that unless Kabila does what he is told he cannot expect much international help in reviving the collapsed economy and institutions of the Democratic Republic of Congo. That worries some at the World Bank. As one member of the Congo team put it: "The longer you wait, the greater the risk of the economy spiralling down, exacerbating the country's centrifugal tendencies." As an example of what he meant, he noted the presence in Kabila's government of some fairly unreconstructed devotees of the late Patrice Lumbumba and his brand of African socialism, who could exploit a lack of Western support to advance their own ideological perspectives. "There is the risk that the formal private sector throws in the sponge and you lose what's left of the tax base."

Not a lot is left. If government statistics can be believed (and the truth is the system is so shattered that they probably cannot) the state is collecting the equivalent of 5% of GDP in revenues from taxes and duties, a fraction of what it needs. Of course, taxpayers tend to pay a good deal more than that estimate suggests, given what might politely be called the transaction costs levied by individual collectors.

At the moment, said the Congo team member, the government was so starved of revenues that it would have to rely on donors even for the relatively modest sum for the resettlement of about 75 000 men and children under arms, plus their families (about half a million people).

The bank team found that of all the Kabila administration's plans, those for demobilisation — being key to achieving stability and "social peace" — were the most advanced, and "realistic". The idea was to resettle veterans in existing communities, which would be encouraged to absorb the newcomers through the establishment of local "social funds" which would benefit veterans and their new neighbours. This, according to the "Knowledge Bank", as World Bank president James Wolfensohn likes to call his institution these days, works better than giving all the money to the veterans.



WOLFENSOHN

The future of Kabila's Congo depends not only on getting those whose livelihood rests on their being armed into gainful, civilian existences. The problem is figuring out where to begin or what else the country needs. There is so much, notwithstanding that a lot of functions in which the state once had a role, education, for example, health care and telecommunications, have already privatised by default.

As the Congo team member noted, the Congolese government does not even have the institutional capacity to draw up a national budget that would meet the standards of the International Monetary Fund or other international lenders — a rather significant defect since the democratic republic has inherited a serious arrears position from the late Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire. To renegotiate this the new authorities will need to provide a more or less credible statement of their finances, current and projected. The difficulty of that task is compounded by the fact that the central bank of the Congo has yet to enter the age of the computer. This is a country that does not really even have a currency of its own. With a moratorium on the printing of new Zaire notes to stifle inflation the Congolese money supply is calculated by the World Bank team to be less than 0,4% of GDP. All transactions that matter, including payments to soldiers, are in hard currency or kind.

The Democratic Republic of Congo's minerals potential is huge, of course, and many, from SA and further afield, have rushed in to seek deals, or reconfirm those they struck in the Mobutu era. The World Bank team was not altogether happy about some of the terms it was seeing and advised the government against selling the family jewels for up-front cash in lieu of taxes and royalties down the road.

Arguably, if the international community, for which read the US and its anointed UN secretary-general, were more interested in the new Congo's future than the unpleasantness surrounding its birth, the Kabila administration might not have to be in the position of having to hock national assets to Adolf Lundin, chairman of Canada-based Tenke Mining Co for $250m. Unhappily for the Congolese, however, the US, and, it seems, the UN, is not interested in their long-term fortunes. They would rather posture — cheaply.

West must keep faith with Kabila

There is nothing to be gained for Congo or Central Africa by isolating Kabila's administration, writes **Chris McGreal**

Laurent Kabila, president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, has developed the knack of losing friends fast.

Governments that were ready to throw aid his way — if for no other reason than to assuage their guilt about giving Kabila's predecessor, Mobutu Sese Seko, so much money for his private indulgences — are shying away. And Kabila's Rwandan backers are increasingly exasperated at his reluctance to listen to their "advice".

He even managed to offend Nelson Mandela by dismissing his mediation efforts towards the end of the civil war. The South African leader is not the type of man a new African president wants to insult.

So it comes as no surprise to the United Nations investigators charged with tramping around eastern Congo in search of mass graves that Kabila has brushed aside pressure from potential allies and blocked their expedition. But his stubbornness is evidence of his weakness, not his strength.

Five months after seizing power, Kabila can hardly be said to be in control of his country. The Rwandan soldiers who swept him to victory remain the dominant force in eastern Congo where most of the massacres took place. The region is plagued by instability, much of it a continuation of confrontations that began beyond the former Zaire's borders.

Kabila is probably not in a position to bow to the UN's demand even if he were inclined to. Other, more powerful forces have every reason to keep prying eyes away. The UN knows this. The United States and the European Union know this. If questions are to be asked and pressure brought to bear, then the focus should be on the Rwandan authorities. But the fiction is maintained that Mr Kabila is the authority and if atrocities were committed, it was by troops under his command.

As they tramp down this blind alley, Washington and Brussels are undecided whether to withhold assistance from Kabila until he co-operates, or to view the mass killings in the east as an issue separate from the running of Congo today.

The US plans to send a delegation to the capital, Kinshasa, led by its UN ambassador, Bill Richardson, to put pressure on Kabila. There is no reason to believe it will be any more successful than previous efforts.

The UN's moral authority over Kabila, or anyone else in Central Africa for that matter, is not great. An organisation that turned tail and ran at the start of the Rwandan genocide and then kept mass murderers fed and watered in the sprawling Hutu refugee camps commands little but contempt in the region. Washington, Paris and Brussels are hardly in a better position after backing Mobutu for decades.

This leaves the US and others torn between punitive measures and trying to buy Kabila off. But what if Richardson succeeds? Even less clear in the minds of US and EU officials is what they will do if the UN investigation turns up hard evidence of a systematic slaughter of Hutu refugees.

Kabila's administration needs to be judged not by what happened in eastern Congo during the civil war but by how they administer the country from now on. The massacres are less a Congolese issue than a Rwandan one. Most of the victims were Rwandan Hutus. It is likely that most of the killers were Rwandan Tutsis.

Isolation and *de facto* sanctions in the form of withholding aid will severely set back any attempt by Kabila at reconstruction.

Kabila is stubborn, less than adept at dealing with the international community and constrained by authoritarian views he held for decades in obscurity. But there is nothing to be gained for Congo or Central Africa by isolating his administration and seeing it fail.

Kabila agrees to UN probe

358

KINSHASA: Congo President Mr Laurent Kabila has done it before and the question now is whether he'll do it again — promise a UN team it can investigate allegations that his army massacred Rwandan refugees, only to renege later.

After months of recrimination, the Congolese government agreed on Saturday to allow a UN team to probe reports that Kabila's rebels, backed by Rwandan Tutsis, slaughtered Rwandan Hutus during their drive to unseat late dictator Mr Mobutu Sese Seko.

The accord, reached after hours of talks between Kabila and Mr Bill Richardson, US ambassador to the United Nations, gives the team freedom to go where it wishes and pledges the government's support.

It specifically says the team can move out "as soon as possible" to eastern Congo, where many of the massacres are alleged to have taken place, as well as to western Mbandaka, a city the government barred the team from visiting last month.

It is the strongest sign yet that the UN team will finally get into the field.

But the government has agreed to an investigation before, only to set up roadblocks to stop it.

Even Richardson, after announcing the agreement, said he was only "cautiously optimistic" the work would actually begin.

"Implementation now is critically important," he said at a news conference with Kabila.

