

ZAIRE - GÉNÉRAL

1998

Congo mine's value rises to \$75bn

BRUSSELS — Gecamines, the state-owned mining firm in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, said at the weekend that a huge copper and cobalt deposit was now estimated to contain metal worth \$75bn and the estimate would probably rise.

In view of the doubling of estimated reserves, methods for extracting maximum value from the Tenke Fungurume project would have to be "re-examined and adapted to the new data, in the interest of the state", Gecamines said in a communique published in the Belgian financial newspaper L'Echo.

This should be done in accordance with the "policy of rapid development of the country's natural resources set by the government," Gecamines said.

The Tenke Fungurume project is a joint venture between Gecamines and Canada's Tenke Mining Corp which signed a deal to exploit the deposit in 1996.

Gecamines said recently that

results of prospecting in the Dipeta Syncline, between Tenke and Fungurume, showed a large increase in reserves from those taken into account at the time the joint venture contract was signed.

Estimated reserves had now doubled to 18.4-million tons of copper and 898 000 tons of cobalt from the previous estimates of 9.8-million tons of copper and 456 000 tons of cobalt, it said.

"This doubling of reserves ... shows that the Tenke-Fungurume deposits together with those of Dipeta are gigantic and unique in the world," the mine said.

The new reserves would enable annual production to be increased or the project's life to be extended beyond what had been agreed to in the contract, Gecamines said.

The value of the metal reserves would probably increase with the future exploration of other deposits at Dipeta and the Fungurume zone where deep deposits had not yet been explored, it said.

In a separate notice in L'Echo,

Gecamines gave details of its decision to cancel an international tender for a huge copper-cobalt project in the Congo.

Gecamines confirmed on Friday that it was cancelling the tender, launched in November 1995, for the Kolwezi concentrator tailings project in Katanga province.

America Mineral Fields had signed an agreement worth \$1bn with Zaire's rebels in April to buy the Kolwezi project.

Gecamines said that apart from building a factory, substantial revenues and creating jobs, it had expected bidders to make a significant cash payment to compensate it for partially giving up its rights to the tailings. It estimated the value of the metal in the tailings at more than \$10bn.

Gecamines said the tender had been cancelled to safeguard the interests of the country. New arrangements would be made "so that the project contributes more effectively to the country's development goals", it said. — Reuter.

BD 5/1/98

(358)

Zairean generals freed (358)

CT/IS/1/98

PRETORIA: Three former Zairean generals who were detained at the Pretoria

Central Prison's maximum security division after they fled to South Africa before President Mobutu Sese Seko's regime was overthrown were freed from jail yesterday.

This followed an urgent application by generals, Kpama Baramoto, Mudima Mavua and Ngbale Nzimbi to the Pretoria High Court for their release.

Judge B R du Plessis ordered that their detention be set aside as unwarranted and unreasonable and that they be released from custody immediately.

The generals were arrested by the Aliens Investigation Unit last month and detained from December 13.

They said in court papers they fled to SA as the civil war in the then Zaire was reaching its end and under the regime of President Laurent Kabila they feared for their lives.

They said they were refugees who were entitled to political asylum. — Own Correspondent

Congo rulers vow to punish corrupt judges

(358)

Kinshasa - The government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has vowed to upgrade the judiciary and punish corrupt magistrates as part of efforts to install the rule of law in former Zaire. ARG 17/1/98

Government spokesman Raphael Ghenda yesterday said measures to revamp the sector would cost about \$24-million (R120-million).

"Upgrading the judiciary is one of our top priorities. We are committed to a state of law," Mr Ghenda said. "The government has adopted all these measures to eradicate corruption within the judiciary. The judiciary we have inherited is rotten."

When Africa's third-largest nation collapsed under three decades of corrupt rule by ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, judges were widely regarded as puppets in the hands of the rich.

Mr Ghenda said magistrates' monthly wages would be increased substantially to remove the temptations of corruption. The government would improve magistrates' working conditions and promotion would be by competitive examinations, he added. - Reuters

Kabila enforces ban on Congo politics

BD 19/1/98

(358)

KINSHASA — President Laurent Kabila has declared that a ban on politics will remain in force in the Democratic Republic of Congo, saying the alternative is to risk bloodletting among rival political militias.

Kabila, in a speech at the weekend marking the 37th anniversary of the murder of nationalist independence hero Patrice Lumumba, said opposition militants had hidden 30 000 weapons in their homes in Kinshasa.

Earlier, police enforced the ban by preventing veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi from addressing party militants.

Kabila, speaking in Kinshasa's People's Palace, said that peace had been restored to the former Zaire and that the ban would remain in force until the national elections planned for 1999.

"With 400 political parties, you could have had 400 private militias who would have wrecked the transition period. It would have been chaos, anarchy. Our brothers in the other

Congo with fewer militia have tried that," Kabila said.

Fighting between rival political and ethnic militias in neighbouring Congo has killed thousands of people.

Kabila's new minister of state for the interior, Gaetan Kakudji, said on state television on Friday that all politicians should respect the ban or risk going before a military tribunal.

Witnesses said soldiers took away four Tshisekedi supporters outside his Kinshasa home on Saturday and that dozens of police surrounded the headquarters of his Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) in the same Limete district of Kinshasa.

Tshisekedi planned to speak publicly to party members for the first time in months at the party's headquarters.

UDPS secretary-general Adrien Phongo said Tshisekedi had simply wanted to deliver a New Year address. Witnesses said one of Tshisekedi's secretaries, Yovo Bossongo, and three other party militants were taken away.

Tshisekedi, a veteran opponent of former Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, is also the best known domestic political opponent of Kabila, who topped Mobutu last May.

Tshisekedi and his prodemocracy message enjoy an enthusiastic following in the teeming and poverty stricken capital, as well as in his party's ethnic stronghold of Kasai.

Kabila and his Alliance of Democratic Forces (AFDL) proclaim fidelity to Lumumba's legacy.

Kabila, who has awarded himself sweeping powers, has banned all political activity until the general elections promised in 1999.

Phongo denounced the curbs. "We ask ourselves now whether the liberation war was fought against Mobutu or against the UDPS and the people," he said.

"These are the methods of dictatorship that the AFDL is using to attempt to install by force a power with no popular legitimacy."

Tshisekedi, as is his custom, refused to make any comment and remained at home, where he spends most of his time.

Dozens of marches, demonstrations and meetings have been broken up by troops, and scores of UDPS and other opposition members have been detained since Kabila came to power.

Tshisekedi himself was detained briefly in June after addressing students at a Kinshasa university.

The government has called on all political parties who opposed Mobutu's dictatorship to rally behind the AFDL's national reconstruction programme during a two-year transition period before elections.

The government crackdown on political activity in the Democratic Republic of Congo has partially succeeded in stifling public opposition to Kabila's new government.

It has also encouraged a growing number of initial opponents of "no-party rule" to rally behind Kabila.

Congo accuses US group of altering

Simon Barber

ED 21/1/98

(358)

WASHINGTON — Gecamines, the Democratic Republic of Congo state mining arm, has accused American Minerals Fields International (AMFI) of "reprehensibly" altering documents in order to obtain mineral exploration rights from Laurent Kabila's rebel alliance before it took power last year.

Gecamines, in a statement signed by CEO Mbaka Kawaya Swana, also charged that AMFI "took advantage" of civil war chaos to try and lock up a contract to process tailings at Kolwezi before Gecamines could finish evaluating

bids from other companies, including Anglo American.

Dallas-based American Mineral Fields, AMFI's parent, is suing Anglo in a Texas state court for \$3bn following Gecamines' recent announcement that it was rebidding the Kolwezi contract. Toronto-listed AMF had repeatedly assured investors that it had won the contract. In the suit it accuses Anglo of improper "interference".

Gecamines said it was still weighing bids from six companies when Lubumbashi, where it is based, fell to the rebel alliance on April 9 last year. "Evaluation of the tenders was then

disturbed and could not be concluded.

Taking advantage of the situation at the time, AMFI managed to get some of the leaders of the (alliance) — who had not yet reached Lubumbashi to make contact with Gecamines — to sign a document in the town of Goma on April 13, "Congo's state mining company said.

This awarded AMFI the Kolwezi project as well as the development of the Kipushi zinc mine, which AMF had separately been negotiating with Gecamines.

At the same time, in order to obtain exploration rights in areas then exclusively controlled by Gecamines, AMFI presented the alliance with a doctored

Gecamines document, Gecamines said.

The original was a letter to government from Gecamines requesting an extension of rights to certain "exclusive exploration zones".

In the version given to the alliance "AMFI had erased the names 'Gecamines' and 'Sodimico', and replaced them with 'AMFI', which is an objectionable action".

As a result of the Goma agreements obtained from the alliance "AMFI made statements to the press relating the conclusion of contracts valued at \$1bn with the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo".

After learning of "the irregularities

which have sullied AMFI's actions", the Kabila government cancelled the agreements and told AMFI to negotiate directly with Gecamines, the company said.

Subsequently, AMFI was unable to satisfy the "financial requirements" of being selected as Gecamines' partner in the Kolwezi project, and no deal was confirmed by the government. As for the Kipushi project, Gecamines had questions concerning AMFI's pre-feasibility study to which AMFI had not responded.

At the time of going to press AMFI had not commented.

Gecamines' statement was posted on the Internet on Monday.

documents

Gecamines allows mining in Kolwezi area

Anglo joins Congo mine consortium

CT (PR) 22/1/98 (358)

SHERILEE BRIDGE

Johannesburg — Anglo American, South Africa's largest corporation, had signed a consortium deal with Gecamines, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's state-owned mining company, to mine in the African country's Kolwezi area, Anglo said yesterday.

It was not clear whether the consortium deal would roll over to other operations in the Kolwezi area, where a contentious high-grade copper tailings project has become the subject of a \$3 billion legal battle between American Mineral Fields (AMF) and Anglo.

AMF is suing Anglo, claiming that Anglo interfered with its contracts in the Congo by offering to pay the Congo government tens of millions of dollars to squeeze out the US mining company.

The lawsuit has been seen by analysts as a final attempt by AMF to salvage its dealings with the Congo after the early-January cancellation by Gecamines of a \$1 billion agreement to purchase the Kolwezi copper-cobalt tailings project.

Charmaine Russell, an Anglo spokesman, said the company was very positive about developments in the Congo and looked forward to doing business there.

Details of the Kolwezi Group West consortium deal, which is subject to a confidentiality agreement because of its sensitive nature, have not yet been disclosed, but the mining rehabilitation project is expected to cost more than \$1.2 billion.

Foreign mining companies from Australia, Asia, Belgium, Canada, China and Europe have also signed the deal. Anglo is expected to take a 15 percent stake.

The deal is said to cover 22 000km² of the copper-rich Katanga area and involve the rehabilitation of large open-pit mines and dumps.

John Clemmow, an analyst at Investec Securities, said the ore reserve for the Group West was running at about 5 percent copper, and some areas showed up to 2 percent cobalt.

"It is obvious that Anglo is a favoured investor in the Congo," said Clemmow.

"Signing the consortium deal has given the group political favourability in the Congo."

In the interim, Toronto-listed AMF was expected to meet Gecamines officials this week to reopen talks and clarify the validity of its decision to renegotiate the Kolwezi project.

AMF said it had carried out multimillion-dollar feasibilities on the projects it was awarded and \$15 million had already been ploughed into the project.

Earl Young, the vice-president of AMF, said he was very optimistic and was sure that the company would be pleased with the resolution.

Gecamines said yesterday AMF never had exploitation rights to the copper tailings in Kolwezi and said bidding for the project would start from scratch.

The Kolwezi mine workings hold about 1.44 million tons of copper and 275 000 tons of cobalt — worth about \$10 billion.

While Gecamines accused AMF of altering documents to secure the mineral rights from Laurent Kabila's rebel alliance before the alliance took power last year, it has invited AMF to tender in the next round.

Young denied the charge that AMF had in any way altered the agreement.

IN BRIEF

Democratic Congo to privatise 'lame duck' firms (308)

KINSHASA — The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo planned to privatise unprofitable state-owned companies and would publish a list of the "lame ducks" soon, the economic and oil ministry of the former Zaire said on Sunday.

State-owned firms have been run by provisional boards since last July, two months after President Laurent Kabila came to power.

In another development, the ministry of mines has decided to withdraw licences issued to a dozen companies allowing them to prospect in unspecified "exclusive zones" as they had failed to act five months after the issue of the permits.

Congo's investment blues

(358) mtg 30/1 - 5/2/98

With the scrapping of another 12 mining deals, investor confidence in Congo is shaky, reports

Madeleine Wackemagel

Laurent Kabila's honeymoon with the investment community is going through a rough patch.

Hard on the heels of the cancellation of the America Mineral Fields (AMF) Kolwezi copper reclamation project, the government of the new Democratic Republic of the Congo has announced the scrapping of another 12 mining research deals signed five months ago.

Kabila's Ministry of Mines says the 12 foreign companies involved are dragging their heels instead of starting the work. Other firms have been given until February 10 to start research work or have their preliminary agreements scrapped too.

That, say insiders, is very bad for investor confidence.

"Big international mining companies will not commit large sums of money upfront for greenfield exploration in the rainforest," says one. "The government is going about things in the wrong way. First, there have to be reassurances that due process will be followed. You don't encourage investment with ad hoc agreements that can be cancelled at any time."

Investing in the Congo is not for the faint-hearted, but with high risks come huge rewards. And for that reason alone, believes BoE NatWest analyst Barry Sergeant, the money will keep on coming.

But only as long as security of tenure is in place. "At the moment there is no mining code, no tax system. So even if a company did win a tender, it wouldn't know what taxes

it would be paying. Such issues have to be addressed as quickly as possible, otherwise the rebuilding of the country will never get under way."

Only six months ago, politicians and businesspeople alike were talking about the Congo as the driving force for the region, with mining the engine. And as the biggest economy on the continent, South Africa was best



placed to capitalise on that potential.

But already that vision seems compromised and the new government's credibility is being called into question. AMF, which is suing Anglo American for \$3-billion over alleged interference in the Kolwezi contract, believes it held the exclusive rights to the project. Gecamines, the state-owned mining company, disputes this, even going so far as to accuse AMF of fraud.

Robert Stewart, the new chair of AMF, is in the Congo this week, attempting to clear up the issue. Says AMF representative Earl Young: "We believe the tender was handled in a transparent way. The government said we'd won it and that we had been awarded the property. We are now trying to determine why they changed their minds. There is a lot of confusion,

but we are very optimistic that the talks will be fruitful."

The AMF delegation is hoping to go straight to the top in its attempts to reopen negotiations; a meeting with Kabila is on the cards. But analysts believe they are in for a rough time, having failed to satisfy the financial conditions laid down by the Gecamines authorities first time around.

Meanwhile, the Kolwezi project is in limbo. Anglo has said it is no longer interested in tendering. Instead, Anglo will concentrate on the Kolwezi Group West project, which is much bigger, but also requires larger capital investment to get off the ground. Industry sources estimate that more than \$1-billion is needed.

Anglo is co-leader, with 15%, in an eight-company consortium, a move that has raised eyebrows in the mining industry. Not only because it marks a significant turnaround in Anglo's popularity stakes in the country (it was forced to abandon the Tenke Fungurume copper cobalt investment in the 1970s because of political pressure), but because such groupings are difficult to manage.

Anglo, however, is optimistic. Says representative Glen Finnegan: "It has enormous potential — more than 400 000 tons of copper per annum. The task team working on the feasibility study is up and running."

But Anglo's involvement raises other questions about the government's policy. On the one hand, the new order has lambasted the mining companies for profiting for years from the former regime; on the other, Kabila has hailed the consortium as one that will spearhead the revival



Rough times: Laurent Kabila's relationship with the investment community is in jeopardy.

PHOTOGRAPH: RODGER BOSCH

of the country's mining industry.

As a result, some observers believe the industry is still in a massive state of flux, with the government all too frequently moving the goalposts, with new rules and new visions. In the short term, the fear is that such volatility puts any deal done either with Gecamines or the government in jeopardy.

The new Minister of Mines, Kamale Mututulo, will no doubt use next week's African mining conference in Cape Town to set the record straight. Much of the problem, according to people operating in the Congo, is lack of experience.

"They're beginning to realise that they haven't been too hot on the public relations side. They've created certain misperceptions that they are now keen to correct. And no doubt the minister will set out to do just that next week, making it clear that the government will indeed honour all agreements," says one observer.

But with the legal battle between AMF and Anglo hanging over any further developments, the minister may be in for some tough questions.

Mining is a rough game so a bit of jostling for position is par for the course. The concern now must be that the industry will be tied up in litigation for years to come, with dire consequences for the economy as a whole.

Anglo faces R3bn US lawsuit

M+G 9-15/11/98 (3/8)

Following allegations that it interfered in a tender awarded to a US firm, a damages suit has been filed against Anglo, reports
Stefaans Brümmer

Anglo American and its associated companies are facing a \$3-billion lawsuit in the United States after allegations that it "interfered" in a tender already awarded to another mining company in the Democratic Republic of Congo's fabulously rich copper belt.

On Wednesday, the Arkansas-based junior mining company America Mineral Fields (AMF) filed the damages suit against Anglo, De Beers and Minorco in a Dallas, Texas, court. This came a week after Congo authorities announced they had cancelled a tender awarded to AMF to reclaim copper and cobalt mine dumps at Kolwezi in the Katanga province estimated to be worth \$10-billion.

Many analysts agree Congo President Laurent Kabila's handling of the matter has damaged investor confidence in his country, reinforcing the image of a government inexperienced in economic matters. Kabila's rebel alliance awarded the tender to AMF last April — a month before the rebels ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko and swept to power in Kinshasa.

The relationship between AMF and Anglo — who formed a partnership when Mobutu's government first invited tenders — soured towards the end of 1996 when AMF decided to go it alone. The companies bid separately.

This stood AMF in good stead with Kabila's soon-to-be-victorious forces in early 1997: the rebels were thought to favour AMF because of Anglo's long-standing relationship with Mobutu's government.

AMF made no secret of its material support to Kabila during his campaign. Anglo, in turn, hinted it doubted the validity of a tender award by a rebel movement.

AMF chief executive Simon Brownlie said in a statement on Wednesday that his company believed Anglo "has for some time orchestrat-



Happier times: Laurent Kabila (left) with AMF's Max Boule (middle), brother of major shareholder Jean-Raymond Boule, in Lubumbashi last year. PHOTOGRAPH: STEFAANS BRÜMMER

ed a well-financed campaign to interfere with the company's projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo".

AMF's suspicions about Anglo appear to have been raised by a letter dated August 7 — a copy of which is in the *Mail & Guardian's* possession — from Bobby Danchin, president of Anglo's New Mining Business Division, to Congo's Minister of Mining Kambale Kabila Mututulo.

The letter states: "We learnt ... that the Kolwezi project has not yet been definitely assigned and Anglo American New Mining Business Division wishes to have the opportunity to present an alternative offer to the government. We will be delighted to meet in Kinshasa to discuss the matter."

The letter was also marked for the attention of Victor Mpoyo, who has recently been promoted in a Cabinet reshuffle by Kabila to the super-portfolio of minister of state responsible, among other things, for the economy.

Mpoyo is related to Kalaa Mpinga, an Anglo director and business development manager in Danchin's division. Mpinga, who is Congolese, has been intimately involved in Anglo's ventures in his home country.

Anglo communications manager Glen Finnegan this week confirmed the contents of the letter, but said it

had to be seen "in context. It was a letter to seek clarity on the award of the tender. Then we got the reply that AMF had been selected. We simply stood back then."

She said Anglo would not comment on the court challenge, pending consultations with its lawyers in the US, but added that the company denied interfering with AMF's interests and that it had no remaining interest in the Kolwezi reclamation project.

Finnegan added that Anglo was now tendering, as part of a consortium involving Belgium's Union Minière, for the unrelated Kolwezi Group West mining rehabilitation project. It was a larger and more capital-intensive operation, and Anglo would have its hands full with that alone.

Before news of the court challenge, sources close to Anglo claimed Anglo's decision to abandon interest in the Kolwezi tailings project was also partly related to Anglo's realisation that such interest could open the door to legal action from AMF.

Congo's state-owned mining company, Gecamines, announced the cancellation of the tender award to AMF last week saying the original process had been flawed — and that it wanted more cash. A communiqué said "new arrangements" would be made, presumably meaning that the tender process would be reopened.

Gecamines would have been AMF's joint venture partner in the Kolwezi reclamation project.

It is understood Kabila's government has been squeezing AMF for some time to pay more for Kolwezi. Mpoyo is alleged to have demanded an upfront payment of about \$150-million from AMF, which the company refused.

After Kabila came to power, he never ratified the original tender award, as required by Congolese law. But AMF appeared secure in its title anyway: the company has sunk millions of dollars into feasibility studies and preparatory work already. Some analysts judge that if AMF succeeds in establishing jurisdiction in Texas, and the suit goes ahead, the odds will be stacked heavily against the Arkansas company.

Investec Securities Africa analyst John Clemmow said Anglo had little to answer for, as Kabila never ratified the original agreement, which was entered into by a rebel movement that had not formally taken power. Legal opinion appeared to go against the validity of the contract, he said.

But, warned mining expert Humphrey Harrison: "If [AMF] can establish jurisdiction, then any two-bit lawyer can make enough of a problem for Anglo to make it want to settle out of court ... What has AMF got to lose in a judicial system where lawyers go on success fees?"

Congo owes Harare Z\$300 000 in rent

Michael Hartnack

BD 5/2/98 (358)
HARARE — The Democratic Republic of Congo's embassy has run up Z\$300 000 in unpaid rent for a house in Harare's exclusive Borrowdale suburb, a spokesman for the estate agents said yesterday.

Only intervention by the Belgian embassy, which pledged the money would be paid by the end of this month, stopped attempts by the house owners to have Congolese diplomatic immunity set aside so the diplomats could be evicted, said property administrator Hunter Ngosi.

In the period of less than a year since Laurent Kabila has been in power, his representatives in Harare have sustained the reputation of their predecessors from Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire for leaving a trail of unpaid debts. The Zaireans exploited the diplomatic status of their premises to resist repossession or attachment of property, but had their water, electricity and telephones cut off.

Kabila's ambassador Bemboi Bab refused to comment, referring reporters to Zimbabwe's foreign affairs ministry which, he said, would mediate after receiving instructions from Kinshasa.

Ngosi said Bab had requested a "grace period" when he took over the house from the representatives of the previous regime. "Ever since then he has sought extensions, citing several reasons. We only agreed to let him remain in the house out of respect for the Belgian ambassador. We will proceed with the eviction procedures if the money is not paid within the two weeks."

Belgium, the former colonial power, has been helping Kabila's regime restore administration which virtually disappeared during Mobutu's rule.

Showdown over Mobutu's generals

mtg 13-19/2/98 (358)
Stefans Brümmer and Ann Eveleth

An extraordinary legal battle reaching to the office of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki is set to reach a climax in the Johannesburg High Court next week when ousted Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko's military elite demand continued safe haven in South Africa.

The court hearing follows months of legal wrangling, political indecision and administrative bungling as the state attempted to expel three of Mobutu's most powerful collaborators from South Africa.

The three are accused of fostering counter-revolution in their home country, now named the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Voluminous legal documents tell of international intrigue, covert activity and government clumsiness.

Mbeki was drawn into the fray when the military men named him a co-respondent, claiming he usurped Minister of Home Affairs Mangosuthu Buthelezi's powers, interfering with an otherwise amicable relationship. Mbeki and Buthelezi's offices reject the allegations.

Former Mobutu generals Kpama Baramoto, Mudima Mavua and Ngbale Nzimbi settled in South Africa when Laurent Kabila, now president of Congo, ousted Mobutu. The generals already had strong ties — including businesses and family homes — in South Africa.

Their arrival was clouded by suspicions that they had received illicit support from domestic intelligence operatives. But the court papers suggest their presence in South Africa was supported by regional neighbours who feared the generals would escape the regional security net.

This regional view began to change after Kabila took power, and amid growing reports of mercenary activity by the generals. But Baramoto, Nzimbi and Mavua proved more difficult than anticipated to dislodge from South Africa.

South African police and immigration officials arrested them on December 13 when they allegedly attempted to re-enter South Africa illegally after a trip to Congo. The trip fuelled reports they were plotting to overthrow Kabila.

Subsequent reports have linked them to a growing political and mercenary network stretching to countries as far afield as Angola, Congo (Brazzaville), Côte d'Ivoire, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany.

Baramoto's links with South African mercenary firm Stabilco and its boss, former Executive Outcomes operative Mauritz le Roux, are well known. But sources close to Le Roux this week confirmed a split earlier this year and claimed another South African mercenary outfit had moved into the void.

Raids on the generals' homes netted more evidence. Buthelezi's affidavit refers to "stacks of application forms from my department ... quotations for arms and ammunition, as well as military personnel ... [and] classified government documents" among other items seized.

But a high court judge overturned their detention order on January 14 as "unreasonable and unwarranted", and released the three men.

On January 15, the day after their release, police and immigration officials went to arrest them under a different clause of the Aliens Control Act. They were not at home and their lawyers obtained an interdict suspending the warrants. Before the matter came to court, Buthelezi withdrew the warrants.

On January 27, officials launched yet another raid in an effort to deport Baramoto, Mavua and Nzimbi. Although intelligence sources are adamant the men were closely observed, they once again escaped.

The generals' lawyer obtained an urgent interdict restraining the government from arresting or deporting them. On Tuesday he will attempt to have the order extended while the men apply for political refugee status.

Complicating the matter further for Buthelezi, the men claim in their affidavits that he promised them residence permits following a

face-to-face meeting with him last year.

They claim Buthelezi reneged on this "under great and improper political pressure" from Mbeki — a claim Buthelezi denied, despite admitting that he initially fell for their story of having fled Zaire penniless and in borrowed clothes.

But the court will have to go beyond these inconsistencies to consider the complex political dilemma facing South Africa: how to balance the desire to rid the country of a potential regional threat and show support for the sovereignty of the new Congo government, while avoiding perceptions that it could be handing asylum-seekers over to an uncertain fate in Congo.



Buthelezi Denied Mbeki Interfered

Said a South Africa intelligence official: "It would be embarrassing if they were to be deported and shot on the tarmac on arrival. This is not this kind of image we would like to present as a country."

Cashing in on Congo, PAGE 15

In twelve countries we've got the recipe for the environment

We've cleaned up much of the

South African environment. (That may not

sound modest, however, collecting 1,7

billion used beverage cans in a year makes

a difference that's easy to see.)

But Lesotho, Swaziland,

Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana too

have environments to preserve - and why

stop there? We also collect from Angola,

Mozambique, Mauritius, Seychelles,

Reunion and Madagascar.

Together with South Africa's

returns, that makes us third in the world in

steel can recovery.

Our recipe? A unique socio-economic

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Congo repaying debt to Spoornet subsidiary

Claire Pickard-Cambridge
and Simon Barber

THE Democratic Republic of Congo has started repaying its historic debt of R136m to Spoornet subsidiary Comazar and its state-run railway organisation has sealed a second six-month agreement with Comazar to lease rolling stock.

Spoornet, which holds 65% of Comazar in partnership with the Belgian railways, is hoping that its renewed involvement with the Congo will help to get the country's railways running properly again.

This will facilitate the repayment of debt to Comazar for the use of its stock and services over a five-year period and will benefit the Congo and SA companies by helping to attract mining investment to the region.

Spoornet executive director Mafika Mkwanazi said yesterday that the Congolese railway organisation began repaying the historic debt at a rate of about R891 000 a month. In addition, it paid its leasing fees for locomotives and wagons over the six months from July to December and a second such six-month leasing agreement had been signed.

This follows Comazar's turbulent experience last year when the new government seized its stock and denied its operating company Sizarail — in which the Congolese government had a minority stake — the right to operate. Sizarail's Belgian MD Patrick Claes was imprisoned shortly afterwards.

Spoornet staff confirmed that Claes, who is also a board member of Comazar, was released earlier

this week. Although he was imprisoned for six months, no charges were brought against him and he was flown back to Belgium to be reunited with his family.

Mkwanazi said Sizarail had finally been liquidated last month, but the current Congolese rail organisation still owed Comazar \$16.2m for the assets it confiscated last year. This debt was not related to the debt-repayment agreement.

Comazar was invited to lease locomotives and wagons to the new state-run railway in July last year and opted to do so despite the outstanding debts, taking a long-term view on its relationship with the new government.

Last night Mkwanazi termed Comazar's relationship with the Kabila government as "very good" and said rail traffic was growing at

a steady pace in the country.

He said it was Spoornet's policy to expand via joint ventures into the rest of Africa. Through Comazar it had put in bids to operate in Cameroon and Mozambique, and was interested in Angola and Malawi. It had already been awarded a concession to operate a section in Zimbabwe under the Spoornet mantle.

Meanwhile, Brussels-based newspaper *Le Soir* reported on Wednesday that Claes believed a large portion of the current Congolese rail organisation would be sold to private investors, who would then be given a 20-year concession to run the network.

Claes told *Le Soir* that he believed he was held by the Kabila government as a bargaining chip in negotiations over the future of

the railway network.

It appeared that he was initially held in connection with trumped-up allegations of appropriating state funds.

He believed he had helped to gain his freedom by persuading the Kabila government that a new company held by the private and public sector should replace Sizarail. It should be run by business as a concession, he said.

He still hoped to get his job back and believed the Congolese government realised that freeing him was essential to gaining outside backing for monetary reform.

Mkwanazi said he was not aware of the proposal for a successor company to Sizarail. He thought it likely that Kabila would want advice from Claes on running a national rail network.

BO 20/2/98 (358)

Congo releases 16 of Mobutu's allies

(358) BD 20/2/98
KINSHASA — At least 16 former allies of the late president Mobutu Sese Seko, accused of embezzlement and corruption, had been released from prison in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, justice ministry officials said yesterday.

The group included Kithima Bin Ramazani, number two in the former Zaire. A dozen other dignitaries from Mobutu's ousted dictatorship were still in jail pending investigations. "They have been released provisionally. It's the (justice) minister himself who decided to set them free," a senior official said.

One of the 16 said they had been asked to confirm lists drawn up previously of their assets before being freed. A condition for their liberty was that they do not leave the country, he said.

More than 30 Mobutu allies, including former ministers and directors of state enterprises, were arrested after Laurent Kabila took power in May last year following a seven-month rebellion. Only one of them has been brought to trial so far.

But in what several local human rights groups condemned as amounting to a ransom demand, Kabila told them they would be set free if they returned money they had allegedly stolen.

Bemba Saolona, a former business association president, who said he paid \$300 000 directly into the national treasury last month in exchange for his freedom, was still in jail by Wednesday night.

So far only the trial of general Kikunda Ombala, former head of the national air company, has opened. He was charged with stealing a mini-bus and jet fuel and the trial is scheduled for next month.

Many of the detainees have said the government has very little or no evidence to convict them of the corruption charges. — Reuter.

A meal will not buy our complacency, says the labour movement

THE heady 1970s saw the resurgence of democratic, militant and progressive trade unions. Workers (I was and still am one of them) used to see management as part of the ruling class and to a large extent we were quite correct. The relationship between the two was antagonistic.

Because of this, negotiating teams were, among other things, forbidden to drink tea or any beverage offered by management in those days. It was considered that, at best, this would be lending oneself to being "softened up" by management. At worst it was regarded as selling out.

The article by René Grawitzky (Business Day, March 12) brought back those early days. Grawitzky alleges, falsely, that the Cosatu public sector union's leadership was entertained to a dinner by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki. She mentions things like "the food and whisky was going down well" and then the punch line came. The deputy president "dropped" a bombshell — that government was not going to stick to its obligations under the three-year agreement signed by government and the public sector unions in 1986. This conjures up amusing images of the 1970s belief that if you drink management's tea you are surely on your way to selling out workers.

Of course, nowadays, organisers routinely drink tea with management without compromising themselves. Unions today are

There are no secret deals or back-door meetings between government and trade unions, writes National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union president Vusi Nhlapo in response to an article in Business Day last week

confident enough of their strengths that they can meet a deputy president of a country at his residence to discuss issues affecting their members without feeling that they are being bought with food or drink. As for this deputy president stooping to such lows, this is amazing to even consider.

Grawitzky raises important debates which essentially revolve around the relationship between government and the Cosatu public sector unions. In particular how is government going to transform and restructure the public service in the light of what I would argue are self-imposed budgetary deficit targets.

Firstly, her allegation of secret meetings between government and Cosatu public sector leaders are totally false. There is nothing wrong if the alliance leadership meets at any level to discuss public sector transformation. Perhaps we need more such meetings and maybe government will begin to understand what workers really want.

The article seeks to portray alliance meetings as mysterious forums where plots are hatched and buddy-buddy agreements are reached to be later visited on the unsuspecting SA public. Nothing could be further from the truth. The assertion in the

article that it will be problematic for government secretly to brief "certain" union leaders is untrue. If Grawitzky had checked her facts she would have known that the deputy director-general of the public administration department visited public service unions to consult on many issues last year and early this year.

One of the more serious allegations in the article is the distinction made between Cosatu and its public service affiliates. The article implies these unions are being manipulated in private while Cosatu is campaigning against the "budget on process". This is a bit of fancy on the writer's part.

Where, however, I agree with the writer is when she intimates that it is of no use for the government to trumpet about how it spends 40% of the budget on salaries. Public service delivery is, by its nature, labour intensive. You can build as many schools and clinics as you want but you still need more teachers, nurses and doctors to service them.

This brings me to Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's budget. Despite protests from Cosatu public service unions, it shows government intends putting less into salaries this year. The figure put forward by

the government is R3.7bn instead of R6.5bn, as stated in the agreement. This is totally unacceptable, of course.

The budget speech and the president's opening address to parliament implied government wanted to see retrenchments in the public service. The retrenchment issues is completely disjointed and has no relation to transformation or service delivery.

Cosatu unions, in particular, have committed themselves to public service transformation. Retrenchments which are budget deficit driven cannot be acceptable.

Government needs to be engaged very strongly about its notion that it is not an employment agency. It is wrong for our government to be so callous and nonchalant about retrenchments. It becomes ideological, and that much harder to tackle.

Lastly Grawitzky writes about the three-year agreement as if it is a holy cow. It has its strong points and its weak points. Where the agreement protects or is beneficial to our constituency, Nehru or is not allow government to change it willy-nilly.

Greasing palms helps to oil the wheels of officialdom and ensure a soft landing

Corruption at Kinshasa's airport during Mobutu's regime mirrored the state of the nation, but it had its advantages, writes Michaela Wrong

was reassuring to hear, could accept no liability for whatever happened next.

At the terminal doors, an official would seize your passport before disappearing into the building, an unnerving gesture designed to nudge you permanently off balance. Another uniformed official would then attach himself to you, promising to "arrange everything": that is, plunge into the seething bedlam inside and negotiate a reasonable cut for him and his colleagues in exchange for a passport stamp so expertly smuggled the date was always illegible.

The biggest mistake was to get your money out too soon. Volunteer the first bribe — intended to cover all officialdom in your ambit — before your passport was safely in your grasp and your friendly official would vanish, to be replaced by a fresh round of uniforms, all demanding a piece of the action.

Payment time had to be carefully judged: best was after you had entered the taxi and the driver had his foot on the accelerator, but before one of the soldiers circling like sharks in the parking lot noticed banknotes were being handed out. It could be tricky.

There were periods when things seemed to improve. When Kengo wa Dondo, favourite with the foreign donors, was appointed prime minister, Ndjiti became less



KABILA



MOBUTU

terrifying for a while. The airport was placed under new management, the numbing administrative hurdles slashed. But like the Kengo honeymoon itself,

during which futile attempts were made to rein in Mobutu's expenditure and balance the budget, it could not last because the rot had spread too far. Soon the police and

MO 18/3/98

reducing the wage gap, enhancing service delivery, and dealing with low salaries and morale, especially among professional workers — nurses, teachers, policemen etc. It is no secret that this agreement has been, in the main, a disappointment. Among other things, it had unintended but predictable consequences. It benefited largely bureaucrats, to the detriment of professional workers at the frontline of service delivery, hence the nurses' strike of 1996 immediately after the signing of the agreement.

The old guard bureaucrats were turned overnight into millionaires through the voluntary severance packages. We all know the wage gap has not been significantly reduced. The packages became unaffordable and it was the good bureaucrats with private-sector options who were leaving, not the dead wood. Government has since jettisoned the packages.

Far from being a holy cow, we need to review the agreement. This must be done in a nonopportunistic way that will fundamentally transform the service to be more democratic, representative and customer orientated.

Government must bring in more experienced negotiators in the public service co-ordinating bargaining council.

and ensure a soft landing

MO 18/3/98

fulfilled every French official's worst nightmare and declared Congo an anglophone country.

It seemed a miracle, the best possible advertisement for the new administration's campaign to clean up the civil service and reintroduce the concept of public duty.

But as we waited in the strangely silent hall, a terrible realisation began to dawn on me. Certainly, we were not being harassed, and for that we were all enormously grateful. But this process was taking an awfully long time.

Arrival cards — a new invention — were really being filled in. Passport photographs were actually being inspected. Luggage was really being searched, not waved through on a nod and a wink. It was painfully slow.

Corruption, when it comes down to it, is all about greasing wheels. Like Congo's new ministers, who have started reinstating Mobutu's discredited aides because at least they know how to get things done, we were seeing what happens when you remove an effective informal arrangement without having an efficient formal system to replace it. Remove the grease and the machinery locks.

As we shifted impatiently from foot to foot, it was left to the grizzled Italian missionary in the queue, a man conversant with unpalatable truths, to say the unsayable. "Bring back the old team," he muttered with a sigh. — Financial Times.

US rival now first in line for Kolwezi project

Anglo spurns AMF olive branch in Congo dispute

ET (MOR) 19/3/98 (378)

SHERILEE BRIDGE

Johannesburg — Anglo American, South Africa's largest corporation, has refused to make any monetary payments to American Mineral Fields (AMF), its US rival, after AMF said it was withdrawing its \$3 billion lawsuit in an attempt to settle differences out of court.

The mining giant yesterday stuck to its initial position that it had not "tortiously interfered" with the Toronto-based company's contracts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Analysts viewed the "tactical retreat" as an attempt by AMF to kiss and make up as it tried to reconcile its position in the DRC.

It comes after AMF's \$1 billion Kolwezi copper-cobalt tailings agreement was cancelled by

the government of Laurent Kabila and the DRC's mining agency Gecamines at end-December.

John Clemmow, an analyst at Investec Securities, said AMF stood to be re-awarded the Kolwezi tailings project contract after the Congolese government said it would not reopen tenders.

The government planned instead to allow the original bidders to make offer. These include Anglo, which has said it is no longer interested; JCI, which is restructuring; Iscor, which is already committed to the Kolwezi Group West rehabilitation projects; and AMF.

It was uncertain, however, whether the Congolese government was still seeking higher bids for the project. Clemmow said AMF stood a strong chance now that it had replaced the senior management the Congolese

government had accused of being involved in malpractice.

"It makes sense for AMF to withdraw from its lawsuit, at little cost, so as to leave its way clear to proceed with the Kolwezi tailings project," said Clemmow.

The reversal of legal action also meant Anglo would not be roped into the antitrust case against De Beers in the US.

Anglo and De Beers have avoided sending representatives to the US because the justice department has actions open for alleged antitrust violations, and representatives of either company could be arrested on entry.

AMF alleged that Anglo, De Beers and Minorco had been engaged in an elaborate scheme to "unlawfully monopolise the world's gold and gem diamond supplies".

Kabila shrugs off demands for freedom

Star 19/3/98

(358)

Democratic Republic of Congo's president
has banned opposition and its leaders,
and turned deaf ear to the world

AFP
Kinshasa

The Democratic Republic of Congo has maintained a stony silence in the face of growing pressure for progress towards democracy, including a fresh demand by Washington for the release of political detainees.

Yesterday, the regime of President Laurent Kabila refused to respond to the US demand, arguing that it had been made by an unnamed official.

"We don't reply to phantoms ... only to officials," Kabila's communications adviser Dominique Sakombi said when asked about the appeal, made in Washington on Tuesday by a senior administration official who requested anonymity.

The official, speaking ahead of President Bill Clinton's six-country tour of Africa starting next week, also called on Kabila to lift the ban on political activity.

Washington, while relieved at the overthrow of the dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, who died in exile in September, has professed only cautious support for Kabila's regime in the absence of clear moves towards democracy.

Kabila has also come under increasing criticism for long stalling a UN probe into reports of the mass slaughter

during his uprising of Rwandan Hutu refugees from their own country's 1994 civil war, and for continuously muzzling the press.

Among those the United States wants released is opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, who was banished last month to his home village where he is under house arrest. Tshisekedi's supporters say he is in deteriorating health.

The 65-year-old head of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDSP) was accused of violating the ban on political activities.

After his arrest, which occurred just 24 hours after a visit to Kinshasa by Clinton envoy Jesse Jackson on a mission to promote democracy in Africa, the UDSP called on Clinton to intercede with Kabila to obtain Tshisekedi's release.

Jackson was unable to see Kabila or any government officials during his stay.

Three other opposition figures are in detention.

On several occasions, security forces have prevented Tshisekedi's UDSP from holding rallies, and press conferences called by politicians have been forcibly broken up.

Clinton is scheduled to meet Kabila in Entebbe, Uganda, on Wednesday during a regional summit of east and central African leaders.

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UN probe team expelled from Congo

(358)

Kinshasa – Republic of Congo authorities have expelled a United Nations team investigating alleged massacres by government forces after the team began exhuming graves, state-run television reported.

The team, based in the north-western city of Mbandaka, was given until March 31 to finish its work and leave, Voice of the People television said yesterday.

"The people of Congo have expressed their desire for the

expulsion of the mission," said the television station.

Congolese military authorities were "shocked and indignant" that the UN team had "desecrated" several graves at a cemetery in Mbandaka, the station said.

The move came a day after the investigators, working in north-western Congo, began exhuming the bodies of Rwandan Hutu refugees who were allegedly massacred by forces loyal to Laurent Kabila when he led the campaign to topple the late Zairian dictator

Mobutu Sese Seko during the country's seven-month rebellion.

It remains unclear how many died, although some UN officials say the death toll could reach into the tens of thousands.

Two other UN teams – based in Kisangani and Goma in northeastern Congo – have until May 31 to conclude their investigations, the station said. Congolese authorities are reported to have repeatedly blocked investigators from entering areas where massacres took place. – Sapa-AP

Ashanti seeks talks over mine dispute

MARTIN HOWELL

(358) CT (MR) 25/3/98
Accra, Ghana — Ashanti Goldfields, the largest African gold producer outside South Africa, is seeking talks with Democratic Republic of the Congo president Laurent Kabila in an attempt to resolve a dispute over the ownership of a gold mine.

Ashanti says last June it paid several million dollars for an 86 percent stake in the Kimin mine in Congo from Mindev, a Belgian-controlled company, and then invested more in the project in a partnership with Okimo, the state-controlled mining company.

But Sam Jonah, the Ashanti chief executive, said that late last year, without Ashanti's knowledge, the rights to the project were granted to a joint venture between Okimo and Russel Resources International, a little known unlisted company.

"Our rights were trampled on. Our employees were told to leave the property, and let me say they weren't provided with champagne to do so," Jonah said.

This is the latest in a series of disputes over mining rights in the Congo since Kabila came to power. The US's America Mineral Fields said three months ago a deal it had to develop a cobalt reserve had been terminated by Gecamines, Congo's state-controlled mining company.

Canada's Falconbridge, the nickel producer, said in January it pulled out of talks to develop Congo's mining industry because the government wanted commitments without providing adequate information.

"We had a very warm welcome from the president and the minister of mines when we first went in but now the situation is puzzling, to say the least," Jonah said. He said it was the first time the firm had faced such a problem in Africa. Ashanti had 42 exploration sites in 15 African states.

Congo state officials could not be reached for comment.

Jonah said Ashanti was, through its lawyers, seeking talks with Kabila to resolve the dispute.