Kabila denies refugees were specifically targeted, but has acknowledged that some Rwandan Hutus, armed by Mobutu to fight the rebels, and the women and children they hid among may have been killed in battle.

"We want to see actions, not just words," Richardson said at the press conference, "and today has been a very good start." — Sapa-AP

CT 27/10/97

Kabila is no saviour, say ex-hostages who want his past known

(358)

Three Stanford University students and a Dutch citizen break their silence on the man who kidnapped them 22 years ago

Star 29/10/97

THE WASHINGTON POST

Even now, 22 years after Laurent Kabila sent his guerrillas to kidnap them at gunpoint, to beat them and hold them for ransom in a remote jungle camp, Carrie Hunter and her companions do not want the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) to know exactly where they are.

They made a pact then not to talk publicly about their ordeal, not to publicise their weeks under armed guard on skimpy rations in a cold mud hut, undergoing "re-education" from Maoist officers.

But last spring, watching in dismay as Kabila came out of nowhere to seize control of what was then Zaire, oust his longtime nemesis, Mobutu Sese Seko, and win US and international recognition, the former hostages said they decided the world should know what they call the truth about Kabila's past.

Beginning with a May 23 letter to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Hunter and the three others seized with her have tried to persuade the Clinton administration to confront Kabila about his record of "kidnapping, slavery and terrorism".

They agreed to be interviewed after getting what they described as a brush-off, saying they fear the people of Congo are facing treatment similar to what they received at Kabila's hands.

"Don't forget that in 1975 our State Department branded this man a terrorist. We deal with terrorists all the time, but we acknowledge that they are terrorists. To our knowledge, neither the United States nor the Dutch government has ever been willing to confront Kabila with his past."

Hunter, Barbara Smuts and Kenneth "Steve" Smith were young Stanford University students in 1975 studying chimpanzee behaviour at the Tanzania camp of renowned naturalist Jane Goodall. Emilie Bergmann was a Dutch graduate student and administrative assistant to Goodall.

But it ended abruptly in a midnight raid on the camp by about 40 heavily armed men sent across Lake Tanganyika by Kabila to seize "Europeans".

Kabila then was an unsuccessful Third World Marxist guerrilla leader who, after a failed insurrection in the mid-1960s, had taken control of an

> **"The women who brought us our food were also hostages"**

enclave along Zaire's eastern border, beyond Mobutu's control.

Confined to the border area of Zaire, Kabila and his forces regularly used Tanzania as a travel and supply route, accounts at the time said. That was how they knew about Goodall's camp and the "Europeans" they believed were working there.

Interviewed separately, Hunter, Smith and Bergmann gave similar accounts of their captivity and their reason for recounting it now: a fear that Kabila is getting away with sanitising his past, hiding the risks of brutality and terror they believe his rule presents to the people of Congo.

After seizing all the white people they could find at Goodall's camp and stealing the money, cooking pots and chickens of the African staff, Kabila's guerrillas loaded hostages and booty into a leaky boat for the long trip back across the lake. All the while, they brandished weapons in the faces of their bound captives and pointed rifles at their heads.

Once in Zaire, Hunter said, "we were greeted by this ragamuffin army" and marched up a rugged escarpment above the lake "to a special camp they had built for us, two huts, mud and wattle. The mud was still wet. It was clear they had prepared this attack, that they intended to bring back prisoners, and there we were."

The guerrillas' commander, who called himself General Alfred Nando, told the captives that the guerrillas were members of Kabila's *Parti de la Revolution Populaire*, or PRP, which he described as a Marxist-Leninist group established in 1968 to seek Mobutu's ouster and "create a socialist society."

The captives were ordered to write letters to then-Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere and the US and Dutch ambassadors in Dar es Salaam, demanding money, weapons, the right to move freely through Tanzania on their way to China for training and the release of PRP prisoners from Tanzanian jails.

In the end, all the PRP obtained was a ransom of nearly a half-million dollars raised by the captives' families "and never repaid", Bergmann said.

It rankles them, Hunter said, to see envoys such as Bill Richardson, US ambassador to the UN, travelling to Kinshasa to talk to Kabila as a legitimate head of state rather than as a terrorist who has never been confronted about his past.



Kidnapper? ... Laurent Kabila's 'terrorist' past has been

Kinshasa reopens its river border with Brazzaville

BD 30/10/97 (358)

KINSHASA — The Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday formally reopened its border with Congo, formed by the Congo River flowing between the two countries' capitals.

Deputy Interior Minister Faustin Munene said at a brief ceremony river traffic would resume today after the Democratic Republic of Congo "agreed to reopen the border at the request of the new regime of Gen Denis Sassou Nguesso", who had returned to power in Brazzaville after winning a four-month civil war.

"We have agreed to reopen the border at the request of our Congolese brothers in Brazzaville to allow them to come for food supplies in Kinshasa," Munene said.

The border between the two Congos was formally closed in May when the rebel alliance of now Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila overthrew dictator Mobutu Sese Seko of the former Zaire.

Munene called on border police "to prevent infiltration by former elements of the Zairean Armed Forces" who fled to Congo after Mobutu's ousting. "We hope the Brazzaville authorities will take security measures to prevent these elements from infiltrating here," Munene said.

Initially river traffic would recommence only between Kinshasa's Ngobila beach and Mfima beach in Brazzaville, Munene said. Private wharves would remain closed.

River transport experts were inspecting security conditions at Mfima beach, Munene said.

Civil war broke out in Congo-Brazzaville in early June, just three weeks after Kabila's rise to power in Kinshasa. Despite the border closure, Kinshasa allowed boats to transport refugees from Brazzaville to safety in the city. — Sapa-AFP.

The bankrupt Democratic Republic of Congo hopes to grow without cash

Kabila seeks 'economic partners'

(358)

ET (PZR) 5/11/97

FROM REUTER

Johannesburg — Bankrupted by its former ruler, the new Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was hoping to entice foreign investment through partnerships, said Pierre Mpoya, the economy minister and the minister of economic, industry and trade.

"We need to be accepted as partners ... so we can develop ourselves without cash, because no one has cash to invest around these areas," Mpoya said on Monday night at a southern African investment workshop organised by Africa Resources Investment, a South African black-owned firm.

"If we can trust each other maybe the one that can manufacture equipment can sell on promises to be paid when the plant, which has been credited, will be functioning and will produce goods," Mpoya said.

He said the DRC, formerly Zaire, badly needed to rebuild basic infrastructure, left in tatters after years of corruption and neglect by ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.



CASH STRAPPED
DRC President Laurent Kabila prioritises infrastructure such as roads, airport, river transport, telecommunications, health and education for investments through partnerships

Priorities for investment were road, airport and river transport building, as well as telecommunications, health and education, he said.

Mobutu was toppled by rebel leader Laurent Kabila, now the country's president, in May after a seven-month rebellion and fled, leaving Africa's third largest nation facing economic ruin and foreign debt of $14 billion.

The country is extremely rich in copper, cobalt, diamonds and gold, and Mpoya said investment in these sectors would come naturally, but for now the priority was basic infrastructure.

He said a programme for investment had already been established and the country would hold an investors conference shortly.

Kabila's government was still awaiting assistance promised by the South African government soon after the fall of Mobutu to implement fiscal development, Mpoya said.