The Kimin mine at present produced only a few thousand ounces of gold a year, but it had the potential to be much bigger, Jonah said.

The Africa Energy & Mining newsletter said last November Russel was an unlisted company created by Gad Raveh, a businessman based in Australia.

Meanwhile, America Mineral Fields said last week it had withdrawn a \$3 billion lawsuit against Anglo American related to its dispute in the Congo. It had charged Anglo American, the world's biggest producer of gold, with undermining its contract with Gecamines. — Bloomberg

Plotting a putsch with our consent

MAG 27/3-2/4/98

(358)

Ann Eveleth

The Johannesburg High Court last week rejected a bid by three of former Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko's senior kleptocrats for court recognition as political refugees, but the victory was overshadowed by a stunning history of official blunders.

The government detained former Zairean generals Kpama Baramoto and Ngbale Nzimbi and former defence minister admiral Mudi-ma Mavua for 30 days last December, on their return from a meeting to plot a coup in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Until then they lived an unfettered existence in exclusive Johannesburg suburbs for more than six months, after fleeing the advance to power of Zairean rebel leader Laurent Kabila in May 1997.

A series of official inconsistencies grounded in a haphazard foreign policy allowed lawyers for the three to mount a serious challenge to South African sovereignty and the constitutional separation of powers.

The African National Congress government did not sever South Africa's apartheid-era links with Mobutu in 1994, but practised constructive engagement toward the dictator. This position held until well into Kabila's whirlwind revolution last year. The shift lay behind many of the contradictions at the heart of the three Mobutuists' argument.

South Africa's continued "pragmatic" dalliance with Mobutu allowed the three men to recount a history of "VIP treatment" by South African authorities.

Just before Kabila took power, the Southern African Development Community backed South Africa's decision to give temporary residence to the Mobutuists, believing that South Africa's security structures could keep tabs on them. This clearly did not happen.

The Mobutuists slipped easily out of the country at least once to attend a clandestine meeting aimed at the overthrow of Kabila. They also presumably met their admitted "sympathisers" in the South African intelligence community who gave them confidential government documents. All this happened while they were allegedly under surveillance.

Had the case turned out differently, the high court might have compelled South Africa to let United Nations personnel decide its immigration stance on the Mobutuists, or ruled the administration incapable of carrying out its duties and set a precedent for judicial intervention in the affairs of the executive.

Both political concepts stood in serious jeopardy when the arguments closed, with the Mobutuists pleading for judicial intervention in the Department of Home Affairs's refugee recognition procedures, and the judge considering a mandated role for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees.



Running hard: Three Mobutuists fleeing from Laurent Kabila (above) have spent a rather privileged time in South Africa

In the end Judge Meyer Joffe rescued both principles, and referred the Mobutuists back to administrative procedures — but delivered some searing comments on the role of home affairs Director General Albert Mokoena.

Judge Joffe said it appeared Mokoena had personally authorised the issuing of travel documents to the three Mobutuists, only two of whom were in South Africa on valid temporary residence permits at the time. The problem is that the kind of "stateless" travel documents they received can only be issued to permanent residents. So, the Mobutuists' lawyers argued, their clients believed they had been granted permanent status in the country as political refugees.

Not so, said Minister of Home Affairs Mangeliso Buthelezi. They were only granted the "indulgence" of a permit to attend Mobutu's funeral in Morocco last September. They were to hand in their documents on their return. Yet their permits never said that, and

immigration officials never came to collect the documents before the Mobutuists flew to the Congo in December to plot the "revolution".

Judge Joffe summed up this blunder: "Either the department [of home affairs] does not consider itself bound by the law, or is unaware of it. Both situations are unacceptable."

When police Senior Superintendent Daniel Mokgabudi stumbled on the Mobutuists' presence in the country prior to their arrest, and questioned Mokoena on their status, he was advised "the matter is a political issue" and instructed not to intervene.

This "hiatus, above-the-law situation" also drew criticism from Joffe. "It is not open to the director general to tell a police officer not to implement the law," he said.

Their December arrest sparked the Mobutuists' first legal victory, after the government failed to back its most serious allegations with hard evidence.

But this curious behaviour dates back much earlier. According to court papers, the South African ambassador to Zaire, Jan van Deventer, began warning the departments of foreign affairs and home affairs as early as January 1996 not to grant Baramoto and his family residence, because of the "somewhat negative" reputation of the Zairean Garde Civile he headed and his alleged links with criminal networks. These warnings were ignored, and South African authorities thereafter afforded Baramoto and his associates "VIP treatment".

Buthelezi took the unusual step in August of meeting personally with the Mobutuists. He accepted their claims to having fled Zaire penniless and in borrowed clothes, without, it seems, reference to their Sandton addresses.

Despite the "political decision" to grant them temporary residence, their stay rested not on a systematic procedure with high-level review, but on a series of ad hoc permits granted by different offices.

One application was even rejected by the head office of home affairs, only to be later granted by a district office.

Kabila's constitution to outlaw opponents

(358) BD 114/98
KINSHASA — The Democratic Republic of Congo would bar 248 individuals — including opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi — from politics if a draft constitution was approved, its framers said yesterday.

The list of 248 names was submitted on Monday to President Laurent Kabila as an amendment to the draft consti-

tution, sources in the constitutional commission said. Those listed faced accusations of embezzlement or murder.

Kabila has banned all political activity for a two-year "transition period" ahead of promised elections.

Meanwhile, his finance minister, Fernand Tala-Ngai, said yesterday that a pledge to re-

sume payments to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in March was "null and void".

Tala-Ngai said that he had promised the IMF on March 18 that Kinshasa would pay back \$5m in debt arrears. But he said yesterday it was impossible to pay back such a sum "in the absence of a formally drawn-up budget for 1998". — Sapa-AFP.

IN BRIEF

Congo calls for review of foreign debt repayments

KINSHASA — The Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday called for a review of agreements signed during the reign of former president Mobutu Sese Seko and pleaded for leniency on foreign debt repayments.

Government spokesman Raphael Ghenda said no decision had been made on paying arrears to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. "The government cannot be held accountable for the actions of the old regime."

The government on Tuesday backed down on a pledge it had made to pay \$5m in arrears to the IMF by the end of last month. Kabila recognised last December the country's \$14bn external debt from his predecessor's 32-year rule, but asked international financial institutions to be patient. "Congo will be able to stand by its commitment towards financial institutions only if it is economically strong," Ghenda said.

Kabila's crown dangles uneasily in face of coup plots

By KIKAYA BIN KARUBI
Star Foreign Service

Kinshasa - In Kinshasa people call them the "Three Musketeers". Generals Baramoto, Nzimbi and Mavua are the most feared and most hated survivors of the previous regime of Mobutu Sese Seko because of their brutality and "kleptocratic" style of leadership.

Now the three, who own large homes in South Africa, are said to be at the forefront of a plot to overthrow President Laurent Kabila during the festivities marking the first anniversary of his taking power on May 17.

Sources close to the presidency here say that those planning an armed comeback have regrouped on several fronts. There are those exiled in Europe who have formed a new political organisation called the "Rassemblement Congolais des Democraties" (RCD), with Maitre Nymy Mayidika Ngimbi as their mastermind.

Mobutu's children are channeling some of their inheritance into the purchase of weapons and the recruitment of members throughout Europe and Africa. The former president's notorious son Mobutu Kongolu, known during his father's reign as Saddam Hussein because of his brutal style, is

very active in this group. He was last seen in Germany accompanied by a certain Ipeke and a Tshisuaka, two pillars of the RCD.

Last year, Mobutu's niece Annie Litho was arrested in Mannheim, Germany, after striking a deal to export to an unknown destination a significant quantity of weapons. From February 22 to March 8 another member of the Mobutu family, Mobutu Zemanga, grandson of the deceased dictator, who speaks fluent Russian, visited Moscow for the same purpose with two weapons specialists, Gbiatano and Gbenenge, renegades of the disbanded Division Speciale Presidentielle (DSP), Mobutu's special forces.

The weapons in Europe are then dispatched into the field by "the Three Musketeers" who are believed by the Congo government to be based in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, now, after leaving South Africa, apparently because of the pressure they are coming under from the SA Government. So far they have successfully used the courts to resist efforts to kick them out but their future in South Africa is by no means certain.

Reports here say there is a link between the three generals and the May May rebels who are fighting for land in Kivu

province. Weapons are also supplied to Hutu extremists who are destabilising the Rwandan government "in order to keep Kagame busy".

Rwandan vice-president Paul Kagame is the man most responsible for supplying the military muscle which brought Kabila to power last year.

The Interhamwe militias responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda are said to be still mobilised and supported by President Denis Sassou-Nguesso's Cobra militias in

The Three Musketeers said to be at forefront

Congo Brazzaville. Their presence there as well as that of the former Zairian DSP is causing concern to the Kinshasa government which fears that the three generals will liaise with these active troops on Congo's doorsteps.

The coup plots come at a bad time for Kabila whose relationship with the international community continues to deteriorate. First it was the UN Human Rights Commission, then the IMF and Unicef and today

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the list of organisations and countries with a grievance against Kabila has grown to include the former colonial power Belgium and other human rights organisations inside and outside the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The government angered the IMF by trashing its proposals to repay the huge debt left by the Mobutu administration, after finance minister Fernand Tangel had promised to start monthly payments of \$25-million from the end of March.

Kabila branded Unicef and other UN agencies based in Kivu province as "terrorists' mail boxes", alleging that their camps and operations were being used by dissident forces to mobilise against his government. Then it infuriated the UN HCR by detaining one of its inspectors, investigating allegations that Kabila's forces massacred Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi during the civil war last year.

All of this has angered UN secretary-general Kofi Annan who has suspended and threatened to terminate the UN mission investigating the alleged massacres.

Last week Kabila's government alienated Belgium by broadcasting a special TV programme to display a cache of weapons found in the Belgian

consulate in Lubumbashi which it said the Belgians intended to supply to rebel forces. The Belgians flatly denied this, insisting the weapons had been sent to the Congo a year ago in case they were needed to evacuate Belgians during the war.

As a result of this row, Belgium has refused a visa to Raphael Ghenda, Minister of Information and Culture, and Paul Kapita, Minister of Public Service, to visit Belgium over the Easter weekend in an effort to iron out the problems between Brussels and Kinshasa.

Ghenda is an ideologue of Kabila's AFDL movement while the co-opted Kapita is a nephew of opposition politician Etienne Tshisekedi and an influential member of the UDPS opposition party. He was expected to answer questions on the restriction of his uncle to his village where he has been assigned to agricultural projects.

The DRC will be on the agenda of the 54th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights which takes place in Geneva next week. Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo will participate in the debate that will also include independent human rights organisations.

This is viewed in Kinshasa as the last opportunity to set the DRC's human rights record straight.

Red tape delays Iscor deal

BD 16/4/98

IRON and steel firm Iscor said yesterday a R400m deal to refurbish the Democratic Republic of Congo's Kamoto copper and cobalt mine had been delayed by bureaucracy. (358)

Iscor executive chairman Hans Smith said he expected Laurent Kabila's government to approve the deal, to be signed by the end of March, in "a matter of days or weeks".

Iscor has a definitive agreement with state-owned Gecamines to refurbish the Kamoto mine, but the deal requires government approval.

Smith said the refurbishment of Kamoto, destroyed by years of mismanagement, and neglect under toppled dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, would start soon after the deal was sealed.

How the new government dealt with foreign investors was being closely monitored.

Smith said the Kamoto project would determine the outcome of sep-

arate plans by a consortium of international mining firms — of which Iscor was a member — to develop resources in the Group West section of the Congolese copperbelt.

"Kamoto is approximately 20% of the greater Group West in which we want to get involved ... The rate at which Group West is developed depends (on) Kamoto getting up and running. All the other consortium members are looking at us."

Smith said Kabila's government deserved a little patience. "Once they sign that agreement it is not just Kamoto ... they are signing a principle of development, a very hefty decision."

Kamoto was at the heart of Iscor's strategy to grow in sub-Saharan Africa. "We have done a lot of preliminary work already and for us it is important in the sense that it will be the first of a very big change in investment philosophy." — Reuter.

AFRICA

Kinshasa worried by UN move

NO 20/4/98

(278)

KINSHASA — The cash-strapped Democratic Republic of Congo voiced concern on Saturday that it might be targeted by international sanctions after United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Kofi Annan decided to halt a UN human rights probe there.

Annan's decision on Friday to pull out the team investigating ethnic massacres because of systematic obstruction by the country's authorities, comes as Kinshasa desperately needs aid and investment to rebuild its crippled infrastructure.

In an apparent bid at damage control, Planning Minister Etienne-Richard Mbaya denied refusing any UN request and said: "The government is concerned about the withdrawal of the UN team without real and valid motives."

He accused unnamed "antiliberation lobby groups" of trying to sabotage the country's reconstruction and said he trusted the UN would not be fooled. He also expressed hopes that international reparations would not follow.

Then he turned on the UN team, saying it had engineered its own exit from the country by "insulting" local populations and "desecrating" a traditional cemetery in its search for mass graves.

"Yes, there are mass graves," Mbaya said — but claimed they were dug by the Zairean army which was defeated when rebels swept across the country to claim power last year.

He also denied that important documentary evidence gathered by a Canadian investigator on the UN team who had been detained by soldiers had been read or photocopied, as alleged by the United Nations. Annan gave the order for the team to leave after the Canadian's brief arrest.

A preliminary UN inquiry into the 1996-1997 massacres found the rebel troops who now form Kinshasa's regime were responsible for most of the killings.

UN officials warned that the withdrawal of the team could send off-putting signals to potential investors, particularly in the European Union. The EU puts up the lion's share of humanitarian aid and reconstruction aid to the country, totalling about \$400m.

However, this aid is contingent on Kinshasa meeting human rights standards and other criteria.

Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister Erik Derycke warned that the withdrawal of the human rights probe "will not reinforce the (Congo's) international standing".

He agreed that it would discourage the international community from coming forward with reconstruction aid and feared that "it will be the people ... who will pay dearly".

The US, which has made minor investments under its "trade not aid" policy, expressed dismay at the decision to pull out the UN team.

Much hope was placed in the rebuilding of the nation's rich mining industry which saw its riches sapped away under ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Dominique Sakombi Inongo, a communications adviser to President Laurent Kabila, blasted the decision on Friday by Unesco to freeze aid over the continued detention of a prominent opposition figure arrested last November.

Inongo said Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma "had deliberately broken the law forbidding political activities" and would be tried.

Kinshasa authorities said Ngoma and two other jailed critics of Kabila's regime had escaped from prison early in the week, but were "recaptured".

The three have not been seen since, despite a government promise to show them on state television. — Sapa-AFP.



Atsu Kofi Amega, head of the United Nations mission for the Democratic Republic of Congo, at Kinshasa airport on Saturday.

Kabila fears coup bid by 'Three Musketeers' as

By KIKAYA BIN KARUBI
Star Foreign Service

In Kinshasa people call them the "Three Musketeers". Generals Baramoto, Nzimbi and Mavua are the most hated survivors of the previous regime of Mobutu Sese Seko because of their brutality and "kleptocratic" style of leadership.

Now the three, who own large homes in South Africa, are said to be at the forefront of a plot to overthrow President Laurent Kabila during the festivities marking the first anniversary of his taking power on May 17.

Sources close the presidency say that those planning an armed comeback have regrouped on several fronts. There are those exiled in Europe who have formed a new political organisation called the "Rassemblement

blement Congolais des Democraties" (RCD), with Maitre Nymy Mayidika Ngimbi as their mastermind.

Mobutu's children are channeling some of their inheritance into the purchase of weapons and the recruitment of members throughout Europe and Africa.

The former president's son Mobutu Kongolu, known during his father's reign as Saddam Hussein because of his brutal style, is active in this group. He was last seen in Germany, accompanied by a certain Ipeke and a Tshisuaka, two pillars of the RCD.

Last year, Mobutu's niece Annie Litho was arrested in Mannheim, Germany, after striking a deal to export to an unknown destination, a significant quantity of weapons.

Another member of the Mobutu family, Mobutu Zemanga, grandson

of the deceased dictator, visited Moscow from February 22 to March 8 for the same purpose with two weapons specialists, Gbiatano and Gbenenge, renegades of Mobutu's disbanded Division Speciale Presidentielle (DSP).

The weapons in Europe are then dispatched into the field by "The Three Musketeers" who are believed by the Congo government to be based in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, after leaving South Africa, apparently because of the pressure they are coming under from the SA Government.

Reports here say there is a link between the three generals and the rebels who are fighting for land in Kivu province. Weapons are also supplied to Hutu extremists who are destabilising the Rwandan government "in order to keep Kagame busy".

Rwandan vice-president Paul Kagame is the person most responsible for supplying the military muscle which brought Kabila to power. The Interhamwe militias responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda are said to be still mobilised and supported by President Denis Sassou-Nguesso's Cobra militias in Congo Brazzaville.

Their presence there as well as that of the former Zairian DSP is causing concern to the Kinshasa government who fear that the three generals will liaise with these active troops on Congo's doorstep.

The coup plots come at a bad time for Kabila whose relationship with the international community continues to deteriorate.

First it was the UN Human Rights Commission, then the IMF and the U.N. Children's Fund (Unicef)

and today the list of organisations and countries with a grievance against Kabila has grown to include Belgium and other human rights organisations.

The government angered the IMF by translating its proposals to repay the huge debt left by the Mobutu administration, after Finance Minister Fernand Talangai had promised to start monthly payments from the end of March.

President Kabila branded Unicef and other UN agencies based in Kivu province as "terrorists" mail boxes, alleging that their camps and operations were being used by dissident forces to mobilise against his government.

Then it infuriated the UN Commission on Human Rights (HCR) by detaining one of its inspectors investigating allegations that Kabila's

forces massacred Hutu refugees from Rwanda and Burundi during the civil war last year. All of this has angered UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan who has suspended and threatened to terminate the UN mission investigating the massacres.

Last week, Kabila's government alienated Belgium by broadcasting a special TV programme to display a cache of weapons found in the Belgian consulate in Lubumbashi which it said the Belgians intended to supply to rebel forces.

The Belgians denied this, insisting the weapons had been sent to the Congo a year ago in case they were needed to evacuate Belgians during the civil war.

As a result, Belgium refused a visa to Raphael Ghenda, minister of information and culture, and Paul Kapita, minister of public service, to

visit Belgium on the Easter weekend in an effort to iron out the problems between Brussels and Kinshasa.

Ghenda is an ideologue of Kabila's AFDL movement while the co-opted Kapita is a nephew of opposition politician Etienne Tshisekedi and an influential member of the UDPS opposition party. He is expected to answer questions on the restriction of this uncle.

The DRC will be on the agenda of the 54th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights which takes place in Geneva this week. Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo will participate in the debate that will include also independent human rights organisations.

This is viewed in Kinshasa as the last opportunity to set the record straight as far as the human rights situation in the DRC is concerned.

status abroad sags

Star 20/4/98 (358)

AFRICA

Truth about massacres 'has come to light'

DA 22/14/98

GENEVA — The perfect murder does not exist, let alone 180 000 perfect murders — the number of people who disappeared in the Democratic Republic of Congo from October 1996 to May last year, according to the UN special rapporteur on human rights in the republic.

Chilean jurist Roberto Garretón said all historic truths, such as what happened in the former Zaire during the war of liberation against dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, eventually came to light. Garretón said the truth about the reported massacres could be reconstructed through witness testimony, other documents and satellite images, and urged against a loss of hope in spite of the scarce progress made by his UN investigative team, sent to the country on July 8, last year, and

withdrawn last week.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced his decision last Friday, based on the constant obstacles set in the way of the team's investigations by the government headed by President Laurent Kabila. Experts were blocked from digging in areas where common graves were reported, while authorities harassed and intimidated witnesses who gave testimony to the UN team, said Annan.

The most recent incident took place on April 7 and 8, he said, when one of the team's members, Canadian national Christopher Harland, was kicked out of the eastern city of Goma, and then detained in Kinshasa airport.

Kabila's Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo told the UN Human Rights Com-

mission in Geneva last week that Harland had awakened suspicions among the security services by using two different identity documents — a free transit certificate issued by the UN and his Canadian passport.

Annan said his decision to pull the team out was based on the republic government's "total lack of co-operation". He said, however, that the alleged massacres of 180 000 Hutu refugees from Rwanda, missing since the republic's refugee camps were closed in September last year, remained under the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Commission, comprised of representatives of 53 countries.

The commission was to reach a decision yesterday on its evaluation of the human rights situation in the country and

the pending investigation of the reported massacres. The commission will vote on a draft resolution to extend Garretón's mandate as special reporter rapporteur for human rights in the republic to allow him to present his report at the commission's next session in March next year. Human rights groups predict that the commission will unanimously renew Garretón's mandate.

Three of the 53 members of the commission — the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda — are governed by Tutsis, the ethnic group which lost up to 1-million of its members in the 1994 genocide waged by extremist Hutus in Rwanda. A year ago, the government of the Democratic Republic refused to allow Garretón to enter the country. Then, in

May last year, it blocked the investigation by a joint mission designated by the UN Human Rights Commission.

The joint mission comprised Garretón, UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions Bacre Waly Ndiaye, and Jonas Foli, a member of the UN working group on forced and involuntary disappearances.

Although Garretón called Annan's decision to pull his team out of the country "a defeat", he said he was afraid the investigation would grind to a halt. Impunity was "the most disturbing aspect, he said, because there were people who would begin to take advantage of the situation to escape punishment. Nevertheless, his inability to enter the country did not preclude an investigation. — Sapa-IPS.

Kabila announces first Congo budget

WILLIAM WALLIS

Kinshasa — President Laurent Kabila's government pledged to spend more than \$744 million in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's first formal budget since the fall of the late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May 1997.

Raphael Ghenda, the government spokesman and information minister, announced the 1998 budget on Thursday, making a side-swipe at the international donor community for doing too little to help the former Zaire.

Ghenda said state revenues were projected at \$744 445 511 and spending would match that. The last

Mobutu budget was for around \$300 million.

Ghenda said 77 percent of the budget would go towards the running costs of the state while capital expenditure to reconstruct the shattered country would make up only 12.7 percent. The government announced a \$4.5 billion programme last year which includes ambitious plans to rebuild 28 000 km of roads.

Ghenda said a large portion of the 1998 budget would help pay the vast civil service and settle salary arrears. He made no specific mention of defence allocations, but said 8 percent would go towards "order".

The Congo has an external debt

of \$14 billion. Ghenda said servicing public debt would absorb 6 percent of the budget, some \$4 million a month. He made no specific reference to arrears owed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Jean-Claude Masangu, the central bank governor, said last week the government would "in the very near future" begin paying arrears to the IMF. He said payments would be determined by budget constraints.

Western diplomats said that should the amount fall well short of an initial IMF bid for \$5 million monthly, the IMF may begin procedures to suspend Congo by a deadline of June 29. — Reuters

(MBS) CT(MR) 4/5/98

Disillusion is mounting in Kabila's Congo ^{Ed 13/5/98} (368)

KINSHASA — President Laurent Kabila notches up one year in power this month with his renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo looking increasingly like the chaotic Zaire he sought to change, critics say.

However, whatever the similarities, most analysts agree that the main difference is that it is still not too late for Kabila to change course.

Kabila took the capital, Kinshasa, on May 17 1997, after his Rwandan-backed rebels swept aside the crumbling army of dictator Mobutu Sese Seko at the climax of a seven-month war. Mobutu's 32-year rule in Africa's third-largest country was synonymous with corruption, brutality and poverty in a richly endowed nation.

Most Zaireans cheered Kabila's army as it swept across a country twice the size of Western Europe from the eastern border with Rwanda. One year on, many express disillusion. The economy is stuck in the rut where Mobutu left it. The human rights picture looks little better, with opponents of Kabila, who rules by decree, locked up or facing the threat of arrest.

"Human rights are seriously in question in my country," leading human rights campaigner Baudoin Hamuli told US President Bill Clinton during a meeting with African human rights activists in Dakar on April 2.

Kabila's supporters argue a year is too short to erase the legacy of three decades of misrule under Mobutu.

At the Dakar meeting, Clinton offered a similar analysis of the record of Kabila's team, with whom the US has been trying, without apparent success, to forge close ties. "I think one of their biggest handicaps is so many of them in the government were out of Congo for so long," Clinton said.

Kabila's government is run more like a guerrilla organisation than a traditional government. Political analysts say decision making is short term, top

Is Laurent Kabila's Congo merely a shade of the former Zaire? asks William Wallis



KABILA

officials enjoy little more than interim status and there is little formal military hierarchy.

Critics compare Kabila with his vilified predecessor and lament the paucity of signs that the country has broken with its tortured past.

"After a year of exercising totalitarian power, is it serious to blame everything on one's predecessor?" asked the opposition Reference Plus daily in an editorial. It is one of many questions Congolese are asking themselves.

When Kabila banned political activity and awarded himself sweeping

powers, there were street protests and fury from members of the civilian opposition who had struggled for years to end Mobutu's reign by nonviolent means — efforts the new men in power appeared to write off.

However, there was also support from sections of the population prepared to grant their new leader a period of grace to unite politicians behind him and deliver on the economic front.

Kabila's main victories in the minds of most ordinary residents are that he has improved urban security, halted the predatory ravages of Mobutu's army and stabilised the local currency.

Even human rights activist Hamuli gives Kabila a pass mark for security and discipline in the public service and in the management of public resources.

However, that is only one side of the picture. "What people wanted was the rule of law. We are further from that than ever now," a senior Kinshasa lawyer said.

A political analyst said one of Kabila's biggest political errors was to have closed down debate in a country thirsty for freedoms. "What Mobutu learned in his last years was that if they could talk to each other, Zaireans didn't fight each other."

An African diplomat suggested Kabila should apply the pressure cooker technique. "If you let out a controlled amount of steam, the cooker doesn't explode."

Many of Kabila's

potential foreign friends expressed dismay at Kinshasa's wrangle with the United Nations over a probe into alleged massacres in the former Zaire. After months of impasse, UN secretary-general Kofi Annan withdrew the UN team from Congo last month, accusing the government of obstructing attempts to seek evidence of alleged massacres of Hutu refugees by Kabila's forces and Rwandan Tutsi allies. The withdrawal could have implications for Kabila's reconstruction plans. Potential Western donors have linked aid to improved respect for human rights and the UN probe was seen as a yardstick. — Reuters.

Kabila says 'no' to aid

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FOREIGN SERVICE

(358)

18/5/98
Kinshasa - Celebrating the first anniversary of his rule over the Democratic Republic of Congo,

Laurent Kabila has pledged to legalise political parties, but said he would not use a proposed World Bank trust fund - because donor countries demanded he improve the human rights situation in Congo.

Mr Kabila's Congo is not yet an international pariah, but he seemed - during a sometimes rambling two-hour speech yesterday - to be preparing Congo for life on the diplomatic and financial outside.

Regarding a trust fund set up by the World Bank to allay fears that funds would be mismanaged, Mr Kabila said:

"We are not going to touch that money. There are conditions ... that we have to solve the human rights problem, but we are the ones who came to chase out the regime that caused human rights problems."

"They gave that regime a lot of money without conditions."

The speech was his first public commitment to unban political parties prior to elections next year - but he implied that a constituent assembly would impose restrictions on the number or type of parties.



African leaders snub Kabila (7/8)

KINSHASA: More than 12 invited African heads of state stayed away from celebrations yesterday marking President Laurent Kabila's takeover of power in the former Zaïre, officials said.

Senior government officials said privately the apparent snub underlined serious differences between Kabila and key regional allies who helped him topple veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

The ceremony opened with a military parade in the Chinese-built Martyrs' Stadium here — but there was no sign of delegations from Rwanda or Uganda, power brokers in Central Africa's turbulent Great Lakes region.

Uganda and the Tutsi-led governments of Rwanda and Burundi supported Kabila's seven-month bush war that climaxed with his rebel troops entering the capital on May 17 last year. Kabila renamed the former Belgian colony the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

"There are serious differences between Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda on the one hand and the DRC on the other over how to restore peace to the Great Lakes," said a senior Kabila aide.

"The DRC favours a negotiated settlement to the conflict between Hutus and Tutsis. That's the only way we can put an end to cross-border attacks in the region. But the ethnic minority in power in Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda does not accept negotiations and advocates a military solution."

The historic Hutu-Tutsi rivalry that exploded in massacres in Rwanda in 1994 has had serious repercussions for the former Zaïre and partly led to Kabila's war.

The Tutsi leadership that emerged in Rwanda after the genocide accused Hutus who fled into Zaïre of staging attacks from their refugee camps. The refugees were dispersed by Kabila's war and most returned voluntarily to Rwanda.

However, Hutu and Ugandan rebels still operate from eastern DRC.

Of the 16 African heads of state who had been invited, only President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and President Ange Felix Patasse of the Central African Republic arrived on Saturday, officials said.

On Friday, Kabila called off a two-day Great Lakes security and development summit, convened to coincide with the anniversary of his victory.

Officially, Kabila's administration blamed the cancellation on a border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, but regional government officials and diplomats dismissed this as a face-saver.

The DRC's statement said Ethiopia and Eritrea had played a full part in organising the summit. An official said Kabila was willing to mediate in the dispute.

Regional diplomats said Uganda and Rwanda had pressed him to cancel the summit. Uganda said President Yoweri Museveni would not attend but that nothing should be read into this.

"We understand that Uganda and Rwanda voiced strong objections to the summit's being attended by countries harbouring forces considered to be their enemies," a diplomat said.

He said the objections related to Congo Republic, Central African Republic and Gabon — all accused of harbouring Hutu soldiers ousted from power in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide.

Diplomats and regional officials said Kabila's erstwhile allies, including Eritrea, were deeply disappointed and concerned.

A major complaint was Kabila's failure to bring stability to eastern DRC, which borders Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

Those invited to Kabila's celebrations included the leaders of Angola, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. — Reuter

NO SHOW: Congolese soldiers on guard under a billboard showing Laurent Kabila at Kinshasa Airport as they await delegates to a regional summit on security — that was cancelled because of disputes.

PICTURE: AP

Mbeki in SADC bid to restart Congo

Windhoek - Deputy President Thabo Mbeki has announced a major initiative by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to help rehabilitate its newest member, the Democratic Republic of Congo - and has declared that he is confident the ruined country will be restored to political and economic health.

Mr Mbeki, who met the Congo's President Laurent Kabila in Kinshasa last Friday, said at the World Economic Forum's Southern African Economic summit here yesterday that South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe would initially be the countries which would act together to provide assistance.

He noted that the process of rehabilitating the Congo had already begun as officials of the SA Reserve Bank had started training Congo bank officials to restore banking administration. Another dire need was the administration, which had collapsed completely.

Mr Mbeki said that Mr Kabila had agreed to allow a UN human rights inspection team to return to the Congo to continue its probe of allegations that Congo troops massacred Hutu refugees.

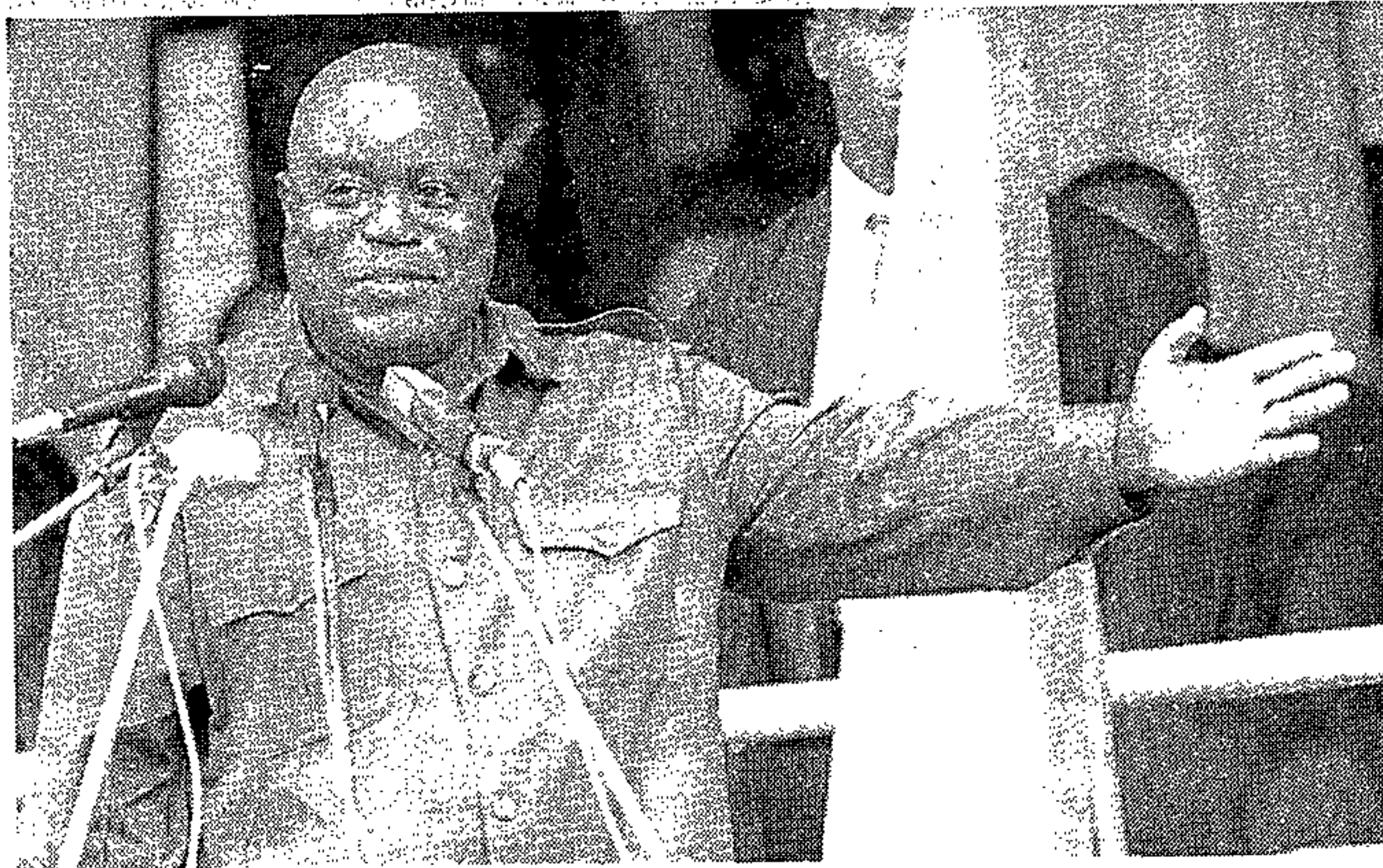
The Congo government had also agreed on the need for democratisation, for an open political system and for preparations for elections, and these specifics were being discussed.

■ President Kabila, in Namibia for the Southern African economic summit, held a private meeting with pop star Michael Jackson to discuss business early today.

Aides to Mr Kabila said the two discussed whether Jackson would play a celebration concert in Kinshasa to mark this month's first anniversary of the overthrow of despot Mobutu Sese Seko, following three decades of rule which had left the economy in ruins.

Jackson also explored the possibilities for investment in the former Zaire, according to the aides, who were present at the 20-minute meeting. Jackson was the guest at the opening of the summit of Namibia's President Sam Nujoma, and addressed the gathering about his concerns for the world's homeless and abused children. - Sapa-AFP

APG 19/5/98



Democratic Republic of Congo's President Laurent Kabila talks to citizens at the national football stadium in Kinshasa at the weekend about progress made in the country during his year of rule. Sunday marked the anniversary of his forces ousting, after a nine-month rebellion, of Mobutu Sese Seko and his 32-year regime.

Picture: AP

Kabila celebrates one year in power but few are impressed

BD 19/5/98 (358)

While its name has changed, the former Zaire remains an economic wreck

KINSHASA — Some things change: Zaire is now Congo. Dictator Mobutu Sese Seko is out and rebel Laurent Kabila is in. An official commitment to fighting corruption has replaced wholesale "kleptocracy". Other things stay the same: Congo remains an economic wreck.

Kabila, like the late Mobutu, rules from a privileged high. And erratic policy-making keeps Congo estranged from the international community.

One year after the fall of the Mobutu regime, Congolese are beginning to say Kabila just picked up where his predecessor left off.

"Nothing has changed the way we expected," said Mpoyi wa Mpoyi, a teacher with two children. "The people aren't happy. There are no jobs, and we have no rights." Over and over, the same sentiments are repeated in the streets of Kinshasa, the potholed and garbage-strewn capital where estimates say unemployment still runs as high as 75%.

On May 17, 1997, those streets were filled with hope as thousands of people poured out to welcome Kabila's conquering rebel army.

Waving palm fronds and dancing in celebration, residents greeted the soldiers with chants of "We're free!" Today, hope is fading amid continued economic despair.

Kinshasa, with its sprawling shantytowns, remains a sad relic

of Mobutu's 32 years of mismanagement and graft.

Along June 30 Boulevard, a construction crane idle since 1990 looms over a half-built building. Foreign backing slowly ebbed away in Mobutu's last decade, while the dictator's greed chewed away at the country.

While Mobutu sold Zaire to foreign investors and lined his pockets, Kabila has gone the other way, wavering on whether to allow outside investment for fear of foreign exploitation.

Freedom also is elusive in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Opposition politicians, human rights workers and journalists have been jailed, newspapers shut and reporters beaten. Political opposition is outlawed by decree.

The African Zone Association for the Defence of Human Rights says Kabila's Congo is subjected to more repressive policies than during the years of Mobutu's rule.

Critics say Kabila's first year in power has yielded change only on the surface, while endemic corruption, nepotism and authoritarian rule persist. The government set up an office to investigate the theft of government funds under the old regime, but fired its boss on suspicion of misappropriating money.

Others, however, say Kabila needs time to implement his policies. "Mobutu had 32 years to destroy this country," says Kalala

Ngedi, an auto mechanic. "Kabila is trying to rebuild it, and we should give him time to lay down the foundations."

The international community is growing tired of waiting, and it has been irritated by Kabila's less-than-diplomatic demeanour — from detaining UN officials and deporting Belgian embassy staff to snubbing Jesse Jackson, Washington's envoy to Africa.

To Kabila's credit, the annual inflation rate has dropped from a pre-civil war high of about 660% to 14% and rampant lawlessness in Kinshasa and elsewhere is down.

"Everyone knows that one could no longer talk of the economy in Zaire," Kabila has said. "What we have done is to stabilise the currency, eliminate fluctuations, job insecurity and continuing uncertainty." His assurances often don't accord with reality. He has done little to create jobs or begin rebuilding the country.

Mpoyi, the teacher, considers Kabila's rebellion a failure. So does unemployed Mohammed Mubengaie and shop owner Freddy Kimbeni, who can't afford to restock his shelves.

A majority of Congolese surveyed in an independent poll said they would not vote for Kabila if presidential elections were held — something Kabila had pledged to do by 1999, but is now backing away from. — Sapa-AP.

Kabila gives investors hope

By PETER FABRICIUS
Windhoek

Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila began the process of restoring his international reputation yesterday, announcing in Windhoek that he would hold elections in June next year.

He received an encouraging welcome from investors at the high-level Southern African Economic summit.

Kabila told a press conference in Windhoek that he would allow political activity, now suppressed, to resume six months before the elections. He would shortly announce the composition of a constitutional assembly to revise the constitution.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki appears to have played a major role in extracting these political concessions from Kabila. Mbeki met him in Kinshasa last Friday and said at the summit yesterday morning that

Kabila would hold a referendum by December to seek public approval for the draft constitution before next year's elections.

But Mbeki expressed grave concern that Kabila was setting himself a target that was too demanding and that, if he failed to meet it, the democratisation of Congo could be harmed.

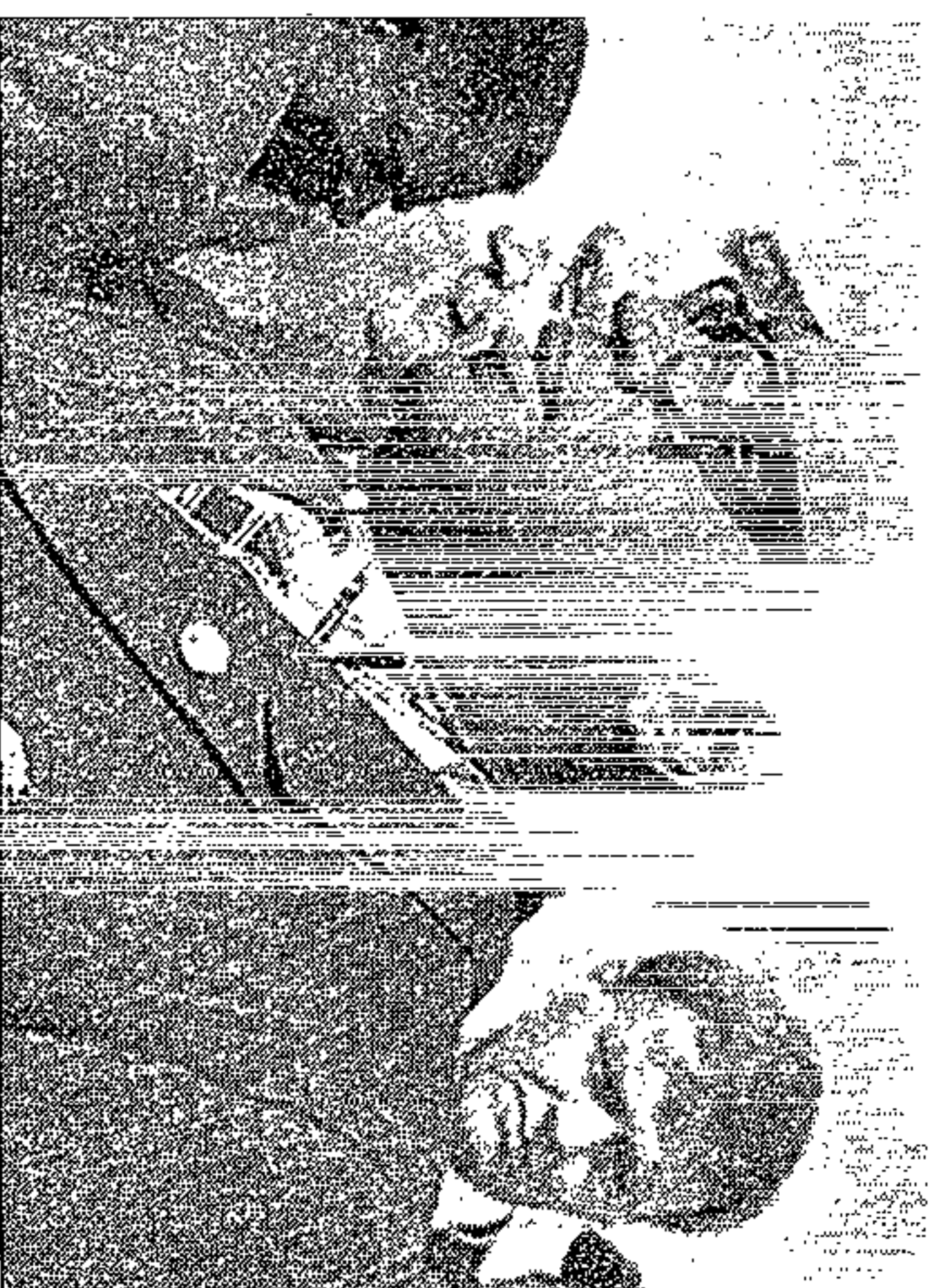
Kabila, however, said he saw no problems with the timetable although he admitted he was reacting to international pressure and "propaganda".

Kabila completely dismissed a report by Amnesty International that his forces were killing and torturing innocent civilians. He said this was propaganda by supporters of ousted President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Kabila assured investors that their investments would be safe in the Congo and that they could repatriate all their profits except for a withholding tax of 10%. — Star Foreign Service



Mobutu is dead and gone, but the lives of people remain wretched under equally inept leadership



New ruler Laurent Kabila ... not making a difference.

Late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko... left a country in ruins.

Congo continues on Kabila's woeful path

BY IAN STEWART
Kinshasa

Some things change: Zaire is now Congo. The dictator Mobutu Sese Seko is out and Felix Laurent Kabila is in. A commitment to fighting corruption has replaced wholesale "kleptocracy".

Other things stay the same: Congo remains an economic wreck. Kabila, like the late Mobutu, rules from on privileged high. And erratic policy-making keeps Congo estranged from the international community.

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"Nothing has changed the way we expected," said Mpyoi wa Mpyoi, a schoolteacher with two children. "The people aren't happy. There are no jobs, and we still have no rights."

Over and over, the same sentiments are repeated in the streets of

Kinshasa, the pot-holed and garbage-strewn capital where some estimates say unemployment still runs as high as 75%.

On May 17 1997 those streets were filled with hope as thousands of people poured out to welcome Kabila's conquering rebel army.

Waving palm fronds and dancing in celebration, residents greeted the victorious soldiers with chants of "We're free!"

Today, hope is fading amid continued economic despair.

Kinshasa, with its sprawling shantytowns, remains a sad relic of Mobutu's 32 years of mismanagement and graft.

Along June 30 Boulevard a construction crane, idle since 1990, looms over a half-built building. Foreign backing slowly ebbed in Mobutu's last decade, while the dictator's greed and corruption chewed away at the country.

Kabila's promise of economic rejuvenation has brought few results so far. While Mobutu virtually sold Zaire to foreign investors

and lined his pockets with the profits, Kabila has gone the other way, wavering on whether to allow outside investment for fear of foreign exploitation.

Freedom also is elusive in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Opposition politicians, human rights workers and journalists have been jailed, newspapers shut and reporters beaten. Political opposition is outlawed by decree.

The African Zone Association for the Defence of Human Rights says Kabila's Congo is subjected to more repressive policies than during the final years of Mobutu rule.

Critics say Kabila's first year in power has yielded change only on the surface, while endemic corruption, nepotism and authoritarian rule persist. The government set up an office to investigate the theft of government funds under the old regime, but then fired its boss on suspicion of misappropriating money himself.

Others, however, say Kabila needs time to implement policies.

"Mobutu had 32 years to destroy this country," said Kalala Ngedi, a motor mechanic. "Kabila is trying to rebuild it, and we should give him time to lay down the foundations."

The international community is growing tired of waiting, and it has been irritated by Kabila's less than diplomatic demeanour - from detaining UN officials and deporting Belgian embassy staff to snubbing Jesse Jackson. Washington's envoy to Africa.

To Kabila's credit, the annual inflation rate has dropped from a pre-civil war high of about 660% to 14% and rampant lawlessness in Kinshasa and elsewhere is down.

"Everyone knows that one could no longer talk of the economy in Zaire," Kabila has said.

"What we have done is to stabilise the currency, eliminate fluctuations, job insecurity and continuing uncertainty."

His assurances often don't jibe with reality on the street. He has done little to create jobs or begin

rebuilding the country.

Mpyoi, the teacher, considers Kabila's rebellion a failure. So does unemployed Mohammed Mubengale and a shop owner. Freddy Kimbeni, who cannot even afford to restock his shelves.

Most Congolese surveyed in an independent poll said they would not vote for Kabila if presidential elections were held - something Kabila had pledged to do by 1999, but is now backing away from.

Of 1 005 people surveyed by the Congolese Office of Studies, Research and Consulting, only 34% said they would vote for Kabila, according to results of the poll that were published in several newspapers despite Kabila's clampdown on dissent.

Another 34% backed opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, who was sent into internal exile by Kabila and placed under house arrest in his home village earlier this year. The remainder spread their support among a variety of other opposition leaders. - Sapa-AP

Star 20/5/98 (358)

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Kabila tells of steps to integrate regional economy

Alan Fine
and Claire Pickard-Cambridge

WINDHOEK — Laurent Kabila, the president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, arrived at his first World Economic Forum summit yesterday, appealing for foreign investors to take up business opportunities and outlining measures to integrate Congo-Kinshasa with the regional economy.

He said that with large areas of unexploited land, his country offered huge possibilities for business in agriculture. Co-operation in mining, petroleum and gas had begun and he

invited more foreigners to invest. Developing the country's railways was a natural extension of the subcontinent's transport system.

Appealing for regional integration, Kabila said no single country could harness economic globalisation on its own to grow and alleviate poverty. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), which had played a role in security issues, had to be more involved in the economic sphere.

Congo-Kinshasa needed regional assistance to upgrade education which had deteriorated severely during Mobutu Sese Seko's last years as ruler. Telecommunications must

also be improved and integrated. (Deputy President Thabo Mbeki disclosed earlier that Telkom and an unnamed SA company were in talks with Congo-Kinshasa.)

Kabila said his country had the potential to electrify the region with its Inga generating complex and invited foreign investors to participate in constructing phases two and three.

Mbeki said that better communication was needed on opportunities in the region. An investment advisory group of international and local business leaders and government was being set up to play this role, said Mbeki. About four months ago, top international

businessmen at Davos (the forum's main venue in Switzerland) had suggested such a group to him. "What was inspiring was that a number of these executives said they wanted to serve personally in this group."

SADC executive secretary Kaire Mbuende said the importance of regionalism had been emphasised at the forum because investors needed larger markets which no single country could provide. The SADC had to move faster in integrating economies.

Policies had to be harmonised, along with more government-public sector partnerships and re-engineering of the public service.

Mbeki expresses SA concern at 'short time frame' for polls in Congo

Claire Pickard-Cambridge

WINDHOEK — Government was deeply concerned that the Democratic Republic of Congo's plans to hold a constitutional referendum by year-end and a general election by next June would not provide enough time to prepare properly and ensure a credible outcome, SA Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said yesterday.

At a conference which he devoted almost entirely to SA concerns about the Congo, he said the inter-

national community was also obliged to assist that country. Vast amounts of money were needed just to ensure far-flung communities were informed about the nature of the constitution.

Mbeki said when he visited President Laurent Kabila last week the South Africans had expressed their concerns about the short time frame the Congo had set for the two important political processes. Mbeki announced that Telkom SA was investigating the possibility

of helping Kinshasa to re-establish basic telecommunications, but did not provide further details.

This follows an announcement on Monday that Eskom had sent experts to investigate the rehabilitation of the Inga 1, 2 and 3 power projects on the Congo River.

Mbeki said international organisations, like the World Bank, were keen to assist in the recovery process because it was appreciated that stability in central Africa was of paramount importance.

Mbeki said "questions of dictatorship" were discussed with Kabila. He had been told the main reason for freezing political activity was that armed militias were attached to political parties in Kinshasa.

When questioned about his treatment of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, Kabila said Tshisekedi had refused to join a unity government and had been accused of planning assassinations of government leaders. Tshisekedi had since "been asked to go the Kasai Province".

"He was then given a hoe, a plough and some seed."

Tshisekedi was expected to be allowed to return to Kinshasa soon.

Mbeki also told the news conference that he did not believe the three sets of trade talks involving SA — namely those with other customs union members, with the European Union and within the Southern African Development Community — were progressing slowly.

He said the talks were complex and interrelated.

Will the real Kabila please

A year on, many wonder whether

This past Sunday marked one year since the corrupt regime of Mobutu Sese Seko was swept out of Kinshasa by Laurent Kabila and the Rwandan, Ugandan and Angolan troops who backed him.

Instead of the embraceable democracy that many expected and Kabila promised, the Democratic Republic of Congo has become a diplomatic cactus that has jabbed thorns into friends and foes alike.

I spent almost three months in Congo in the run-up to Mobutu's defeat, most of it in sweltering, chaotic Kinshasa, to which I returned last week.

Outwardly little has changed. Roads remain riddled with potholes. The dirt streets through many neighbourhoods are cratered with muddy holes big enough to swallow vehicles. Residents engage in do-it-yourself road repair, fighting expansion of the craters by filling them with uncollected refuse.

Some road repairs are underway in Kinshasa and along the important road connecting it to Congo's only sea port at Matadi. Squads of workers can be seen wearing smocks in the bright yellow of the new national flag. They dig out rubbish-clogged drainage ditches, cut up fallen trees and scoop up the coating of sand, soil and rubbish that covers the outside two metres of most roads.

The day I arrived, I was at a corner news stand when two 4x4s with screaming sirens pulled up to a hotel and several security men leapt out waving stubby machine guns. The crowd reading the newspapers flinched in fear, then fled into adjoining alleys and shops. That fear is a sign of what has become the central fault line of Congolese debate: Kabila has shown himself to be intolerant of dissent and quick to use security forces to stamp it out.

The United Nations, Human

INSIDE STORY

Ross Herbert of the Foreign Service revisits Kinshasa, and finds Congo leader Laurent Kabila struggling to fulfill his early promise

Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the United States government have all accused Kabila's government of significant, continuing human rights violations, including torture, illegal detention and extrajudicial killings. The list of such acts has become long enough that the pattern is no longer open to dispute.

In his two-hour speech commemorating his first anniversary in power, Kabila spent most of his time defending himself against international human rights criticism. He argued, justifiably, that it was a significant accomplishment to have an army that no longer looted the population nor harassed people for bribes.

Before Kabila, people would not walk the streets at night for fear of soldiers. Taxi drivers, shopkeepers, foreigners and particularly journalists were routinely shaken down by Mobutu's security forces.

Human rights might have been easier to ignore by diplomats if it were not for the United Nations probe into alleged massacres of Rwandan Hutus by Kabila's forces during the war to oust Mobutu.

After the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the killers settled along with some two million Rwandan refugees in UN-funded camps in then-Zaire.

Every diplomat in the region knew that Rwanda's Tutsi army was the driving force behind Kabila's rebellion and few would be naive



Che's view: revolutionary Guavera considered Kabila an ineffective leader

enough to believe that the Rwandans would not aggressively pursue the killers deep into Congo.

All Kabila had to do was allow the UN to investigate, agree that massacres are bad and attribute them to rogue elements. But instead of providing this diplomatic figleaf, Kabila obstructed the UN probe at every turn, finally arresting one of its members and photocopying the investigation documents he had with him.

On April 17, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan withdrew the investigators, who are now compiling a partial report based on their work so far.

"A lot of us are hoping the report will blame Rwandans for the massacres so we can get on with things," said one Western diplomat.

But it may be too late. By defiantly rejecting any form of conditionality attached to aid, Kabila has made it virtually impossible for the major powers to deliver meaningful assistance. He complained of Mobutu's lack of transparency, but when pressed by donors to deliver a nation-

Talking tough: Laurent Kabila preaches democ-

al budget, he produced one that provided no accounting of key revenues, such as diamonds, or detail on military expenditures, which consume a huge portion of public funds.

Effectively, he demands a blank cheque from the world, arguing that the West gave massive aid to Mobutu even though it knew most of it went into his pocket. The world's emphasis on good governance and human

Congo slides backwards as foe

ROSS HERBERT
FOREIGN SERVICE

Kinshasa - The world has found ways to accommodate nations with human rights records worse than the Democratic Republic of Congo. So why has Laurent Kabila received such a chilly reception since taking power?

One reason is the contrast between his articulate democratic promises and his record of intolerance.

On Friday, Amnesty International released a report asserting that Kabila's first year in power had been

marked by a deliberate and calculated policy to kill, maim, torture, and arbitrarily arrest untold numbers of innocent civilians.

Opposition political activity has been banned, and the popular politician and most determined Mobutu opponent, Etienne Tshisekedi, has been exiled to his remote home village after meeting US envoy Jesse Jackson.

Last week prosecutors called for the death penalty for three men accused of organising a coup, including Anselme Masasu, one of the four main founders of Kabila's AFDL

movement and one-time chief of army staff under Kabila. One of the AFDL founders disappeared during the war, and a Western diplomat said the latest trial was little more than an effort to get rid of a rival for power.

"When it comes to Congolese citizens voicing their opinion or forming opposition groups, there has been a clear reversal of the gains achieved since April 1990 when opposition political parties were formally recognised," Amnesty International said.

Paul Nsapu and Sabin Banza, leaders of the Ligue des électeurs (Electors' League), were arrested on

April 27 on their way from a meeting at the Belgian Embassy in Kinshasa.

Earlier in April, Kabila's government had accused Belgium of being a terrorist state.

On April 3, the Zairian Association for the Defence of Human Rights was banned.

Other human rights workers have been arrested, including one last Friday.

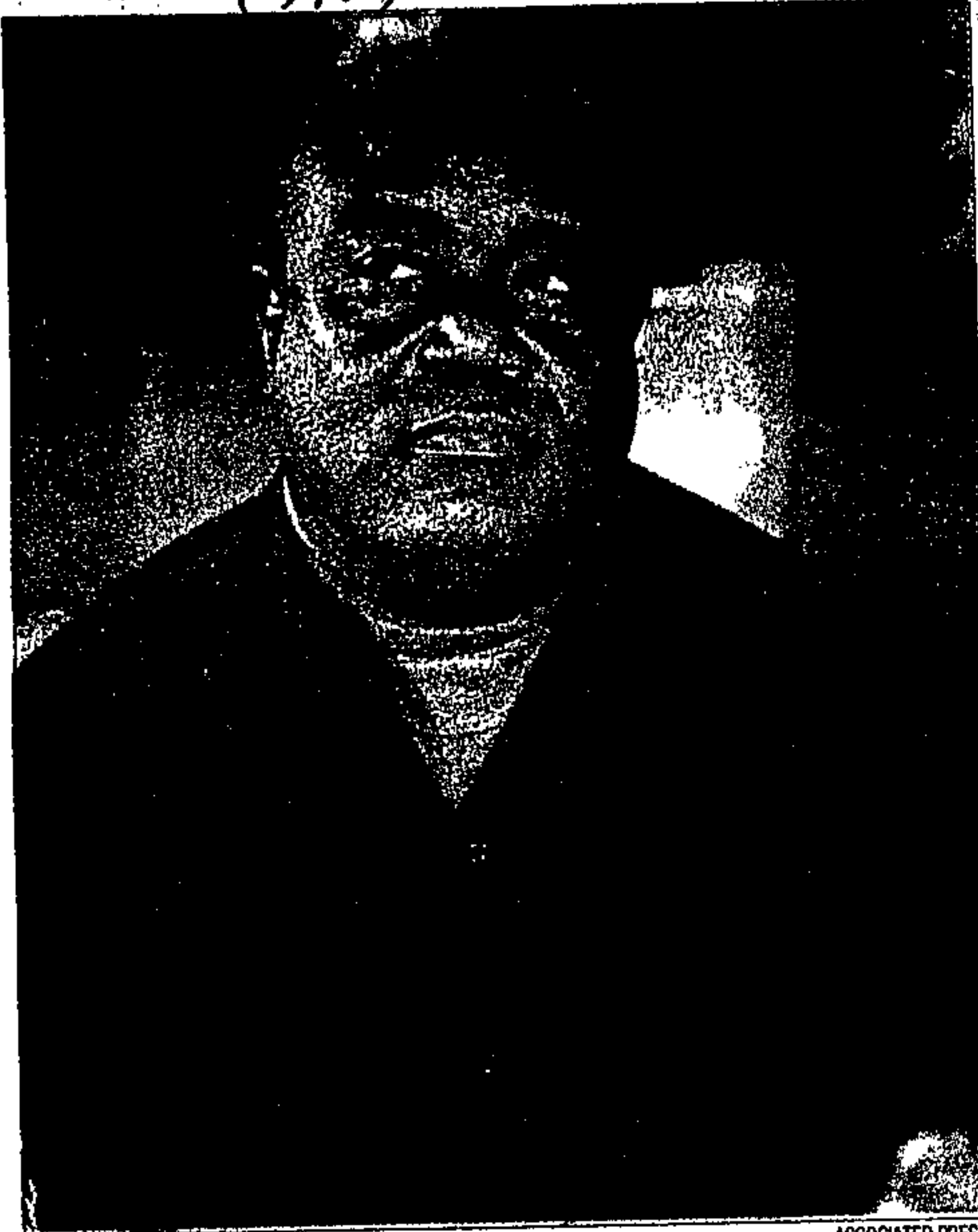
Newspaper editors have been frequently arrested, often for petty reasons.

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Kabila please stand up? or whether Che Guevara was right

(398)

AACT 20/5/98



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Talking tough: Laurent Kabila preaches democracy – but practices intolerance

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Effectively, he demands a blank cheque from the world, arguing that the West gave massive aid to Mobutu even though it knew most of it went into his pocket. The world's emphasis on good governance and human

rights halted aid to Mobutu in 1990. And there are no more Cold War justifications for tolerating useful but oppressive regimes.

From the 1960s, when he began fighting Mobutu, until Rwanda gave him another chance in 1996, Kabila lived in isolation in the deep bush of the Fizi mountains. Today he seems stuck in a time warp, either unaware or conveniently unwilling to accept

that the way the world gives aid has changed.

Deeply nationalistic, Kabila and his inner circle accuse the world of opposing them out of desire to oppress the Congolese people. The belief that the world is out to exploit Congo also led to Kabila renouncing mining contracts signed by his government and seizing assets held by South Africa's Spoornet.

Such rhetoric also destroyed the goodwill most of the world held for him a year ago. Kabila now presents a difficult diplomatic challenge because many countries feel they have little influence left.

In the 1960s, the Argentine revolutionary Che Guevara wrote that Kabila was a feckless, ineffective leader more interested in drink and women than managing his forces in the field.

The most logical course now is so obvious that many Congolese and international observers wonder whether Guevara was right after all. Others wonder whether Kabila is simply not clever enough to grasp the situation.

Instead of toning down his rhetoric and giving his security forces orders to ignore petty slights by journalists and human rights workers, Kabila recently visited Libya to learn how it survived international sanctions.

There is more to Kabila than his human rights record. Kabila and his ministers express genuine anger over Mobutu's rule and seem sincere in their desire to improve the country. But implementation rarely matches intention.

Kabila seems not to understand how little ability his government has to plan and coordinate. His government has no middle management and even tiny decisions require consultation with Kabila himself. When the minister of commerce recently embarked on a business trip without

asking Kabila's personal permission, Kabila had the man pulled out of a Swiss Air plane that was on the runway ready for takeoff.

The regional security and development summit that Kabila hosted last week was an organisational disaster before it was abruptly cancelled.

Foreign diplomats were notified of the event before invited heads of state, some of whom received only a week's notice and were given no opportunity to consult on the agenda.

Journalists and translators were shunted from room to room as accreditation rules were repeatedly changed. On the morning that heads of state were to arrive, diplomats, conference delegates and even members of Kabila's staff were barred by soldiers from the conference hotel because Kabila was inside.

Unhappy with his bumbling, unilateral approach to the summit, Kabila's closest allies – Rwanda and Uganda – showed their displeasure by refusing to attend either the summit or his first anniversary celebration on Sunday.

Going it alone might help Congo by forcing Kabila to learn to organise his government, a skill without which he will never be able to properly administer the billions of dollars in aid he desires.

Kabila remains a mystery because he simultaneously speaks of free-markets and democracy while arresting critics over petty issues.

The crucial test will come next year.

He has promised elections by June 1999, the unbanning of political parties six months prior to that, and a constituent assembly to draft electoral laws and a constitution.

But until the process actually begins, the world can only wonder which view of Kabila is most accurate: his own image of himself, or Che Guevara's.

ards as foes face a crackdown

Garry AFDL war, the latest effort

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detained by military intelligence for two days after he published a letter from a human rights group asserting that some government officials were detaining people in private jails.

After an international outcry he was released.

Military intelligence complained that it had only brought him in to get information and therefore he had not really been arrested.

About 30 members of Tshisekedi's political party have been arrested.

Vovo Bossongo and Honore Kabeya said they were tortured with

on January 17. "They wanted me to lie down but I resisted, and so they forced me. They touched me with an electroshock baton on the genitals. I felt some kind of current in my body and I fell down," Kabeya told Amnesty International.

Amnesty said about 54 Rwandan refugees and at least 100 Congolese civilians were unlawfully executed by AFDL forces in Shabunda, South-Kivu province, between March 25 and April 7.

The Amnesty report also claims that as many as 900 civilians in and around the town of Rutumba in

North-Kivu province were reportedly killed by AFDL forces – allegedly supported by Ugandan and Rwandese government forces – between February 20 and mid-April.

The killings took place in the context of joint operations by the forces of the three governments against their armed opponents.

Kabila's government has not specifically replied to the accusations.

However, during talks last week with South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Kabila pledged to draft a new human rights policy.

CONGO *Political and economic promises leave investors wary*

Kabila impresses, but without convincing

(358)
CT (BR) 21/5/98
PETER FABRICIUS

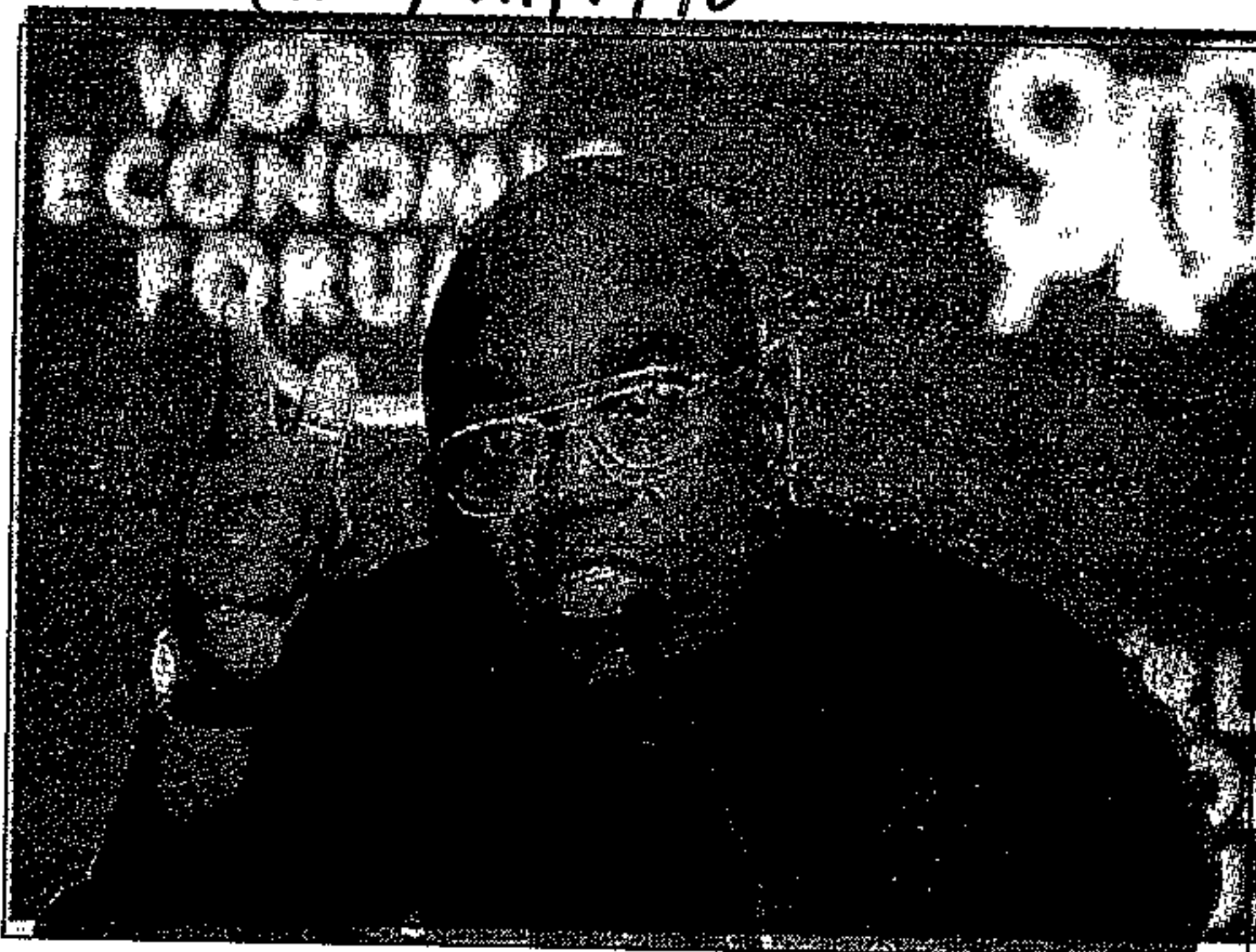
Windhoek — Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila made an impression with his big pitch for investment at the World Economic Forum's southern African summit. But he still had some convincing to do before the big money flowed, mining sources said yesterday.

"The experience of many potential investors is that when you get to the Congo, things are much more difficult," said one South African mining executive.

Kabila made a two-pronged pitch for investment. First he promised free political activity in six months, before elections next June, thus unblocking donor assistance.

Second, he marketed his "sound macroeconomic policies", investor-friendly regulations such as full repatriation of profits, and his efforts over the past year to begin rehabilitating ruined infrastructure.

The Congo is denied financial assistance from the Bretton



POINT MADE Laurent Kabila addresses the media at the World Economic Forum summit in Windhoek this week

PHOTO: AFP

Woods institutions because of various differences, not least the probe by the United Nations (UN) into alleged massacres of refugees by Kabila's forces.

Kabila vowed "to improve communications with the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral and multilateral financial institutions ... and other

donor countries".

He said the UN human rights team that had recently left the Congo, citing obstructions from officials, was welcome to return.

Doug Taylor, Iscor Mining's African business development manager, praised Kabila for making "small but significant changes" under difficult

circumstances. But others were less convinced.

One executive, who did not wish to be named, said although many mining companies were exploring business in the Congo because the resources were too big to ignore, the government had not yet created the conditions for them to commit to large-scale investment.

He said the Congo was still reluctant to offer private mining companies majority shares in joint ventures with the government. Mining houses were unlikely to commit huge resources without a controlling interest.

A businesswoman who had been importing beef into the Congo from Uganda said her cold storage rooms had been shot up by soldiers, forcing her to close the business. She asked Kabila whether he could guarantee that did not happen again.

Kabila's response was merely to insist that security in Kinshasa was "better than Pretoria or Johannesburg". — Independent Foreign Service

Some observers doubt if he understands his parlous situation, writes Ross Herbert of the Star Foreign Service in Kinshasa

Kabila seems stuck in time warp

Star 25/5/98 (358)

PHOTOS: GARY BERNARD

May 17 marked one year since the corrupt regime of Mobutu Sese Seko was swept out of Kinshasa by Laurent Kabila and the Rwandan, Ugandan and Angolan troops who backed him.

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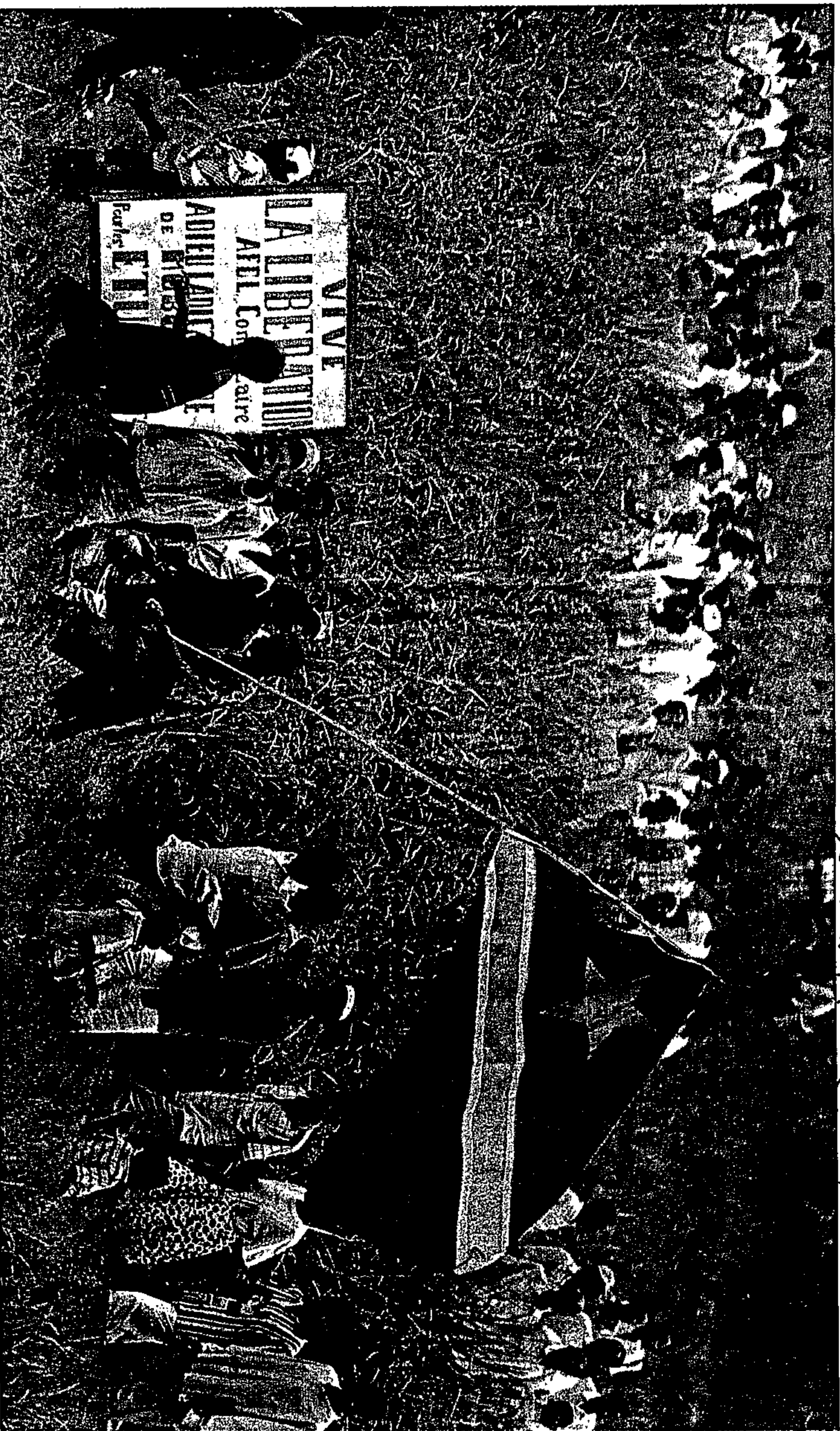
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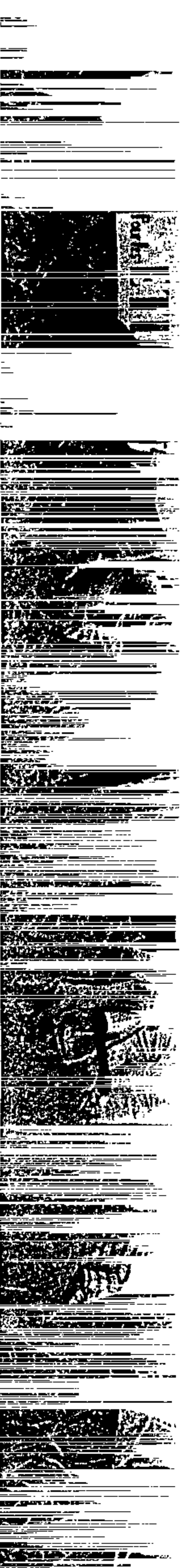
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Kabila remains a mystery because he simultaneously speaks of free-markets and democracy while arresting critics over petty issues. The crucial test will come next year when he has promised elections by June 1999, the unbanning of political parties six months prior to that, and a constituent assembly to draft electoral laws and a constitution.

Kabila will likely pick the assembly himself, which he said will decide which political parties will be allowed to participate.

He rightfully distrusts the hundreds of Kinshasa political parties, many drawn up along tribal lines and once loyal to Mobutu. But his notion of selecting parties smacks of Sani Abacha's "democracy".

Until the process actually begins, the world can only wonder which view of Kabila is most accurate, Kabila's or Che Guevara's?

First year marked by a policy to kill and maim opponents

Kinshasa - The world has found ways to accommodate nations with human rights records worse than the Democratic Republic of Congo. So why has Laurent Kabila received such a chilly reception since taking power? One reason is the contrast between his articulate democratic promises and his subsequent record of intolerance.

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Newspaper editors have been frequently arrested, often for petty reasons. Ipakala Abeoyo Mobiko, editor of *La Reference Plus* newspaper, was detained for two days by military intelligence after he published a letter from a human rights group asserting that some government officials were detaining people in private jails.

After an international outcry, he was released. Military intelligence complained that it had only brought him in for information and therefore he had not really been arrested.

About 30 members of Tshisekedi's political party have been arrested. UDPS leaders Yovo Bossongo and Honore Kabeya said they were tortured with electroshock batons, after their arrest on January 17.

"They wanted me to lie down but I resisted and so they forced me. They touched me with an electroshock baton on the genitals. I felt some kind of current in my body and I fell down," Kabeya told Amnesty International.

Amnesty said about 54 Rwandan refugees and at least 100 Congolese civilians between March 25 and April 7 were unlawfully executed by AFDL forces in Shabunda, in the South-Kivu province.

The report also claims that as many as 900 civilians in and around the town of Butembo in North-Kivu province were reportedly killed by AFDL forces - allegedly supported by Ugandan and Rwandese government forces - between February 20 and mid-April 1998. The killings took place in the context of joint operations by the forces of the three governments against their armed opponents.

Kabila's government has not specifically repudiated the accusations. However, Kabila has pledged to draft a new human rights policy during talks last week with South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

Congo detains ministers for 'corruption'

KINSHASA: Security forces have arrested two Democratic Republic of Congo government ministers, Raphael Ghenda and Kam bale Mututule, press reports and sources close to the presidency said yesterday.

The daily *Le Palmars* said Ghenda, the information minister, was detained at the weekend for the alleged misappropriation of R3 million President Laurent Kabila provided for new radio and television equipment.

The paper said Ghenda spent only R325,000 on equipment.

Other sources said Mututule, the minister of state enterprises, was arrested for alleged mismanagement of a public company.

A source close to Kabila's office con-

firmed the arrests, but said the reasons were not known.

The paper said Ghenda's detention was also linked to a national television broadcast of a documentary film on atrocities committed against civilians during civil wars.

The film was shown the day before a scheduled 16-nation summit on solidarity and development on May 15. It coincided with the start of events to mark Kabila's seizure of power a year earlier.

The summit was called off, reportedly because of a mounting territorial dispute and clashes on the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Last Friday, security forces briefly arrested Ghenda for questioning and

also hauled in Yerodia Abdoulaye Ndombasi, Kabila's cabinet director, in connection with the broadcast.

The chairperson and director-general of state radio and television, Jose Kajangwa, and the TV news director and his deputy, Tshilonda Tshia Mulamba and Kazadi Akea, have been in detention for a week and relieved of their duties.

Other broadcasting staff were also arrested.

The film reportedly infuriated Kabila's regime, whose ex-rebel alliance has been accused by human rights organisations of the massacre of Rwandan Hutu refugees as it swept across the former Zaire to oust dictator Mobutu Sese Seko last May.

The Kinshasa government and the United Nations last year began a long stand-off over investigations of the alleged massacres, which became bitter as UN staff accused Kabila's regime of systematically hampering their inquiries.

Mututule, for his part, was reported by Kinshasa sources to have been detained in connection with his duties as minister of public companies.

On taking power in the renamed Democratic Republic of Congo, Kabila pledged to clean state-owned enterprises after decades of mounting chaos and endemic corruption during 32 years of rule by Mobutu, who died in exile last September. — Sapa-AFP

(358) of 26/5/98

Laurent Kabila makes his debut to cheers —

CONGOLESE President Laurent Kabila's debut at the World Economic Forum has served to highlight the ambiguity with which he is viewed.

Most investors at a post-summit session last week rallied behind him, applauding him at every turn for ironing out anarchy and stabilising the currency. Eager to have an early stab at ventures in the "new Congo", they appeared to be willing him to secure a business-friendly environment.

Their mood contrasted with the chill of a news conference Kabila was whisked to where the press launched a blitzkrieg over alleged human rights violations against political opponents and Rwandan refugees. Kabila offered little in the way of explanations and cut short the questions.

Earlier on, Kabila and his team of ministers worked hard at courting investors. The newest member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) made it clear it planned to ride out the crisis and bring foreign capital back into the country. Early steps included trying to stamp out blatant corruption and re-establishing confidence in the largely ignored banking sector.

Kabila and his ministers say they have adopted a three-year emergency plan to put the country back on its feet. Development targets, in order of priority, are: infrastructure, agriculture, energy, basic social services, the justice

Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila received an ambiguous reception at the World Economic Forum in Windhoek last week, writes **Claire Pickard-Cambridge**

system, a new investment code and industrialisation.

They dwell particularly on the potential of mining and agriculture. Many state-owned farms have been abandoned, they say, and foreign investors can enter joint-venture partnerships with government. Congo has two types of land tenure, the traditional and the modern. Where land has been demarcated under the modern system, the state can award long-term concessions.

Central bank governor Jean-Claude Masangu Mulongo says inflation has dropped dramatically to 5% and the exchange rate against the dollar has been stable for the past seven months. The bank is trying to pull the cash flow in a largely informal economy back into the banking system — an initial step in trying to provide more credit for development.

Taxes were previously paid only in cash because government did not accept cheques.

These practices are changing and government has asked companies — many of which keep boxes of dollars in their basements — to route payments to each other through banks.

Only six or seven of the country's 10 banks are working and government wants savings and



Laurent Kabila arrives at the World Economic Summit.

Picture: AP

loans bank's established in small towns, encourage saving.

The team emphasises that investors can move money freely in and out of the country. But some containment is needed in a context of possibly over-liberal forex regulations, and import-export licences will be reintroduced.

Kabila was congratulated by

civilians". It also said government had done everything in its power to stamp out dissent.

Journalists were derisive when Kabila replied that human rights organisations — including a United Nations team which recently left Congo after being unable to investigate human rights violations — were on a mission to "disinform the world". He had, however, invited the UN team to return. He also blamed the media for damaging Congo's image and championing

the country, and was mining copper and cobalt in two ventures in the Kolwezi area.

However, Kabila guffawed loudly when one of the most important investor concerns was voiced — that of security. He told a questioner, Ugandan MP Winnie Byanyima, that he did not have a problem with undisciplined soldiers, although she said her company's premises had been "shot up by government soldiers".

Kabila said Kinshasa was now a safe city — 37 000 guns had been seized when political militias were disarmed. Pierre-Victor Mpojo, minister of state for the economy, went as far as saying there was no unrest in the country, contradicting President Thabo Mbeki's statement earlier that unrest in the east was still a problem. Uganda and Rwanda are also known to be worried about instability in eastern Congo.

Far more vexatious for Kabila, however, was his grilling by journalists wanting comment on an Amnesty International report released last week. The report, entitled "A year of dashed hopes", said Kabila's first year in power had been marked by "a deliberate and calculated policy to kill, maim, torture and arbitrarily arrest untold numbers of innocent

on the cause of his political opponent, Etienne Tshesekedi, who he described as a relic of the old order.

Kabila's bitter skirmish with the media indicated that the growing clamour over human rights was affecting perceptions of his rule, despite neighbouring governments' efforts to paint him in a positive light.

However, Kabila defended himself against charges of crushing opposition, saying political activities would be allowed in the six

months preceding the elections.

Tshesekedi, he said, had been used by foreign powers to destabilise the regime. When caught, he had been "given the choice of imprisonment or returning to his home village".

Since returning to his village, Tshesekedi had been "given food, high-yielding seeds and a plough", Kabila said cynically.

"Now he no longer wishes to return to Kinshasa."

and boos

Kabila bars Mobutu men from constitution-drafting assembly

(358)

70 27/5/98

KINSHASA — Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila on Monday set up a transitional constituent assembly, but barred from membership dignitaries of the former Zaire regime headed by dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Kabila ousted Mobutu in a military takeover last year.

A decree released late on Monday on television said the assembly would

be made up of 300 members who "were never mixed up in the killings and economic crimes" committed since the country's independence in 1960 and who had not been "notorious dignitaries of the regime that fell on May 17 last year".

Although the decree did not name names, opponents of Kabila's regime such as Etienne Tshisekedi of the Union for Democracy and Social

Progress and Andre Bo-Boloko Lokonga of the Social Christian Democratic Party had held ministerial posts under Mobutu and would thus be disqualified.

The constituent assembly will draw up a draft constitution to be put to a referendum.

A first draft has already been submitted to the president.

Given legislative functions, the

assembly will also have the task of adopting laws on political parties, associations, nationality and the national elections commission set for next year.

Candidates aged 25 and over had to apply to the constitutional commission by June 12, the decree said.

It did not state which body would select the members of the assembly. — Sapa-APR

on trying in (748) Kabila's Congo

Business in Kabila's Congo is riddled with problems, writes Helen Vesperini in Kinshasa

11-28/5/98

JUST days before the first anniversary of his arrival in Kinshasa, President Laurent Kabila announced his intention to build a road and rail bridge over the mighty Congo River that separates his Democratic Republic of the Congo from its smaller neighbour, Congo Republic.

For many businessmen, Kabila's announcement is typical of his government's approach — announce an ambitious project and then do nothing.

"It would be an impressive achievement for any country, but for here, where they cannot fill in a hole in the main street, forget it," one entrepreneur said.

The reconstruction of this vast central African country, whose infrastructures crumbled during three decades of corrupt rule by Kabila's predecessor Mobutu Sese Seko, should have been a dreamed-of opportunity for entrepreneurs in all sectors.

But investors complain that with the notable exception of Economy Minister Pierre-Victor Mpozo, few cabinet members have any business background. Many are academics. Some businessmen say they would excuse inexperience, but that inexperience coupled with an arrogant refusal to heed advice is an exasperating mixture. "If they would just sit down with us and listen to suggestions," fumed the former head of Unilever Congo before deciding he had enough and retiring to Australia.

An Asian businessman familiar with east Africa agreed. He said that even though he badly wanted to believe in Kabila's regime, as long as ministers in Kinshasa refused to honour appointments, the situation was impossible. "I employ 400 people here," he said. "In Uganda that would be enough to get me a meeting immediately with any minister. Not here."

A problem, too, was that ministers who do receive businessmen show little interest in their suggestions. "You meet (Ugandan President Yoweri) Museveni and he has people taking notes. Museveni is saying all the time: 'That is interesting, note that down.' Here they can meet dozens of people without having so much as a notebook on their desks — what can they possibly remember at the end of the day?"

Others resent having to deal with a plethora of different ministers for one contract. The manager of a public works company building a small bridge near the capital complains that he is now on the sixth version of his contract and that every modification, however minor, must be approved by four different ministries: planning, public works, transport and labour. Not surprisingly he is sceptical about the government's plan to build or repair 28 000km of road over a three-year period.

Confused signals

Payment terms are another stumbling block. "Talks tend to end in deadlock when they (the government) start asking for 100% credit when I want a 30% advance and the rest by letter of credit," an eastern European in Kinshasa in search of business said.

The business community was not reassured by Congo's handling of its relationship with the International Monetary Fund. Finance Minister Fernand Tala Ngai sent out confused signals saying that the government had agreed to pay \$5m a month towards IMF arrears. Then, shortly after returning from talks in Washington, he backed down on that commitment on the grounds the government had not yet voted a budget. Since then, the Central Bank has said Congo will indeed resume IMF payments, and the government has come up with a budget of sorts, setting revenue and disbursements at \$744.4m — without saying where it will come from or how it will be spent. To achieve the projected monthly revenue of more than \$60m, the government will have to almost double current income.

The big test now for Congo's economy, diplomats say, will be the introduction of the country's new currency, the Congolese franc, which is set for the end of June. Parity will be 100 000 New Zaires (NZ) for 1 new franc, with NZ130 000 currently worth \$1.

The most familiar-sounding complaint to those who knew Zaire under Mobutu is corruption. The new ruling party tried to promote a sense of civic responsibility. What it failed to do was to ensure that all rank and file public servants received a living wage. And so old practices flourish.

Yet, despite the catalogue of complaints, Congo's immense mineral wealth and large population continue to attract businessmen looking for deals and new foreign trade associations keep popping up — proof that many are still prepared to give the Kabila authorities another chance.