"We are still waiting for the move. We hope it will come, any support to help us in this short difficult period," he said.

International donors plan to meet in early December for talks on ways to help the DRC revive its ruined economy, a World Bank official said last Friday.

The "Friends of Congo" meeting, co-ordinated by the World Bank, was scheduled for December 3 and 4 in Brussels.

The DRC became a member of the Southern African Development Community trade grouping in September with, among others, South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, the Seychelles, Mauritius and Tanzania.

Republic of Congo seeks investment

(368) BD 6/11/97

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International donors are scheduled to meet in Brussels early next month for talks on ways to help the republic revive its ruined economy, a World Bank official said last Friday. — Reuter.

World Bank freezes Republic of Congo ties

(3588)

WASHINGTON — The World Bank has frozen its financial ties with the Republic of Congo because the government has defaulted on its loan payments, bank sources said on Wednesday.

The Brazzaville government went into default on October 31 on loans from the bank, prompting the lending agency to suspend all loans and credits to the country, the sources said. The World Bank was expected to release a statement on the Congo Republic yesterday.

Former Marxist military ruler Denis Sassou Nguesso, who proclaimed himself president after a bloody four-month civil war, has promised to convene forums to decide on a new democratic transition.

Regional analysts say the makeup of the new government suggests Sassou intends to focus on liberalising the economy while leaving elections on the back burner.

Over the years, the Republic of Congo has borrowed more than $240m from the World Bank to spur development. But bank sources in Washington said it had missed recent debt service payments and the bank had placed the country in "nonaccrual" status, meaning the Republic of Congo would not be able to borrow until it cleared its arrears, estimated at $16m. — Reuter.

BD 7/11/97

AFRICA

Kabila has stifled Congo civil rights — UN report

BD 13/11/97 (358)

NEW YORK — The government of President Laurent Kabila, which took power in the former Zaire last May, had eliminated civil rights to life, liberty and physical integrity, a highly critical United Nations (UN) report said on Tuesday.

Kabila, who overthrew the late President Mobutu Sese Seko, "exercises executive and legislative power and judges and magistrates are answerable to him; all laws which contradict the new precepts laid down by the president have been repealed," UN human rights investigator Roberto Garreton of Chile said.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as the country was renamed, "the regime has eliminated the civil rights to life, liberty, physical integrity ... the rights of political participation have been suspended; there are no measures to ensure the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights," the report said.

Announcements of free elections were contradictory and no effort was being made to implement them, said Garreton, with whom both Kabila and Mobutu refused to co-operate.

Alluding to the Tutsis — who helped propel Kabila to power — the report said that "one ethnic group predominates over hundreds of others, often resulting in conflict, while the new armed forces and police "are at the service of the political and ethnic power group in the government and commit abuses against opponents and 'enemies'."

"The new state structure, based on an omnipresent state party (though this is denied), the absence of a short- , medium- or long-term democratic project, and the fact there is nobody capable of controlling the exercise of power all lead the special rapporteur to conclude that the Congolese people do not enjoy, and will not enjoy in the foreseeable future, the human right to democracy."

The report said the arrival of Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire "had some positive aspects", like an end to extortion and looting, more security in the cities and a drop in ordinary crime.

Democratic Congo has long been embroiled with the UN over an investigation into alleged massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees.

A UN mission that first arrived in Kinshasa in August was denied access to areas where alleged massacres took place. The mission's leaders returned to Congo only this week after personal involvement by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and talks with Kabila by the US UN envoy Bill Richardson.

Meanwhile, Kabila's victory has made little difference to diplomats of the country stationed in Zimbabwe's capital Harare.

Six months after Kabila took power, the embassy's telephone is still cut off for nonpayment and the officials there have not been paid for years. Power has been cut off until huge arrears are settled.

Yet the premises are a hive of activity, with business people seeking details of investment opportunities following last month's signing of a trade pact and a $13m line of credit between Zimbabwe and Zaire. — Reuter, Sapa-DPA.

'Kabila worse than Mobutu' – UN

MHG 14-20/11/97 (358)

Chris McGreal

The United Nations has accused the new government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire) of showing little more respect for human rights and democratisation than Mobutu Sese Seko's dictatorship.

A report was released as UN investigators returned to Kinshasa to probe massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees in the east of the rechristened Congo after months of prevarication by the new administration. The UN human rights report damned President Laurent Kabila for curtailing freedoms since he seized power in May.

"The regime has eliminated the civil rights to life, liberty, physical integrity ... the rights of political participation have been suspended; there are no measures to ensure the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights," it said.

The report's author, Roberto Garreton, a Chilean lawyer, said Kabila's administration has made contradictory announcements about free elections, and that no effort is being made to implement them. Instead, Garreton said, Kabila "exercises executive and legislative power and judges and magistrates are answerable to him; all laws which contradict the new precepts laid down by the president have been repealed".

At his inauguration, Kabila gave himself virtually limitless powers to rule by decree until presidential elections scheduled for April 1999. On Monday, the government installed a commission to draw up a new constitution. The UN report said the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire's victory over Mobutu "had some positive aspects" by bringing an end to the endemic extortion and looting, increased security in the cities and a drop in ordinary crime.

But Garreton launched an attack on the political prominence of Tutsis — many from Rwanda — who provided the force which propelled Kabila to power. He described them as one ethnic group predominating over hundreds of others while the police and army "are at the service of the political and ethnic power group in the government and commit abuses against opponents and 'enemies'."