Kabila includes war ally in new Congo cabinet

BD 3/6/98 (358)

KINSHASA — President Laurent Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo has reshuffled his government, sacking six ministers under investigation for irregularities and bringing in a key ally from the war that brought him to power.

The new 37-strong government, announced late on Monday, includes Deogratias Bugera, the powerful secretary general of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo which toppled dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May last year following a seven-month bush war.

Bugera has been given the job of minister in charge of the presidency. "Maybe Kabila wants him (Bugera) to be more visible with elections drawing nearer," one political analyst said.

Kabila, who has banned politics and rules by decree, has promised national multiparty elections for April next year.

Many of the obscure new cabinet members come from society at large and have not held ministerial positions in the past.

Kabila sacked six ministers, five of whom are in detention during a probe of the financial management of their ministries.

The five are Etienne Richard Mbaya (planning), Lokombe Kitete (energy), Raphael Ghenda (information), who was also government spokesman, Kambale Mututulo (public enterprises), and his deputy, Biselele Kamutambi.

The president, who declared war on corruption shortly after taking over, has on numerous occasions warned his cabinet that anyone abusing their positions for personal gain would be punished.

Asked about the reasons for the reshuffle, he said earlier on Monday: "We want to have a more efficient team." He was speaking on his return from a three-day trip to Lubumbashi, where he met internally exiled opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi.

Tshisekedi has made participation of his Union for Democracy and Social Progress in government conditional on a resumption of political activity. — Reuter.

AFRICAN BUSINESS

heed the lessons of Asian crisis and take care of the banking sector

Congo Republic in line for donor aid package after war

From Reuters

Quagadougou, Burkina Faso — The president of Congo Republic said this week that his government was close to an agreement with both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on a package of aid specially tailored for countries that are emerging from war.

Denis Sassou Nguesso was speaking on the sidelines of the annual Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit now taking place in Burkina Faso.

He said his government would meet donors for a round table meeting in Washington, DC on June 16 and 17.

"We believe that by mid-June we will conclude these negotiations in Washington," he said. The meeting would focus on his country's post-conflict programme.

Sassou said his government would follow up these talks with negotiations on a three-year medium-term programme.

"We think that by mid-June we will have concluded the first phase," he said.

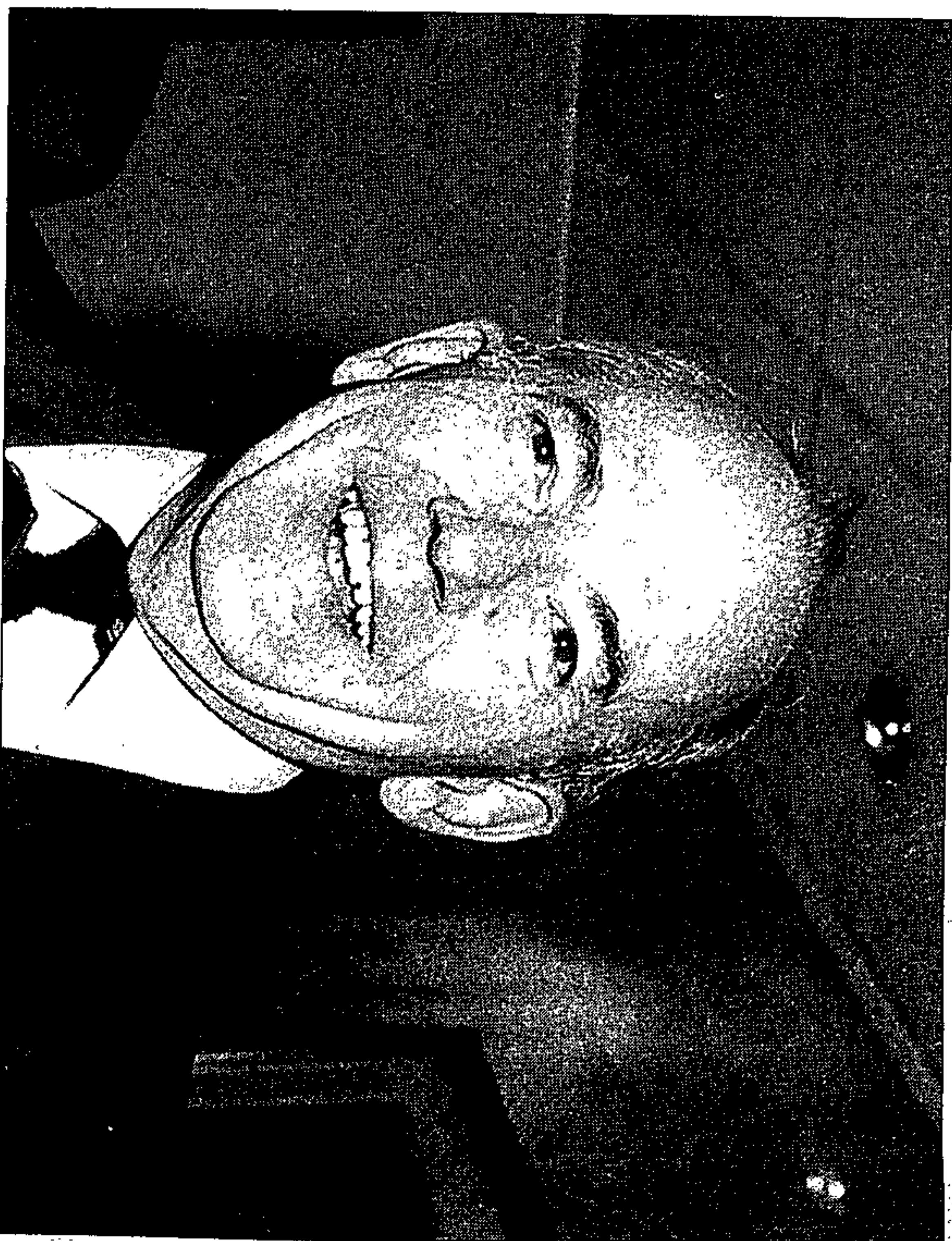
Sassou is Congo Republic's former Marxist military leader.

He is attending his first OAU summit since returning to power in October last year after a bloody showdown with elected President Pascal Lissouba, whose mandate lapsed during the conflict.

Michel Camdessus, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, had said earlier in the day that Sassou's country was a likely recipient of a special package under an initiative set up last year.

He said that Rwanda was the first recipient of such aid, designed to stabilise war-torn countries and create the economic conditions for normalisation in those countries.

"We would like countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia to benefit from help, but the countries have to take the first step and set up a programme that we can support," Camdessus said.



DESIGNED TO STABILISE The IMF's Michel Camdessus, who says that Rwanda will be the first recipient of a special aid package under an IMF initiative set up last year

EMERGING ECONOMIES OAU summit told to

INVESTMENT *There are scores of opportunities for imports and rebuilding, but the market is as exasperating as any in the continent*

Modern-day Jekyll and Hyde stalking Kabila's Congo

ROSS HERRERT

Kinshasa — Cinderella or Frankenstein? That is the question investors are asking themselves about the one-year-old Democratic Republic of Congo.

To optimists, Mobutu Sese Seko's former fiefdom is rich, virgin land where the government, frozen out of Western aid, is hungrily looking to South Africa for investment in infrastructure, mines and agriculture.

To pessimists, Congo is an unstable place, headed by a capricious government that might at any time cancel contracts, impose new taxes or arrest uncooperative business people.

Which is the real Congo? The problem for potential investors is both visions are apt: it is a propitious moment for South African business, but the Congolese market promises to be as difficult and exasperating as any in Africa.

On the positive side, Congo is richly endowed with natural resources and unexploited arable land ideal for such cash crops as mango, coffee, cocoa and palm oil, some of which were exported in significant quantities before kleptocratic rule and nationalisations destroyed commercial agriculture.

Congo has more than 1 million square kilometres of forest, 6 percent of the world's total. There are abundant reserves of copper, cobalt, gold, precious stones and diamonds. With a vast river network, Congo has the potential to produce 100 000 MegaWatts of electricity, enough for most of sub-Saharan Africa.

There is significant demand for electrical equipment, telecommunications gear and consumer products. As mines and mining exploration get under way, there will be significant demand for mining equipment. So limited is local production that restaurants, oil and mining companies regularly fly in bread, milk, meat, ice cream and liquor from South Africa.

Quick-tempered and deeply suspicious of foreign powers, Laurent Kabila's government has alienated nearly every potential foreign friend, including its once staunch war-time allies, Uganda and Rwanda.

Obstruction of a United Nations investigation of alleged massacres during the war and a declining respect for human rights led almost every major donor to sharply limit foreign aid. An avalanche of bad press created enough doubt to keep away all but the bucaniers and the big mining boys.

is vastly more difficult than finding its theoretical opportunities. I spent the better part of three months in Congo last year, and returned for two weeks last month to try and answer that Chindrella-Frankenstein question.

Diplomats and businessmen say the chief problem in dealing with Kabila's administration is a governing style that is capricious, flush with prejudices and quick to arrest.

Journalists and human rights workers have been targeted but business is not exempt. Despite Patrice optimism, his federation's executive committee was abruptly banned by the government, pending new federation elections. A main reason was business criticism of a government system to try and collect advance income taxes at the time goods are imported rather than when sold.

Due process is a concept Kabila rejects or does not comprehend.

Capriciousness results from a structure that is highly centralised around Kabila, who is often mired in every petty decision. Ministers and officials have a power to block deals, but only those near the pinnacle have an affirmative power to sweep aside difficulties. The result is an atmosphere of chaos. Both Britain and South Africa are without high commissioners because Kabila's government lost their accreditation papers.

Everything is bucked up the ladder to higher authorities, yet ministries are packed with functionaries whose only apparent duty is to block access to higher authorities.

Now is the perfect time for South African businessmen to move in

Theoretically, investors work with the relevant ministry to strike a preliminary agreement, then the minister takes the proposal to an inter-ministerial council on economic matters. Unfortunately, almost every one of Kabila's 26 ministries has an interest in commercial affairs and can weigh in.

A key link are the four ministers of state, Kabila's closest confidants who control the power ministries of the interior, the economy, planning and the office of the presidency. And Kabila himself must approve major deals. Some sources said if Kabila could be convinced early on, much subsequent bureaucracy could be cut.

One wild card is the election Kabila promised for next June. Opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi is as popular as Kabila in polls. A Kabila defeat or instability caused by harring Tshisekedi could spell long-term unrest. Work is under way on a new investment code.



BORROWER Mobutu Sese Seko left the country with a huge foreign debt

The lack of clear rules, administrative chaos and overlapping authority together offer an environment ripe for corruption. Despite Kabila's apparent commitment to create clean government there are signs corruption is on

the rise. An executive linked to a South African firm said he had been threatened with arrest because a worker alleged the executive failed to pay \$4 000 five years ago for house-painting work.

When reports of clear corruption reach the top, Kabila does act. When local newspapers reported soldiers were collecting tolls along the road to Matadi, Kabila had some 600 people arrested. And he did arrest five members of the Cabinet and other officials recently on corruption allegations.

Vietnam Congolese businessmen say South Africans often run into trouble. They pay too willingly without having done enough homework to know whether the corrupt official can really deliver. Kabila has been known to cancel contracts, despite months of negotiations, after the slightest hint of corruption.

On the monetary front, Kabila gets better marks. The country's notorious hyperinflation has dropped to single digits and the dollar exchange rate stabilised. However, critics say this was



TWO SIDES Laurent Kabila is both capricious and anti-corruption

achieved by stopping the production of all new currency, which is steadily deflating the economy.

Kabila appointed a widely respected central bank governor, Jean-Claude

Masangu, the American-educated former head of Citibank in Kinshasa.

He quickly tackled one of the bank system's major problems: there is no bank lending and no liquidity to honour cheques, which trade at a fraction of face value. Masangu ordered bank balances to be divided by a factor of 4.8, the result of which could be honoured.

In effect they wiped out a huge portion of government debt to commercial banks and took the banking system a step away from its previous Alice-in-Wonderland quality. But the move sparked fears that the government would move to seize or not honour foreign currency accounts.

Reaching agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is the single most critical hurdle for Masangu, because the World Bank, most lenders, insurers and aid donors will not give until good standing is restored with the IMF.

The former government stopped

making payments on IMF debt in 1992 and was suspended from the fund in 1994. Mobutu Sese Seko racked up some \$14 billion in foreign debt, which Kabila refuses to pay. The IMF insists it cannot forgive the debt until the new government pays off interest rate arrears of about \$450 million and shows a track record of reliable repayment.

When Masangu briefed the board of the IMF in March, sources said the board was impressed by his economic plans, candour and promises to pay off interest arrears. Then a week later, the government publicly renounced its commitment to pay the arrears, allegedly after Kabila angrily said Masangu was not authorised to pledge any repayment.

"It was an embarrassment for everybody ... To us this is a very manageable situation if they want to do it," said an IMF source who asked not to be identified. — Independent Foreign Service

asking themselves about the one-year-old Democratic Republic of Congo.

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Obstruction of a United Nations investigation of alleged massacres during the war and a declining respect for human rights led almost every major donor to sharply limit foreign aid. An avalanche of bad press created enough doubt to keep away all but the bucaners and the big mining boys.

"Now is the time that the West is holding back investment. It is the perfect time for South African business to move in," said Rashid Patel, one of the optimists who moved to Kinshasa from his native Bombay 30 years ago.

Well connected in both the Congolese and South African business communities, Patel also is head of the Congo chamber of commerce, known as the Federation of Congolese Employers, a useful stop in making appointments, searching for partners and learning about government.

Sorting through Congo's negatives

last month to try and answer that Cinderella-Frankenstein question.

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One wild card is the election Kabila promised for next June. Opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi is as popular as Kabila in polls. A Kabila defeat or instability caused by barring Tshisekedi could spell long-term unrest. Work is under way on a new investment code, labour law, land laws and taxes, but nothing has been formally promulgated. The lack of clear law is compounded by byzantine lines of authority.

There are separate ministers of commerce, economy, finance, strategic zones of development, public enterprises, industry and small and medium enterprise, energy, mining and transport. Then there are customs, tax, price-control and supposed product-quality officials to deal with.

Businesses variously report that between 14 and 16 departments must dealt with in importing goods.



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3LD TRADE OPPORTUNITIES

Welcome — Congo is back in business

Claire Pickard-Cambridge

(348)

THE perception that the Democratic Republic of Congo is a lawless jungle where it is tough to do business is something Francois Gasore Bahile is determined to dispel.

The business consultant is establishing a bureau in Sandton to promote investment in Congo. He has also been appointed by the Congo government to improve its economic co-operation with other Southern African Development Community countries.

He admits there are problems in Congo and that it has a bad image. But he says government is cracking down on corruption, modern economic policies are being drawn up, and the central bank has been put on its feet again.

When President Laurent Kabila came to power more than a year ago the state fixed-line telephone system was barely functioning. A private Chinese company had since gone into partnership with the state and some people in

Kinshasa had recently been "astonished to find that when they applied for a phone they got one, and that a month later they even received the bill". The next challenge would be to extend the system to the rural areas.

He said private cellular phone companies operated in Congo and that SA's MTN was in the early stages of negotiating for one of these contracts.

The informal dollar-economy operating in the streets was increasingly being channelled through the banking system again, he said. Street vendors used to set the rate of exchange between the Congolese franc and the dollar — now the central bank did so and the rate of exchange had been stabilised with inflation falling. Government had also begun closing operations which did not adhere broadly to the bank's exchange rate, he said. "About two years ago there was more than \$500m circulating informally around the country while the central bank had only \$20 000 in its vaults.

Now for the first time the central bank has more foreign currency than that floating in the informal sector."

Illustrating that government was serious about tightening controls, he said a French bank director in Kinshasa had been arrested last week for transporting a large amount of foreign currency without permission from the central bank.

Diamond buying had previously been uncontrolled, and while this was still prevalent, buyers could now get diamonds from state company Miba.

Bahile urged potential SA investors to contact his office. "We will also try to address the concerns of investors and to advise government on appropriate policies to provide security as it reorganises fiscal and customs structures." Undeterred by government's lack of funds, Bahile plans to make the Sandton bureau self-financing and will provide a newsletter to parties interested in his country. Government's key aim is to attract general investment, al-

though agriculture, mining and hydropower remain areas urgently requiring development. A delegation of ministers will visit SA next month to examine spatial development initiatives, such as transport corridors, with a view to establishing similar projects.

SA companies involved in Congo include Anglo American; Stanbic; Iscor; construction companies LTA and Swanepoel, and Investec. Comazar, which is 65% held by Spoornet, leases rolling stock, while SA Airways now has two flights a week to Kinshasa.

Group Five Goodwin, a subsidiary of construction company Group Five, is negotiating to operate, upgrade and maintain a 350km transport corridor linking Kinshasa with the port of Matadi near the west coast; and power utility Eskom has sent experts to see what it can do to help rehabilitate the country's Inga power projects on the Congo River rapids near the coast.

□ Bahile can be contacted at 011-884-6126. Fax: 011-784-9023.

Kabila vows to crush military uprising

(358)

BD 4/8/98

KINSHASA — President Laurent Kabila has vowed to take military action against a declared rebellion in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo said after an emergency cabinet meeting yesterday he was optimistic that the government would control the situation. "We have a population to protect and will proceed militarily."

The meeting followed overnight clashes in the capital between ethnic Tutsi elements of the army and troops loyal to Kabila, and an open declaration of revolt from sections of the army in the eastern Kivu provinces. Rebel troops said they had withdrawn support from the government in three towns: Goma, Bukavu and Kindu.

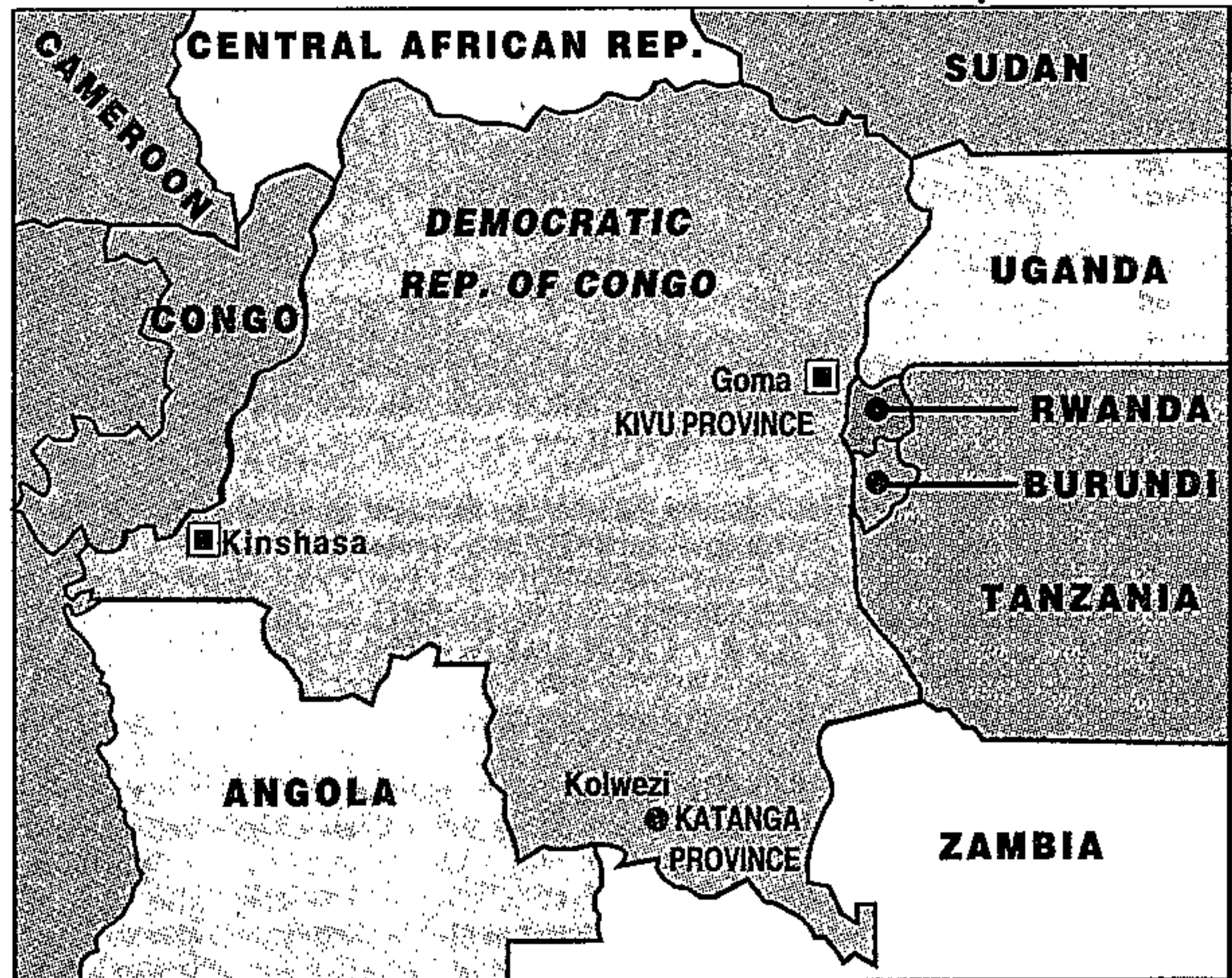
Shooting also broke out in Kinshasa, resulting in a curfew.

Senior officials including Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha and Presidential Affairs Minister Deogratias Bugera had fled the country, regional security sources said. They said the two men had left Kinshasa a few days ago but had decided not to return after Kabila started arresting people perceived to be close to Rwanda. "They are clearly on the side of those seeking to remove Kabila," a source said. The two are reported to be in SA.

Claire Pickard-Cambridge reports that the growing number of SA companies which have moved into Congo were trying to establish yesterday whether their operations would be affected. An SA foreign affairs spokesman said SA was monitoring the situation closely before deciding what to do.

SA companies involved in the country include Anglo American and Iscor, which have regional offices in Lubumbashi and operations in the southern Katanga Province near Kolwezi.

Anglo, with America Mineral Fields, is to exploit a Kolwezi copper tailings project and is also involved in



exploration. However, its head office was still trying to establish whether operations had been affected. Iscor, which has made substantial investments in the country and intends mining copper and cobalt, said there had been no unrest yet near its operations.

Comazar, which is 65% held by Spoornet, leases rolling stock to the country. It had a turbulent experience last year when the new government seized its stock. However, a spokesman said last night it was still "business as usual", with only a limited amount of goods being moved in the area.

SAA spokesman Leon Els said SAA had not yet decided whether to suspend tomorrow's flight to Kinshasa.

Much of the unrest in the former Zaire is centred in the same volatile east where ethnic Tutsis launched a re-

volt in 1996 which snowballed into civil war and the toppling of veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May 1997. Kabila took power at the climax of the war in which his alliance rebel forces were backed by troops of the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan army.

Diplomats said the chaos in Congo was a direct result of last week's troop withdrawal by tiny but militarily powerful neighbour Rwanda.

Relations between Kabila and his Rwandan and Ugandan allies have soured, in part over the status of the ethnic Banyamulenge Tutsis and over how to handle persistent insecurity in the volatile east.

The Banyamulenge migrated 200 years ago to what is now Congo but suc-

Continued on Page 2

Congo

(358)

BD 4/8/98

Continued from Page 1

cessive Congolese governments have discriminated against them. Kabila promised to treat them equally but officials said he now mainly favoured people from his Katanga province, and had surrounded himself with relatives. They said the departure of his Rwandan backers had left him vulnerable.

In a statement read on the Goma-based Voice of the People radio station, the Congolese 10th battalion said it was in revolt against Kabila. "We, the army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have taken the decision to remove President Laurent Desire Kabila

from power," battalion commander Sylain Mbuchy said.

Witnesses in the Rwandan frontier towns of Cyangugu and Goma said both sides had closed their common border. The sources said Goma and Bukavu airports had been closed by the rebellious 10th battalion.

Diplomats said Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe had called a meeting for Friday to discuss the events. They said Kabila and the presidents of Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, Namibia and Tanzania would meet in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

Rwanda's foreign ministry said his country had fully detached itself from affairs in Congo and did not want to become a scapegoat for its neighbour's internal problems.

ARMY REBELLION IN EAST

Kabila's foreign minister flees Congo

JOHANNESBURG: The rounding up by Kabila of people in his government seen as being close to Rwanda has resulted in the flight of many senior officials, including two ministers.

SENIOR officials, including Foreign Minister Bizima Karaha, have fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where an army brigade in the east has announced a rebellion against President Laurent Kabila, regional security sources said yesterday.

Karaha, a medical doctor who doubled as Kabila's chief political strategist, called Reuter minutes later in Johannesburg to confirm he was out of the country, but then his phone went dead.

"I am not in the Congo, I am..." Karaha said before the line went down.

The sources told Reuter that Karaha had fled together with powerful Presidential Affairs Minister Deogratias Bugera.

They said the two men had left the capital Kinshasa a few days ago but had decided not to return after Kabila started arresting people perceived to be close to Rwanda.

"They (ministers) had initially left on official duties abroad. But recent events forced them to stay on outside.

"They are clearly on the side of those seeking to remove Kabila," a source said.

News of the two men's departure came as shooting broke out in Kinshasa, leading to the declaration of a curfew and an announcement by the Congo's 10th battalion, based in the eastern Kivu province, that it had rebelled against Kabila.

Kinshasa newspapers reported last week that Bugera had fled. There was no official word from Kinshasa on the whereabouts of the two ministers.

"The two men are certainly no longer in the Congo. We believe they have fled because of the chaotic developments in the Congo," a regional source said.

The sources said Moise Nyarugabo, who worked as Kabila's chief aide during last year's military campaign against late dictator



DESERTED: Laurent Kabila, losing friends who fear arrest.

Mobutu Sese Seko, had also fled, while Kabila was said to have arrested seven senior army officers including the commander of the military police.

The office of President Nelson Mandela said it was studying events in the Congo and would make a statement at an appropriate time.

Diplomats said a special envoy of Kabila was touring Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and other neighbouring countries to explain events in Africa's third largest nation.

Diplomats said the chaos in Congo was a direct result of last week's troop withdrawal by tiny but militarily powerful neighbour Rwanda.

Rwanda was the backbone of a regional African alliance that propelled Kabila to power after a lightning seven-month campaign ignited by ethnic Banyamulenge Tutsis.

Relations between Kabila and his Rwandan and Ugandan allies

ET 4/8/98
have since soured, in part over the status of the Banyamulenge, over how to handle persistent insecurity in the volatile east and over accusations of tribal government appointments.

The Banyamulenge migrated 200 years ago to what is now Congo but successive Congolese governments have discriminated against them.

Kabila promised to treat them equally, but officials said he now mainly favoured people from his native Katanga province.

They said tribal appointments had dominated Kabila's inner circle and the departure of his Rwandan backers had left him vulnerable.

They said Kabila had surrounded himself with relatives. Interior Minister Gaetan Kakudji is Kabila's cousin, army chief-of-staff Celestin Kifwa is a brother-in-law and deputy chief of staff Joseph Kabila is his son.

Other senior posts, including those in military and civilian intelligence, are also held by men from Katanga.

In a statement read on the Goma-based *Voice of the People* radio station and monitored in the Rwandan capital Kigali, the Congolese 10th battalion said it was in revolt against Kabila.

"We, the army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have taken the decision to remove President Laurent Desire Kabila from power," battalion commander Sylain Mbuchy said.

Witnesses in the Rwandan frontier towns of Cyangugu and Goma said yesterday both sides had closed their common border.

The regional sources said Goma and Bukavu airports had been closed by the rebellious 10th battalion.

Diplomats said Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe had called a meeting for Friday to discuss events in the Congo.

They said Kabila and the presidents of Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, Namibia and Tanzania would meet in the Zimbabwean town of Victoria Falls. — Reuter



Raging battles as war erupts in Congo

By ROSS HERBERT
AND PETER FABRICIUS
Star Foreign Service

Luanda - Fierce fighting raged across much of the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) yesterday as Congolese ethnic Tutsi rebels and Rwandan soldiers seized the strategic airport in the country's third city of Kisangani and pounded the border towns of Bukavu and Uvira with heavy artillery.

President Laurent Kabila's government denied some of the advances, but an official said an internal commercial flight had been hijacked and ordered to land at the Kitona military base in the far west of the country near the Angolan border.

Battles were yesterday reported in three of the main towns in the east: Kisangani, Bukavu, a frontier town with Rwanda, and Uvira on Lake Tanganyika, across from Burundi.

The vice-governor of the Kivu region in which Bukavu and Uvira are located, Benjamin Serukiza, told AFP that the rebels now control a "large part" of the area. He said that he had joined the rebel side.

DRC Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo immediately accused Rwanda of having invaded Kivu by sending in "heavily armed troops" to back the Congolese rebels. The Rwandan army denied this, but a UN source in Kinshasa said that battalions apparently coming from Rwanda entered Goma, on the Rwandan border, yesterday morning.

Former Congo foreign minister Bizima Karaha predicted in SA that Kabila would flee the DRC "like Mobutu" within a month - from a rapidly spreading, nationwide revolt.

Karaha denied that this was just a revolt of ethnic Tutsis and insisted that it was a general revolt against Kabila's oppression, corruption and favouring of his Katangese tribe for all positions of power.

Angola, which has been sliding towards resumed civil war, appears linked to the fighting.

Diplomats have said this holds massive regional implications. Together with UN military officials, they expressed concern that the battle for Congo might again tilt the balance of power in Angola and help Unita evade pressure to comply with the Lusaka peace treaty.

"There was a tremendous amount of shooting here right in the middle of town," said a source in the centre of Kisangani. He said government soldiers began rounding up Rwandan soldiers who Kabila ordered to leave Congo last week.

Government troops appeared to be in control of central Kisangani and fighting subsided at 11am but the airport remained in rebel hands, denying the government a vital means of supplying its troops in the east.

"The security implications for the region are tremendous," Paula Ghedini, spokesperson for the UN High Commission for Refugees in Rwanda, said.

This latest rebellion, which erupted at the weekend, has spread far quicker than Kabila's own rebellion that saw the demise of the late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

► SA seeks solution

Page 2

Congo in turmoil again

Sunday 5/8/98 (358)

KINSHASA - The Congo's capital remained under curfew yesterday and troops loyal to president Laurent Kabila manned roadblocks throughout the city, searching for renegade Rwandan mercenaries.

In the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), military officers proclaimed themselves in open revolt against Kabila on Monday and urged the population to oust the president.

About 14 months after charging victoriously into Kinshasa, the rebel alliance that carried Kabila to power appears to be unravelling.

"The government asks the people of Congo and foreigners in the country to stay calm and to stay at home until order is restored," was the abrupt announcement on Monday on the state-controlled People's Radio.

"Stay at home just until that time when the armed forces of Congo re-establish civil order."

Shops throughout the capital remained closed and the city's downtown streets were deserted on Monday.

A defence ministry official said loyalist troops had been ordered to kill any Rwandan soldiers found hiding in and around the city.

Pre-dawn clashes on Monday at two military bases apparently pitted Kabila's troops against Rwandan mercenaries who last year helped the president to oust long-time dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Kabila last week ordered all Rwandan soldiers to leave the country. The fighting comes amid growing suspicions within Kabila's government that the Rwandan troops have been plotting against the regime.

Earlier, Kabila sacked James Kabari, a Rwandan Tutsi who had been the president's top military commander.

Although Rwandan troops played an important role last year in Kabila's victory over Mobutu, relations between the Central African countries have soured in recent months.

According to a defence ministry official, more than 1 000 Rwandan Tutsi soldiers fled the Kokolo base in Kinshasa and are hiding in a forest just outside the city.

Kabila has been growing anxious about the presence of Rwandan forces in Kinshasa and weeks before ordering them to leave he increased security around government buildings. Tanks were deployed in front of the presidential residence and office compound while troops were stationed at key ministry buildings.

In the Rwandan capital, Kigali, a private news agency reported an open rebellion against Kabila had been launched in Kivu province in the eastern part of the DRC.

"We, the army of the DRC, have taken the decision to remove president Laurent Kabila

The government of Laurent Kabila is busy disintegrating barely a year after his troops marched into Kinshasa, **Kamanga Mutond** explains why...



Flashback ... Democratic Republic of Congo president Laurent Kabila with President Nelson Mandela in Pretoria last year.

from power," said a statement read on Sunday over Radio Goma, according to the Rwandan News Agency.

The statement was signed by Sylvain Mbuchi, commander of the Congolese 10th battalion.

The statement called on the local population to remain calm and go about their daily business, and assured residents that the goal of the rebels was to "preserve the unity and security of the whole nation".

"In the name of government troops, we denounce the regime," Mbuchi's text said. It referred to a "movement of open rebellion in North Kivu against Kabila".

Mbuchi set out a list of errors committed by President Kabila - "nepotism, corruption and bad government".

A spokesman for a breakaway ethnic group in North Kivu urged the people to rise up against Kabila.

"We've taken the decision to no longer recognise the government of Kabila," said the spokesman, who identified himself only as Andre. "We don't want to separate from Congo, but Kabila must be removed from power."

In a statement delivered to Associated Press and the Voice of America, Andre said his group, representing Banyamulenge ethnic Tutsis, was in control of most of North Kivu province.

DRC foreign minister Bizima Karaha, a Tutsi from the Banyamulenge group, failed to return to the country on Saturday from a trip to South Africa.

His absence has triggered speculation that he may be linked to the uprising.

Speculation was rife over the stability of Kabila's government after weeks of growing tension between the president, his top advisers and what now appears to be a shaky military alliance with neighbouring Rwanda. - Sapa-AP.

● Karaha appears to have gone to ground in South Africa, but has not contacted any local authorities nor his diplomatic mission in Pretoria.

A DRC embassy official told Sapa yesterday that Karaha was in South Africa, but had not contacted them. The official was unable to comment further and referred all questions to a senior envoy, who was not available.

At a briefing in Cape Town on Tuesday, Home Affairs Minister Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi said he was not aware of any application for asylum by Karaha or any other DRC officials, as rumoured in the media.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said yesterday morning it was still unable to contact its diplomats in Kinshasa for the latest information about the situation there as telephone lines to the country were still down. - Sapa.

AFRICA

Defection swells revolt against Kabila

KINSHASA. — The revolt against President Laurent Kabila spread in the Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday, where his erstwhile foreign minister denounced him as "dangerous" and rebels secured the eastern town of Bukavu.

Fighting was also reported in the Congo's third largest city, Kisangani, and around the strategic Kitona military base in the far west, while the eastern border town of Uvira came under artillery attack.

The eastern town of Bukavu is acknowledged by government to have fallen into rebel hands.

Kabila's foreign minister and chief political strategist, Bizima Karaha, who was in S.A. recently, said he had joined the Tutsi rebels in the eastern town of Goma. He reportedly claimed that other senior members of Kabila's government would soon abandon the

president, and that Kabila would be forced to flee within a month.

The Kinshasa government immediately announced that Karaha had been sacked because of his remarks.

The Voice of the People radio station in Goma, where the revolt began on Sunday, introduced opposition politician Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma as co-ordinator of the uprising.

Karaha accused Kabila of failing to charter a clear political programme, and of being guilty of corruption and nepotism.

He said Kabila had given positions in the government and the security forces to members of his family, his Belubakati tribe and residents of his home province, Katanga.

Karaha is a member of the Banyamulenge tribe of ethnic Tutsis originally from Rwanda and now living mainly in the eastern Congo.

On Tuesday the Kabila government accused Rwanda of invading the eastern Kivu region and sending in heavily armed troops to back the rebels.

However, Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu denied yesterday his country was involved but did not rule out future involvement if there were "serious reasons".

Karaha also denied that the rebellion in Congo was backed by Rwanda. He said it was an internal matter, which he blamed on Kabila's failures. "Kabila has failed to govern. In his one year in power he has done more political damage than Mobutu ever did in 32 years," he said, referring to ousted dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Karaha said the rebels would announce a new political structure after consultations being held in Goma with leaders from across the country. He also rejected reports that the re-

volt was essentially an ethnic one by dissatisfied Tutsis. "Kabila is playing it down by saying it is the Rwandans and Tutsis," he said.

Earlier yesterday, army rebels in the east branded Kabila a dictator in radio broadcasts monitored in the Rwandan town of Gisenyi, where the border with Congo remained closed and about 50 Rwandan troops milled around the checkpoint.

American military officers were also sighted in Gisenyi.

Kabila, who rules by decree, banned political activity shortly after taking power. He promised elections by April. Kabila and his former backers fell out over the role of the Banyamulenge Tutsis, an issue that sparked the uprising that toppled Mobutu, as well as the way to handle persistent insecurity in the east near the border with Rwanda and Uganda. — Sapa-AFP, Reuter.

CAPE ARGUS, THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 1998

Battle for east Congo rocks Kabila's rule

Threat to Angola talks

FOREIGN SERVICE

Luanda — The spread of heavy fighting in eastern Congo is threatening Laurent Kabila's hold on power — and raising fears it will derail delicate peace negotiations this week in Angola.

The United Nations has received word that fighting has spread to the Zambian border and Lubumbashi.

Rebel troops yesterday appeared in control of the eastern cities of Goma, Bukavu and Kindu and were fighting fierce battles for Uvira, along Lake Tanganyika, and Kisangani, about 500km north-west of Goma.

The UN said it had unconfirmed reports of fighting in Lubumbashi and of Kabila loyalists fighting rebel troops at Mokambo — at the border with Zambia.

If Uvira and Kisangani airports fall to rebel troops, Mr Kabila will have no ready route to resupply or attack the east, which is separated from Kinshasa by a vast swathe of roadless jungle.

A source close to negotiations between the Angolan government and the Unita opposition said the Congo conflict threatened to destabilise fragile peace talks here.

Unita, which has been subjected to trade and travel sanctions and

increasingly isolated from the region, may stall for time, seeing the war as an opportunity to seek a new ally and to make resupply easier once Mr Kabila's forces are shifted away from guarding his southern border.

The swift pace of the rebel advance may also provoke Mr Kabila to strike a desperate bargain with the Angolan government, which lent thousands of troops to him last year to oust Mobutu Sese Seko and thus deny Unita support in Congo.

Meanwhile the United States embassy in Kinshasa yesterday ordered all non-essential personnel to be evacuated from the country.

And Bizima Karaha, Mr Kabila's foreign minister until he fled to South Africa, said he was joining the rebels and denounced his former boss as a dictator who must be toppled.

Congolese Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo said the conflict was the result of a Rwandan "invasion" and denied rebels were army dissidents.

A source contacted by telephone in Kisangani described intense fighting as lasting all day, with dead bodies strewn everywhere.

■ UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi said he won assurances from Unita leader Jonas Savimbi that Unita negotiators could return to Luanda by the end of the week.

Arrival of Kabila's new rival

MG 7-13/8/98
(398)
Howard W French

Rebel forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo consolidated their hold on Wednesday on much of the eastern regions of the country, and the names of civilian leaders who might replace the embattled President Laurent-Desiré Kabila if the uprising succeeds began to circulate for the first time.

In the clearest indication so far that the armed insurrection against Kabila, which began on Sunday, may spread across Congo, a rebel-controlled radio station in Goma identified a Kinshasa politician and native southerner, Arthur Zaidy Ngoma, as the leader of the rebels. The radio reported that Ngoma, who had been jailed by Kabila, had already joined the rebels in Goma, which Kabila's government concedes is firmly in rebel hands.

Ngoma, a long-time official of the United Nations Children's Fund, had been living in Paris, where he had gone for medical care and asylum after he was released from prison in response to strong international pressure. Ngoma was jailed late last year after his small Kinshasa-based party, the Forces of the Future, attempted to convene a political forum in the capital.

Until Ngoma's name emerged, the rebellion had been almost exclusively identified with dissident troops from the country's small Tutsi minority from the eastern border with Rwanda. Kabila rode to power at the head of a rebellion by these very same Tutsi forces. But as a guerrilla fighter long isolated in the mountainous east with little national name recognition and no political base, Kabila was never able to establish much authority for himself.

If the rebels' choice of Ngoma is confirmed, it may indicate that the patrons of the rebellion — by almost all accounts, Rwanda — have decided that they cannot afford to have a national leader who comes across as the puppet of the Congolese Tutsi, the Banyamulenge.

For their part, Rwandan officials repeated their denials of involvement in the Congo revolt, but in doing so seemed to reaffirm their strategic interest in the country.

"At the moment there is no reason for Rwanda to be there," President Pasteur Bizimungu said during a visit to Zambia. "But if we have a serious reason to get involved, we will."



Hero no more: Last year thousands of people welcomed Laurent Kabila to Kinshasa. Now, to the five million residents, he seems like a reincarnation of Mobutu Sese Seko. PHOTOGRAPH: AP

Mobutu sans pillbox hat

Alex Duval Smith

Some things change — Zaire is now the Democratic Republic of Congo — but despots just change their spots. President Laurent-Desiré Kabila, hailed as heading a new breed of African leaders, increasingly looks like Mobutu Sese Seko, minus the leopard-skin hat.

On May 17 1997, thousands of people welcomed Kabila's victorious rebel army to Kinshasa. Now, to the five million people of the capital of the Congo, Mobutu's 32 years of corruption seem like 33.

The guerrilla fighter initially appeared to be living up to the view of the United States

Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, as a "strong new leader" and "beacon of hope."

By ending Mobutu's practice of printing money when he needed it, Kabila brought inflation down to about 14%. He repaired the sewage system in Kinshasa, promised to save the mountain gorilla, and was praised by the international community for drawing up a three-year plan to revive the economy.

But in the run-up to elections, which he unconvincingly has promised for April 1999, Kabila has banned political parties, jailed human rights campaigners and journalists, and closed down newspapers. His office of ill-gotten gains — set up amid much fanfare to in-

vestigate corruption by the Mobutu regime — has all but stopped work after its boss was fired on suspicion of misappropriating funds.

Kabila's erratic international policy-making and propensity for putting people from his Katanga region in positions of power have left foreign diplomats suspicious. Worst of all, he obstructed the United Nations investigation into massacres of Hutus by the Rwandan Tutsis who backed his rebellion. The UN eventually put the number of dead at 180 000.

He snubbed Washington's envoy to Africa, Reverend Jesse Jackson, earlier this year and only earned a 15-minute "drop-by" when President Bill Clinton was in Entebbe in April. Nevertheless, despite signs of authoritarianism and the inescapable reality that he came to power by the gun, no one has yet produced hard evidence that Kabila is eating his country's wealth at the rate Mobutu did.

In Washington, a senior official said intelligence sources show considerable Rwandan involvement in the insurgency. "The Rwandans are on the march from three corners of the country and they're getting a lot of sympathy and moving very fast," the official said.

At the outset of the uprising against Kabila, statements by some rebel leaders led many experts to say the insurrection was concerned with defining a large buffer zone in eastern Congo that would be at least loosely controlled by Congo's eastern neighbours, Rwanda and Uganda.

Those two nations have long complained about attacks by guerrillas based in Congo. But when he formally defected to the rebel side, Kabila's former foreign minister, Bizima Karaba, made clear that the goal was to press all the way to Kinshasa, just as Kabila did.

Arrival of Kabila's

new rival

PHG 7-13/8198
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He snubbed Washington's envoy to Africa, Reverend Jesse Jackson, earlier this year and only earned a 15-minute "drop-by" when President Bill Clinton was in Entebbe in April. Nevertheless, despite signs of authoritarianism and the inescapable reality that he came to power by the gun, no one has yet produced hard evidence that Kabila is eating his country's wealth at the rate Mobutu did.

In Washington, a senior official said intelligence sources show considerable Rwandan involvement in the insurgency. "The Rwandans are on the march from three corners of the country and they're getting a lot of sympathy and moving very fast," the official said.

At the outset of the uprising against Kabila, statements by some rebel leaders led many experts to say the insurrection was concerned with defining a large buffer zone in eastern Congo that would be at least loosely controlled by Congo's eastern neighbours, Rwanda and Uganda.

Those two nations have long complained about attacks by guerrillas based in Congo. But when he formally defected to the rebel side, Kabila's former foreign minister, Bizima Karaha, made clear that the goal was to press all the way to Kinshasa, just as Kabila did.

Kabila quits Kinshasa

Congo leader looks for support in stronghold

AR4 8/8/98 (358)

KINSHASA -

Surrounded by an army of security forces and promising a new people's war, President Laurent Kabila has left his tense capital and headed to his former rebel stronghold of Lubumbashi in southern Congo to shore up support for his embattled regime.

Mr Kabila went to the mining town yesterday to meet a South African delegation, and plans to attend a regional summit in Zimbabwe later, the state-controlled Voice of the People radio reported.

Mr Kabila's departure, described as "administrative", comes as Tutsi fighters in the east consolidate their hold on several key towns in Congo's Kivu region and fighting continues on the opposite side of the country near the Atlantic coast.

Mr Kabila is looking to win backing for what he calls a war against

neighbouring Rwanda, which his spokesman says orchestrated the rebellion that began on Sunday and swiftly escalated into a full-scale assault on Mr Kabila's 14-month-old regime.

Rwanda has denied involvement in the uprising, saying Mr Kabila's accusations were simply an effort to find a scapegoat for disenchantment with his government.

"We haven't crossed into Congo," Rwandan army spokesman Major Emmanuel Ndahiro was quoted as saying. "The current crisis in Congo is to blame on Mr Kabila himself who has failed to deliver what he had promised to his country."

Earlier in the week, gun battles broke out in Kinshasa as rebellious Rwandan and Tutsi soldiers murdered in their barracks. The fighting has been quelled, but the city is tense and on high alert.

Troops have been deployed at key

government and commercial buildings in Kinshasa and checkpoints have been set up to regulate traffic entering and leaving the city.

The government earlier acknowledged the eastern city of Bukavu had fallen to the rebel Tutsi and Rwandan allies. But state radio said the key city of Kisangani was in government hands.

"The situation is perfectly calm in Kisangani," Voice of the People reported. "This quiet was marked after two days of trouble."

Mr Kabila promised on Thursday to step up resistance against Rwanda. The rebellion that began late on Sunday mirrors Mr Kabila's own guerrilla war that culminated in the ousting of longtime Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May 1997.

Mr Kabila, this time on the defensive, vowed to wage a people's war against Rwanda.

"The war will be long and popular,

that is, the whole people of Congo will defend their nation and sovereignty," said Mr Kabila, who wore a pair of green army fatigues as he addressed government officials clad in military uniforms.

Tutsi fighters - known as Banyamulenge - and Rwandan soldiers, also Tutsis, who played a key role in Mr Kabila's victory over Mr Mobutu last year, are leading the fighting.

Like Mr Kabila's followers who swept across the country from east to west in eight months, the renegades have quickly captured Congo's eastern cities near Rwanda's borders, while moving west towards Kisangani.

Gun battles continued in the Atlantic coastline town of Mbandaka and at Kitona, about 250km from Kinshasa. Rebels are said to be moving east towards the capital, but the information could not be independently confirmed. - Sapa-AP



FIGHTING STANCE: Laurent Kabila has left the Congo capital

Rwanda warned to prepare for a 'long war'

Kinshasa - President Laurent Kabila has told the Congolese people to prepare for a "long war" with Rwanda, accusing his small neighbour of invading the country where a fast-moving revolt erupted on Sunday.

But rebel commander Sylvain Bikenge denied yesterday that Rwandan troops were fighting alongside the rebels, who he said aimed to capture Kinshasa and overthrow Mr Kabila.

Mr Kabila told a news conference as rebels advanced deeper into the country: "We must prepare ourselves to resist the aggression and to finish the war in the aggressors' home."

Breaking his silence since the revolt erupted in his army on the eastern border with Rwanda, Mr Kabila vowed to take the conflict to Rwanda, still trying to recover from its interethnic conflict.

But he stopped short of a declaration of war on the country which had backed him in a seven-month bush war that culminated in the toppling of Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seko last May. - Reuters

Time for voices of ordinary Congolese to rise above the guns

The rebellion in the Democratic Republic of Congo has opened up another opportunity to finally remove Mobutu Sese Seko's legacy and provide a nonmilitary solution to the country's problems, writes Horace Campbell

FOR the past fortnight, the media have carried reports of the scale and extent of the new rebellion in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The government of Laurent Kabila is now aligned with the very forces that he originally fought against: those who were in Mobutu Sese Seko's army along with the former Interhamwe (Hutu militias) from Rwanda.

The arbitrary forms of rule and the repression of the Kabila government have led to many comparisons between his government and the Mobutu regime. This new war has the potential of becoming a major confrontation involving many of Congo's neighbours, or it has the potential to embody the peoples' drive for release from repressive and authoritarian politics.

Kabila has made a semi-declaration of war against the government of Rwanda, and there are reports that Congolese citizens who are Tutsis are being rounded up. The heightened insecurity for the citizens of Congo demands clarity and political intervention by those forces that want reconstruction and development for not only Congo, but the entire region.

In August last year Congo became a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The conflict now provides a test for whether the SADC will be an organisation on paper or whether the Organ on Defence, Security and Politics will be able to set clear guidelines for the peaceful resolution of political differences.

There are three central issues in the situation in Congo. These are the questions of democracy, peace, citizenship and stability for the 50-million Congolese; the relations between Congo and its neighbours and the future of east and central Africa; and the use of armed rebellions to solve political questions.

Kabila's government has neither the military capacity nor the economic resources to maintain a war.

In many ways the Kabila government precipitated the rebellion.

During the period of the first military campaign, which brought Kabila out of obscurity, there were voices calling for clarity with respect to the kind of government to be established after Mobutu. The internal political opposition to Mobutu was clear that a military victory would not solve the inherent instruments of repression and dictatorship that would devolve to any new leader who occupied Mobutu's bureaucratic and security apparatus.

From the outset, Kabila and his entourage turned a deaf ear to these elements. Within a short time, even those who initially supported Kabila had to distance themselves from the repression, nepotism and arbitrary rule of his regime. Kabila also refused to open dialogue with the internal political forces.

While gradually depending on the political and security machinery of Mobutu, Kabila became isolated to the point where he turned to the manipulation of ethnicity, regionalism and open corruption to stay in power.



MOBUTU



KABILA



MUSEVENI



MUSEVENI

Two recent experiences highlight the nature of his government. The first is with respect to the issuing of a new currency at a time when citizens were promised the death penalty. The minister of justice threatened anyone suspected of sabotaging the newly released Congolese franc with trial before military tribunals and ultimately death before a firing squad. The same arbitrariness was manifest in the expropriation of the mining interests of Bando Resources Corporation of Canada.

It was this absence of the rule of law that led to comparisons between Mobutu and Kabila. The similarities with respect to the manipulation of ethnic and regional sentiments deepened this cancer in the body politic and precipitated the rebellion.

The government's use of the ethnic Tutsis as scapegoats and reinforcement of the hostility to Rwanda merged with the propaganda of those who had committed genocide in Rwanda — that the Tutsis wanted to set up a new empire in Central Africa — from Uganda to the Atlantic Ocean.

Rwanda's government lives under the weight of the recent experience of genocide in that society. The increase in the number of incursions from Congo against innocent citizens in Rwanda over the past year is a chilling reminder of the agenda of those armed elements who committed genocide in Rwanda and are committed to completing their "unfinished" task of 1994.

It was the attempt to remove genocidal killers from eastern Congo that precipitated the Rwandan involvement in the war to remove Mobutu. The leaders of Rwanda had lived in Uganda and were aware of how

Tanzania's politics and economy were negatively affected by the war to remove Interhamwe from the region. It was therefore in the interests of Rwanda to leave the Congo as soon as the government of Kabila had settled in.

A joint commission was established to oversee the gradual withdrawal of Rwandan forces. However, Kabila was insecure and wanted a crack Rwandan unit to remain. When the leaders of Rwanda refused, Kabila announced that all Rwandan forces were to leave Congo, which resulted in increased propaganda in the media against Rwandans and the Banyamulenge, pastoralists from the east.

The insecurity of the Kabila government created greater insecurity for the Congolese citizens and for the citizens of Rwanda and Uganda, especially those living near the Congo border. The vitriol of Kabila and his key supporters was backed up by the removal of commanders who were from the east, considered to be Banyamulenge.

The rounding-up of Tutsis in the capital was a replay of the kind of intense ethnic hatred that had been spread by Mobutu. Almost every nationality had been persecuted under Mobutu and the questions of peace, citizenship and democracy have been unsettled since independence in 1960.

The Mobutu government denied the Banyamulenge their citizenship in 1996. Their persecution under Kabila had increased in relation to changing relations between Congo and Rwanda. As elements of the Mobutu military were rehabilitated under Kabila, so the Hutu Interhamwe became bolder and more confident in eastern Congo. The level of co-operation is now

manifest in the fact that one of Mobutu's most notorious generals is leading the government forces in Kisanangani.

There can be no peace in Congo as long as the authors of genocide feel they can act with impunity there and in Rwanda, Burundi or any part of Africa. The lame response of the international community to the question of genocide and framing the questions of citizenship in ethnic terms has emboldened the forces that want war.

The call of the leaders of the rebellion for a new political dispensation has to be viewed against their own political record. Insofar as there is no clear political programme, there is no evidence to suggest that these forces will develop the kind of political framework that will lead to demilitarisation in Congo. The credibility of those fighting in the east will be judged to the extent that those democratic forces that were active under Mobutu form a strong political base of opposition to Kabila. It is in this sense that the short-term position of the trade unions, the intellectuals, women and youth groups will be pivotal in determining the direction of the rebellion.

A long military campaign will undermine all the unarmed political forces within Congo and benefit the genocidists, Mobutu's former generals, Unita leader Jonas Savimbi and their external supporters.

During the 1996 rebellion, Kabila had promised to build a broad-based government of national unity with a terminal date for leaving office. The present rebellion has brought back to the fore the issues of the democratic transition, the rule of law, security of persons, citizenship and the devel-

opment of an enabling environment for the full democratisation of the Congo. These issues require the positive engagement of the Organisation of African unity, the SADC and elements in the region that want peace. Both Uganda and Rwanda had supported Kabila in the hope that there would be increased security for the citizens in the border regions with the Congo.

President Yoweri Museveni was one of the few leaders who supported the US initiative, called the Africa Crisis Response Initiative. The Ugandan government has an interest in ending the incursions into the country from Congo by an armed group called the ADF.

The counter-insurgency experience of the past two years by the Ugandan military demonstrates that military efforts inside Uganda are not enough.

Uganda is preoccupied with the war on its border in the north between the SPLA and the government of Sudan. It is this war that binds the strategic alliance between the Pentagon and Uganda. It is in this sense that the US is not an uninterested party in this new rebellion. The allies of Uganda and Rwanda place a premium on military solutions, so it is urgent that those voices that seek political and economic integration in the region come to the fore.

Peaceful forms of solving the issues in the Congo must emerge if the region is to take seriously the recent call by Museveni for a political union between eastern and central Africa.

The major beneficiaries of the rebellion in Congo are the mobilised forces of Unita. At the same time, this rebellion provides

the military framework for strengthening the elementary alliances that were made with the Hutu militias while Savimbi army fought on the same side as Mobutu. In fact, the litmus test of Kabila's political integrity will be determined by his position in Unita's military wing.

Relations between Angola and Congo are being influenced by the Kabila government's inability to halt the operations of Unita in Congo and Zambia.

All of southern Africa will be drawn, one way or another, into the new wars in Congo and Angola. Zambia remains a fire for intense activity since it is now the most secure rear base for Unita.

This would make the Zimbabwean government the only government that is given overt military support to Kabila. This support would weaken any effort at conflict resolution emanating from the leadership in Zimbabwe.

In the case of SA there is equivocation between the information presented by the Ugandans and Rwandans and those intelligence that think Kabila can stabilise the political situation.

The rebellion in the Congo has been a filip for all of those forces in east, central and southern Africa that favour militarist solutions to political problems. From the Central African Republic, to Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Brazzaville and Angola, there are misanthropic elements that favour war over peace.

Former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere has been at the forefront of the search for peace in Burundi. There has been a similar consistent effort in the case of either the Congo or Angola.

The Tanzanian experience of dogged efforts to bring peace should be followed by those elements in SA who want to see reconstruction and development in a region whose vast resources could be deployed for purposes other than war.

The media and the security establishment in SA point to the ethnic factors in the rebellion in the Congo. While these factors are important, they do not overshadow the question of genocide, the rights to citizenship and the need for the rule of law.

The war and rebellion provide an opportunity to put effective conflict resolution mechanisms in place in the SADC region that would force Kabila and the rebels to retreat from military solutions. One analysis of the situation said: "The militaristic line has been tried before. While it got rid of Mobutu it did not succeed in getting rid of Mobutism. Therefore it is time to let the voice of the ordinary Congolese, the workers, peasants, women, the intellectuals, political parties, rise above the rhetoric of machine guns and mortars."

The rebellion continues the unfinished task of removing Mobutism. This is a political question that can be accomplished only with a clear political programme.

□ Campbell is professor of African-American studies at Syracuse University in New York.

Kabila flees as rebel forces near Kinshasa

(358) ARG 14/8/98
Panic as capital's power supply cut

Kinshasa - President Laurent Kabila has fled his embattled capital as rebel forces drive toward Kinshasa, according to a senior government official.

"The president is not in Kinshasa," the adviser said yesterday on condition of anonymity. "I can't tell you any more than that."

A Western diplomatic source in Paris said Mr Kabila had gone to the southern city of Lubumbashi, his former rebel base.

Asked if he intended to return, the official would only say: "For that, we'll have to wait and see."

With rebel forces driving toward Kinshasa from the west, the Congolese capital awoke in a panic today without electricity, radio, television

or newspapers - and hearing rumours their leader had fled.

The power cut was blamed on advancing rebel forces.

The city was bracing for what many believe is the imminent arrival of fighters that launched a rebellion against Mr Kabila earlier this month.

The US was preparing for the emergency evacuation of its citizens, and foreign airlines have stopped flights to and from Kinshasa.

In a stunning move, the rebels, led by Tutsi and Rwandan fighters and disenchanted members of Mr Kabila's military, quickly captured key towns in the east and west.

The rebels also said their troops had advanced as far as Kasangalu, 30km southwest of the capital.

Western diplomats and rebel spokesmen said the insurgents had captured Inga, about 200km from the capital, where the primary power transformer for Kinshasa is located.

The rebels were reportedly responsible for the power cut.

Rebel leaders in Goma said Kinshasa was now in their sights.

"It should fall in the next few days, by the end of the week or by the end of the month for sure," rebel commander Jean-Pierre Ondekane said yesterday in the eastern city of Goma.

In the US, Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said two Marine Corps amphibious warships had been dispatched to the Atlantic waters off Congo in case they are needed to evacuate US citizens. - Reuters

Breakup of Congo feared as rebels close in

By ROSS HERBERT
Star Foreign Service

Kinshasa - The rapid rebel advance towards the beleaguered capital has raised the prospect of the final breakup of the Democratic Republic of Congo as a nation.

Although rebel forces have demonstrated prowess on the battlefield, they have no commanding figure able to unify more than 200 tribes spread across the vast central African nation. Rebel forces draw support from non-Tutsi groups, but government propaganda has convinced many citizens that they are an invading army backed by Rwanda and Uganda.

President Laurent Kabila returned to Kinshasa yesterday, pledging to stay and vowing to defeat the rebels, Reuters reports. "We are here to stay. Whatever happens, the aggressors will fail," an upbeat Kabila told state television on his arrival in the capital.

He retains support among troops from his home city of Lubumbashi - heartland of his Baluba tribe - and broad but soft support in Kinshasa. If Kabila retreats to Lubumbashi,

he could hold it and its valuable copper mines, ceding the rest of the country to the rebels.

Such scenarios remain diplomatic conjecture but underscore the risk the conflict holds for a region racked by tribal tensions.

Tutsi-backed rebels are in firm control of the eastern Congo and the Atlantic coast. With apparent control of the port of Matadi, which supplies Kinshasa with most of its food,

Kabila returns to capital

imports and fuel, and the hydro-electric station at Inga, the rebel army is in position to strangle Kinshasa economically.

Petrol stations have experienced fuel shortages in Kinshasa and in the Congo Republic capital of Brazzaville, both of which depend on a fuel pipeline from the coast.

Meanwhile, the rebels have named the members of a transitional team which is preparing to take power.

The Congolese Democratic

Coalition is led by Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, a professor and a longtime opponent of former dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, and includes Kabila's former foreign minister Bizima Karaha.

"We want to gather all political parties fighting against Kabila's dictatorship," Wamba said. "We will welcome any political parties, as long as we avoid a new dictatorship."

The coalition called on all Congolese to join in the fight against Kabila, and on the international community to aid the uprising by denying their support to the government.

France dispatched 400 troops from Libreville, Gabon, to Brazzaville on Saturday to evacuate hundreds of people hoping to escape Kinshasa before rebel troops close in on the capital. French paratroopers controlled the port and manned road blocks in neighbouring Brazzaville in anticipation of the mass evacuation.

Animosity towards the French, which has run high since Kabila came to power last year, continues. About 100 people demonstrated in front of the French embassy in Kinshasa on Saturday, and Kabila's

soldiers reportedly subjected French citizens to painstaking searches before allowing them to board departing boats.

Congolese citizens paid about R650 each for a speedboat journey across 2km of river separating Kinshasa and Brazzaville.

"We don't know what to believe. We are worried. The government says one thing and the foreign media say something completely different,"

Aim is to avoid new dictatorship

said one woman who fled to Brazzaville on Saturday.

The United States closed its embassy and urged all citizens to evacuate.

A South African military Boeing 707 airplane evacuated an estimated 100 people from Kinshasa airport.

Those evacuated included South Africans, Japanese, Canadians and Greeks.

► Reports and picture
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Kabila's back to wall

(758) Soulestan 18/8/98

KINSHASA – President Laurent Kabila, 15 months in office, has played the nationalist card to defend his revolution and maintain power in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

His accusations that his former sponsors and allies, Rwanda and Uganda, invaded to support a rebellion by the ethnic Tutsi minority in Africa's third largest country struck a chord among many in Kinshasa.

"We don't want these foreigners coming in and trampling all over us again," one hotel worker commented on Saturday as rebels said they were gathering reinforcements in the west for a final push towards the city.

With Kabila and some members of his government in the country's second city, the mining centre of Lumbumbashi, about 1 600km south-west of Kinshasa, the message and repeated government assurances that the army is holding the line began to look a little thin.

But thousands of volunteers, many of them admittedly the young and the unemployed of Kinshasa, have signed up to fight.

Reports from both sides talked of fighting in the west on the road to the capital in an area where the vast nation narrows towards a small coastline.

Truth, so the saying goes, is often the first casualty of war.

A 20-hour power cut in Kinshasa on Thursday and Friday left both sides claiming to control the giant Inga dam, 225km southwest of the city, which provides the former Zaire and Brazzaville, capital of the neighbouring Congo Republic, with most of its electricity.

One of many ironies of the predicament in which Kabila now finds himself is that he is almost certainly right in pointing the finger at Rwanda, even though its border is almost 1 500km to the east of Kinshasa.

He has good reason to know and recognise the signs – he ousted veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko with the active help of Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated army 15 months ago.

Independent sources say Rwandan troops are heavily involved in the latest rebellion, launched in the east on August 2.

In Kinshasa, there is a sense of having seen it all before. "It's a photocopy," said Pierre, a driver who lived through Kabila's triumphal arrival in the capital in May 1997.

In the dying days of the Mobutu regime, the army mobilised across the city before melting away the day before Kabila's forces marched into town.

This time, however, residents report little extra military activity across the city and hopes are for another soft landing that will allow everyone to pick up where they left off with minimal bloodshed.

Beleaguered DRC leader Laurent Kabila is seeking his countrymen's help to overcome insurrection. **Nicholas Phythian** says the coming weeks will be decisive.



Anti-government rebels claim they already control one third of the Democratic Republic of Congo. PIC: AFP

But, unlike Mobutu in 1997, Kabila enjoys support in the population at large and there are signs that his forces are fighting back.

Sunday was a normal weekend day in Kinshasa. A slow start, with a mixture of church services, soccer and routine chores associated with keeping body and soul together with little or no money.

"There's no panic. People only panic when there is sustained shooting," local journalist Henri Kasongo commented.

Kabila, a 1960s revolutionary, surprised everyone – and possibly even himself – with his sudden rise to power at the head of a disparate coalition of anti-Mobutu forces.

A protege of Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni, the regional powerbroker and a former guerrilla leader, Kabila marched into Kinshasa to be hailed as a liberator at the end of a seven-month bush war.

Kinshasa residents, whatever they think of Kabila the man, praise the way he has ended the predatory swoops and rackets of soldiers and security forces that were a way of life under Mobutu.

Kabila's administration has curbed rampant inflation – it is currently around 13 percent – and

replaced the discredited zaire used under Mobutu with a new unified currency, the Congolese franc.

But his promises of national reconstruction remain little more than that, in part because he failed to tap into Congo's huge mineral wealth and in part because he has failed to inspire the confidence of international donors and investors.

However, would-be investors say that last-minute redrafting of contracts or the renegotiation of contracts already inked have hit business confidence.

Donors have held on to their money, citing human rights concerns and the slow pace of democratic reform in the DRC.

To cap it all, Kabila fell out with Rwanda and Uganda, which were looking to him to help provide stability in the volatile heart of Africa after the 1994 genocide of minority Tutsis in Rwanda and a string of regional revolts.

Regional political analysts say that relations cooled amid differences over how best to provide security in the east near the borders with Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi.

The pace and style of political reform – Kabila ruled by decree with minimal input from established opposition personalities – and the role of the ethnic Tutsi Banyamulenge minority were other bones of contention.

The final straw, it seems, was his decision at the end of July to order all remaining Rwandan soldiers home.

In yet another irony, this was something veteran opposition politician Etienne Tshisekedi, his rival for the hearts and minds of the capital's five million people, had been demanding since Kabila's arrival in the capital.

Kabila, in his rallying call to the nation, contrasted the size of tiny Rwanda to that of its huge and shambolic neighbour.

"Are we going to accept the challenge of the toad that wants to swallow the elephant?" he asked.

The coming days or weeks may well provide the answer. – Reuters.

Mandela calls Congo summit

ARG 21/8/98

(358) (21/8/98)

POLITICAL STAFF AND SABA

President Nelson Mandela is set to host peace talks between the presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Rwanda in Pretoria on Saturday, followed by a full meeting of Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the crisis in Central Africa.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe has also been invited.

Presidential aide Parks Mankahlana said "plans are far advanced to convene the meeting involving Mr Mandela, DRC President Laurent Kabila, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu, and Mugabe.

"The meeting will be followed by a full session of SADC on Sunday in Pretoria," he said

Earlier today the Rwandan government said it was ready for full-blown war with the Democratic Republic of Congo if Zimbabwe and Namibia failed to immediately recall troops they allegedly sent to the DRC.

Rwandan ambassador Dr Ben Karenzi said Rwandan troops were ready to go into

the DRC to protect "Rwanda's vital interest in eastern Congo".

Dr Karenzi called on President Mandela to intervene and to convince Zimbabwe and Namibia to withdraw their military support. He said according to his information Zimbabwean and Namibian troops had already been deployed.

In meetings and telephone conversations with SADC presidents yesterday, Mr Mandela, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo argued with South Africa's SADC partners that **there could be no lasting military solution to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.**

Putting the case against military intervention the South Africans argued that neither the government of President Kabila, nor the rebels now advancing on the capital, Kinshasa, have the capacity to prevail militarily and also run the country peacefully for any length of time.

In meetings and telephone conversations with SADC presidents yesterday, the South African message was sharp and unambiguous: military intervention will make the only rational long-term solution - the cre-

ation of a truly democratic state in the DRC - more difficult and it could plunge the entire region into a conflagration.

President Mandela is understood to have told the SADC presidents yesterday that the first step towards resolving the conflict peacefully should be a ceasefire, followed by negotiations between Mr Kabila's government and the rebels on the formation of an interim administration.

Mr Mandela said he expected Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni would issue a call for a ceasefire by rebels in the DRC. This would have the effect of easing tensions.

"I am convinced we are making very important headway in ensuring that a peaceful solution comes at the earliest possible convenience," he told journalists at his Cape Town residence, Genadendal.

He said several heads of state had asked him, as SADC chairman, to call a summit on the crisis.

He wanted Mr Mugabe, who has promised Mr Kabila arms and troops, involved in any SADC initiative because he was a capable and experienced leader. He rejected a suggestion that there was personal enmity between him and Mr Mugabe.

Congo: Mandela brings leaders to peace table

As troops move in, the wrong move could plunge the region into war

BY PETER FABRICIUS
AND ROSS HERBERT
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

With Zimbabwean troops confirmed in Kinshasa and reports of Angolan soldiers on the way, President Mandela is the only hope to defuse the crisis in the Congo. But the wrong diplomatic move could throw the whole of central Africa into war, according to Western diplomats in Kinshasa.

Late on Thursday Congolese television showed footage of Zimbabwean soldiers arriving at Kinshasa's airport to help President Laurent Kabila against a rebel force that claims to be about 120km south of the capital at Mbanza Nguungu. Meanwhile, Reuters said Angolan troops and tanks were reportedly moving into the Cabinda enclave, which adjoins Congo.

"The South Africans are about the best hope to defuse this, but I am not sure Mandela has the credibility with Kabila. The question now is whether overt Zimbabwean support will encourage overt Rwandan support. If things turn in one direction, one can see the whole continent at war," said one diplomat, who asked not to be named.

South Africa has managed to coax the big guns of the growing Congo conflict to the negotiating table, convening a meeting today of the five leaders most deeply involved in the fighting. It is a final effort

to prevent the civil war that rebels have been conducting for three weeks from spiralling out of control into a major regional confrontation.

Kabila, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu, who is openly supporting the rebels, and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, who is believed to be supporting them, will meet under Mandela's chairmanship in Cape Town to try to thrash out a peaceful solution to the civil war.

Tomorrow Mandela will chair another summit of all 14 heads of state of the Southern African Development Community in Pretoria to endorse the hoped-for peace agreement and otherwise to mend the widening rift in the organisation caused by sharp differences on whether to provide military assistance to Congo, an SADC member.

According to diplomats, the Zimbabwean troops are supposed to guard Kinshasa's airport, a brief that will not have much military significance. However, a major force of Angolans from Cabinda could radically shift the balance in western Congo by forcing the estimated 5,000 rebel troops to defend their flanks.

Faced with such a prospect, analysts said rebels may have little choice but to race ahead to capture Kinshasa or head east into the Congolese heartland.

Although the rebels are only days away from Kinshasa, the presence of foreign troops could affect the outcome significantly by stemming the flood of Kabila's

troops who have defected to the rebel side since the conflict began on August 2 with an army mutiny in Goma.

While Mandela emphasises diplomacy, Mugabe is leading an alternative, hardline coalition to prop up Kabila with military force. According to Mugabe, Zambia, Tanzania and Namibia have pledged military support to Kabila.

The entry of Angola, which is fighting a slow-burning conflict with its opposition Unita movement, opens the way for Unita to strike an alliance with the rebel troops. There is little that Western powers can do to defuse the crisis.

The situation is complicated by the US's cruise-missile bombing in Sudan. America backs Uganda, which is fighting several Sudanese-backed rebel groups, whose use of Congolese territory helped to draw Uganda into last year's battle to oust Mobutu Sese Seko in the former Zaire.

Sudan, looking for targets to strike back at the US, might turn to greater anti-Uganda support, choose sides in the Congo or strike at American interests anywhere in the region.

Although South Africa has pulled off a diplomatic coup in hauling in the key players for talks, success is far from assured as the military stakes rise rapidly.

Veterans of South Africa's last high-profile negotiation effort to end the civil war between Mobutu and Kabila are sceptical about the latest effort. Last year, Mandela battled to bring the two foes together as Kabila's army marched on Kinshasa.

ARM 22/18/198

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Inside the Congo conflict

The main players and why they are involved

ANDREW TRENCH and CAROL PATON look at the motives of five countries key to the Congo's future:

ZIMBABWE: Zimbabwe helped Laurent Kabila, then leader of the rebel forces, to kick out former Zairian strongman Mobutu Sese Seko in May 1997 by supplying military hardware and advisers and has continued to help by providing rations and equipment through Zimbabwe Defence Industries.

Involvement: It is estimated that up to 900 troops have been sent to Kinshasa and the frontline. There are also reports of Zimbabwean fighter jets flying in support of the Congo government, although Zimbabwe denies this.

Motive: South African officials are baffled. Opinions range from questioning Robert Mugabe's state of mind to saying he wants to deflect attention from his own domestic problems. Others say Mugabe is making a big play in his show-down of egos with Mandela, whom he is known to dislike.

Mugabe is also chairman of the Southern African Development Community's organ on politics, defence and security and has fought with South Africa over

giving the committee more power. His moves in Congo may be a strategy to gain more influence in the region through the committee.

RWANDA: Rwanda was the main brain and force behind Kabila's rise to power and much of Kabila's army until recently consisted of Rwandans.

Involvement: Officially, Rwanda is not yet in the war, but is threatening to formally enter. However, few doubt it is the chief supplier of equipment and troops for the mainly Tutsi rebels. Rebels have been seen in columns of T-55 tanks, which are likely to have been supplied by the Rwandans.

Motive: To kick out Kabila, whom they feel has betrayed them, and to protect Tutsis from growing persecution by Kabila.

ANGOLA: Originally a Kabila backer and still one today.

Involvement: Angola has sent special forces with armoured support into Kinshasa, about 500km south-west of Kinshasa. Rebels also speculate that some of the fighter planes spotted over Congo may be Angolan. However, South

African diplomats doubt that the government's forces have the capacity to pose any real threat to the rebels.

Motive: There are reports that bases linked to the Angolan opposition group Unita are situated in Congo. An Angolan invasion provides a chance to deal with these in the ongoing fight between the MPLA government and Unita.

UGANDA: Led by Yoweri Museveni, the man some have named the "Bismarck of Africa" and a central player in Kabila's victory over Mobutu, providing weapons, cash and troops.

Involvement: Uganda is not admitting involvement in the latest rebellion although, like Rwanda, it is widely held to be deeply involved. Museveni is threatening to intervene formally to protect Uganda's interests.

Motive: About 5,000 anti-Ugandan forces — comprising Sudanese government fighters, former Mobutu supporters and Ugandan rebels — have bases in Garumba National Park in Congo, about 100km from the Ugandan border, from which to attack Uganda. An intervention in Congo gives Museveni the chance to rid himself of this threat.

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO:

Involvement: Fighting off rebel advances by Rwandan-backed Tutsis in the west and the east.

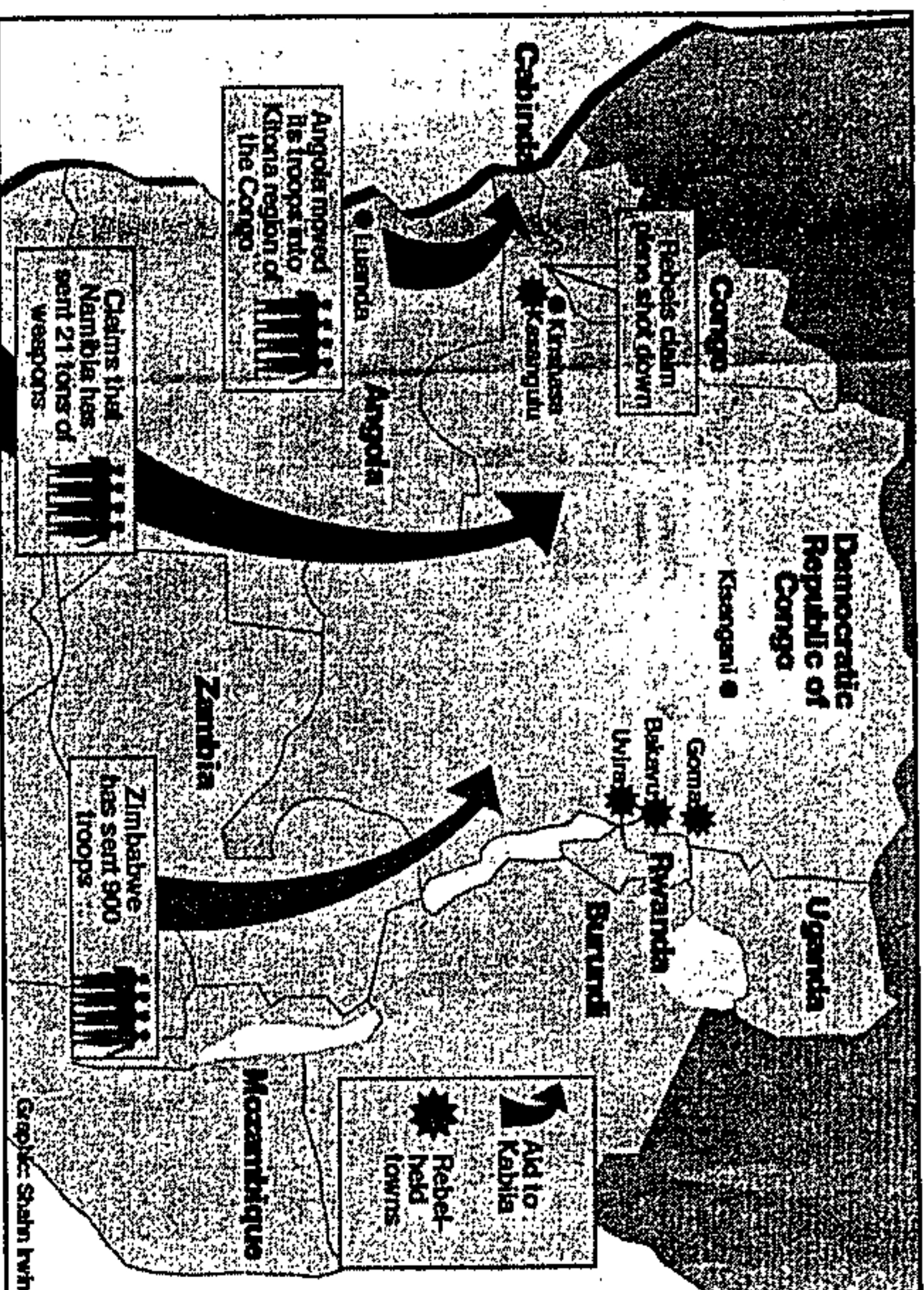
Motive: The rebellion by Banyamulenge Tutsis, who together with Rwandan troops helped Kabila overthrow Mobutu, was triggered earlier this month when Kabila attempted to expel the Rwandan troops still in the east of the country.

At the same time, Kabila also detained thousands of Tutsis in Kinshasa, where they were held in "protective custody" in prisons under appalling conditions. There were also unconfirmed reports of government massacres of Tutsis and reports by diplomats of executions taking place in the capital.

Although ethnic Tutsis — called Banyamulenge — have lived there for generations, they have long been a target of resentment and anger in Congo, where other ethnic groups often refer to them as foreigners or Rwandans.

Kabila's plan seems set to backfire as the rebels, backed by Rwanda and Uganda, have seized large parts of Congo and look set to march into Kinshasa.

THE SITUATION YESTERDAY



Rebels 'down jets' as war hots up

Kabila snubs Pretoria's efforts to broker cease-fire as more countries join Congo conflict

ANDREW TRENCH, CAROL PATON
and CRAIG DOONAN

CENTRAL Africa lurched towards an all-out war as South Africa battled to secure an 11th-hour cease-fire in an attempt to bring the region back from the brink of anarchy.

At the time of going to press last night, Rwandan-backed rebels fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo claimed to have engaged Angolan and Zimbabwian government forces. The rebels said they had repelled an Angolan tank advance into Mutuanda, an oil town on the coast, and had shot down one Zimbabwian fighter plane and two belonging to the Congo government. A rebel column of Russian-made T-55 tanks was seen moving towards the battle front.

As the fighting escalated, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni threatened to intervene to protect his country's interests if other African countries intervened to help Kabila. Uganda is widely believed to be backing the rebels already.

Meanwhile, in Pretoria, talks organised by President Nelson Mandela between Museveni, Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu and envoys representing Congo's president Laurent Kabila will begin in earnest today after a short session last night.

SA sources said the success of the talks hinged on whether an immediate cease-fire could be agreed to.

Mandela yesterday proposed:

- An immediate cease-fire;
- An immediate halting of troops in their positions;
- An immediate start to political dialogue between the Congo government and armed rebels and other political opponents of the Congo in the region;
- The withdrawal of all foreign troops in the Congo; and
- Ideas on how to establish a government of national unity.

The Pretoria talks had faltered earlier when Zimbabwian leader Robert Mugabe refused to attend, and Kabila claimed that he was sick.

Kabila's representatives arrived yesterday and were part of the brief discussions last night.

Dominique Sakombi, a spokesman in Kinshasa, said Kabila did not attend because he did not want to "walk into a lion's den". "Young African fighters once relied on Mandela, but now it seems that age is taking its toll," he said.

South Africa is hoping to present a framework peace plan to a summit of all 14 leaders of the Southern African Development Community today.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe is reported to have sent 900 troops to the Congo. Kabila's former foreign minister, Bizima Karaha, who recently defected to the rebels, claimed his troops had downed three fighter aircraft in the Congo — one Zimbabwian and two government planes. Zimbabwe has denied the claim.

Angola is reported to have moved special forces, backed by armour, into Kitona, about 500km south-west of Kinshasa, where they apparently want to secure the airport — the main supply point for the rebels.

Rebel forces were closing in fast on the capital. "We are advancing steadily towards Kinshasa. So far we have been able to knock down resistance as we move and we are preparing for a big showdown in the capital itself," rebel commander Dioudonne Kabengele told Reuters. His forces claimed to be 30km south-west of Kinshasa.

In Kinshasa there was a "general feeling of anticipation", said SA diplomat David Wiid yesterday.

The Congo crisis began on August 2 when Rwandan-backed rebels mutinied in the east of the country. The conflict quickly escalated, drawing in other members of the development community.

Kabila, who ousted former president Mobutu Sese Seko last year, has painted the conflict as a nationalist

struggle against ethnic Tutsis.

Banyamulenga Tutsis in the east of the Congo originally backed Kabila in his fight against Mobutu. They now accuse him of executing thousands of Tutsis, and are being supported by Rwanda's mainly Tutsi army.

Events came to a head this week when Congo state radio exhorted Kabila loyalists to attack Tutsis. The final straw was the intervention of Zimbabwian troops to prop up the Kabila government.

Rwanda's ambassador to SA, Ben Karenzi, said Tutsis had been targeted. "We are pushing for a diplomatic solution but we reserve the right to use all means at our disposal."

The possible formal declaration of war against the Congo was not an exaggeration, he said.

South African diplomats fear that, if the rebels reach Kinshasa, ethnic hatred fuelled by the government could cause a blood bath.

● See page 4

Mandela plan gives Congo hope

Leaders back SA's 11th-hour bid for a ceasefire and a political solution to the crisis as Zimbabwean and Angolan troops join the fray

By PETER FABRICUS
AND MARCO GRAMELLI

Hopes for a peaceful settlement of the widening Congo war rose last night as southern and central African leaders issued an urgent call for an immediate ceasefire and troop standstill.

In a race against time, 11 heads of state - called together by President Nelson Mandela in Pretoria - issued the unanimous call for peace, as Angola and Zimbabwe were sending their forces into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to prop up President Laurent Kabila's government.

While the entry of Angolan and Zimbabwean forces into the conflict at the weekend slowed the rapid advance of rebels, who had appeared likely to take Kinshasa within days, it also threatened to expand the war.

Mandela called the emergency summit in his capacity as chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) but also invited Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu - who is believed to be providing military aid to the anti-Kabila rebels - and Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi.

The SADC has been sharply divided over how the region should intervene in the conflict. Angola and Zimbabwe have led the initiative for a military response, while South Africa has urged a diplomatic settlement.

The summit's unanimous call for a peaceful resolution was an endorsement by SADC and key central-African leaders of the South African approach, but, significantly, Angola was not represented.

Kabila was also absent although he was represented by his justice minister, Mwenze Kongo. Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe - who has clashed sharply with Mandela over the past few days - was



On the march ... Congolese rebel soldiers move through the town of Kisantu at the weekend, on their way to the frontline near the capital Kinshasa.

also absent but was represented by his high commissioner.

Asked whether the absence of Mugabe and Kabila implied their countries were not party to the ceasefire call, Mandela pointed out that both were represented at the meeting and said the decision was unanimous.

However, he said, Angola's position was not yet known.

A communiqué issued after the four-hour summit recognised Kabila's government but urged democratic elections in the Congo within a reasonable time.

The summit mandated Man-

del to find ways of implementing the ceasefire and troop standstill, and he promised: "I will start the process tonight."

Mandela said the plan already enjoyed the support of rebel forces in Congo: "What we have decided is what the rebels have already said they want, so

there was no necessity for them to be here."

South African Government officials have made it clear they believe that, if the chief backers of the rebels - Uganda and Rwanda - support the SADC peace initiative, the rebels will go along with it.

"We are confident in the sense that the rebels speak the same language as we do. The government of the DRC also wants peace. I'm confident we will be able to reach a peaceful settlement," Mandela said.

Asked if Angola's absence was a major obstacle, an SA of-

ficial said the summit had been in contact with the Angolan government, which had agreed to halt the advance of its troops at Kitona, which they took from the rebels at the weekend.

More reports, pictures
Pages 4 and 11

(3/8) Apr 24/8/98
CRIMINALS / REUTERS



Supporters of the Democratic Republic of Congo's president Laurent Kabila demonstrate at the main stadium in Kinshasa yesterday. Angolan forces supporting Kabila have captured a key airbase, trapping anti-government forces between the coast and the capital. PIC: AFP

11th-hour peace bid

By Willie Bokala

SOUTHERN African heads of state who met in Pretoria yesterday called for an immediate ceasefire to the military conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The leaders at the Southern African Development Community summit, which was also attended by the non-SADC presidents of Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, said the situation in the DRC was unacceptable and demanded a withdrawal of troops.

Rwanda and Uganda stand accused by the DRC of supporting the rebels who want to oust the government of President Laurent Kabila. Both have denied this.

But the summit also accepted that, regardless of the contribution that African governments might make towards accomplishing peace in the DRC, the principal responsibility to end the conflict rested with the people of that country themselves.

The heads of state mandated President Nelson Mandela, who is SADC chairman, to consult with the sec-

etary-general of the Organisation of African Unity and together create mechanisms to implement both the ceasefire and the attainment of peaceful negotiations aimed at holding democratic elections in the DRC.

The leaders said elections in the DRC should take place within a reasonable period of time, and pledged to contribute material resources to support that effort.

All but two of the 14-member SADC leaders attended. Those absent were Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who is at loggerheads with Mandela over leadership of the SADC, and Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos.

Both Zimbabwe and Angola have committed soldiers to the conflict and are supporting Kabila, who also did not attend, but sent his Minister of Justice, Mr Mwenze Kongo.

Presidential spokesman Mr Paks Mankahlana said earlier yesterday that a 10-point plan had been put to the SADC leaders and the DRC yesterday morning. Kabila was briefed on the proposals and gave his



Paks Mankahlana puts forward the South African position.

response late yesterday. The content of his response was not made public, however.

Although Mankahlana would not divulge the contents of the 10-point plan, *Sovereign* understands they are a series of steps put together by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki that need to be taken to lead the DRC towards

democratic elections.

These would include the recognition of the government of Kabila, a ceasefire by all parties, and an interim government of national unity followed by a conference of as many parties as are representative of various sections of the DRC population.

The conference would then produce a blueprint of the process towards elections and a new government chosen by DRC voters.

Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi told reporters in Pretoria yesterday that "the proposals are very interesting, indeed".

"We don't believe in the removal of any government by force. We support change by democratic means," he said.