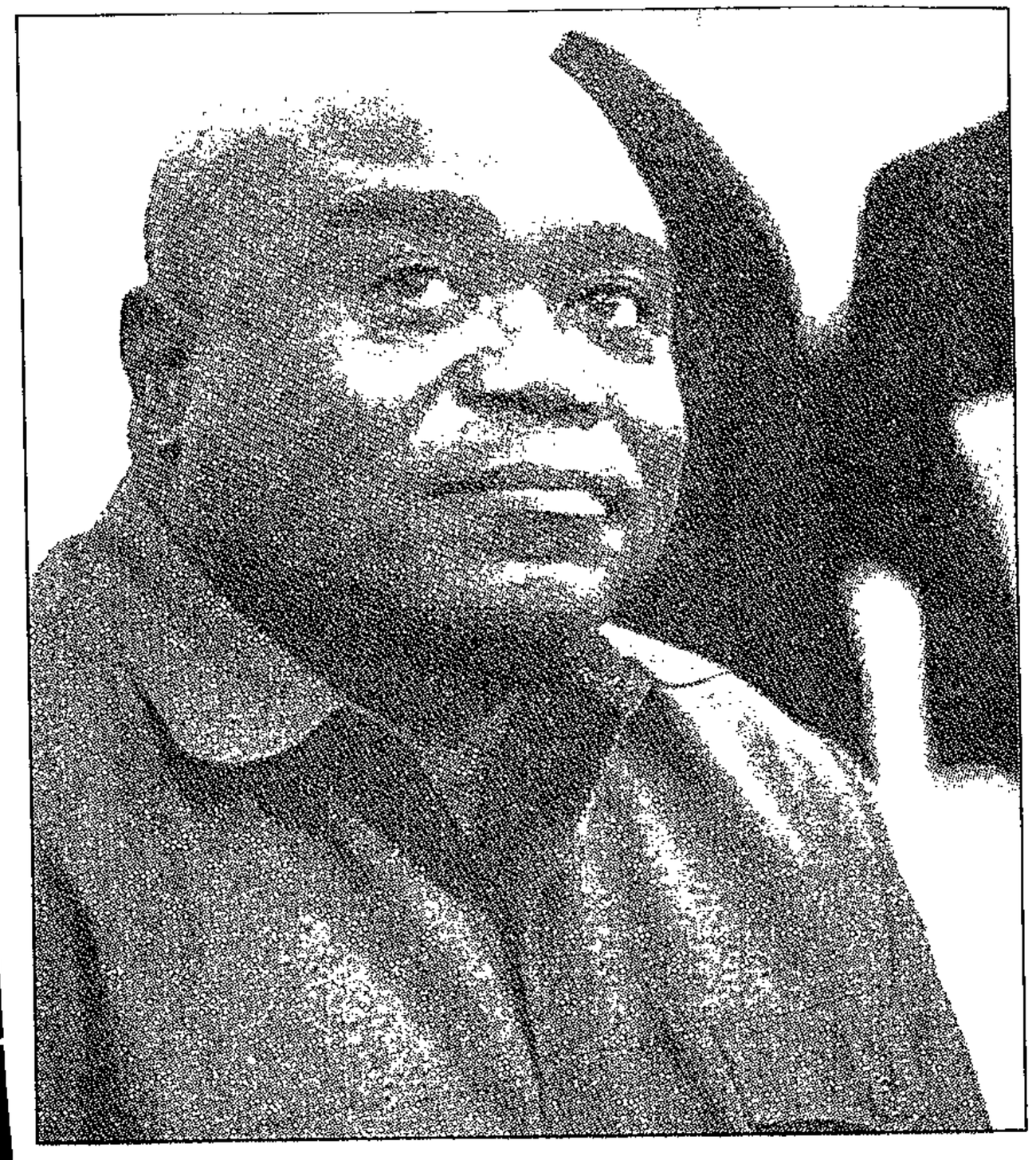
The new state structure, based on an omnipresent state party (although this is denied), the absence of a short, medium, or long-term democratic project, and the fact that there is nobody capable of controlling the exercise of power all lead the special rapporteur to conclude that the Congolese people do not enjoy, and will not enjoy in the foreseeable future, the human right to democracy," Garreton concluded.

There was no immediate reaction from Kabila's administration. Few of the liberties Garreton accuses the new government of denying Congo's citizens existed under Mobutu's three-decade dictatorship, which the UN failed to criticise until he fell from favour with Western powers.

Garreton has clashed with the government before after it accused him of bias as head of the UN's investigation into massacres of Rwandan refugees in the east of the former Zaire. At the time, Garreton accused Kabila's administration of obstructing the probe but he was forced to step aside under pressure from the UN headquarters in New York which feared a total collapse of the probe.

UN investigators returned to Kinshasa this week saying they had secured a new agreement to go ahead following intervention by the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, and the American envoy to the UN, Bill Richardson.

Congo's minister of the interior has said publicly that his government does not trust the UN.



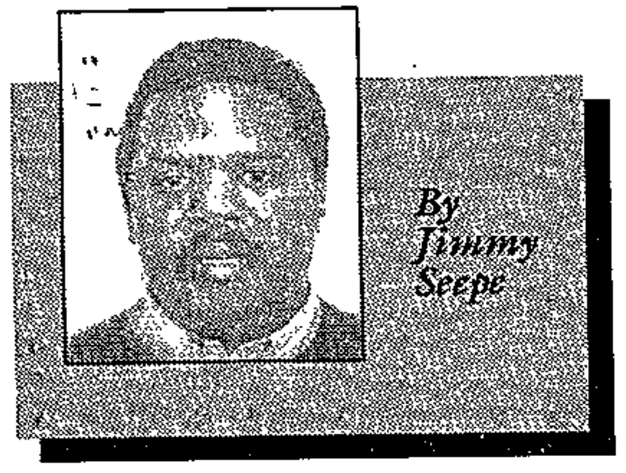
LAURENT KABILA ... received information that Mobutu's generals were plotting an armed struggle against his government ■ PIC: FANIE JASON

Zaire's loose cannons

(358)

NIA report slams the activities of generals hiding out in SA

CP 16/11/97



By Jimmy Seepe

Accused by the Democratic Republic of Congo of dragging its feet on Mobutu Sese Seko's runaway generals, South Africa will now soon act

THE NATIONAL Intelligence Agency has completed a damning report confirming some of the allegations against more than 30 former Zairean generals accused of using South African soil to plot illegal activities against the new Democratic Republic of Congo, City Press was informed this week.

The report, handed to the President's Office and parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence, could result in the generals' extradition to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Depending on how the government acts on its findings, the report could help improve relations between South Africa and Congo – potentially one of the continent's richest countries.

Although relations between Pretoria and Kinshasa are not strained, the Congolese government has expressed disquiet at what they perceived to be Pretoria's "feet dragging" in acting against the generals.

□ A NIA spokesperson, Hellmuth Schlenther, confirmed to City Press that the intelligence agency had completed its investigations on the generals' activities.

The intelligence agency was asked to investigate them two months ago by President Nelson Mandela after DRC President Laurent Kabila told him they had received information that the generals were plotting an armed struggle against the new Congo government.

The generals sought political asylum in South Africa after Kabila and his Rwanda-backed forces overthrew former Zairean dictator, Mobuto Sese Seko, who has since died.

Schlenther would not reveal details of the intelligence report before the president and parliament's joint standing committee had a chance to study it.

The committee is expected to make recommendations to be submitted to Mandela. But it is unlikely to do so soon as its chair, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, is said to be overseas for the next two weeks.

It is thought that the committee will be charged with advising the president on whether to hand the generals over to Kabila's new government to face trial.

Another recommendation could be to let them remain in the country but place them under strict surveillance to limit their activities and ensure they do not use South Africa as a launching pad against the DRC.

However, City Press has learned the government is not likely to extradite the generals since South Africa has not signed any extradition treaty with Kabila's government.

Another argument advanced for the generals to stay in the country is that their absence from the DRC has served as a stabilising factor for the new government.

Kabila is still trying to consolidate his position,. The presence of several Rwandanese in his government and the army has fuelled resentment among locals.

There are fears that if the generals are extradited while Kabila's hold on government is still shaky, it could ignite the already unstable political situation.

Since Mobutu's overthrow, a number of his generals who fled to South Africa have moved in and out of the country unimpeded. Most of them have bought expensive homes in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town.

Their presence has been a source of embarrassment to the government, worried about accusations that it is harbouring politicians who have looted their country's coffers.

Killing fields haunt Congo

ARG 17/11/97 (358)

Kinshasa – Something horrible happened to Rwandan refugees in Congo's forests as Laurent Kabila's rebel army took over the country in the eight months between October 1996 and May 1997.

Some 200 000 Rwandans are missing, probably dead. A report by Human Rights Watch, published this month, finds that the Rwandan army and Mr Kabila's guerrillas "carried out massive killings of civilian refugees".

It tells of areas in eastern Congo, visited by its staff, filled with mass graves or littered with decomposing bodies.

It also alleges that aid agencies and their food supplies were used as bait by the Rwandan army and the rebels to bring the refugees out of the bush. They were then murdered.

The three leaders of a United Nations team last week flew into Kinshasa to investigate these allegations.

The team has had endless difficulties, its start constantly delayed. And since it has to complete its work by the end of February, those who know the pace of the country and the scale of the task believe that it may turn out to be the skimpiest of inquiries.

Even so, it has to be done.

Western donors have made the investigation a condition of aid. And, without aid, Congo's new government will be unable to begin the reconstruction of a country ruined by decades of misrule.

Outsiders, particularly the United States, are relieved that there is a government of sorts in the rich centre of Africa with which they can do business.

So there was general satisfaction on October 25th when Bill Richardson, America's representative at the UN, said he had got President Kabila at last to agree that the inquiry could go ahead.

'Areas in eastern Congo were filled with mass graves or littered with decomposing bodies'

The investigation had been blocked since mid-April, bedevilled by distrust on both sides.

Mr Kabila's suspicions of the UN go back to the 1960s when Patrice Lumumba, the first prime minister of Congo (whom the young Kabila supported), was murdered, and UN troops helped suppress his followers.

Suspicions were reignited in the 1990s when the UN, after abandoning Rwanda to its genocide, fed Rwandan refugees in Congolese camps that were run by Rwandan militiamen responsible for that genocide, and who were beginning to regroup and recross the border and attack the new government in Rwanda.

The new Congolese government, and its Rwandan allies, claim that the UN has shown little sensitivity towards history.

When the team from the UN Commission on Human Rights, led by Roberto Garreton, a Chilean, circulated a report on the killings before investigating them, Mr Kabila's men refused to allow Mr Garreton into the country.

They also demanded that the inquiry's mandate be extended to include the 1994 Rwandan genocide, plus Congo's years of repression under the late President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Kofi Annan, the UN's secretary-general, apparently accepted these amendments. In July, he set up his own investigating team, extending the mandate back to 1993 and putting Atsu-Koffi Amega, a former Togolese judge, at its head. But Mr Amega had once been given an award by President Mobutu.

Distrust stirred again, especially when Mr Amega decided to begin the investigation at Mbandaka, some 550 km from Kinshasa, where there was strong evidence that several hundred Hutu refugees had been murdered by Rwandan soldiers in the last days of Mr Kabila's revolutionary war.

To the Kinshasa government, Mr Amega's decision seemed to confirm that the UN inquiry had been set up simply to put it in the dock.

Frightened of what might be found at Mbandaka, the government demanded that the investigation be confined to the eastern part of the country and that it would investigate no events that had taken place after May 17th 1997, the day Mr Kabila finally took over.

While these shenanigans were going on, the government, according to human-rights investigators, was busy removing evidence of the killings.

In addition, Mr Richardson's breakthrough last month seems not to be as clear as it first looked. The statement that Mr Richardson gave to the press that Mr Kabila had agreed to an inquiry turned out to be his alone.

Although Mr Kabila and his ministers met Mr Richardson and, according to the Americans, associated themselves with what he had to say, they signed nothing. – The Economist

Mugabe says SADC states are supportive of Kabila

Gaborone – Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe said the Southern African Development Community (SADC) heads of state were dismayed by the international "demonisation" of Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila.

Mugabe was responding to a question posed during the International Herald Tribune trade and investment summit in Gaborone this week on how the SADC and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) were dealing with the present political situations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Congo Brazzaville.

Mugabe, who took part in a discussion session on the future of SADC during the summit, along with President Masire of Botswana, President Chissano of Mozambique and Prime Minister Geingob of Namibia, said the SADC was happy former Zairian president Mobutu Sese Seko had been unseated and wanted the international community to recognise tyranny had given way to a new process.

"The SADC supports President Kabila's policy for the formation of a transitional government in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the world must now give support to Kabila to assist the process of consolidation and the move toward democracy," said Mugabe.

Mugabe noted that the former Zaire was suffering from acute food shortages and minimal infrastructure. He said Kabila was battling to rebuild the nation with practically no resources. – Star Foreign Service

(352) Star 20/11/97

Mugabe says Congo's leader needs assistance

BD 20/11/97 (358)

Claire Pickard-Cambridge

GABORONE — President Robert Mugabe said yesterday he had been dismayed by the international community's attempts to demonise the Democratic Republic of Congo's leader instead of helping the new administration to consolidate itself.

He told a trade and investment conference that United Nations investigations into alleged massacres in President Laurent Kabila's territory had received undue emphasis at a time when the colossal problem of reconstruction needed to be attended to.

"I am not saying this issue should be swept under the carpet ... but help is called for and we want to see Kabila's government strengthened so that parameters can be achieved for bringing about democratic elections."

During the debate, Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano appeared to agree, saying the Democratic Republic of Congo should be helped to support in reorganising economic structures. "The world is more concerned about superficial things such as a crime here and there, and is not concerned with eliminating the root problems."

Mugabe said the Democratic Republic of Congo was now a member of the Southern African Development Community and needed its assistance. "We should not let the international community raise Kabila as a devil who must be crushed. Instead, he should be seen as a saviour of the people."

He said the situation in Congo-Brazzaville, where President Pascal Lissouba had been overthrown by Denis Sassou-Nguesso last month, had been difficult for the region which had tried earlier to facilitate mediation.

"However, the fact is that Sassou-Nguesso is in control and we should help to ensure that he leads the country back to civilian rule, and that there are elections as soon as possible," Mugabe said.

However, he was glad the Organisation of African Unity had started imposing sanctions against coup leaders, as was the case in Sierra Leone, because coups should never be accepted.

After concerns were expressed about Zimbabwe's fiscal deficit, Mugabe said foreign investors would not be affected by payments to war veterans. "We need only about Z$4,5bn, which I do not have a headache about." Budget allocations to various ministries would be cut and the privatisation of certain government assets would also raise funds for this.

Reuter reports Mugabe said funds "will come from taxes and from our own sources but it will not come from investment capital. If you are investing, we will not say part of the portion should go towards creating a fund for war veterans.

"We are to cut the budget's allocation to various ministries in many ways. We have assets. We are privatising some of our assets and through that we will get some funds," he said.

Kabila's political opponents arrested

KINSHASA — A prominent opponent of Democratic Congo's President Laurent Kabila and the acting army chief of staff were arrested in different parts of the capital on Tuesday, witnesses and aides said yesterday.

Witnesses said police arrested politician Z'Ahidi Arthur Ngoma and five of his supporters shortly after he addressed a news conference.

Z'Ahidi, a former employee of the UN cultural agency Unesco, was for a long time a staunch opponent of Zaire's late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Since Mobutu was toppled in May, he had also been one of the fiercest critics of Kabila, whom he accused of installing a new dictatorship in the central African country.

"After the news conference had finished the police surrounded his house and shot into the air before going inside to arrest him," one witness said.

Also on Tuesday, Cmdt Masasu Nindanga, the acting army chief of staff, was arrested in Kinshasa and taken to an unknown destination, his close associates said.

"The orders to arrest him appear to have come from the top but now we don't know where he's been taken," a close aide to Masasu said. "About 100 heavily armed soldiers encircled his office," the aide said.

A senior internal security official confirmed the arrest but did not give the reason for it.

Masasu has been acting chief of staff since Kabila came to power last May after a successful seven-month guerrilla campaign against Mobutu. Masasu was a political leader in Kabila's then rebel AFDL movement.