Zimbabwean president Frederick Chiluba would not confirm yesterday whether his country had sent troops to back Kabila, although Mugabe is on record as saying Zambia would do so.

South Africa, backed by Mozambique and Botswana, favours a peaceful resolution and is hoping to convince other regional leaders to support a ceasefire.

Mugabe, who chairs the SADC conflict resolutions committee, maintains that a meeting of SADC defence ministers last week had given him the go-ahead to intervene militarily in the DRC.

He likewise maintains that Mandela's efforts at diplomacy are unnecessary.

Meanwhile, rebel forces said yesterday they had captured the far northeastern city of Kisangani, the second largest city in the DRC.

Kisangani, which is 1 200km northeast of the capital Kinshasa, fell yesterday into rebel hands, rebel leaders said at their headquarters in Goma, near the Rwandan border in the east.

Also yesterday, reports said Angolan forces had captured a key airbase on the southwestern edge of the DRC, trapping anti-government rebels between the coast and the capital, a rebel commander said.

"They (the Angolans) took the airport at Kikona after heavy fighting last night and this morning," the commander, Diondounne Kabengele, said.

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Nzo heads efforts for Congo ceasefire

Stephen Laufer and John Dlodlu

BD 25/8/98

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HEAVILY armed Angolan troops and tanks poured into the Democratic Republic of Congo yesterday, as a ceasefire subcommittee headed by SA Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo prepared to shuttle between Zimbabwe, Angola, and Congo in an attempt to win support for an end to hostilities.

An SA government spokesman said Nzo, his Tanzanian and Mozambican counterparts and senior Organisation of African Unity officials were likely to travel to Luanda, Harare, and Kinshasa this week. They would also meet representatives of the Congo rebels.

Presidential spokesman Parks Mankahlana said they would base their efforts on an expression of support for a ceasefire in the declaration following the Victoria Falls meeting chaired by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. Zimbabwe and Angola have been supporting Congo President Laurent Kabila against the rebels.

Intense fighting raged in the country yesterday, with both government forces and rebels claiming important advances. As the rebels conceded the loss of three towns, sources said Kabila was no longer in Kinshasa, but had set up headquarters in the southern town of Lubumbashi.

Sapa-AFP reports that Angolan and Zimbabwean forces helped drive the rebels back from positions close to the capital, Kinshasa. Sources said Angolan troops had also struck at the rear of the rebel advance.

Rebel spokesman and former foreign minister Bizima Karaha said his forces could not respect any ceasefire until Angolan and Zimbabwean troops had withdrawn from the conflict.

Unconfirmed reports said Uganda was strengthening its military presence in eastern Congo. Uganda is concerned that Kabila may receive military assistance from Sudan, which



Congolese citizens shout outside the gate of the French embassy in Kinshasa during a protest march against foreigners, including the French, whom the protesters claim are supporting a rebellion in Congo. Picture: AP

supports rebels in northern Uganda.

Reuter reports Institute for Strategic Studies analyst Jakkie Potgieter said he had unconfirmed reports that Uganda's 32nd battalion had moved into Rwanda and the two countries planned to airlift a force into Congo.

The ceasefire plan was agreed to on Sunday in Pretoria at a meeting of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) plus Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Angola did not attend and Mugabe showed his disdain by sending his SA high commissioner.

SA government sources said Nzo, the Tanzanian and Mozambican for-

ign ministers, and OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim had explored ways of convincing Mugabe and Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos of the need for an immediate halt to hostilities.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki was said to be playing "a critical role behind the scenes" in attempts to win support for a ceasefire. Mugabe is understood to have fewer problems talking to him than Mandela, who he regards as his rival in southern African affairs.

Sources said SA had not yet dis-

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Congo

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Continued from Page 1

cussed the deployment of soldiers as ceasefire monitors to Congo. Such a move would require parliamentary support, foreign affairs spokesman Marco Boni said. Mankahlana said the issue had not yet arisen, "but you cannot have a ceasefire without guarantors". SA would deploy troops only if instructed to do so by the SADC and on the strict understanding that they were neutrals.

Boni said Nzo was disturbed at the reports of further Angolan troop movements into Congo. They were contrary

to the letter and spirit of Sunday's ceasefire agreement.

A senior SADC politician said he believed the ceasefire initiative would work, mainly thanks to the involvement of Uganda and Rwanda. The politician, who attended the Pretoria meeting, said Museveni's security concerns, dating back to the days of Mobutu Sese Seko, would be addressed by the SADC plan. It was now up to Kabila to meet the SADC halfway for having helped him survive.

One diplomat said the plan was a coup for SA diplomacy, having wrested the initiative from Mugabe.

Tensions aggravated: Page 12
Comment: Page 15

SA's Congo peace bid in tatters

HUGH ROBERTSON
POLITICAL EDITOR

ARG 25/8/98

President Mandela's initiative for a ceasefire and troop standstill in the Democratic Republic of Congo has taken another battering, with the country openly rejecting the ceasefire call and Angolan troops continuing their advance against rebels fighting the regime of President Laurent Kabila.

Meanwhile, rebels said Angolan and Zimbabwean jet fighters supporting the DRC government had bombed rebel-held Kisangani today and continued to attack rebel forces south-west of the capital, Kinshasa.

Bizima Karaha, Mr Kabila's former foreign minister, said Kisangani, Congo's third-largest city which fell to the rebels on Sunday, was attacked early today.

"No military objectives were hit, only civilian targets," Mr Karaha said.

"They cannot recapture Kisangani, only bomb it from the air. This is terrorism."

At the same time, Uganda admitted its forces had been deployed in the north-east of the country. Uganda's Foreign Minister, Eriya Kategaya, said the country's troops were in the DRC, but added they were simply defending Uganda's security interests.

South Africa's role in the peace initiative was further compromised as officials of Mr Kabila's government alleged secret South African support for the rebels.

According to a spokesman, a South African-registered aircraft had been recorded requesting permission to land at Goma, a town in eastern Congo now held by rebels.

He said the South African Government

To page 2

US backs SA's Congo peace drive

From page 1

had been invited to comment, but there had been no response.

South African officials said today they had no information on the claim and were seeking further details. They denied any South African aid to the rebels.

But even as fighting continued, Mr Mandela's ceasefire initiative was given strong support yesterday by the United States.

Howard Wolpe, President Bill Clinton's special envoy to Africa's

Great Lakes region, met Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos and said afterwards that he was encouraged by prospects of a peaceful resolution of the DRC conflict. "We are looking for a political framework for this to happen," Mr Wolpe said.

The US firmly supported the early withdrawal of foreign forces from the DRC and he had discussed this with Mr Dos Santos, Mr Wolpe said.

The Los Angeles Times reports that Angolan troops pressed ahead yesterday, seizing an Atlantic naval base and the oil port of Matadi from

the rebels and moving up the Congo River to engage rebel forces.

News of the advance came hours after Mr Mandela referred optimistically to an Angolan announcement, which said its forces would not go beyond the key town of Kitona.

■ Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo will lead a SADC ministerial delegation today to Addis Ababa, Luanda and Kinshasa in an effort to implement the peace initiatives agreed to at the Pretoria summit hosted by President Mandela last Sunday, the Foreign Affairs department announced.

Congo peace brokers hypocrites, says Mugabe

Michael Hartnack

HARARE — President Robert Mugabe called would-be peace brokers in the Democratic Republic of Congo "hypocrites" yesterday, in what diplomatic observers saw as an intensifying war of words with President Nelson Mandela.

"All those who have been denying and all those who have been talking peace are hypocrites," Mugabe said, claiming that Zimbabwe had positive proof that Rwanda and Uganda were helping rebels against President Laurent Kabila's government.

Reports yesterday said Mandela, the chairman of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), had again criticised Mugabe's role in seeking military intervention as chairman of the SADC Organ on Politics Defence and Security.

Speaking after a meeting with Howard Wolpe, US special envoy to Africa's troubled great lakes region, Mugabe said: "There are hypocrites who are talking peace when in fact they are supping with the rebels all day and all night."

He rejected US calls for the withdrawal of all outside forces from the Congo.

US ambassador Tom McDonald appeared disconcerted by the vehemence of Mugabe's remarks and said Washington stood by its appeal "so that the quickest possible path and diplomatic solution to address the conflict can be found. We all have a common aim in how dangerous the situation in the Congo has become".

Zimbabwean spokesmen have been emphasising that their contingent is a part of "allied SADC forces" responding to an appeal for help from "a legitimate government".

Assault on Kinshasa: Page 13

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Thursday August 27 1998

Kasrils clarifies SA's potential role in conflict

By Peter Fabricius

South Africa has the capacity to deploy peacekeeping forces in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo within 24 hours, but is not about to do so, Deputy Defence Minister Ronnie Kasrils explained yesterday.

He was clarifying remarks he made at a briefing on Tuesday when he said SA was ready to deploy peacekeeping forces in the Congo if the Southern African Development Community took such a decision at the highest level.

Kasrils said yesterday that his remarks had been taken out of context and misinterpreted in some reports to suggest that SA had changed its policy about not intervening militarily in the Congo.

That was not so, he said.

"I was talking completely hypothetically. I said we have been working on improving our peacekeeping capacity for the past four years and that we are now very well trained and have the capacity to send a peacekeeping force into the Congo. I also said we were capable of doing so within 24 hours because we have a rapid response force," Kasrils said.

He added this would happen only if President Mandela and the SA Government gave the order, and the peacekeeping mission was approved at the highest level by the SADC.

He said SA did not consider the Zimbabwe meeting of some SADC defence ministers, which approved military intervention two weeks ago, as a high enough decision-making body.

Kasrils also explained that SA was in any case unlikely to get involved in the Congo as it was now, with a war going on.

"We would be very careful about going in for peace enforcement. We are not in favour of that," he said, adding that SA did not want to repeat the mistakes made in other interventions, such as in Somalia, which had tried to enforce peace. — Star Foreign Service

Congo crisis reflects a new Africa

(268) 27/8/98

MXOLISI MGXASHE

Africa is re-shaping itself and national boundaries drawn up in colonial days will not survive

If there is anything that has confused most people in Africa for the past week or so, it is the curious and intriguing about-turn by Rwanda, Uganda and some troops from the Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF) who had helped enthrone Laurent Kabila in May last year. Now they want him out.

The prospect of Kabila's being removed from office may be avoided, however, if the proposed ceasefire and negotiations bring about the required durable political solution to the crisis. That will be determined before the end of this week, it is hoped.

Like all such alliances, which are sometimes called "marriages of convenience" around common issues, the ADF has not been able to survive the test of time. It has now been replaced by the Congolese Movement for Democracy (RCD) — another amorphous grouping embracing forces with varying political and ideological agendas.

These include a well-known revolutionary scholar, Ernest Wamba-dia Wamba, who used to teach at the University of Dar es Salaam, and some ex-Mobutu soldiers who seem split between the rebels and Unita's ranks bent on causing extensive destabilisation in Angola.

The anti-Kabila forces are united around removing him because they claim he is "corrupt", a "nepotist" and a "dictator" and demand democratic elections in that country.

Amid all these charges of corruption, a report in the *Sunday Independent* this week alleged the existence of a multi-million-dollar business connection between Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe and Kabila through Mugabe's nephew, Leo, and Kabila's son, Joseph.

The paper also quoted Mugabe's aide, George Charamba, as having said: "After Kabila won his revolution we made a conscious decision to move in and take advantage. We were not prepared to repeat the mistakes we made in Mozambique, where we made huge sacrifices only to discover we had created a market for South African business."

From this statement it is clear that the spirit of African solidarity that was once prevalent in Africa, which no doubt made its own strong impact on the collapse of apartheid, has now been replaced by notions of "scratch my back and I will scratch yours".

The statement certainly does throw some light too on the desperation which has been evident in several African capitals that have pledged military and material support to Kabila. Kenya was about the most unlikely participant in this enthusiastic display of solidarity.

And, as before, neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda are once again in the forefront of the current rebellion and have been joined by Burundi. They are raising "national interest" as justification for what Kabila and his supporters and the rest of the Congolese people see as an invasion of the national sovereignty of their country.

The situation has been further complicated by Zimbabwe and Angola's rush to despatch troops to the DRC against advice from the chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), President Nelson Mandela,



Congolese women from the Kinshasa side of the river wait in vain yesterday for the ferry. River traffic was closed at the weekend as the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo remains tense. PICTURE: AP

**African solidarity
has been
replaced by
'scratch my back
and I will
scratch yours'**

who proposed a more conciliatory and peaceful approach.

Mugabe in turn went beyond the expected rules of diplomatic and traditional African protocols in trying to embarrass the SADC chairperson, who was fortunately calm enough to defuse a bigger crisis.

The current political crisis in the Congo is certainly not new, dating back to the time it got its independence from the Belgians on June 30, 1960. Protracted crises followed the assassination of the Congo's first and only democratically elected national leader, Patrice Emery Lumumba, eliminated with the connivance of the CIA in 1961.

Huge western transnational companies, mainly from the US, France and Belgium, have been the major bodies that have exerted influence on what happened to the Congo and who became leader.

Mobutu Sese Seko had always been the West's — and particularly the US's — "blue-eyed boy" who made sure their interests were well protected.

This he did, brutally and mercilessly — as long as he also received a reasonable share of the loot. Now that he is no more, the West has looked to Kabila.

However, Kabila has been rather too independent for the West's preference — a bit erratic and certainly unconventional. Nevertheless, that was his style for all the years he was fighting in the dense jungles of the Congo.

The economic interests inspiring the current scenario have now expanded beyond the traditional players of the West, and includes African leaders such as Mugabe.

According to reports quoting the anti-Kabila rebels, Zimbabwe's President has more than R200 million at stake if Kabila loses the fight. There may be others like Mugabe who are probably also ready to make a quick buck out of the "Jewel of Africa".

The Americans, known to have very close military co-operation with the Rwanda government, have decided to keep "out of sight" and perhaps pursue their own interests more cleverly than before.

The head of the African Studies Centre at the University of Cape Town, Mahmood Mamdani, has raised another issue: Kabila's failure before and after entering Kinshasa to build and expand his "narrow political base" in the DRC.

Mamdani, from Uganda, says the forces who put Kabila into power had their own agenda. "The situation is that anybody with an interest in the Congo is going to pursue it through a foreign force because there is hardly any internal force strong enough."

This situation, he says, reminded him of the Ugandan experience in 1979 when Tanzanian troops moved in to oust another dictator and serial killer, Dada Idi Amin. As recently as two months ago, says Mamdani, Ugandan leader Yoweri Museveni was not in favour of a second intervention in the Congo precisely because of the Amin experience.

President Mandela last week disclosed that former Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere had urged him to persuade the rest of the SADC heads of state that physical confrontation in the DRC be avoided and that peace efforts should be pursued — a position that seems to contradict the official line of the current Tanzanian administration led by Nyerere's former foreign minister, Ben Mkapa.

The escalation of the crisis in the Great Lakes comes at a time when South

African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki has expressed great concern over the wars that have engulfed most of Africa.

As Mbeki puts it, it is a time when Africans should be traversing with vigour once more the path of "self-discovery and the restoration of our own self-esteem — without which we would never become combatants for the African renaissance".

But University of the Western Cape sociologist Professor Kwele Prah seems to hold a more optimistic view.

He believes the current political wars in Africa reflect a general disintegration of the "neo-colonial state", and offers hope that a new democratic order that will rid Africa of dictators will finally come about.

"The Somali state has ceased to exist," Prah says, "with various warlords in charge of fragmented mini-states in the north and south of the country."

"Kenya is also teetering on the brink of conflict, and if one is not careful it may be consumed by the same (kinds of) conflict seen in other areas of the continent."

Prah believes it is only a matter of a decade or so before the collapse of the neo-colonial states in Africa ushers in a new era of promise for most Africans.

"The process of their collapse will become a real challenge to those who for all these years have yearned for true political, economic and cultural changes."

"It is important that a new scenario emerges, one which tries to accept African creativity and the ability of Africans to solve their problems."

Prah says that if Africans accept the challenge and try to formulate "creative ideas" on how to work towards political systems that respect the culture and history of all the continent's people, "we will then make some headway".

One of the crucial aspects of this process, he says, is the promotion, development and use of indigenous African languages in tertiary institutions and other research centres as vehicles of social, cultural, scientific and technological development — as has been done for decades by the British, Americans, Germans, Chinese, Indians, Japanese, Arabs and other nations that have by far outstripped Africa in development, self-reliance and self-preservation.

On the African renaissance proposed by Mbeki, Prah said what was important was that the idea had emerged out of the political experience of the African National Congress, which represented "the final and in many ways the best chance for Africans to start addressing the problems of this continent".

He says South Africa's democratic dispensation, which today is "stronger and better organised", could easily become the key creative, industrial and financial centre for further development of the African continent.

"If we fail here, then the last chapter of African independence will also have failed. We cannot let this experience fail."

"This is why it becomes crucial that we make sure that the concept of the African renaissance, which is apparently being echoed by forces which have always been opposed to African independence and development, does not become vulgarised, distorted and misused," he notes.

Prah says it is also important for Africans to move away from the symbolism, sentiment and political rhetoric of the past so that they can give the idea of an African renaissance the structural flesh it needs — "without which it will degenerate in a few years' time into an empty political slogan, like so many of the preceding versions of the idea".

HUNDREDS WOUNDED OR KILLED — DOCTORS

Kinshasa under siege

CT 27/8/98

KINSHASA: As the long-awaited rebel assault on the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo started yesterday, South Africa continued with its shuttle diplomacy to broker a peaceful solution.

REBELS fighting to topple President Laurent Kabila launched an assault on the capital Kinshasa yesterday, infiltrating suburbs near the airport and triggering a fierce artillery battle.

With the sound of heavy weapons fire echoing across the city from early morning, the government urged the people via state radio and television to stay calm.

"The Congolese armed forces are conducting mopping up operations of armed elements who infiltrated the capital," a radio announcer said.

Doctors at a Kinshasa hospital said hundreds of fighters had been wounded or killed.

The government imposed a curfew while it tackled "invaders" claiming to control parts of the city. The curfew, announced by the official Voice of the People radio, followed air and artillery strikes in the morning against rebels east of the capital.

Earlier one of the Tutsi-led rebellion's leaders, Bizima Karaha, said the rebel forces had entered Kinshasa, controlled parts of it and had attacked the airport.

Other rebel leaders said they had taken Kalemie in the south-east Katanga province, and denied government claims they had been kicked out of Kisangani, in the north-east, and the port town of Matadi.

In Kigali, meanwhile, Rwanda accused Kabila of ordering the killing of ethnic Tutsis and others and warned it might enter the Congo conflict if necessary to protect them.

"Rwanda could intervene in the Congo crisis if Kabila pursues the initiative he has undertaken to terminate foreign nationals or Congolese on the pretext that they are Tutsis or Rwandans," Patrick Mazimhaka, minister in the Rwandan president's office, said.

Angola and Zimbabwe have both sent troops to support Kabila, while Uganda and Rwanda are supporting the rebels, although both deny any active involvement.

This has left the country virtually split in two, with Uganda and Rwanda in the east and Angolan and Zimbabwean troops backing government forces in the west.



PEACE MISSION: Alfred Nzo

Angolan warplanes and helicopters yesterday supported DRC artillery in an attempt to flush out rebel pockets near Kinshasa.

Kabila's cabinet director, Abdoulaye Yerodia Ndombasi, went on official radio to say authorities were imposing a night-time curfew until the "Rwandan and Ugandan invaders" had been crushed.

Most shops, offices and public buildings were closed and the army put up roadblocks, searching vehicles and advising people to return home.

The artillery fire that raged through much of the morning died down in the afternoon to enable ground troops to track down concealed invasion forces, a source close to the president's office said.

Angolan military planes were seen on the tarmac at the airport, which was guarded by Zimbabwean troops. They are helping to protect the city and its supply routes.

Witnesses reported that more than 200

rebel fighters had surrendered during the mopping-up operations run jointly by DRC, Angolan and Zimbabwean forces.

The rebels, mainly army soldiers who had defected, surrendered at a Roman Catholic mission at Sanda, 40km south-west of Kinshasa on the road to Matadi.

Others gave themselves up at a camp in Lemba, in the east of the capital. Witnesses said they appeared to be tired and hungry.

Karaha, Kabila's foreign minister until he defected, had earlier said that "our troops are in Kinshasa, they have attacked the airport and control certain parts of the city".

He said Zimbabwean troops and Kabila's soldiers were in disarray.

He also claimed at least 50 Zimbabwean soldiers had been killed on Monday at Kasangulu, a few kilometres south of the capital, and that the rebels had repelled a DRC and Zimbabwean attack.

The government for its part claims its forces and allies have recaptured the towns of Matadi, Moanda, Boma and Bariana, Atlantic Ocean or Congo river ports vital to Kinshasa.

Kabila himself paid tribute "to the brotherly armies of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe who have chosen the path of reason and good sense to assist us so that hope doubles in strength in our country".

Zimbabwe has openly justified intervention, Angola has all but officially admitted its role while Namibia has remained silent.

On the diplomatic front meanwhile, a South African-led diplomatic mission held talks in Addis Ababa with Organisation of African Unity chief Salim Ahmed Salim.

South Africa's Alfred Nzo headed a team of foreign ministers from Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania that met Salim and will accompany him on a visit to Angola and the DRC to try to broker a peaceful resolution.

However, in Harare, President Robert Mugabe branded as "hypocrites" fellow southern African leaders trying to reach a diplomatic solution, saying they were "supping with the rebels", the official Ziwa news agency reported.

Several countries closed their embassies in the Kinshasa last week and evacuated staff and foreigners. — Sapa-AFP, Reuter

DD 28/8/98 Picture: AP.

Zimbabwe flies home first battle casualties

(274A) (358) (352)

Michael Hartnack

HARARE — Zimbabwe has acknowledged its first casualties in fighting to defend President Laurent Kabila's government in the Democratic Republic of Congo, saying "at least" two soldiers have been killed and 15 wounded.

State sources said yesterday three more Zimbabwean soldiers were missing on the battlefield.

"Zimbabwe is sending reinforcements after finding that regular troops from at least two foreign countries were spearheading the attacks in Kinshasa," said the state-controlled Herald, whose editor Bornwell Chakaodza was recently transferred to the post from being President Robert Mugabe's director of information.

Meanwhile parliament, the politburo and traditionally supportive sections of the African business community, were reportedly criticising the war at a time of explosive internal trouble in Zimbabwe.

Millers said yesterday they would stop producing meal as soon as current maize stocks ran out, raising the probability of renewed food riots. State price clamps following a Z\$300/ton increase in grain prices had made milling unviable, they said.

The Herald said bodies and wounded started arriving back in Harare from the battle near Kinshasa's airport and around the Masina suburb. A leased Russian heavy transport aircraft that brought them back took reinforcements for the 600-strong contingent already deployed, said the newspaper, which is closely controlled by the information ministry.

The newspaper said that after the "foreign-led invasion force" attacked SADC troops, the "allied forces ambushed the principal column being used in the assault..."

Hundreds were reported killed on both sides.

The Zimbabwean Financial Gazette, owned by a consortium of leading African businessmen linked to Mugabe's ruling Zanu (PF) party, reported unrest among parliamentarians and a split in his elite policy-making body, the politburo, over intervention in the Congo. Retired army commander Gen Solomon Mujuru

warned strongly against involvement, politburo sources told the newspaper, while MPs were outraged that they were not consulted.

"Gen Mujuru openly expressed his reservations and questioned what Zimbabwe stood to benefit, and whether it was not a question of putting interests of private individuals to the forefront," they said.

This was a reference to reports that cabinet ministers were among those owed up to Z\$2.5bn on business ventures in Congo since Kabila took power last year.

In some of the most outspoken criticism ever published in Zimbabwe, an article called the intervention "The War of Mugabe's Ego", while an editorial warned that the fallout from the "debacle" would bedevil relations between Zimbabwe and SA long into the future.

Mandela targeted

"Neither (Nelson) Mandela nor his successor Thabo Mbeki is likely to forget too soon what a good friend Zimbabwe has been and is," it said sarcastically.

Diplomats said yesterday Mugabe's attack on Wednesday on "hypocrites" calling for peace was clearly aimed at Mandela, while Mugabe's demand that the Organisation of African Unity take over management of the crisis challenged Mandela's position as chairman of the SADC.

Edmore Tobaiwa, chief economist for Zimbabwe's First Banking Corporation, questioned the cost of intervention "when the country is facing one of its worst recessions", and when unions seemed about to launch a national strike for "restored macroeconomic stability to stop the decline in disposable income due to spiralling inflation and tax".

The International Monetary fund delayed until October its \$20m budget support and a crucial donor conference next month sought Z\$40bn for urgently needed land reforms, he noted.

The cost of deploying a single Zimbabwean soldier was put at \$100 a day, while tangible profits so far from trade with Kabila had been minimal, said Tobaiwa.

Nzo quits DRC mission as fighting grows

(358)
sowetan 28/8/98

By Willie Bokala

MINISTER of Foreign Affairs Alfred Nzo was on his way home yesterday after his team of Southern African Development Community (SADC) leaders aborted their peace mission to Kinshasa because of heavy fighting.

This has prompted President Nelson Mandela to call on heads of state in the region to speak with one voice over the question of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Presidential spokesman Parks Mankahlana said Nzo would brief Mandela on developments leading up to his proposed ceasefire in the DRC.

The President believed all heads of state should be united over the DRC question, Mankahlana said.

The question of who was the aggressor in the DRC had to be dealt with multilaterally, said Mandela's spokesman, who was commenting on a report that Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe had on Wednesday called South Africa "hypocrites" for its would-be peacebrokering in the DRC.

Diplomatic observers have seen this

as an ever-intensifying war of words between Mugabe and Mandela.

Mankahlana said Mandela's quest for a united voice among African leaders was the reason for Nzo, the foreign ministers of Mozambique, Angola and Zambia, and Organisation of African Unity secretary-general Dr Salim Ahmed Salim undertaking their mission to Luanda and Kinshasa.

The mission was trying to find a way of reconciling the SADC initiative with that of the Victoria Falls summit organised by Mugabe.

Mandela had "enormous respect" for Mugabe, believing him to be one of the premier statesmen on the African continent and in the world, Mankahlana said.

"President Mandela believes that whatever tactical differences may exist between other SADC states and Zimbabwe, everyone wants to make peace on the continent, including President Mugabe," Mankahlana said.

"It is President Mandela's firm view that all heads of state should speak with one voice on the question of the DRC," Mankahlana reiterated.

Congo leader thanks Mugabe

Michael Hartnack

HARARE — President Laurent Kabila arrived here yesterday to thank President Robert Mugabe for organising military intervention last week that saved his capital, Kinshasa, from seizure by ethnic Tutsi Banyamulenge rebels and army mutineers, allegedly backed by Uganda and Rwanda.

Kabila was expected to express his gratitude personally to Mugabe for Zimbabwe's support in the fight against Rwanda and Tutsi rebels, said officials after Mugabe welcomed the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo at Harare International Airport and took him to State House for talks.

Official spokesmen would not provide details about Kabila's visit and did not disclose what had been discussed after the meeting ended.

At the weekend, relations between Zimbabwe and SA plunged to a level not witnessed since PW Botha was in power. The Zimbabwean state media reported that local controllers had deliberately obstructed SA Air Force overflights in the belief that they were supplying weapons to the Congo rebels.

The state media also highlighted new Mugabe allegations that bungling by President Nelson Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki prevented his attendance at the August 22 Pretoria

summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Mugabe alleged SA had made the war possible by arming the rebels.

"Where did they get those tanks?" he asked at a joint news conference given with President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia on Saturday.

"Rebels would not have had the capacity in so short a time to wield the kind of guns and military equipment such as huge personnel carriers and tanks. So they talk peace and act war, and these are the hypocrites," Mugabe claimed.

Mugabe said Mandela and Mbeki had failed to give him details in time of the SADC summit convened by Mandela in Pretoria. Mbeki had telephoned him and "I gave him my views about the countries which should be involved if the plan was to be effective and he said he would consult with me."

"I was not told the venue and that this meeting would be held on Saturday (August 22). Then he never got back to me and the next I heard of it was in the evening, that our high commissioner was told by SA there would be a meeting," Mugabe, in his bluntest rejection to date of Mandela's leadership as SADC chairman, said. "We must now enlist the Organisation of African Unity which has an organ for conflict resolution."

"It is not possible for us to resolve it (the Congo war) as SADC, because we

are divided."

The state-owned media triumphantly reported yesterday how "allied forces led by Zimbabwe" had reopened the road between Kinshasa and its international airport, and other links between Kabila's capital and food producing regions.

However, the independently owned Sunday Standard challenged official statements that only two Zimbabwean soldiers had been killed and 14 wounded: "Tragically, Zimbabweans who are funding Mugabe's war machine with their taxes are being paid back with the blood and body bags of their children."

Namibian defence sources said earlier last week at least seven Zimbabweans had been killed in the first battle they engaged in.

The Sunday Standard alleged the war was costing up to Z\$40m a day and referred to Friday's further 20% slide in the value of the local currency to 27-1 against the US dollar following reports that the International Monetary Fund had deferred a decision until October of further budget support of \$20m.

Reports from Bulawayo at the weekend said Central Intelligence Organisation agents had stopped wives and relatives of soldiers from travelling to Mugabe's office in the capital to protest against their dispatch to the Congo. The relatives were accused of being "supporters of the rebels and friends of SA".



A lynch mob drags through the streets of Kinshasa the burned body of a government soldier said was a Tutsi rebel.

Kabila seeks SA support before accepting ceasefire

Michael Hartnack,
Dustin Chick and Stephen Laufer

DEMOCRATIC Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila last night said he would not accept President Nelson Mandela's call for a ceasefire in the war with rebels until SA denounced invasion of his country by Uganda and Rwanda.

"We all know that SA sold more than 60 tons of guns and ammunition to Rwanda before the aggression and we cannot see reason in calling for a ceasefire before condemning the aggression and calling (on)

the aggressors to retreat," Kabila said after day-long talks with President Robert Mugabe in Harare.

Kabila's statement that "while he knows definitely that Rwanda and Uganda are supporting the invasion troops, there are other countries who are supporting his enemies", was taken by observers as a reference to SA.

Mandela's spokesman Parks Mankahlana said last night that government would reply to Kabila's statement through the media only through legitimate communication channels.

SABC Television news reported last night that Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad dismissed as "unfounded" Kabila's accusations that SA had supplied arms. Tension between Zimbabwe and SA also heightened at the weekend with the disclosure that Zimbabwean aviation authorities denied an SA Air Force flight overflight rights en route to the Congo. As Kabila's forces advanced on the battlefront, Mugabe attacked Rwanda, Uganda and SA, saying they were hypocrites for urging a ceasefire while pouring arms into the conflict. Rwanda, in turn, said it would send troops into Congo if it became necessary to protect itself.

Kabila's rejection of Mandela's ceasefire call came after SA Defence Minister Joe Modise said earlier that he was hopeful a ceasefire could be in place within a week to 10 days. Modise

Continued on Page 2

Ceasefire

Continued from Page 1

said that mediation efforts were continuing and it was possible that a renewed mission might travel to the region before the end of the Nonaligned Movement summit on Thursday.

But other observers said Modise's forecast was optimistic.

Forces loyal to Kabila were advancing at such a rate that they had little reason to agree to a ceasefire for the moment.

Meanwhile, the SA Air Force yesterday confirmed reports in the Zimbabwe's state-controlled Herald that the SAAF flight had been deliberately obstructed — the Herald reporting it was in case it was supplying the rebels.

An article by an anonymous "correspondent", understood to be a top Zimbabwean government figure, alleged: "Millions of dollars worth of SA arms sales to Rwanda and Uganda triggered the present uprising in the Congo and explain the confusing signals coming out of Pretoria regarding a ceasefire in that country."

The article said that on Sunday, August 23, Zimbabwe's civil aviation department was asked by the SAAF to permit an American built Lockheed C130B Hercules to overfly.

The article said a verification team of foreign ministers of Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe met Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni at Gulu military barracks on August 12, and saw "large quantities of new SA armoured vehicles, troop carriers and other military equipment".

Congo peace prospects brighten as opponents jet in for summit

Stephen Laufer

DURBAN — Despite belligerent statements by ministers from the Democratic Republic of Congo in the afternoon, prospects for a peaceful resolution to that country's crisis appeared to brighten last night as key players in the war arrived in Durban for the Non-aligned Movement summit.

The two most significant backers of President Laurent Kabila's Kinshasa government, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and Angolan President

Jose Eduardo dos Santos, arrived in the early evening following speculation they might not attend. They were joined by Namibia's Sam Nujoma, also a backer of the Congo government.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, whose government has been backing rebels in Congo, landed soon after Mugabe. Another backer of the opposition to Kabila, Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu, was also reported to have arrived in Durban. But Kabila had not arrived late last night.

The leaders from both sides of the

Banro demands restitution ... Page 5
Rebels trapped ... Page 6
Few options ... Page 11

Congo divide are expected to meet other Southern African Development Community leaders and United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today in a "summit within a summit", with the war topping the agenda.

Today sees the high point of the summit as the meeting of heads of

state and government gets under way. Cuban president Fidel Castro is among a number of movement stalwarts in Durban for the gathering.

Annan, who met President Nelson Mandela on his arrival from Johannesburg, appeared optimistic that Kabila could be brought to the negotiation table. Asked whether Kabila's latest military successes had made him reluctant to negotiate, Annan said: "I am not sure this is going to be the situation for ever. We need to find a way of getting everybody to talk."

Nomavenda Mathane reports that Annan is expected to call for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Congo. Annan said yesterday the UN believed in the territorial integrity of countries and that foreign troops in Congo should be withdrawn.

Earlier, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki said he was confident there would be a ceasefire and a withdrawal of all foreign troops from Congo, followed by an inclusive political process.

Continued on Page 2

Congo (358) (700)

Continued from Page 1

SA and other SADC members have called for opposition forces to be included in interim political arrangements before democratic elections.

But Congo Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo poured scorn on such suggestions, saying the country's political dispensation was an internal matter. "We will not accept the imposition of anything from outside."

Kongolo denied there were any internal political problems, or that the Kabila government was burying its head in the sand rather than engaging the opposition constructively. "Before the aggressors came there was no problem. They can leave peacefully or we will kick them out."

Congo Foreign Minister Jean Charles Okoto said Kinshasa would agree to a ceasefire only if there was an

unconditional withdrawal of "occupying forces from our national territory".

But Kongolo appeared to leave a back door to negotiations open when he said any SADC member was welcome to try to resolve the crisis. "Anybody can come and try. We talk to all SADC members."

He said Rwanda and Uganda had engaged in an "act of aggression", and that it was the right of the Congo government to call for military assistance from Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. "Our friends will go when we decide together that they must leave."

Separately, it was learned that officials had agreed on a resolution condemning the recent US strikes on a factory in Sudan. Sources said that the heads of state and government meeting today would be presented with a text describing the attack as an unwarranted act of aggression. The US said the factory produced chemical weapons, while Sudan said it was a pharmaceuticals producer.

PD 2/9/98

Kabila plans to seize chunk of telephone company

(378)

BB 2/9/98

KINSHASA — President Laurent Kabila's government plans to seize a major stake in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's main private telephone company Telecel and has accused a group of staff there of treason in the civil war.

Senior Telecel staff came from the ethnic Tutsi Banyamulenge minority, accused of playing a prominent role in the revolt against Kabila.

A senior government official said government "did not plan to nationalise the company" but to take over a major shareholding held by Miko Rwayitare, ethnic Tutsi part owner of the company. Earlier Telecommunications Minister Kinkela Vi-Kansy alluded to the plan on state radio and television.

US businessman Joe Gatt, the other ma-

jor shareholder in Telecel, said he was to hold talks with government. "It is very difficult to understand what they are doing," he said.

Telecel, which uses cellular telephone technology, has become the main telecommunications network in Congo. It is part of Telecel International, which is based in the British Virgin Islands.

The future shape of the Congolese company, in which Belgian company Sait-RadioHolland holds a 10% stake and Miko and Gatt hold 45% each, was unclear.

However, state radio said government planned to put the management of the company in Congolese hands, and that a new company, Telecel Congo, was set up on Monday.

New directors would be named soon.

Shortly after Kabila took power, his government scrapped a concession under which Sizarail, a private company with SA interests, was operating the rail network.

Claire Pickard-Cambridge reports that Congo business sources said last night the action against Telecel sent a worrying message to investors.

"Even though government denies this amounts to nationalisation, it is expropriating assets and appointing its own directors. There has been no talk of offering compensation."

The source said it was believed that government or its appointed directors intended to plunder Telecel's reserves because the company was known to be cash-rich.

mining concessions

US company demands return of Congo gold

Simon Barber

WASHINGTON — Banro Resource Corporation is demanding the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo either give back the firm's gold mining concessions in South Kivu and Maniema provinces or pay more than \$1bn in restitution.

Through its wholly-owned US subsidiary, Banro American, the Toronto-listed

mining junior has retained the high-powered Washington law firm of Akin, Gump and requested arbitration by the World Bank's International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

According to Banro, President Laurent Kabila issued a series of decrees in July dissolving Banro's 93%-owned Congolese subsidiary, Société Aurifère du Kivu et Maniema Sarl (Sakima) and terminating

the 1997 mining convention between the government, Banro and Sominki, Sakima's predecessor company.

The reason given was "certain irregularities in the liquidation of Sominki and the creation of the Sakima".

Further decrees established a new private company, Société Minière du Congo Sarl and named Philemon Naluhwindja, a chief in the area of the concessions, as its

managing director.

At the same time, Minister for the Development of Strategic Zones Umba Kyamitali, issued an order of "remise et reprise" requiring that Sakima hand over its assets.

Its Kinshasa office was then seized and \$57 000 was removed from a safe in the local office of Mitchell and Associates, a US firm that advises clients on Congolese mining law.

The firm's principal Pat Mitchell said yesterday the money was to cover Sakima's payroll and other expenses and that Sakima employees were intimidated by Naluhwindja and his military escort into revealing its whereabouts.

Claire Pickard-Cambridge reports that Banro Resources chairman and CEO Bernard van Rooyen said in Johannesburg yesterday that his company was involved in

talks with the Congolese government which appeared to have realised that it had damaged investor sentiment. Banro expected to hold further talks soon with Umba.

Van Rooyen said a mining convention signed between Banro and the Congolese government provided for either party to approach the Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes in Washington if there was a breach of their agreement.

UN steps in to deal with Congo crisis

Lawetam 3/9/98

By Joe Mhilela

UNITED Nations (UN) Secretary-General Kofi Annan moved to centre stage yesterday to deal with the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), holding bilateral meetings with all parties - including president Laurent Kabila, who made a surprise appearance in Durban earlier that morning.

Annan will hold a crucial session with members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Durban to address the situation today as the 12th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement reaches its climax. Annan met leaders of South Africa, Lesotho, the DRC, Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia in one-on-one sessions over tensions in both the Congo and Lesotho.

The UN is also expected to help restore normality to strained relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe as the "good relations between these two countries are crucial to the regional peace and stability", UN spokesman Mr Yobert Shamapande told *Sowetan*.

Military option

Also, Annan is expected to persuade Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe and his Namibian counterpart Mr Sam Nujoma "of the futility of the military option in the DRC conflict", Shamapande said.

Shamapande could not confirm the presence in Durban of the Tutsi rebels pitted against Kabila in the Congo conflict.

"I have heard rumours that the rebels are here but these are government-to-government bilaterals," he said.



Democratic Republic of Congo president Laurent Kabila arrives at the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Durban yesterday accompanied by a South African aide. Sixty heads of state are attending the meeting which finishes today.

However, other sources said representatives of the rebels were in town and ready to participate in ceasefire talks.

Today's session between Annan and SADC leaders is expected to result in agreement on a ceasefire, as

both Zimbabwe and Angola, who have troops supporting Kabila in the DRC, have said they cannot sustain their involvement any further.

The cost of the military exercise is said to be huge and draining the resources of both countries.

SA's summit spokesman, Mr Joel Nkomo, said the bilateral talks sought to address "general security issues" within Southern African countries, like Lesotho, Angola and the strife-torn Congo.

He said the talks should be seen

against the backdrop of President Mandela's call for a political solution to the problems in the DRC.

Shamapande said the UN was keen to do all it could to broker peace in trouble spots of the world, including the regional conflict afflicting the countries of this region.

In his address to the heads of state at the summit, Annan urged his "brother African leaders" to forego military means in resolving the conflict currently besetting the African continent.

Terrible price

"My Brother African leaders, I appeal to you once again, we Africans must summon the will to resolve our problems by political, not military, means.

"For every day that we fail to do so, the innocent people of this continent pay a terrible price," he said.

The use of terrorism could not be justified by "any ideology, any grievance or any faith".

"We all have a duty to combat terrorism wherever and whenever it rears its head," Annan said.

However, Namibian leader Sam Nujoma said they had had to go to Kabila's aid because of "internal aggression" in the Congo.

Nujoma said he hoped the positions taken by Zimbabwe, Angola and his country to help Kabila would be endorsed by the summit.

However, Mandela's position on the conflict in the Congo has been to allow political and diplomatic means to take centre stage.

Shamapande said for the UN, the withdrawal of foreign troops "such as those coming from Zimbabwe" would facilitate a process leading towards democratic elections in the Congo.

● See pages 2 and 10

Peace efforts founder as Kabila leaves

MD 3/9/98

Stephen Laufer

DURBAN — Efforts to broker a ceasefire and political settlement in the Democratic Republic of Congo foundered last night as key players left Durban ahead of a breakfast summit scheduled for this morning.

The departure of Namibian President Sam Nujoma and reports last night that Congo President Laurent Kabila would also leave appeared to stymie United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's efforts to breathe new life into the peace process.

Military sources confirmed that Nujoma, who is among Kabila's key backers, had left SA for Windhoek. Aides to Kabila said he was likely to leave last night after a number of meetings, most of them with heads of states regarded as his supporters, who are in Durban for the Nonaligned Movement summit.

Earlier, attempts by SA to gain agreement on a resolution on Congo for the summit's final communique collapsed when representatives of the Kabila government did an about-turn on a call for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of foreign troops. Sources said problems arose over whether it referred to all external armies or just those supporting the rebels.

The Congo delegation had ultimately rejected the amendment altogether. If no agreement was achieved by this afternoon, the summit would probably not take a position on the crisis at all, the sources said.

Kabila arrived unexpectedly in Durban yesterday, apparently after a late-night meeting of his key backers decided to encourage him to come and put

(378) (2477)

his case to Annan. It is understood that Nujoma, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola told Kabila he was losing ground to the SA view of events in Congo.

Besides Annan, Kabila yesterday met Nujoma, Mugabe, Dos Santos and Sudanese president Omar El Bashir, who supports rebels active against the Ugandan government, which itself supports rebels against Kabila. He also met Isayas Afewerki of Eritrea; Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo (Brazzaville); Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat; and Omar Bongo of Gabon.

Arafat's spokesman said the Palestinian leader had expressed his full support for efforts to maintain the territorial integrity of Congo and called for a dialogue to resolve problems.

Abusing an invitation to speak on behalf of the African group after President Nelson Mandela's election to head the Nonaligned Movement yesterday morning, Nujoma limited himself to a defence of the intervention by Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Angola on the side of Kabila. He said he and his allies would leave Congo only "when the job is done to the satisfaction of the government of the Congo".

Striking an uncompromising note, Nujoma said the nonaligned nations should strongly reiterate the "sacred principle" of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of states, and "oppose any manoeuvre aimed at overthrowing legitimate governments by force".

Earlier, sources said that all Southern African Development Community

Continued on Page 2

Congo

Continued from Page 1

heads of state and their colleagues from Uganda and Rwanda, who are backing the Congo rebels, would attend Annan's breakfast summit. Annan spent most of yesterday in bilateral meetings with the SADC leaders, apparently in an attempt to massage the peace process.

Addressing the summit plenary earlier, Annan appealed to African leaders to "summon the will to resolve our problems by political, not military means". For every day that armed conflict continued, innocent people of the continent paid "a terrible price".