Kabila told a news conference last week that the current military chiefs were only interim appointments.

Officers from the Rwandan army which backed Kabila's successful revolt have remained in Congo, occupying senior positions with influence over the Congolese armed forces.

Z'Ahidi, who leads the Forces of the Future party, held a seminar in Kinshasa on Monday in which he accused Kabila's AFDL movement of holding an entire country hostage to its wishes.

Kabila banned political parties and their activity shortly after taking power last May. Dozens of politicians and activists opposed to his policy have been arrested, and troops have been sent out on numerous occasions to break up demonstrations.

On Saturday soldiers broke up a meeting at the headquarters of chief opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi's popular Union for Democracy and Social Progress Party.

Groups to sue Nigerian govt

Hilary Andersson

LAGOS — Fourteen prodemocracy groups in Nigeria have filed a lawsuit against the Nigerian government for disrupting a reception they had organised for the outgoing US ambassador, Walter Carrington, in September.

The groups, which include the National Democratic Coalition and the Campaign for Democracy, are suing government for the equivalent of $500 000 for allegedly violating their human rights.

When soldiers and armed policemen raided the ambassador's farewell party — also attended by SA ambassador George Nene — two months ago, guests fled to another location. Soldiers broke down the gates and tore a guest's speech from his hands.

The incident sparked a fierce diplomatic row between the US and Nigeria.

Côte d'Ivoire govt set to complete privatisation

Shareen Singh

ABIDJAN — The Côte d'Ivoire government would privatise by next year the sectors of the economy still in government hands, Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan said yesterday.

Addressing the opening of a four-day conference to attract investment, Duncan said the remaining 16 enter-

More than 2 000 investors and dignitaries from 38 countries were at the conference and trade fair and many said they were optimistic about forging trade relations with Côte d'Ivoire, attracted by its political stability, opportunities emerging from privatisation and government initiatives in developing the economy.

Duncan said the processing of raw

Burundi sanctions hit neighbouring states

Chilombo Mwondela

LUSAKA — Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania have been hardest hit by economic sanctions imposed on Burundi by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa).

This is the view of Boney Katatumba, president of the Eastern and Southern African Business Organisation, who claims SA, Europe, America and Asia have taken advantage of the gap created by the Comesa economic sanctions and have flooded the Burundi market with essential commodities previously supplied the neighbouring countries. Katatumba urged the fourth Comesa council of ministers meeting held in Lusaka to review the trade embargo against Burundi.

Zambian Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry chairman George Chabwera said this week that Zambia's sugar exports had been greatly affected by the embargo.

"Already, export earnings from regional sugar sales have dropped about 30% and this is not helping us," he said.

□ DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (358)

Genocide allegations on eve of conference

A Democratic Republic of Congo conference opens in Brussels today amid accusations that President Laurent Kabila's government killed thousands of Rwandan refugees and Congolese civilians after ousting former dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. Twenty-six countries and international organisations have been invited to the World Bank-sponsored event, and almost all have accepted to come.

The "Friends of Congo" conference comes at the request of the Kabila government whose forces drove Mobutu from power in May. The meeting is not a pledging conference but an attempt to pinpoint the needs of the Congo — known as Zaire under Mobutu — and outline a possible programme of long-term economic assistance. On the meeting's eve, Amnesty International reported that Kabila's forces had murdered thousands of Rwandan refugees and Congolese civilians since his rebellion broke out in eastern Zaire in September 1996. — *Sapa-AP, Brussels* CT(BE) 4/12/97

Congo's leaky borders threaten SADC trade

(358) CT(BJR) 8/12/97 (2[illegible])

PETER FABRICIUS

Johannesburg—The Democratic Republic of Congo faces a huge challenge in imposing customs control over its vast borders to enable it to join the proposed free trade area which other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries intend launching within eight years.

Mfundo Nkuhlu, the director for Africa in the Congo's department of trade and industry, expressed this concern last week to the Forum de Reflexion des Congolais (FRC), a meeting of Congolese expatriates in South Africa.

Nkuhlu had said in an earlier interview that he believed the Congo (formerly Zaire), which joined the SADC in September, might have to stay out of the free trade agreement at first, to enable it to gain sufficient control of the movement of goods across its borders.

At the FRC meeting he was quizzed by Congolese who asked what was the point of Congo joining the SADC, if they could not join the free trade area. He replied that for such an area to work there had to be adequate customs control around all the external borders, to guarantee that all goods trading within the free trade area originated there.

Otherwise the SADC would be providing an opportunity for "footloose" and "fly-by-night" operators to bring in goods from the outside and trade duty-free, without benefiting the SADC countries.

Nkuhlu said the Congo bordered on nine countries, and the stretch of border to be protected by customs officials was huge, relative to a weak government structure.

He said the Congo had asked South Africa to help strengthen its customs administration, but this was not easy for South Africa to do when it was going through its own profound changes and customs were the "soft underbelly of our own system".

South Africa was also helping the Congo with supply-side measures such as helping develop transport corridors, "because you can't trade if you don't produce". The South African Cabinet had agreed in principle to invest in the Congo side of the Benguella railway, which connects Congo's mineral-rich Katanga province to the Angolan port of Benguella.

An Italian company had already been given the job of repairing the railway on the Angolan side. Nkuhlu said South Africa was investigating the problem of making the railway tracks on both sides compatible, and would soon be sending a team to the Congo.

He noted that Spoornet, the South African rail parastatal, had been involved in the Congo for some time.

He said when the railway restarted, it would open southern Congo to development and capital inflow. It would mainly be used by the major mining companies in Katanga.

Nkuhlu said the Congo was desperate for capital inflow, which was why it had brought forward the international donors' conference which took place in Brussels last Thursday.

— Independent Foreign Service

It will take more than a name change to clean up Zaire

BD 10/12/97 (358)

Purging corruption may be difficult in the former Zaire, where the system forced even the most honest into venal practices, and graft has become a necessity rather than a personal failing, writes Michela Wrong

DESCRIBING a system corroded from top to bottom by corruption, the late president Mobutu Sese Seko once remarked of Zaire: "Everyone is for sale."

From their offices in the elegant Gombe district, 125 officials are now embarking on the task of eradicating that national vice.

Created after Mobutu was toppled by the Alliance of Democratic Forces (AFDL), the Office des Biens Mal Acquis (Office for Ill-Gotten Gains, known as OBMA) is undertaking the modern equivalent of cleaning out the Augean stables: trying to eliminate graft in a nation on the take.

Operating out of a whitewashed villa once owned by the president's first wife, OBMA's agents are logging the plunder that reduced a nation rich in copper, cobalt, diamond, gold and coffee to pauper status.

Behind it lies the conviction, echoed in a handful of traumatised African states, that the future can be built only once past shames have been purged. What the truth commission is for SA and the International Tribunal may yet be for Rwanda, OBMA is meant to be in the rebaptised Democratic Republic of Congo.

But in contrast with the truth commission, amnesties are not on offer. "There will be no pardons," insists Jean-Baptiste Mulemba, the former guerrilla fighter who heads OBMA. "If we forgive, those who come tomorrow will also steal. Once is enough. There won't be a second time in our country."

Working with teams of European and US lawyers, OBMA is locating bank accounts, companies, shareholdings and properties Mobutu and his coterie established in a score of African and Western countries in three decades in power.