As Annan spoke, Kabila walked out

of the plenary hall.

One source close to the process said he did not believe that Annan had enough influence to pull off a ceasefire alone. His efforts had to reinforce other attempts at brokering a peace.

SA was chosen within the political committee to chair attempts at reconciling very different amendments on Congo proposed for the summit's final communique.

Sources said Congo had tabled wording condemning the intervention of Uganda and Rwanda, while Rwanda proposed a call for a conference on the establishment of a broad government of national unity. Uganda's amendment expressed concern at "ethnic cleansing" by the government.

Kabila's allies: Page 11



SHOWING UP: Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila arrives for the afternoon session of the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Durban yesterday.

PICTURE: AP

Kabila lashes out at the 'invaders'

CT 3/9/98

(358)

DURBAN: President Laurent Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo used his address to the Non-Aligned Movement heads of government summit here yesterday to launch a scathing attack on Rwanda and Uganda, accusing them of wreaking havoc in his country.

Kabila also lashed out at the international community, who he accused of ignoring human rights abuses perpetrated by the Rwandan and Ugandan invaders, and the international media, which he said gave a distorted view of the conflict.

"We demand the immediate withdrawal of the Rwandans and Ugandans from our territory without conditions," he said.

Kabila's address was in stark contrast to the carefully worded and conciliatory speeches delivered by other heads of state.

Dressed in a rumpled brown safari suit, Kabila paid tribute to the countries that had fought the Rwandans and Ugandans — Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola.

Kabila said the Ugandan and Rwandan-backed forces had killed and raped, and destroyed property in his country — including a key harbour, dam and oil refining facilities. He also accused them of hijacking Congolese planes to carry Rwandan troops 2 500km into DRC territory.

Kabila said his countrymen were being deported and killed, women were being raped and children were being used as cannon fodder. "We denounce these odious crimes."

He called on the Non-Aligned Movement to condemn the aggressors, saying: "The dignity and credibility of our forum is at stake."

Kabila accused Rwandan deputy president Paul Kigame of attacking the DRC under the false pretence that genocide was taking place in the east of the country.

He claimed those backing the invaders were stooges for people with vested financial interests in the DRC who did not want to see his government succeed.

Earlier in the day, Kabila's request to jump the queue and be the first head of state to address delegates was rejected.

Kabila apparently asked the secretariat to allow him to be first so that he could return to the DRC to grapple with the continuing conflict in his country.

"Kabila's request was turned down because the list of speakers was already completed. He was also told that he should perhaps look for another president who was will-

ing to swap positions," sources in the secretariat said.

Earlier yesterday Kabila left the heads of state auditorium while United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan was in the middle of his address.

A source said this should be interpreted in the light of increasing tension between the UN — Annan in particular — and the DRC.

Other sources in the corridors of the summit suggested the refusal of Kabila's request was to force the DRC leader to attend a Southern African Development Community leaders' working breakfast here this morning.

The crises in Angola and the DRC, as well as problems in the Great Lakes region, are expected to be on the agenda for the breakfast talks, hosted by Annan. — Sapa

ANALYSIS

member states. Five — SA, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland — belong to the Southern African Customs Union (SACU).

Tanzania is a member of the revived East African Co-operation Group with Kenya and Uganda, while Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe belong to a rival economic union: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa).

Others, notably Zimbabwe and Zambia, have negotiated bilateral trade deals with SA, while committing themselves to an SADC regional free trade protocol due to be phased in over an eight-year period.

Forging an economic union among countries so disparate in size and at such different levels of development is a formidable task, worsened by the determination of some leaders, notably Mugabe, to promote the SADC as a political entity as well as an economic union.

The Congo crisis threatens to derail economic recovery in a region where per capita gross domestic product has fallen from \$900 (at 1987 prices) in 1980 to an estimated \$725 in 1996.

Except for SA, every country now embroiled in the crisis desperately needs substantial foreign aid from the donor community along with loans from the Bretton Woods institutions.

The governments of Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe know their military involvement in Congo should it last beyond a few weeks, will seriously damage their economies while closing the door on foreign aid and foreign investment.

Zimbabwe's decision to send troops to a conflict not directly threatening its interests could put paid to its hopes of raising more than \$1bn at a donor conference next month to finance land resettlement.

Also in doubt must be the disbursement of the next tranche of its \$175m International Monetary Fund standby loan, while Zambia's stalled copper mine privatisation programme is another likely casualty of a conflict whose consequences will be felt for years to come. — Financial Times.

Officers, politicians at helm of Congo's 'anarchic' rebellion

Tim Cohen and Claire Pickard-Cambridge take a look at the leaders of the rebellion in the Democratic Republic of Congo

WHO is leading the rebellion in the Democratic Republic of Congo? The most visible leader soon after the revolt was launched on August 2 was Arthur Zahidi Ngoma, a specialist in international law and a United Nations official for many years. He was also jailed by Congo's leader, Laurent Kabila.

Asked soon afterwards whether he was the rebellion's leader, Ngoma's pointed reply was that it had no leader. "We just want to depart a bit from warlord Kabila's methods... we are working to finally flush out Kabila's dictatorial system... and this is the spirit that governs our actions now."

While Ngoma is no longer playing a leading role, sources say there is some truth in his claim that the rebels have a fairly consultative leadership style. They also say that although the rebels have their base in the east, their leaders are from a variety of regions and several organisations.

The most volatile of the rebel spokesmen is 56-year-old historian, Prof Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, who on August 12 was appointed chairman of the Democratic Congolese Rally to lead the resistance.

Wamba dia Wamba, who comes from western Congo, is academically respected for his writings on the need for a democratic dispensation as a precursor to Congo's economic and social recovery. He left Zaïre after independence in 1960 and went into exile in Tanzania where he taught at Dar es Salaam University, later becoming influential as a champion for the cause of democracy in Africa.

Apart from his credentials as an activist, Wamba dia Wamba also seems to have been propelled into the bosom of the rebel movement by his origins in the southwest. Other leaders refer to his origins in an effort to deflect claims that the movement is dominated by eastern Banyamulenge Tutsis.

The vice-chairman of the rally is Moïse Ngaragabo, a former director of Kabila's office and former director of the anti-corruption tribunal. He is assumed to have close



Political co-ordinator of the Congo rebels, Vincent Lunda-Bululu, gestures to his men.

links with Rwandan strongman Paul Kagame.

There are at least two members of the rally's executive council with former links to dictator Mobutu Sese Seko — the co-ordinator of the council, Vincent Lunda-Bululu, and Tambwe Alexis Mwanba.

While Mwanba was a transport minister under Mobutu, Lunda-Bululu is a lawyer from the southern province of Katanga and was prime minister in Mobutu's first transitional government from 1990-91. He later joined the moderate opposition.

Some who thought a rebel victory possible argued that Lunda-Bululu had the best credentials to take Congo's helm because he was considered an effective and experienced administrator. He is also a seasoned politician and has the

political advantage of not being part of the minority Tutsi tribe.

Another influential executive council member is Bizumu Karaba, a Tutsi doctor from the eastern Kivu province who trained in SA. He was Kabila's foreign minister until he left to join the rebels, and his move was considered a blow to Kabila's political strategist.

While the rebels' political leadership has taken a few turns, the military leadership is undisputed. It was Jean-Pierre Ondekane who announced the start of hostilities and who is the military brain behind the rebellion. He previously served with the Zaïrean Armed Forces and rose to command the first military region of Lubumbashi. He also took part in the war to oust Mobutu, leading opera-

tions in Kananga, Kikwit and Kenye up to Kinshasa.

The 36-year-old leader turned against Kabila, claiming he tried wrongly to arrest soldiers who had put him in power. This led to an insurrection by soldiers near Goma, who pressed Ondekane into leading them. Ondekane describes himself as a fighter without political ambition: "I am leading a revolution for all Congolese, but once we reach Kinshasa, the politicians will take over."

Ondekane never met Mobutu, but he met Kabila while on a mission in the Central African Republic. At the time Kabila was a good man, but he changed when he surrounded himself with his Luba (tribal) brothers, Ondekane said, unwittingly revealing how large a role ethnicity is playing in the conflict.

Picture: AFP

FOR all its importance, the Constitutional Court is sometimes the arena for brain-numbingly dull hearings. Often taken up with technical arguments beyond the grasp or interest of the average person, its sittings may attract few observers beyond the legal teams involved in the deliberations.

But last week's hearing was different: a time warp, like stepping back into the drama of a court under apartheid on one of those rare days when everything came together — a clear case of injustice; a strong, sympathetic Bench; rousing words against oppression and inequality. Even better, for once the state acknowledged it had no justification and said nothing to defend the indefensible.

Suddenly space was at a premium in the courtroom, and many people sat on the floor or stood bunched at the back. They had come to witness one of the last major legal battles against the mindset left over from the previous order: the fight to decriminalise gay sex.

Though the Constitution says that the State may not "unfairly discriminate" against anyone on the grounds of sexual orientation, the laws which make sodomy a crime still exist.

From the protracted struggle which the gay and lesbian community has been forced to wage to translate the promises of the Constitution into a reality for themselves, it has often seemed that of all marginalised groups, they have benefited least from the new order.

Many battles lie ahead over issues like child custody, equal benefits for partners and the legitimisation of gay marriages. These rights could still take years to win, given the obstructions created by often barely disguised official homophobia. But the crowds packing the Constitutional Court last week believed one major victory was imminent, and were determined to see history being made.

Under the law as it now stands, gay men have been reduced to the status of "unapprehended felons" as some experts have put it. Sodomy between males is an illegal and a punishable offence. And while always illegal between men, it is not illegal in a heterosexual relationship. Much was made of this anomaly by Gilbert Marcus SC, who appeared for the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality.

Marcus, a veteran of many skirmishes in the apartheid courts, pointed out that the British decriminalised sodomy in 1967 after a report roundly rejected any suggestion that, simply because many churches disapproved of homosexuality, it should remain a crime.

But just a year later South Africa moved strongly in the opposite direction, with the report of a parliamentary committee investigating changes to the Immorality Act. Top-ranking police officers told the committee that homosexuality was a "threat to the Republic". Given the paranoia of the time, this claim on its own would have warranted tough legal action.

The police noted that "the activities of homosexuals definitely have a deleterious influence on the social structure of the populace."

Fighting for the freedom to enjoy sex without fear

The Constitutional Court takes a scathing view of homophobic legislation still on the statute books, writes CARMEL RICKARD

ST (PT) 6/9/98

Gays drank "excessively", became addicted to drugs, and were "completely estranged from the church and religion".

Homosexuals became spiritually and physically weak, leading to a loss of productivity and in general "their activities result in moral decay and a sense of inferiority".

The police contributed other sinister-sounding information, not least that they had "established" that every gay person makes it his business to "recruit as many homosexuals as possible" and that homosexuality had been increasing in a "disturbing" fashion.

They proposed that homosexuals be removed from their environment and receive psychiatric treatment; and that effective legislation be introduced to "combat the evil".

Last week, the Constitutional Court scrutinised the sodomy laws, including the "effective legislation" passed 30 years ago following the police evidence — and it was scathing about what it found.

"Once you take away prejudice, there is nothing left," commented Judge Albie Sachs. "All the justifications are based on prejudice, the very thing the Constitution is there to prevent."

The court's task was to consider a decision made by Judge Jonathan Heher of the Johannesburg High Court in May. Following a challenge to the sodomy laws brought by the gay and lesbian coalition, he declared the common law crime of sodomy unconstitutional,

along with various other sexual offences in the statutes which would not be a crime if committed by a woman, or engaged in between women or a man and a woman.

Under the Constitution, an order such as that made by Judge Heher has to be ratified by the Constitutional Court before it takes effect.

The sodomy case was making history, as Judge Lawrie Ackermann pointed out during the hearing, because it was the first time the Constitutional Court was dealing with issues of sexual orientation. The coalition

and its members hope the court's judgment will be more than a rubber stamp. They want it to highlight the injustices they have suffered, and still suffer, despite the protection of the Constitution. They are also seeking acknowledgement of the pain caused by the existing legislation and prejudices of many in society.

Marcus argued that even though Judge Heher's conclusion was welcome, his decision had not focused sufficiently on continuing discrimination against the gay and lesbian community, such as the fact that someone with a conviction for sodomy could not register as a security officer or qualify to receive a pension under the Special Pensions Act.

Marcus urged that the judgment should recognise and deal with the problem that the gay and lesbian community was marginalised and susceptible to abuse. He quoted Amnesty International reports about the

imprisonment, torture and even murder of gays and lesbians in many countries.

Though he did not mention Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe by name, everyone in court was well aware of the extreme homophobic views repeatedly expressed by Mugabe, and of his persecution of gays and lesbians.

While the Christian churches had often been in the forefront of those urging condemnation of gays and lesbians, there was also a strong strand which took the opposite view, Marcus said.

This was exemplified by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who recently wrote that those who made gays and lesbians "doubt that they were the children of God" committed "the ultimate blasphemy".

Tutu continued: "If the Church, after the victory over apartheid, is looking for a worthy moral crusade, then this is it: the fight against homophobia and heterosexism."

The court has reserved its judgment to an as yet unspecified date. Based on the tone of the debate, it seems almost certain that the court will declare the sodomy laws unconstitutional. But even if the judges go further, the problem remains of how they are to convince officials — including judges of other courts — that the days of discriminating against people on the grounds of their sexual orientation are really over.

After all, it was only four years ago that the Deputy Judge President of the Johannesburg High Court, Judge Monas Fleming, handed down a judgment restricting a lesbian mother's access to her own children; a decision which, since it has still not been overruled, continues to carry legal force in the lower courts on questions of adoption and foster care.



OUT OF THE CLOSET: A gay couple from Soweto take to the streets by South Africa's Constitution, discriminatory

Secret deal helps Mugabe save face

Spies pave way for Congo peace talks

(358) ST 6/9/98

ANDREW TRENCH

AS Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe sent his troops to war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, his top intelligence officers were quietly meeting with their South African counterparts to hammer out a plan that would allow Mugabe to withdraw from the damaging and costly conflict without losing face.

The meetings laid the foundation for a breakthrough at the Non-Aligned Movement's summit in Durban this week, where Mugabe announced he would host a peace meeting between the countries involved in the conflict at the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe tomorrow.

Uganda and Rwanda are supporting the rebels and seek to establish a security zone on Congo's eastern flank to protect them from Hutu insurgents. Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe are backing the beleaguered regime of Congo's President Laurent Kabila.

The meeting — the idea of President Nelson Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki — is expected to allow Mugabe to pull his troops out of the Congo while retaining a semblance of dignity.

Sources close to the peace talks told the Sunday Times that South Africa decided to allow Mugabe to take the credit for a possible settlement because it was a small price to pay to end the Congo crisis. The seeds for the deal were planted in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare, last Thursday when top officials from the South African Secret Service met with their Zimbabwean counterparts.

The Zimbabweans urged South Africa to push ahead with a deal that would allow Zimbabwe to withdraw from the Congo.

The meeting was one of a series that is said to have started within days of Mugabe sending troops to help prop up Kabila last month.

Zimbabwean intelligence officials told their South African counterparts that Mugabe had not consulted them about the deployment and that they had serious concerns about the country's capacity to sustain a war on foreign soil.

Sources say Zimbabwe's intelligence community anticipated Mugabe would quickly realise his mistake and seek a way out.

Zimbabwe has committed almost 3 000 troops to the Congo and some estimates say this has already cost the cash-strapped country up to \$30-million (about R189-million).

Later discussions between the intelligence officials took place with Mugabe's sanction, and South African officials clearly understood that the request for a way out for

Bid to end invasions

WARRING nations in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be asked tomorrow to consider a proposal for their troops to monitor and secure Congo's borders.

The plan, which official sources say is the most advanced of those tabled, is expected to be presented by Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe at talks attended by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at Victoria Falls.

It is said to propose that Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Congo, Rwanda and Uganda withdraw or scale down.

Their soldiers would co-operate and deploy on the borders of Rwanda, Uganda and Angola after a cease-fire and agreement on political negotiations in Congo.

The deployments would aim to stop rebel Unita forces from invading Angola from western Congo; Ugandan rebels from launching attacks into their country from Congo; Rwandans from entering eastern Congo; and Congolese forces from attacking Tutsis in eastern Congo or entering Rwanda.

This plan is said to be a variation on a proposal, brought to Durban by Annan for similar deployments of troops other than from combatant nations.

It has not been decided whether South Africa or other nations will contribute to a monitoring or peacekeeping operation in Congo.

Zimbabwe came directly from the president, the sources said.

Another meeting is said to have taken place between the South African Secret Service and its Namibian counterparts in Namibia over the past two weeks.

Opening a door for Zimbabwe's withdrawal from the Congo became central to South Africa's strategy to bring an end to the crisis, and intense diplomacy picked up on the opportunity offered by the meetings of the intelligence officials.

On Thursday morning, at a meeting at Durban's International Convention Centre at which the 14 countries of the South African Development Community were rep-

resented, Mandela is said to have put forward his idea for the Mugabe-led meeting of belligerents.

The central role Mugabe played in the crisis was underlined by the fact that he represented Kabila's interests at the breakfast summit, which was also attended by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Organisation of African Unity Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim.

Once a face-saving formula was provided for Mugabe, the next problem was to sell a deal to Rwanda and Uganda, which both have troops in the Congo. But there was evidence even before Thursday morning's meeting that an agreement was in sight.

Annan said he and Salim had had a series of meetings with Ugandan and Rwandan officials. It is understood that gaining the support of Rwanda and Uganda for the peace deal hinged on getting Kabila to accept that he was faced with a rebellion that needed to be dealt with by negotiations, and that he could not simply claim to be the victim of an invasion.

If Kabila accepted this, Uganda and Rwanda would concede their troops were in the Congo and would negotiate a withdrawal.

Kabila, meanwhile, sensing that his allies were seriously considering ditching him, held a series of meetings with Angolan, Zimbabwean and Namibian officials.

To save face, Mugabe had to sell Rwanda and Uganda's line that there was a rebellion as well as an invasion in the Congo, and that a political solution was needed.

At a press conference on Thursday, Mugabe specifically referred to rebels in the Congo as being a distinct entity from Rwandan and Ugandan forces — an indication that the issue had been resolved.

Mugabe also dropped his backing of Kabila's calls for the immediate withdrawal of Rwandan and Ugandan forces.

"In the short term, what we would want to see is that those involved on the side of the rebels and those on the side of the government of Kabila meet to discuss the terms of peace," Mugabe said.

He added he would advise Kabila to implement a "political programme" embracing people of "all shades of opinion" which would lead to elections next June.

In return, South Africa conceded that Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia's deployment of troops in the Congo was justified.

"Our call for a cease-fire does not mean that we did not agree with the original reason foreign troops intervened in Congo," Mandela said this week, opening the door for a face-saving withdrawal by Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola.

RG 19198

SA ploy to force peace

Congo stance will smooth way for talks

FRANK ROBERTSON
POLITICAL EDITOR

South Africa will not send peacekeeping troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo - thus forcing Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe and the presidents of five other African countries militarily involved to seek a political solution at their Victoria Falls talks today.

The crucial decision was conveyed to the Cape Argus by a senior government official as the presidents of countries involved in the DRC conflict - Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and the DRC - began negotiations with representatives of the rebels.

Intelligence sources are convinced that none of the countries which have intervened militarily in the DRC can afford to keep their forces in the huge and restive country for long, and that no lasting peace can be

imposed by military force alone.

At the same time, rebels have made it clear there will be no peace if their backers, Uganda and Rwanda, are the only ones required to pull troops out of the DRC, and that Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia will have to do the same.

Although South Africa will give any negotiated settlement its fullest support, the warning that it will not become militarily involved leaves the combatants with no choice but to do what President Mandela has been urging from the outset - move quickly towards a negotiated peace.

The South African position puts President Mugabe, who championed the cause of military intervention, in a difficult predicament at Victoria Falls.

In effect, he is being forced to clean up the political mess he has created by leading the military charge - a fact he tacitly conceded yesterday when he said the main purpose of

the Victoria Falls meeting would be to find ways of withdrawing foreign troops.

A measure of his problem arose even before the negotiations got under way, when DRC rebels objected to his chairing the talks on the grounds that he was one of the combatants. They were apparently supported by Uganda and Rwanda.

In a last-minute compromise aimed at securing rebel participation, the six presidents finally agreed that Mr Mugabe - who initiated the meeting - should step down and Zambian President Frederick Chiluba should be asked to chair the meeting as a neutral broker.

Mr Chiluba reportedly agreed to do so last night.

South Africa has chosen to stay aloof from the Victoria Falls talks, but has made it clear that it remains eager to see the Congo conflict effectively resolved and is eager to see unity maintained in the Southern

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African Development Community.

South African officials today refused to criticise Mr Mugabe or to draw satisfaction from the dilemma he faces in trying to undo what he set in motion. And they insisted the country would give wholehearted support to Mr Mugabe and the other presidents in their quest for a negotiated solution.

But it has become increasingly clear since the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Durban last week that perceptions of Mr Mugabe having emerged triumphant from the DRC crisis were vastly misplaced.

So, too, were reports that Mr Mandela had changed his tune by saying at the NAM summit that he accepted the reasons for military intervention by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia.

Officials pointed out today that accepting the reasons put forward was merely accepting a historical reality and did not mean South Africa supported military intervention.



REUTERS
Peace bid: Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu and President Mugabe at the Victoria Falls talks

Rebels walk out on Congo peace deal

Ceasefire is in trouble, warns SA ^{ARG 8/9/98} (358)

HUGH ROBERTSON
POLITICAL EDITOR

The Democratic Republic of Congo ceasefire agreement signed at Victoria Falls may not be worth the paper it is written on.

The rebels, who are the cause of all the fighting and who were kept at arms-length throughout the summit at the insistence of DRC president Laurent Kabila, walked out of the meeting today and vowed to continue their struggle.

Rebel leader Bizima Karaha declared: "We are not bound by this agreement, because the only Congolese at the meeting was Kabila - the one who is killing his own people."

The agreement was signed by the presidents of the six countries involved in the fighting - the DRC, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Rwanda and Uganda - but in spite of a claim by Namibia's President Sam Nujoma that the rebels had agreed to it, the rebel delegation walked out before the document was signed.

In effect the agreement merely freezes the military standoff between forces fighting under the banners of the six governments.

Although the rebels said they had come to the talks ready to sign a ceasefire agreement, the closest they

got to being formally recognised was when Zambia's President Frederick Chiluba, who chaired the summit, and Organisation of African Unity Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim - who was an observer - briefed them.

Although South African officials welcomed the ceasefire, they cautioned against assumptions that it would necessarily lead to a lasting peace.

For that to happen, they said, there would have to be a far more comprehensive political agreement on steps towards real democracy in the DRC and a recognition by Mr Kabila of the rebels and their grievances.

He has steadfastly refused to have anything directly to do with them, let alone accept them as negotiating partners, and he and his senior ministers have rejected their complaints of nepotism and corruption, and their claim the Kabila administration has reneged on its promise of democracy.

Throughout yesterday's negotiations Mr Chiluba was forced to shuttle between the hotel room where the rebels were accommodated and Mr Kabila's conference headquarters, because the Congolese president refused even to meet the rebels, whose forces still hold key towns and

installations in the DRC.

The danger now exists of a ceasefire going into effect without the main combatants observing it, and South African officials believe there is a high risk that it could unravel.

If it does, a second ceasefire would be far more difficult to secure.

Even as the ceasefire agreement was being proclaimed at the talks late last night, Angolan, Zimbabwean and DRC government aircraft were reported to be bombing rebel strongholds over a wide front, including the DRC's eastern provinces, where the rebels have strong popular support.

Meanwhile the practical military and financial reasons for South Africa's decision not to send peacekeeping troops to the DRC as part of a settlement began to emerge today.

Senior intelligence sources estimate it is costing Zimbabwe between R5-million and R7-million a day to maintain about 3 000 troops in and around Kinshasa and to station six military aircraft at Kinshasa airport.

Even if these were an exaggerated estimate, they said, it would cost several times that sum to mount a credible peacekeeping operation throughout the huge and unsettled country - a cost which South Africa could not even consider without huge budget cutbacks at home.

Congo ceasefire on cards

(358) Star 8/9/98

Warring sides will swap prisoners, but South African officials caution there may be little more than a freeze in the present military standoff

By Andrew Meldrum
and Hugh Robertson
Victoria Falls

A breakthrough has been made in the Congo peace talks and a ceasefire and prisoner swap was expected to be signed this morning by the six nations and one rebel force engaged in the war. Agreement was reached late last night but the details

were only due to be announced at a press conference this morning.

South African officials closely monitoring the talks welcomed the agreement but warned that it would do little more than freeze the present military standoff.

They cautioned against assumptions that it could end the confrontation between the government of President Laurent

Kabila and rebels who still hold major towns and installations.

For that to happen, they said, there would have to be a far more comprehensive political agreement on steps towards real democracy in the DRC and a recognition by Kabila of the rebels and their grievances.

The Victoria Falls meeting of seven African presidents

plus the Congolese rebels went "extremely well", said Zambian President Frederick Chiluba, who is chairing the talks.

Details have not been disclosed but it is understood that a ceasefire in the conflict is the basis of the accord and also a swap of prisoners from both sides. This is especially important for Uganda and Rwanda as it is reported that large numbers of their soldiers have

been captured by Angolan forces in western Congo.

Zimbabwean sources had suggested that the imprisonment or entrapment of large numbers of Ugandan and Rwandan soldiers who were caught off guard far from home when Angola and Zimbabwe entered the war in the west, is what has given impetus to the agreement.

Zimbabwe President Robert

Mugabe emerged from the late night talks smiling broadly, first holding the hand of his ally Congolese President Laurent Kabila in jovial manner and then taking the hand of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni whose troops have

faced his in the war. The rebels of the RCD (Congo Democratic Rally) were not seen at the end of the talks but they

were to be at the signing this morning, amid indications that they have agreed to the terms. It is not certain yet whether the agreement will include the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Congo, although the South African officials suggested otherwise.

The removal of all troops may be included in the agreement subject to conditions. - Star Foreign Service

OAU summit to tackle Congo conflict

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Addis Ababa – Defence ministers from seven African nations were to meet today in the Ethiopian capital to discuss the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Organisation of African Unity said.

Ministers from Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Congo, Zambia, Rwanda and Uganda were to meet OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim "to hammer out details of a ceasefire and withdrawal of foreign troops from the Democratic Republic of Congo", OAU spokesperson Ibrahim Dagash said. A senior UN official was also expected to attend the Addis Ababa talks, he said. Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia have deployed troops, tanks and planes to prop up the Congolese government of Laurent Kabila. Rwanda and Uganda are backing the rebellion led by the Congo's ethnic Tutsi minority. The rebels have vowed to intensify their six-week struggle. – Reuters

Huge aid airlift to save Kinshasa

ARG 11/9/98
Capital's food supply cut
(255)

Kinshasa – International donors have lined up to join an airlift of food and medical supplies for the Congolese capital, but there is no sign of a truce in the civil war that has led to the emergency.

France announced yesterday it would fly food and medical aid to Kinshasa on Sunday and then help out with airlifts to other parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Co-operation Ministry in Paris made the announcement as Belgium landed the first emergency aid flight in Kinshasa, where nearly 6 million residents are cut off from port supplies by the civil war.

France said one of its aircraft would fly in 34 tons of food along with medical kits and electricity generators.

The plane would then be used to help maintain an air bridge between Kinshasa and the port of Matadi to the west.

The road and rail corridor, through which 75% of food and supplies enter Kinshasa from Matadi, remains closed because of the fighting.

Diplomats in Kinshasa said the Netherlands government was expected to join the airlift, sending in a DC-10 aircraft with medicines and water

treatment chemicals.

The International Committee of the Red Cross was to start flying in water treatment chemicals from Kenya today, the ICRC co-ordinator for emergencies, Jean-Marie Falzone, said.

Aid workers and diplomats this week sounded the alarm for an imminent catastrophe, saying stocks of food and water treatment chemicals in Kinshasa had been exhausted.

"With the aid coming in we are cautiously optimistic a catastrophe will be avoided," Kinshasa Governor Theophile Mbemba said, pointing to further aid from Italy.

He said with the return of electricity to Kinshasa on Tuesday after disruptions of nearly a month, a fuel crisis had also eased in the city.

Defence officials from the countries involved in the conflict met in Ethiopia yesterday, but there was no sign of progress towards an expected truce.

The rebels fighting Laurent Kabila's government, who were not invited to the talks at the Addis Ababa headquarters of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), scorned the regional meeting – and claimed fresh military gains. – Reuters

Kabila disgruntled after SADC talks

Port Louis, Mauritius - President Laurent Kabila today expressed his "extreme disappointment" at the outcome of a summit of southern Africa heads of state, devoted largely to the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict.

Leaders in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) issued a final statement saying Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia had acted legitimately when they sent in troops to back Kabila against rebels. They also labelled the long-stand-

ing leader of Angola's ex-rebel movement Unita, Jonas Savimbi, a "war criminal" responsible for bloodshed and deteriorating security in his own country, where he has been disavowed by former top aides after failing to disarm thousands of his troops. However, the SADC heads of state, who wound up their summit late yesterday, stopped short of backing Mr Kabila's contention that Rwanda and Uganda invaded the DRC when they sent troops to back the Tutsi-led rebels in the east.

"I came here for a condemnation of the aggression of a member state of the SADC," the DRC president said at the airport here, where the annual summit had been held.

"They should have made an unambiguous statement on the aggression, which wasn't the case".

He pushed aside the idea of a ceasefire.

The final statement from the summit called for talks "involving all parties".

■ There was heavy fighting today

between forces backing Mr Kabila and his foes for the rebel-held eastern town of Kalemie, independent sources said in Kinshasa.

"There are violent clashes at Kalemie and many dead," one of the sources said, but added that the town in the north of the mineral-rich south-eastern Katanga province had apparently not yet been wrested from the Tutsi-led rebels.

Pro-Kabila forces surrounded Kalemie last Friday after heavy fighting. - Sapa-AFP

AKU 15/9/98

(358)

Denmark threatens to cut off African aid

Michael Hartnack

(358)

PD 28/9/98

from Zimbabwe to Eritrea.

HARARE — Paul Nielson, Denmark's Minister for International Development, has issued a warning to African states that Copenhagen may cut off aid to all those embroiled in the Democratic Republic of Congo if fighting escalates there.

"The minister's point was simply that he was very worried, as is the Danish government, that as soon as the chips are down, then African governments forget to use the means of negotiation and go straight to war," diplomatic sources said yesterday.

They confirmed Nielson last week told a closed meeting here with high-level representatives of nine African states with whom Copenhagen has "development co-operation", that Denmark was "troubled" by the failure of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to avert violence in both Congo and Lesotho.

"I find it disappointing that African countries do not genuinely support the efforts of regional organisations such as SADC and the OAU," Nielson told representatives of economic ministries from nine states,

"Should the countries involved get into a face to face confrontation, my country will have no other option but to withdraw all the aid to the countries involved."

Business leaders were now afraid of investing in Africa because of perceived political instability and were moving to other parts of the world.

"If Danish development assistance is being somehow diverted to the military by warring parties, then this concern is real," Nielson said.

He reported "growing disbelief" by Danish taxpayers in the usefulness of spending money in a continent where killing and the destruction of people were common. Danish people often asked him if their government was contributing to the funding of wars.

Denmark, whose voters approved diversion of a fixed proportion of national income to assist poor nations, is the eighth largest source of donor funds in the world and 60% of this is devoted to Africa.

Zimbabwe's Deputy Finance Minister, Misheck Chinamasa, reportedly told Nielson Denmark had played a major role uplifting the poor.

Urgency of Congo situation hits home

SA is increasing its peace efforts as the Congo conflict escalates.

writes associate editor Stephen Laufer

(978) MD 26/10/98

LANGUAGE has suddenly become a significant feature of the Congo crisis. Unusually, diplomats and foreign policy makers, when describing the situation, have abandoned the trademark cautious, well-turned phrases in favour of bald warnings of a conflagration.

US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice seemed to initiate the change of tone last week when she said the situation was "potentially one of the most serious conflicts in the world today". At least eight African nations were "involved in a bitter war", she warned.

Then, with today's Lusaka summit of belligerents and new trials looming, comment from Pretoria and London further underlined the serious light in which the situation is being viewed.

Official statements and background briefings sought in the face of the latest military escalation to strike a balance between a sense of extreme urgency and continued confidence that a negotiated settlement is still achievable.

In a statement by Foreign Office Minister Baroness Symons, Britain expressed "growing concern". The effects of the crisis were being felt not only in Congo, but across the region.

However, she also said Britain was "working hard for peace". Together with the rest of the European Union (EU) and in the United Nations (UN) Security Council, "we are taking action to promote a peaceful solution".

Similarly, SA Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad attempted to marry deep concern at the unfolding situation with optimism about the longer-term possibility of negotiating a ceasefire and a new political dispensation in the region.

SA, he said, shared the concerns of countries in the region and internationally that the conflict "could explode into a major conventional war involving many of the continent's armies". SA would continue to work for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Congo, and for a politically inclusive solution to the many conflicts fuelling the war.

His response to a question as to when SA would acknowledge that peace efforts had failed, was striking for the logic and tenacity it

signalled. "How long," he asked, "have efforts been going on to find a peaceful solution to the Kosovo conflict? Or in the Middle East?"

The implication was clear: the hawk's may be dominating the headlines at the moment with their war talk and troop movements, but the efforts at a negotiated settlement spearheaded by President Nelson Mandela will continue because it is never too late to end armed conflict.

Mandela is due to travel to Namibia this week in an attempt to involve President Sam Nujoma in the search for peace within the Kabila alliance.

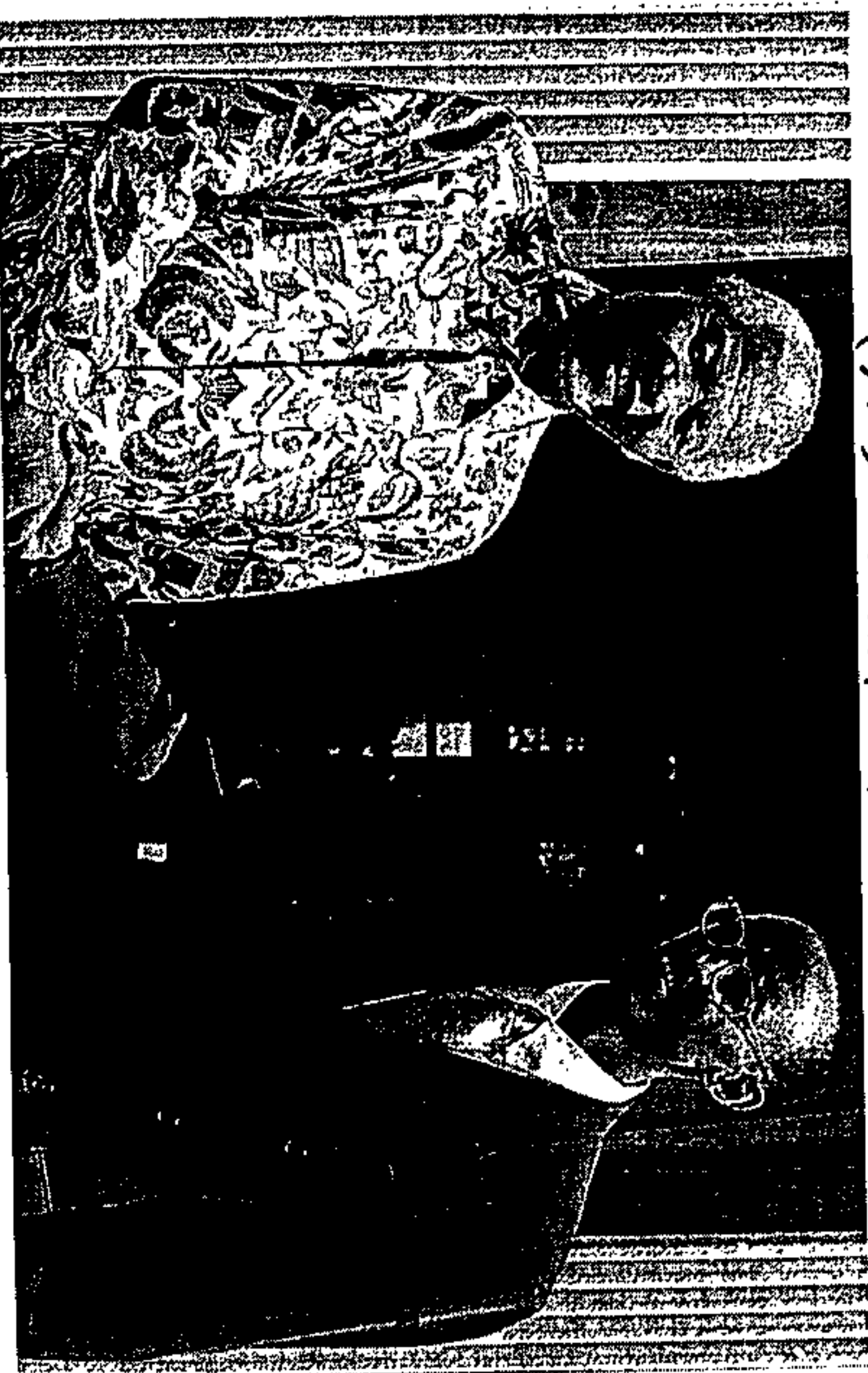
Talks with almost all of the parties to the conflict have continued behind the scenes since the start of the Ugandan and Rwandan-backed uprising in the eastern Congo in August, and there are strong suggestions that SA is intensifying these efforts.

The multiraced conflict centred on President Laurent Kabila's Democratic Republic of Congo is not new. Though it now involves armies from Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and, reportedly, Chad and Sudan on Kabila's side, and at least Uganda and Rwanda in support of the rebels opposing him, it has rarely amounted to much more than skirmishing.

Now, though, it appears to be on the brink of an escalation. Angola has reportedly committed heavily armed helicopter gunships to the eastern front, and Zimbabwe has dispatched another 2 000 troops in support of the 3 000 already there.

The gunships are significant because they can operate independently of the eastern airfields held by the rebels and unhampered by the current rainy season's mud. They are among the more effective weapons for use against guerrillas dispersed in hilly terrain.

Paradoxically, their deployment could also be a good sign for those seeking a peaceful end to the conflict. Along with the larger Zimbabwean commitment, it signals



SA President Nelson Mandela, left, with Rwandan leader Paul Kagame in Pretoria last week.

rising desperation to get the job over and done with on the part of the states backing Kabila.

Neither Zimbabwe — for financial reasons — nor Angola — because of its need to contain Jonas Savimbi's Unita militarily at home — can afford a long war in Congo. Already, the commitment has lasted longer than expected — a sign that they fundamentally misjudged Kabila's hold on the country and their joint ability to repel the rebels.

Kabila's inability to confront the military and political reality of his country is on a par with the myopia of his predecessor, Mobutu Sese Seko, in the last weeks of his dictatorship, those who know the current Congolese strongman say. Their hope is that Kabila, like

Mobutu, will be brought back to earth — and the realities of the necessity of negotiations with the rebels — by a military situation which is not improving, despite multinational backing.

Yet even if, as seems likely, Zimbabwe and Angola run out of financial or military steam and withdraw active support for Kabila reasonably soon, there are so many other contributing conflicts that peace is unlikely to descend on the Congo immediately.

Chad's involvement is reportedly being financed by Libya — a sign that Muammar Gaddafi intends taking a more active, though not necessarily constructive, role in African affairs. According to intelligence reports, Sudan is also involved militarily,

although the country denies it — another sign that Congo has become the battleground for a number of regional power plays related to other conflicts, such as Khartoum's with Uganda.

The greatest concern is perhaps generated by reports that the simmering war is providing cover in the eastern Congo for the Hutu militias, who were responsible for the genocide on up to 1-million Tutsis, to regroup. The Rwandans lost 16% of their population in the genocide. Their regional and security policies will for generations be determined by that trauma.

As with Uganda, it is difficult to convince Rwanda to withdraw from Congo without a cast-iron agreement on securing borders. The peace makers at today's

Lusaka summit face an uphill battle. They are unlikely to bring any laurels home soon.

They are not despairing, either. The situation is not entirely dissimilar to May last year, when the rebel Kabila was on the march from the east of a country still called Zaire.

Then he was supported by Uganda and Rwanda, both seeking borders secured by their man in Kinshasa. His opponent, Mobutu, refused to have any truck with him, and had assembled a military coalition including promises from 10 African countries to send troops to fight off the rebellion.

"My crack troops," Mobutu told anyone who would listen, "will finish off this rebellion." In the event, it was Mobutu who had to go.

Kabila may still find himself in a similar situation, particularly if SA can again convince those lining up to support a dictator that it is their and the continent's long-term interest to keep out or to withdraw.

It is harder this time, with foreign troops already on the ground, but the fact is that the only long-term solution to the crisis lies in a fundamental change of course in Congo and in the region.

If Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe and Angola's Jose Eduardo dos Santos do not know it yet, their inability to secure a decisive military victory will teach them soon.

It is perhaps a sign of the greater gravity of the situation this time that nobody is making any bones about the need for outside assistance.

The peace coalition, in which SA is prominent, has drawn in Belgium as the former colonial power, France for its influence in francophone Africa, the US because of its economic and political clout — particularly with Angola — and the EU and the UN, to do what they can to help reduce the temperature and encourage the belligerents towards the negotiating table.

Whether things are going in the right direction yet will become evident today when it is known whether Kabila or his ministers are in Lusaka for the talks.

Zimbabwean President Frederick Chiluba has been given the task of getting Kabila to the summit, despite his refusal so far to sit down with the rebels.

Locals and foreigners edgy in Congo Republic

Republic of the Congo leader Denis Sassou Nguesso celebrated his first anniversary in power last week but deep fault lines are beginning to show, writes Helen Vesperini in Brazzaville

BD 29/10/98 (358)

ONE year after his victory in the civil war in the Congo Republic, Denis Sassou Nguesso's hold on power appears to be crumbling. Tension is growing in the former French colony across the river from Laurent Kabila's Democratic Republic of Congo.

Twelve months after Sassou's Angolan allies took the port of Pointe Noire, making Sassou the victor in Congo's civil war, rebel activity has put the country's railway line out of action, caused the French embassy to update its evacuation plan and prompted international organisations and nongovernmental organisations to scale their activities back to a strict minimum.

Sassou, who ousted his arch rival, the former president Pascal Lissouba, after more than four months of fighting last year, appeared to command a lot of popular support when he returned to power. He had already been president for more than 13 years prior to Lissouba's term in office.

He preached reconciliation, disarmament, reconstruction of the shattered economy and development of sectors other than petroleum, recruiting popular singers to put the message across.

A former Marxist, he was at pains to emphasise he would continue with his predecessor's liberal economic policy. He called on the Congolese people to emulate Uganda's success in repairing its economy after years of civil war.