Helping the process, says Mulemba, are changing attitudes to banking confidentiality, triggered in part by the outcry over the treatment Swiss banks allotted to Jewish Holocaust victims.

"The Swiss banks started chasing accounts at our request when Kinshasa was not yet in the AFDL's control. Switzerland and Belgium have both agreed to freeze Mobutu's assets," he says.

France, Mobutu's most faithful ally, has been less co-operative and Portugal, Morocco, Senegal and Ivory Coast have yet to respond to requests for an asset freeze, which means the exiled Mobutu family can still tap those sources for funds.

"But if we can evaluate with our own methods the size of that fortune, I don't think any country will refuse to hand over the funds in the end," says Mulemba. "We'd love to recover it all but recapturing even 60% wouldn't be bad."

Trickier has been the hunt conducted at home: tracking down state-owned properties and companies that were seized by the mouvanciers — members of the former elite — bank loans that were never repaid, taxes and duties ignored, accounts fiddled, "little presents" made.

Since August, the OBMA has confiscated 10 businesses worth about $200m and seized 300-350 flats and houses in Kinshasa. Mulemba's judicial inspectors are preparing 200 court cases.

But this is just the start: Mulemba estimates that 90% of the capital's companies indulged in the practice of appointing a mouvancier to their boards to avoid tax. "We will spend as long as it takes to expose what went on, 10 years, 20 years, a century if necessary," he promises.

And therein lies the rub. For Mobutu's system sucked in those around it, as graft became a practical necessity rather than a personal failing. Public servants asked for backhanders because they never received salaries. Companies paid off generals rather than see their premises wrecked. Playing the game often meant the difference between bankruptcy and survival.

That sad truth seems lost on AFDL ringleaders, who spent years in exile and have little understanding or sympathy for the informal self-help arrangements that replaced collapsing formal structures.

Pragmatists also warn that while uncertainty reigns over whether hundreds of businesses are slated for confiscation, only the most foolhardy would step up investment in the Congo, condemning an economy in desperate need of a jump-start to languish in the doldrums.

The price of an overly high moral stance may be coming home to the government as the mouvanciers turn tables on the AFDL, saying that a movement that blithely appropriated villas, cars, televisions and telephones in the first days of its military takeover is poorly placed to preach.

Most embarrassingly, several OBMA agents who found old habits hard to break are now under investigation for using their positions to make ill-gotten gains of their own. Mulemba, who plans eventually to open an OBMA office in every big town and province, admits the operation is in need of restructuring.

But the lapses highlight a basic dilemma: that until Congo's economy is healthy enough to guarantee its citizens — especially its state employees — a decent standard of living, moral rigour is unlikely to triumph. In trying to eradicate graft but not its causes, OBMA may be putting the cart before the horse.

Ask Mulemba how many citizens have spontaneously volunteered their ill-gotten gains, and the answer is edifying. "We have had just one case, of someone who handed over a car Mobutu had given him. On the contrary, the tendency is to hang on like grim death. Mentalities have not yet changed." — Financial Times.

MAIL & GUARDIAN
December 12 to 18 1997

Kabila hires Mobutu's spin doctor

(358)

M+G 12-18/12/97

Chris McGreal in Kinshasa

President Laurent Kabila might not put it this way, but he is hoping Dominique Sakombi Inongo can do for him what he did for the late despot Mobutu Sese Seko.

For 25 years Sakombi was his information minister, head of the sole political party and governor of Kinshasa. But his most celebrated role was behind Mobutu's infamous "authenticity" campaign, hailed at the time as a rebirth of Zairean identity. Like so much under his rule, it was a vast con.

Now Sakombi is back, this time as image-maker to Mobutu's nemesis. Kabila has yet to win the hearts of most of those he rules by decree. A few days after he was appointed last month, Sakombi arranged his new boss's first wide-ranging press conference since he seized power in May. It was generally thought a success.

Sakombi says: "I didn't go to Kabila, he came to me. We reached the conclusion that his image needed to be improved. I have experience in that field. I discuss all aspects of the country with the president. I conceive ideas and propose them."

Sakombi is installed in Kinshasa's top hotel. He sits with a crocodile-skin briefcase at his feet and the nervous smile of a man who has had a lucky escape. All the time he was at Mobutu's side he was really working for a greater good, he insists.

He says: "God placed me next to Mobutu so I could see what he was doing in order that I could denounce it. I was working for God not Mobutu. I was working to expose him."

But for most of those years, Sakombi kept silent. It was only in 1989 that he spoke out after, in his own words, discovering God. Then he quit politics and took to television.



Sakombi: Back in business

Sakombi is also keen to ensure that no one thinks he made money serving the late dictator.

"I worked for 25 years with President Mobutu and I didn't receive a thing from him, not even a bicycle, not a house, not a company. I earned my money honestly. I bought my house. I did not steal like others. I was part of a minority."

Others are more sceptical. The Democratic Republic of Congo's new Office of Ill-Gotten Goods, which is trying to recover billions of dollars worth of cash and property stolen by Mobutu and his cronies, says it has forced Sakombi to hand over his bank accounts. He denies this.

A former teacher with a degree in physical education and communications, he does admit there was a "dark period" in his life. Aged 57, he has 15 children by nine women. "I had many women. I was into darkness before I discovered the light."

His shining moment was the invention of the authenticity campaign. Zaireans were ordered to dump Western names in favour of African ones. The suit disappeared in favour of the *abacost*, so named as an abbreviation of the French for "down with the suit".

"The authenticity campaign was to affirm our culture, our traditions, our ancestors," says Sakombi. "We know that all cultures are hybrids but we did not want the original fundamentals of our culture to succumb to outside influence."

As it turned out, the campaign — along with the Zaireanisation of the economy — was a cover to plunder the country's wealth in the name of nationalism.

When it was all over, in the late 1980s, Sakombi realised, he says, that it had been horribly wrong.

"God revealed to me there was a spell on Zaire. The people were made bad by the sorcerers and magicians using the national flag, the waters of the Congo, the money, so Mobutu would stay for ever."

Waving a Bible, he says: "Now we have a new leader and a better plan, contained in this book — peace, justice, stability, love."

Kabila 'reneges' on promise

(358) ET 17/12/97

GENEVA: The United Nations yesterday accused the Kinshasa government headed by President Laurent Kabila of failing to protect a UN team making inquiries into allegations of massacres in the former Zaire.

"It's up to the government to ensure their security," UN spokesperson Ms Therese Gastaut said in Geneva, after the team was evacuated on Monday from the north-west town of Mbandaka because their base had been targeted by protesters. Kabila had reassured the UN he would protect the UN investigators.

"We need the co-operation of the authorities to implement the mission of inquiry," she added, declaring that no police had turned out to protect the team from several hundred demonstrators.

"We feared excesses," she said.

The investigators arrived at Mbandaka a week earlier on the first stop of a mission that was blocked for months by the Kabila regime, which ousted Zaire's dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May. Mobutu died in exile in September.

The UN panel, which had been waiting in Kinshasa for four weeks to be allowed to go to Mbandaka, were to probe allegations that many refugees from Rwanda were slain there by Kabila's forces at the beginning of the year.

Human rights' organisations claim the massacres were carried out by Tutsi-led rebels who helped Kabila topple Mobutu. — Sapa-AFP

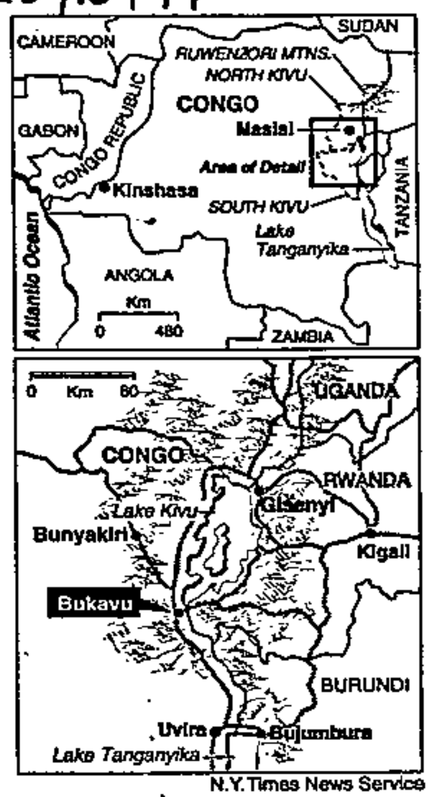
Kabila fails to bring peace

(358) M+G 17-23/10/97

The fighting in Central Africa has outlasted the defeat of Mobutu.
James C McKinley Jr *reports from Bukavu*



Young rebel: Zairean fighters helped Laurent Kabila seize power, but he has yet to gain military control of eastern Congo. PHOTO: SACHA J



N.Y.Times News Service

Five months after seizing power in the former Zaire, President Laurent Kabila has yet to gain military control over the eastern province of this vast country, and his rise to power has not brought peace to Central Africa as the regional leaders who sponsored his rebellion hoped.

From the Ruwenzori Mountains in eastern Uganda to the hilly farms of Burundi, rebels of various stripes are still spreading terror, ambushing soldiers, killing innocent people and in many cases fleeing into the country now called the Democratic Republic of Congo to escape retribution.

Though the situation throughout the region is chaotic, most of the fighting springs from the age-old animosity between the Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups, as well as between Tutsis and the other Bantu groups in Congo who resent what they see as the recent Tutsi hegemony.

It is the same conflict that fuelled the frenzy of killing in Rwanda in 1994, set off the revolution in Congo last year and continues to feed civil war in Burundi.

The continuing warfare has been a major disappointment to Congo's neighbours. Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi all supported Kabila's rebellion last year because under the dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, Zaire had harboured rebel groups intent on overthrowing their governments.

"We recognise the constraints Kabila is under," Minister of Defence Amama Mbabazi of Uganda said, "and we appreciate the little he's been able to do. We still have a few problems. President Kabila has to come to grips with his situation."

In private, officials in Uganda and Rwanda say that both countries have urged Kabila to pour more military resources into the eastern region or to allow the neighbouring countries' forces to do the job. Fresh units of Rwandan troops have already been seen crossing into Congo around Bukavu in the past three weeks, aid workers said.

It was Tutsi farmers who spearheaded Kabila's revolt a year ago after Mobutu's government threatened to expel the Tutsi who had lived for centuries in eastern Zaire. As the rebellion grew and gathered other allies, Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated government stepped in to arm and back the rebels.

For the Rwandan government, Kabila's rebellion provided a chance to end the simmering guerrilla war in its western half by closing down Hutu refugee camps across the border. In the camps, tens of thousands of Hutu militia members and soldiers of Rwanda's former Hutu-dominated government had been retraining and preparing to invade.

To that end, several hundred Rwandan soldiers fought alongside Kabila's army in its march across Zaire, which toppled Mobutu in May.

Since Kabila's victory, Congolese Tutsi have become more and more dominant in local administrations and in the army. Resentment has grown among other ethnic groups, many of whom regard the Tutsi as invaders from Rwanda.

The fighting in western Rwanda has only grown since Kabila took power, though. In the past five months at least 4 000 people, many of them unarmed civilians, have died in a guerrilla war between Hutu rebels and the army of the Tutsi-dominated government, United Nations officials say.

One reason is that thousands of Hutu guerrillas, many of whom took part in massacres of Tutsi in 1994, have filtered back into the country and taken up arms, Rwandan officials and diplomats say. The civil war that was halted in 1994 when a million Hutu refugees fled into Zaire has resumed.

"What's happening in Rwanda now is the end of the war in 1994," said a diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "The Rwandan army is winning the war, but at a terrible cost."

The growing nature of the Rwandan conflict was clear last week, when more than 1 000 rebels mounted a major attack on the Rwandan border town of Gisenyi and were driven back into Congo after seven hours of fighting.

"Even now we still get some infiltrations from some areas of Kivu," the region comprising two eastern provinces of Congo, said Claude Dusaidi, a senior Rwandan defence official. "When they are hit hard, they retreat back to the Congo, maybe retrain, and come back and so on. So we would wish the Congolese to address that issue."

To the north in Uganda, a rebel group in the Ruwenzori Mountains has managed to continue a campaign of raids along the border aimed at destabilising President Yoweri Museveni's government, despite having been routed during Kabila's advance.

Known as the Allied Democratic Force, the Ugandan rebel group asserts that Museveni is actually a Rwandan Tutsi who has "confiscated our motherland".

To the south in Burundi, the main Hutu rebel organisation that used to find a safe haven in Congo has survived by shifting its bases to refugee camps in Tanzania. A few Burundian rebel groups are reported to be still operating in Congo, though. The rebels continue to direct a violent campaign against Burundi's Tutsi-led government.

Even here in Kivu, where Kabila's rebellion began, two formidable guerrilla movements have sprung up to challenge his troops.

In the Masisi area of North Kivu, dozens of armed bands known collectively as the Mai-Mai militia are terrorising Kabila's Tutsi soldiers. They also control much of the countryside to the west of Lake Kivu around the town of Bunyakiri. Two weeks ago they pressed as far south as the Bukavu airport, only 30km north of the heavily defended town, aid workers and local officials said.

The Mai-Mai were an established group before the civil war. They believe that sprinkling magic water on themselves makes them immune to bullets, and they take their name from the Swahili word for water. They fought for years against Hutu and Tutsi immigrants from Rwanda to protect their ancestral lands.

During the civil war, the Mai-Mai briefly joined forces with Kabila's army to oust Mobutu. But in recent months their ranks have been swelled by indigenous tribesmen who are angry about the large number of Tutsi commanders and soldiers from Rwanda and Uganda still on duty in the Congo, local officials said. Since May they also appear to have joined forces with remnants of Hutu rebel groups from Rwanda and Burundi.

"The Mai-Mai are very anti-Tutsi, and they want the Rwandan soldiers to leave immediately," said an aid worker in Bukavu, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Farther south, in the Fizi area, a second rebel movement, drawn mostly from the Babende ethnic group, has been harassing and ambushing Kabila's Tutsi cadres. Led by a long-time rebel leader, Charles Simba, who was once an ally of Kabila, the Babende guerrillas say they regard the Tutsi soldiers as foreign invaders. — *New York Times*

● The United States is to send a senior delegation — led by Bill Richardson, the US representative to the UN — to Congo next week to try to revive the UN investigation into massacres and other atrocities during the civil war that toppled Mobutu.