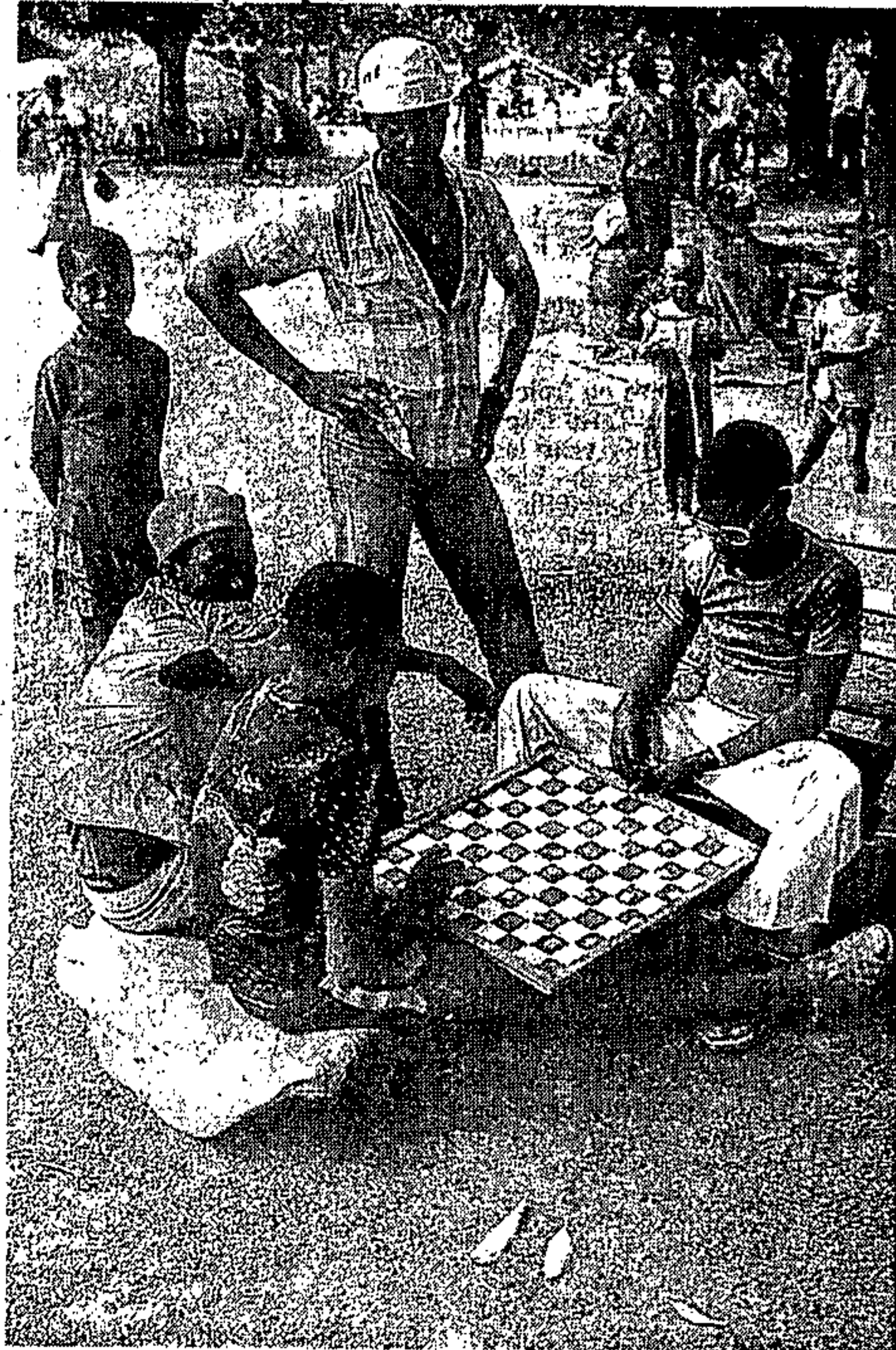
The French community, which dominates business in Congo and which fled at the beginning of the war, pledged massively to return. Companies which did come back in were given free radio advertising. Ambitious disarmament drives were carried out, insulting terms for the country's various ethnic groups were banned. A peace forum was staged with great pomp and ceremony in the capital Brazzaville.

The Angolan troops stationed throughout the south of the country were at first welcomed by the Congolese. They were referred to as the "Amigo" because of their habit of hailing the local population in the same terms.

But there were worrying signs as well. Sassou's government was made up predominantly of people from his own region — the north — or of long-time Sassou faithfuls. At the peace forum, "extremists", that is those who had supported Sassou's opponents Lissouba and his last prime minister Bernard Kolelas in the war, were forbidden to take part.

Some of the Angolan troops were withdrawn. The remainder watched their pay arrive late or not at all and took to terrorising the local population by thieving, looting and raping.

Young people from regions south of Brazzaville, traditionally loyal to Kolelas and Lissouba, took up arms against the Angolans in several localities. On one occasion the rebels seized a hydro-electric



Sassou has done little to improve the lot of his people

dam, depriving the south of the country of power and water for a month. Several times they cut the railway line linking Brazzaville to Pointe Noire, causing petrol shortages in the capital and pushing up the prices of basic foodstuffs.

An increasing number of United Nations agencies and nongovernmental organisations are reporting that their staff have been killed, threatened or robbed at gunpoint in the capital or within a 25km radius.

"Tension is running very high here in the capital," said one expatriate aid worker whose organisation has cut back activities to a strict minimum. "You can be stopped and searched six times in the space of 1km."

In southern Brazzaville, a part of town traditionally loyal to Kolelas, shots ring out in the deserted streets in the evening. Some organisations have established a self-imposed curfew and avoid certain parts of town after 8pm.

There is a long tradition of violence in Congo, but until very recently it has been directed either at political leaders — most Congolese political leaders since independence have come to a bloody end in mysterious circumstances

— or at Congolese from a different ethnic group.

This is the first time in living memory that expatriates have been targeted. Three French nationals have been killed in three months. In the most recent killing late last month, the victim had his head blown off while he slept at home in Brazzaville.

The new trend can perhaps be imputed to an anti-French feeling that crystallised after the war. A new, bitter style of articles in local newspapers, notably in the satirical weekly *La Rue Meurt*, accused French interests of being present in Congo for what they could plunder and the Congolese of allowing themselves to be walked over.

Reports that France's largest oil company Elf Aquitaine SA — also the largest operator in Congo — bankrolled both sides in the war did nothing to improve sentiment. Elf has repeatedly denied any involvement as has the French government, but a former Elf chairman, Loïc Le Floch-Prigent, in a written statement during a recent legal investigation, revealed that Elf's policy in neighbouring Angola was to prolong the civil war in that country for as long as possible.

REST OF AFRICA

Europe withholds aid for Congo

Francois Misser

BRUSSELS — Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila has returned home empty-handed after a series of frosty meetings with business, political and religious leaders in Europe.

The trip was described as a diplomatic failure by most newspapers, which reported that Kabila had not been able to secure the aid he was looking for. All European heads of state he met said they would help Congo financially only when peace was restored, and he was told to begin talks with the Congolese rebels and the opposition in Kinshasa.

Meetings between Kabila and the private sector went particularly badly. In Paris, Kabila arrived late at nearly all his appointments and simply failed to attend a meeting with the influential French National Board of Entrepreneurs.

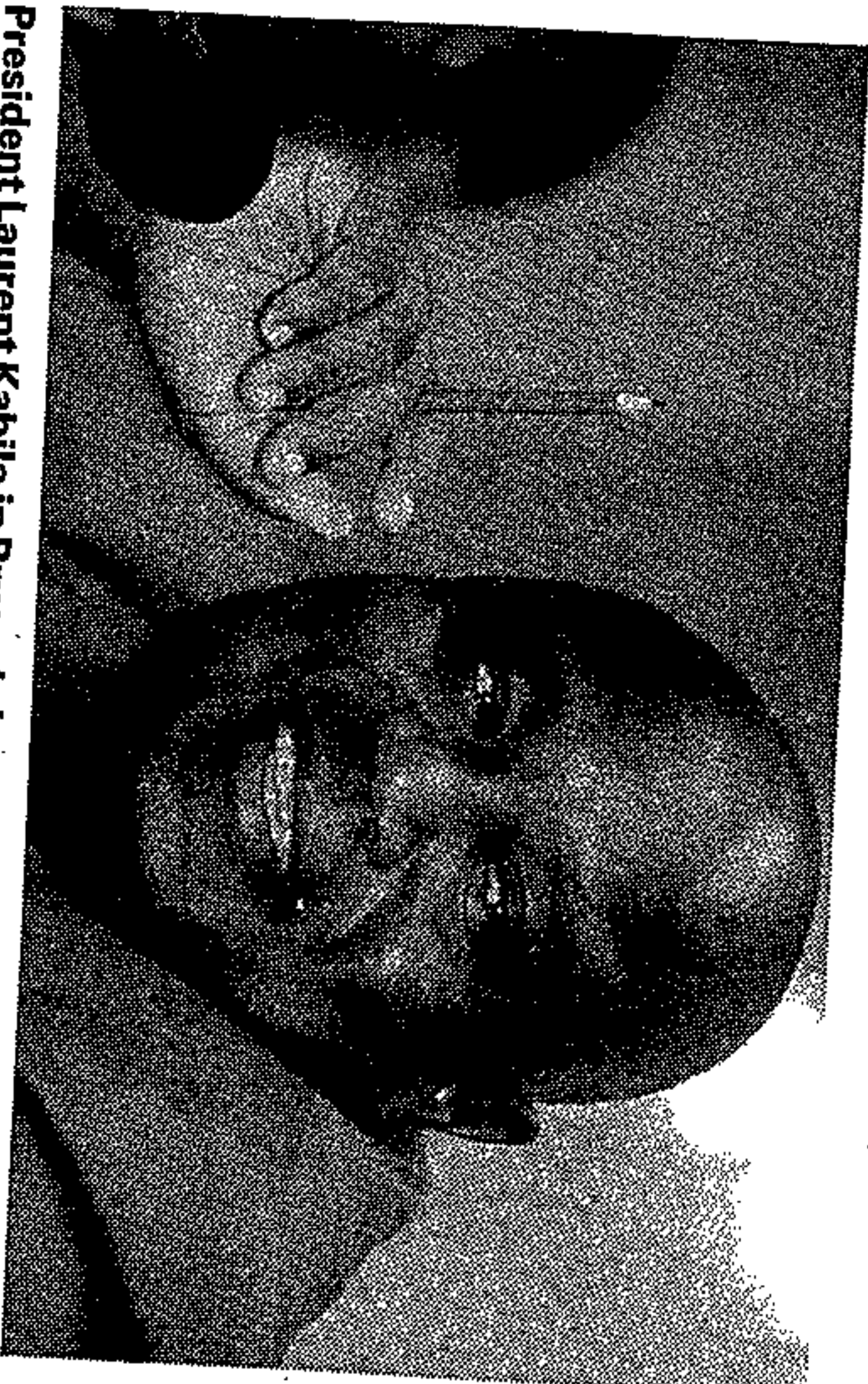
Observers speculated that Kabila had feared being lectured by

Kabila urged to deal directly with rebels in bid to achieve peace

the board after he was reprimanded in Brussels by the Belgian Federation of Entreprises. "If the investors who are already in the country don't get better treatment, there is no point in expecting to attract others," said a communiqué from the Belgian Federation last week.

On the diplomatic front, Kabila met the Pope, the Italian and French presidents, the king of Belgium, the Belgian prime minister and European Development commissioner.

These meetings may have enabled Kabila to show the Congolese and the rebels that he had obtained a measure of official recognition, but there were many counterproductive moments. King Albert II of Belgium appeared unusually severe when meeting Kabila, while French President Jacques Chirac, who normally



President Laurent Kabila in Brussels last week.

gives African statesmen warm hugs, gave him a brief handshake. The complaints filed by human

rights organisations against Kabila for encouraging acts of genocide — particularly his public incite-

Picture: AP

ment against the Tutsis — were highlighted again in the French and Belgian press. Kabila aggravated his case at a rally with the Congolese community in Brussels where he called the Tutsis "slave traders". He also called Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame "a bloodthirsty sadist", and claimed President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda had sent commandos of HIV-positive soldiers to his country with the aim of infecting Congolese women with the AIDS virus.

However, Kabila failed to get his respective hosts to condemn the Ugandan and Rwandan leaders whom he described as "invaders".

Sapa-AP reports that a new wave of refugees have crossed Lake Tanganyika into Tanzania, fleeing fighting in Congo. A United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees spokesman said yesterday several hundred refugees had been arriving each day in port villages in Tanzania's Rukwa region since mid-November.

Zairean opposition threatens a strike

KINSHASA — Zaire's leading opposition parties have threatened a national strike unless President Mobutu Sese Seko revokes his nomination of a maverick as prime minister. ³⁵⁹ ~~29/11/91~~

Kapita Shabangi, a spokesman for the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) party, told a news conference on Wednesday night that Mobutu had 48 hours to remove Nguza Karl-I-Bond.

Should Mobutu refuse, the opposition Sacred Union coalition would call on civil servants, students, the army and the people to go on strike to end what he called "the last dictatorship in Africa".

Mobutu named Nguza to the premiership on Monday to end a government deadlock in the vast central African country which has been on the brink of chaos since the September riots in which 250 people died.

Nguza's Union of Independent Federalists and Republicans (UFR) party was expelled from the opposition alliance last week after he broke ranks by agreeing to accept the premiership.

Nguza is expected to name a cabinet soon.

Zaire's opposition has threatened to break off relations with Mobutu over the naming of Nguza as the country's fifth prime minister this year and said it violated accords signed in September requiring that the premier be a Sacred Union member.

It said Mobutu had to respect his commitments and permit the country's stormy national conference on democratic change, currently suspended due to procedural wrangling, to make constitutional reforms. — Sapa-Reuter.

Taiwanese oil explorers withdraw from Namibia

WINDHOEK — The Taiwanese Overseas Petroleum Investment Corporation (Opic) is to withdraw from Namibia after failing to find oil in the Etosha Basin, Namibia's ministry of mines and energy said yesterday. ^{31029 29/11/91}

"Petroleum exploration is a high risk business which operates in a highly specialised technological and scientific environment," the ministry said in a statement.

Opic, which had a lease agreement with the company Etosha Petroleum, completed a 700m exploration well in the Etosha Basin in October.

"Although the well was successfully completed to target depth, potential for oil and gas in this structure was absent," the statement said.

It added that much of the Etosha Basin remained unexplored and there was little relationship between the geology and, therefore, the potential for hydrocarbons indicating oil in this area and Namibia's offshore area.

The Namibian government has begun negotiations with oil companies that applied for petroleum exploration rights during the first bidding

round which closed last month.

Opic GM David Chen said his company had been in Namibia since 1989 and spent about R30m in its search for oil in the 250 000km² concession area.

Opic reprocessed old data supplied by Etosha Petroleum as well as conducting its own seismic and aeromagnetic surveys in this first bid to find oil in an independent Namibia.

Contributed

The latest exploration well was the fifth to be drilled in the concession since the late 1960s.

"We were looking for oil and found nothing," Chen said.

The ministry said Opic had contributed extensively to the geological knowledge of the area during its exploration.

"The data will be of considerable benefit to further evaluation of the Etosha Basin which, to date, has only been seriously explored in its southwestern part," the statement said.

It said SA had drilled more than 20 boreholes on its western shelf, with limited success. — Sapa.

Zaire economy in chaos

CP News 6/10/91
AN exodus of foreigners from strife-torn Zaire has robbed the country's copper mines of vital skills, slashing output by more than half.

With minerals earning 85 percent of export income, the economic aftermath is expected to add to President Mobutu Sese Seko's political woes.

Mines at Kolwezi in the copper-rich southern Shaba province have closed altogether as a result of the flight of expatriates, said technicians employed at government mines in neighboring Zambia.

Outflow of skills

Most Belgian, French, Portuguese and Lebanese families who lived in Kolwezi and depended on the mines fled after rioting and looting last week.

The violence swept many of Zaire's cities and towns after a mutiny by unpaid paratroopers in Kinshasa on Monday and Tuesday last week.

CP News 6/10/91
Some 1,750 Belgian and French troops flown into Zaire have restored order and evacuated most foreigners.

Mobutu, meanwhile, has been forced by political opponents to ease his iron grip on the nation and take steps towards multiparty democracy.

The disruption of the copper mines, all nationalised by Mobutu in the 1960s, represents a further blow to Zaire's frail economy.

The mines produced 500,000 tons of copper annually, six percent of world output.

"All the mines and metallurgical operations have slowed down to less than 50 percent of capacity," said Patrick Kippea, a French mining engineer.

Kippea is one of over 600 mining technicians who abandoned their jobs and sought sanctuary in Zambia until permanent peace is restored in Zaire.

The Frenchman arrived in a Belgian Air Force plane on Sunday. Thousands of other foreigners fled to Europe, Burundi, Congo, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

CP News 6/10/91
Force plane on Sunday. Thousands of other foreigners fled to Europe, Burundi, Congo, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

George Loix, another engineer, said mines at Kolwezi where he was employed had shut down.

Belgian and French paratroopers were guarding the mines in the Shaba province against looters who attacked foreigners' homes and businesses, Loix said.

Kippea said only local Zairean workers were going underground as expatriates remained on the surface to protect their property.

Most foreigners, however, had been evacuated, he said.

Gecamines, the state mining conglomerate, has threatened to cancel contracts of the evacuees while promising fat bonuses for those who stay, Kippea said.

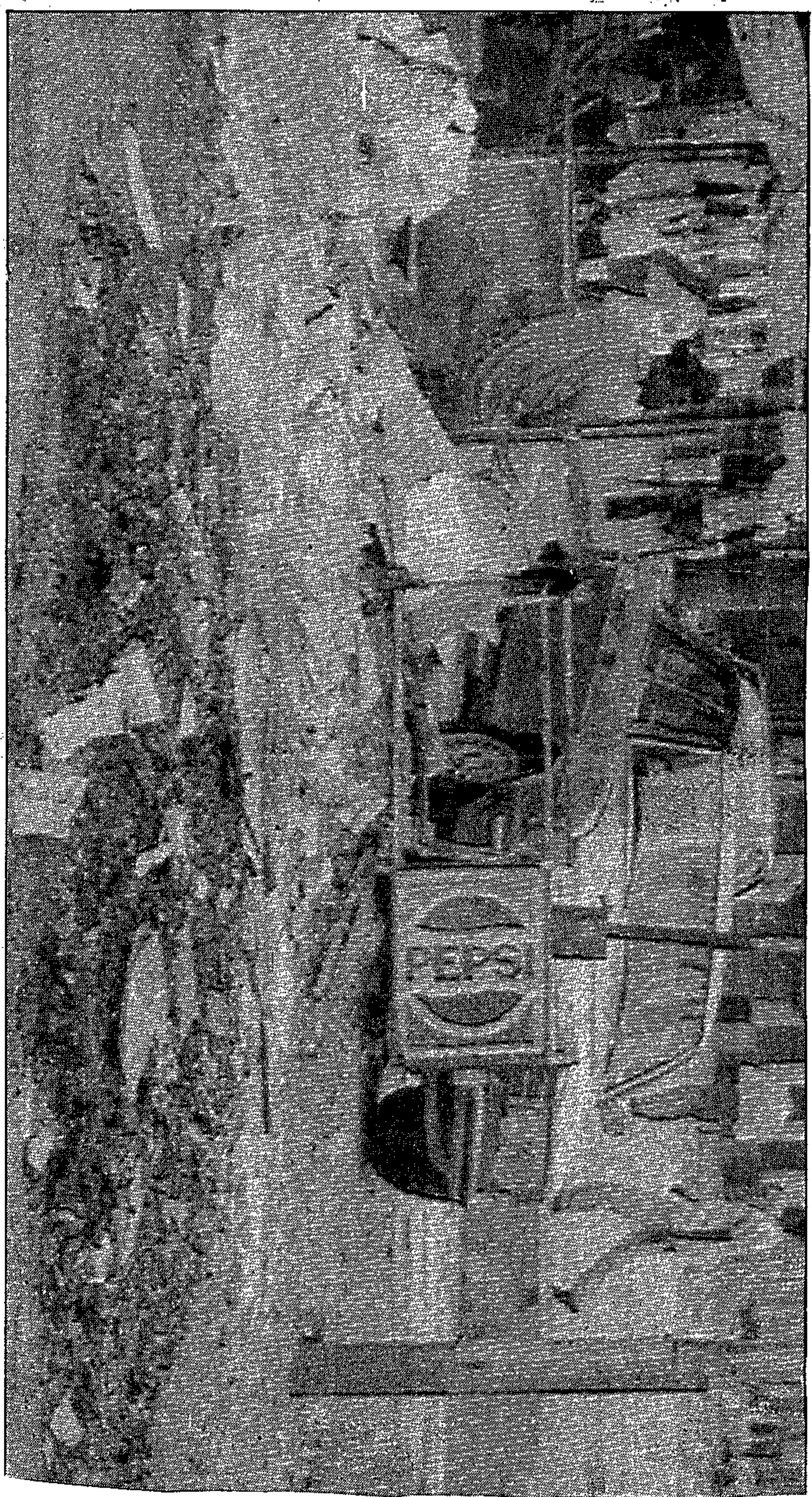
Shaba province, from where most copper is extracted, has often been convulsed by violence.

Previous unrest

The latest evacuees said previous accounts of murder, maiming, rape and looting persuaded them to get out while they could.

A Western diplomat in Lusaka, the Zambian capital, said a convoy of some 450 vehicles was expected to bring more foreigners there in the next few days.

Many expatriates like Kippea left with only the clothes they wore as most of their money and possessions were looted.



SORRY SIGHT . . . The centre of Kinshasa, with its shops wrecked and the streets deep in rubbish left by looters. There is hardly any food.

FW's safari is postponed



SESE SEKO

PRESIDENT FW de Klerk's African summit in Zaire tomorrow - which was "postponed" yesterday - might not take place at all, senior Government sources conceded last night.

They admitted that the meeting might have been a mistake and that it would probably not have achieved much.

They felt that a "rebel" meeting - held despite opposition from the African National Congress and the Organisation of African Unity - would have been un-

necessarily divisive at a time when the Government was seeking reconciliation with the ANC and Africa.

"We don't want to force ourselves on anyone and get people up in arms," the source said.

"We are not seeking confrontation with the ANC."

These sentiments were hinted at by De Klerk in his announcement yesterday that Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko - the host - had asked for the meeting to be postponed until a later date.

Sowetan Correspondent.

23/2/90
Sowetan

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FW's safari is postponed



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Sowetan Correspondent.

20/11/90
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Black miners flock back to Kolwezi

STAR 26/5/78

Don Knowler
The Star's Africa
News Service

KOLWEZI.— Hundreds of African workers have returned to the rich copper mines around Kolwezi as a handful of white mine executives try to draw up emergency plans to get production going again.

But one of the executives — who are flown here daily by jet from Lubumbashi — admitted

yesterday the key to reopening the mines lay in persuading essential white technicians and managerial staff to return.

The executives of the state-owned Gecamines Combine, which also has Belgian interests, toured Kolwezi's complex of mines yesterday and they reported that the damage caused by Katangese rebels had not been as extensive as at first feared.

The black miners mar-

ched to a central miners administrative building earlier this week wearing their helmets and asked to be allowed to return to work.

CRIPPLED

Three white miners also returned to work and one, Mr Mario la Fatu, an Italian engineer, said he would stay on as long as the French Foreign Legionnaires, who recaptured the town on Friday, remained to offer

protection.

The Kolwezi mines account for between 33 and 40 percent of Zaire's foreign exchange earnings through the production of copper, zinc, cobalt, and manganese, and Zaire's troubled economy will be crippled unless they reopen quickly.

The French now appear to have Kolwezi well under control after skirmishes earlier in the week with rebels in central areas, but two legion-

naires were killed when the French mounted a search-and-destroy mission 15 km west of Kolwezi on Tuesday. Six rebels were killed in the operation.

PANICKING

The legionnaires believe there are considerable numbers of rebels or sympathisers around Kolwezi and they are still carrying out searches in the black township of Manika.

RICHARD BREEZE reported from PARIS that

the French Defence Ministry announced yesterday that the legionnaires were pulling out of Kolwezi and moving to Lubumbashi (formerly Elisabethville) to reassure foreigners panicking in the provincial capital.

In a Press conference in Paris yesterday Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko disclosed that foreigners had inundated diplomatic missions in Lubumbashi with demands for repatri-

Striking public servants close Zaire's central bank

Kinshasa - About 2 000 employees of Zaire's Central Bank went on strike yesterday, demanding end-of-year bonuses and restoration of transport allowances.

Employees picketed the bank, forcing it to close for the day. Troops guarded the building behind a large iron fence as bank staff shouted their demands.

"It is us who print the nation's money, but at the end of the month we don't see any of it. They treat us like pigs," said a printer.

His pay cheque, equivalent to \$50 a month, often went unhonoured, he said.

A Bank of Zaire official said the bank had in principle agreed to pay the bonus. "Only we have a problem of liquidity. We had agreed to give them the bonus at a later stage but the staff are impatient."

The bank's staff used to be among Zaire's best-paid public servants. In 1993, annual inflation hit 8 000%. - Reuters

(359)

Star 21/12/96

Dictators not allowed in Congo, says trade union

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 Ebert 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

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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 in-

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tention 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.

Low pay angers Kabila's workers

KINSHASA — An army of neglected public servants got their first pay packet in months yesterday, but found their new leader President Laurent Kabila's effort to restore order in the Republic of Congo unimpressive.

"In other countries people are happy with pay day but here it is a day of sadness," post office employee Pelenge Samba said as he picked up a month's salary — a wad of notes enough to make him a millionaire in "new zaires" but worth only around \$20.

If Kabila, who ousted veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko last month, had hoped for gratitude he will be disappointed. Numerous disgruntled workers complained as they took their money.

"This money will not help anything — it is like being given just a tip," grumbled another postal worker, Victor Boa.

Hundreds of an estimated 600 000 state employees queued up at banks in the centre of the capital, Kinshasa, to collect the

pay, originally announced for Wednesday but delayed a day.

Kabila's government said it would pay one month's salary to employees, but no back pay — at least for now — and no wage rise because the country is bankrupt.

Finance Minister Mwapanga Mwana Nanga said the wage bill — about \$20m — would be found from meagre government revenues. The "new zaires", at about 110 000/\$1, would be replaced by the Congolese franc later this year, he said.

In a worrying sign for Kabila, soldiers from his own army, angered by their own pay dispute, fired off rounds in the jungle city of Kisangani in the east this week, residents and local church radio reported.

They started shooting in the city centre after some were paid in dollars, others in local zaires and some not at all, residents said.

Public servants, who earn between 1-million and 4-million "new zaires" a month, are some of

the worst paid people in a country where an estimated 70% have no job at all.

"It is an insignificant salary but we have no choice. With \$18 I cannot make ends meet," foreign ministry worker Jean-Marie Dambota said.

Most workers like him gave up relying on the previous crumbling state, and put their real efforts into second jobs to scrape a living. Many rely on handouts or even their wives' prostitution to earn the money to raise a family.

Public servants would have to start working properly and those who did not would be laid off en masse as part of efforts to restore order to a sector full of "fictitious workers", Mwapanga said.

Decades of economic indiscipline by the Mobutu government ruined what could have been one of Africa's richest states. Mobutu is alleged to have stashed away billions of dollars, and to have enriched his followers at the population's expense. — Reuter.

Zaire - General
1999

NATIONAL

Foreign currency ban stumps Congo trade

Claire Pickard-Cambridge

A BAN on the use of foreign currency in the Democratic Republic of Congo has brought faltering trade to a standstill and is one of several recent measures bedeviling the climate for SA business.

The ban is a desperate strategy by the Congo government to secure foreign currency to pay for the war against Congolese rebels and takes no account of economic realities, say SA and local businessmen. A lack of faith in the Congolese franc — which has devalued fourfold against the dollar since its launch last year — means almost 90% of transactions are normally in foreign currency.

The decree, which has already resulted in sweeping arrests, makes the business climate even less conducive to investors. However, they believe the ban cannot be enforced in the long run because it will fuel inflation and merely force dollar transactions underground. It has already weakened confidence in the local currency.

The move may lead to rapid inflation as there is not enough local currency

"Trade has come to a standstill because nobody knows how to price their goods, and if they sell goods they will land up with Congolese francs which they cannot get rid of," said one SA businessman.

The decree, signed on January 8, aims to force dollars out of the informal economy into the hands of the commercial banks and ultimately the central bank. Transgressors face up to five years in jail or a fine of up to 50 000 Congolese francs.

An SA source said the ban's immediate effect on his Congolese operation would be to upset the salaries of employees, who were paid in dollars. "If their salaries are converted into Congolese francs at the official exchange rate, rather than the realistic black market rate, they will receive half what they used to get."

"This means the ruling will have a marked social impact on employees and will raise business costs significantly. All

our suppliers will have to build their costs into a Congolese franc quote to ensure it reflects its true value in dollar terms."

He also warned there was not enough local currency to meet requirements.

Tony Wright, Stanbic's deputy MD of the Africa banking group, said the initial effect could be spiralling inflation because there was insufficient local currency. "Cheques are almost worthless and the Congolese franc is devaluing so fast that more and more notes will be needed."

Wright said the ban would not have a serious effect on Stanbic's Kinshasa branch, a small operation focusing on financing imports and exports. But the ban could generate many problems depending on the sector in which a firm operated.

Another source said mining companies still expected to keep some export proceeds in dollar accounts in Congo. "However, the problem is if you want to use the

money in the country you will have to convert it to Congolese francs. It is also feared that if government grows more desperate for dollars to pay its external bills it will consider seizing such dollar accounts."

In a related move, the government has signed a decree establishing a company called Bourse Congolaise des Matieres Precieuses, through which all precious minerals must be sold. The decree aims to force sellers — the large informal diamond market in particular — to go to the "bourse" which pays in Congolese francs.

"Although the bourse purports to be under private control with oversight by government, it is an attempt to centralise trade and increase government's ability to secure foreign currency," said an SA source. Government's bid to corner foreign currency was likely to further encourage smuggling, he warned.

However, the bourse did not appear to

pose an immediate threat to foreign mining operations because war and policy uncertainty had largely prevented development.

Foreign mining companies in Congo include Anglo American, American Mineral Fields, Iscor, and Toronto-listed Tenke Mining. The government cancelled its agreement with Toronto-listed Banro Resources last year and the dispute is the subject of international arbitration. It is rumoured that the government plans to cancel a cellphone contract it awarded to foreign-based Congolese Wireless Network.

Foreign businessmen are dismayed by the arrest last week of respected Central Bank governor Jean-Claude Masangu Mulongo, who they see as the "voice of reason" in official circles. His opposition to the currency ban is believed to be the reason for his detention.

Former president Mobutu Sese Seko tried several times to ban foreign currency transactions and to force mineral trade through government. His failure is a lesson the new government still has not learnt.

Kabila regime arrests six opponents

KINSHASA — Six political opponents of President Laurent Kabila have been arrested in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, according to a local human rights organisation.

Voix des sans voix (Voice of the Voiceless) said that the six were detained on Saturday at the headquarters of the National Intelligence Agency after being summoned there by Ngoie Kabongo, its administrative director. There has been no official statement on the arrests.

Voix des sans voix said on Monday that one of the men, Boboliko Lokonga of the Social Democratic Christian Party, (PDSC), had been released the same day but the others were still in detention.

The others are Adrian Phongo and Joseph Mukendi of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, Cleophas Kamitatu of the PDSC, Bofassa Djema of the Popular Movement of the Revolution and Kisimba Ngoy of the Nationalist Federalist Party. — Reuter.

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BD 20/1/99

Congo tightens control over diamonds, gold trade

DD 26/1/99 (358)

KINSHASA — The Democratic Republic of the Congo is moving to cash in on its gold and diamond exports which last year reached their highest level since 1991, according to mines ministry figures.

The government recently set up a commodity exchange for precious minerals to centralise gold and diamond transactions and increase the revenue which the state obtains from a sector which, the ministry says, contributes far less than it should to its coffers.

Last year, diamond exports topped 25-million carats for the first time since 1991, according to statistics from the Centre National d'Expetise (CNE), a specialised service of the mines ministry that grades precious minerals.

The Congo exported slightly more than 25,87-million carats of diamonds, worth about \$450,8m, last year, up from 21,7-million carats valued about \$386,2m in 1997, according to the CNE.

Miba (Miniere de Bakwange), a Belgian-Congolese mining company in the southern town of Mbuji-Mayi, accounted for slightly more than a quarter of the exported diamonds. The rest came from the 45 licensed buyers that purchase the precious stones from local miners.

The roughly 6,6-million carats Miba exported still fell below its profitability benchmark of seven million carats a year. Ten years ago, Miba produced 10-million carats. Gold exports shot up from just under 394 000kg in 1997 to more than 1,1-million kilogram worth about \$9,5m last year. Production of copper, whose production in Congo has plunged in recent years, gold and diamonds have accounted for of the bulk of the foreign exchange circulating in the Central African nation.

On paper, they generally bring in

\$300m to \$400m a year, but according to the ministry, barely 6% of this amount reaches the state treasury.

Much of the Congo's gold and diamonds are smuggled to neighbouring nations and, according to the mining authorities here, the amounts declared to the CNE generally represent less than half the precious minerals exported.

"It is unacceptable that in 1997, official imports of Congolese diamonds registered on foreign stock exchanges amounted to \$1,2bn in Anvers (Belgium) and \$246m in SA, whereas CNE statistics only registered exports worth \$350m," said Mines Minister Frederic Kibassa Maliba.

To limit the damage, the government has set up a new precious minerals exchange to group all licensed gold and diamond traders in a central site in Kinshasa where their operations can be monitored. The trading companies will now have to conduct all their transactions at the BCMP. "Thus, once and for all, the Congolese state will have control over its real diamond and gold production, which is often underestimated because the operations of many trading companies are dispersed," said an official memorandum justifying the creation of the exchange.

To join the exchange, gold and diamond traders have to lodge \$3m in an account in Switzerland. "If we assume that 40 companies will be members of the BCMP, it will have \$120M in its account, which it will make available to the Central Bank," the memorandum explained.

However, an expert at the Central Bank of Congo said the timing of the mineral exchange's creation was wrong. He said the government needed to take charge of the marketing of these precious commodities. — Sapa-IPS.

REST OF AFRICA

Congo corners diamond spoils

BD 27/1/99 (358)

Need for foreign currency behind expatriate ban

Claire Pickard-Cambridge
and Francois Misser

THE Democratic Republic of Congo's decision to ban foreigners from its diamond trade appears to be largely motivated by government's desire to centralise control of products earning foreign currency.

All expatriates with licences to buy diamonds were ordered to leave the mining areas on January 15 by Mining Minister Frederic Kibassa Maliba and all diamond buying permits were cancelled. Only nationals may reapply for licences and the new licence holders will have to resell diamonds through a centralised Bourse for Precious Minerals which will pay intermediate prices only in Congolese francs.

Bourse sales on the international market would give government access to the foreign currency it needs to finance its civil war against the rebels. Other aims are to cut down smuggling — about 50% of Congo's diamonds are thought to be sold illegally; and the promotion of indigenisation in the industry, although there are concerns about the way new licences will be allocated.

As one analyst said: "Indigenisation or black empowerment could be positive if the buying licences are granted in a transparent manner. However, there are fears the process lends itself to corruption and the government could use the shake-up to obtain stakes in the winning companies."

Only bigger local companies are likely to be able to afford buying licences because membership of the bourse is obtained at a \$3m fee. This means many buyers may prefer to pay slightly more for their diamonds in Antwerp to avoid the hefty downpayment.

De Beers spokesman Andy Lamont said recently the ban would have "huge implications for De Beers' business in the Congo and we are seeking clarification in our discussions with the authorities. It is

an extremely complex situation, but our aim is to play a constructive role in the economies in which we operate".

De Beers has one buying office in Kinshasa, operating as its subsidiary Sedico. "The subject of our discussions with the Congo government will be to see whether Sedico will be able to continue operating," said Lamont.

He said the state diamond mining operation, Miba, produced about 6.5-million carats a year worth \$60m-\$70m.

"We had a buying contract with Miba which became the subject of force majeure in June 1997 when the allies backing Laurent Kabila overran the area. Since then Miba sales have been offered to the major dealers on a tender basis. De Beers has bought the bulk of the diamonds offered at tender."

Analysts say the centralised bourse and the accompanying ban on foreign currency transactions is unlikely to be enforceable in a dollarised economy — 90% of transactions are done with foreign currency — and where smuggling is already rife. "Former president Mobutu sese Seko tried to enforce similar bans and always failed," said one.

While many predict that the centralised bourse will fail soon, the fact remains that internal marketing arrangements will have little effect on the international market. Congo represents about 4% of the diamond supply — or 14-million carats a year — and while production is important, it is not critical to the world market. "Congo's diamonds still have to get to Antwerp or India to be cut and nobody will buy diamonds if they are overpriced," said one observer.

Congo is the fifth biggest producer in the world, estimated to earn between \$600m and \$700m a year. Botswana is the biggest producer with 28% of world supply, or about \$2bn a year, followed by Russia at about \$1.3bn and SA at \$1bn.

The rot comes out of the woodwork in the Congo

Corruption reaches deep in the war-torn state, writes **Francois Misser** in Brussels

BD 24/3/99

(358)

THE man flashes his identity card from the Congolese president's office, which ironically bears the number 000007. Unlike James Bond, he does not have a licence to kill but his revelations could deliver a fatal blow to what may remain of Democratic Republic of Congo leader Laurent Kabila's financial credibility.

His name is Michel Rudatenguha. He was the president's director general for economy and finances for more than a year after Kabila came to power until the August 1998 anti-Tutsi pogroms in Kinshasa.

After hiding for five months in an embassy there, Rudatenguha, a Congolese Tutsi, has re-emerged in Belgium as an exile and is now willing to spill the beans.

A lack of transparency characterises the management of Congolese state properties.

For instance, the petroleum products distribution company, Sonangol-Congo, owned on a 50-50% basis by the Congo government and by Angola's parastatal Sonangol, has no legal existence, claims Rudatenguha. It does not have a staff of its own and it is not registered. Unlike public-owned corporations or partially state-owned ones, Sonangol-Congo does not have an account at the central bank.

Yet public administrations are instructed to buy petroleum products from this company in preference to other sources.

The only person who knows what happens to the profits — which do not appear in the treasury accounts — is its CEO, Pierre-Victor M'Poyo, the minister of state to the presidency in the outgoing government, who has just been reappointed oil minister, and is Kabila's right hand man in most financial deals.

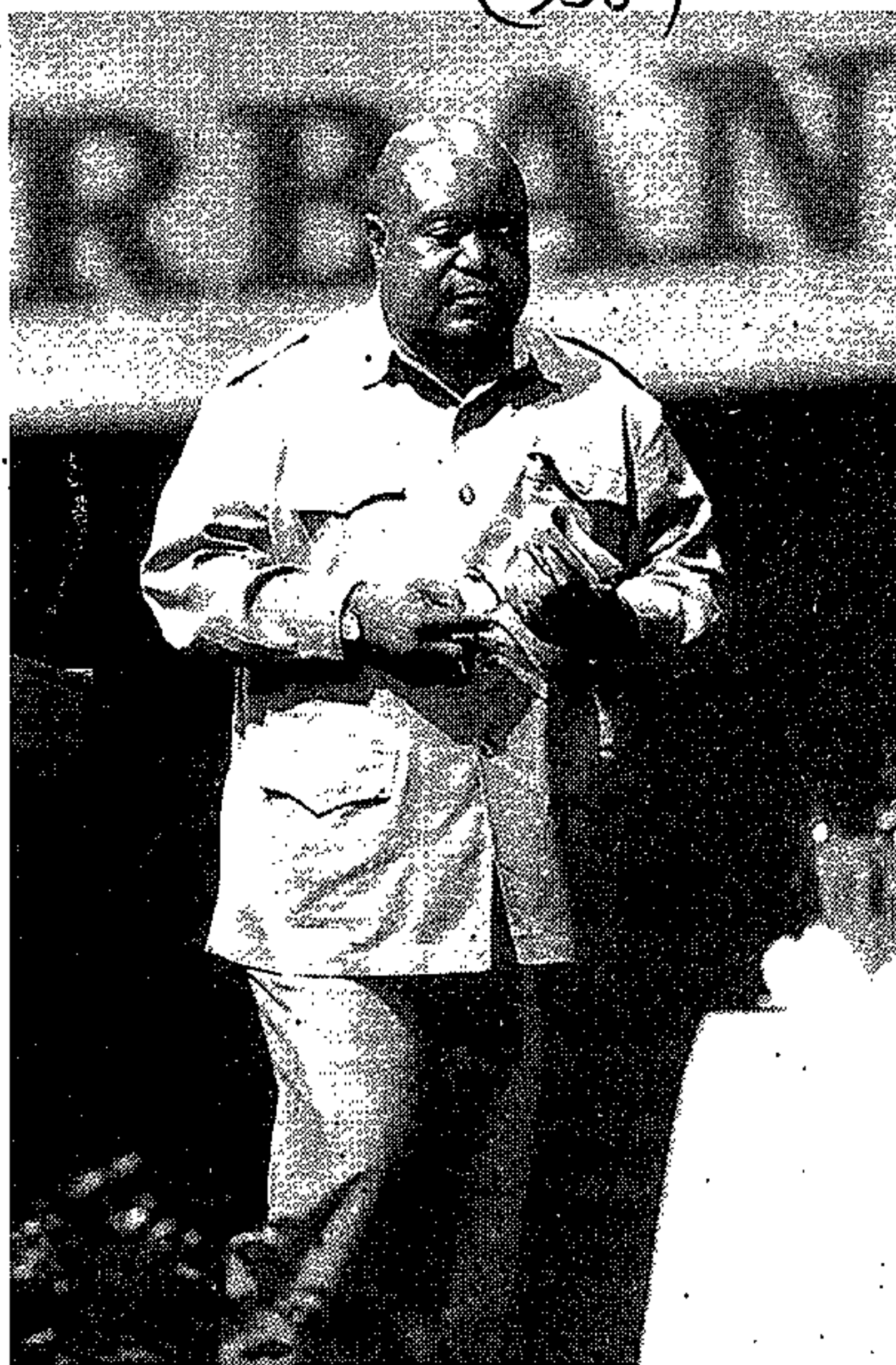
In fact the new minister of economy and industry, Jean Bemba Saolona, was asked by Belgian police several years ago to help with investigations after suitcases filled with paper used to make fraudulent bank notes were found at his home in Brussels.

M'Poyo was involved last year in the clandestine sale of state shares worth more than \$2m in the Bralima breweries controlled by Heineken and in Toyota's local concessionary, Afrima. Neither the former minister of economy, Nyembo Kamema, nor his finance colleague, Tala Ngai, knew about the deal, says Kabila's former adviser. Heineken confirmed the sale of state shares but could not comment further.

There is also mystery surrounding the proceeds of illegal sales of Gecamines' cobalt and copper products during the Mobutu era.

After Kabila took over in May 1997, Rudatenguha claims to have received a fax from the SA government offering to help Congo get back the money from such sales which went into SA commercial bank accounts. The fraud could have amounted to as much as \$300m, he was told.

The figure is consistent with the estimate made in 1994 by the former Gecamines Commerciale CEO, Andre Atundu Liongo, that 30% of production was



Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila

smuggled out of the country. For 1992 alone, this may represent more than \$150m. He says that in 1994 he instructed his lawyers to start legal action against a Johannesburg-based cobalt trader.

However, Rudatenguha was then told by Kabila to hand over the matter to another adviser and he said he did not know whether the Congo managed to get money back from the SA banks.

Gecamines sources in Brussels said they did not know of any official SA involvement in the attempt to recover the proceeds of the fraud in SA banks. However, they said a Johannesburg-based consultancy made an offer to the Congolese minister of mines, Frederic Kibassa Maliba, to carry out investigations to try to recover the money originating from the sale of Gecamines' stolen products. However, its efforts were unsuccessful.

There are suspicions that money extorted from public administrations and major companies is pumped directly into the presidency. Every month, M'Poyo is said to bring about \$2m in cash to the "upper chamber" — a room with a safe, located in Kabila's "Marble Palace" in Kinshasa, the keys of which are permanently in Kabila's pocket, says Rudatenguha.

The money comes from MIBA diamond company, says the former adviser, who was once asked to count the bank notes. Two

Belgian papers have confirmed M'Poyo's "raids" on MIBA, aimed at financing the war effort.

Congolese businessmen are not surprised by these practices. In a letter dating back to April 1997, MIBA's then financial manager, Ngandu Kamanda, and director general, Jean-Pierre Moritz, asked the Belgolaise bank in Brussels to transfer from \$3.5m MIBA's account to an account at the BCDI bank of Kigali, via a New York bank, with the following mention: "contribution to the war effort".

The BCDI account belonged to the Compagnie Mixte d'Import-Export (Comiex), founded by Kabila during the 1967-1986 period when he was a guerrilla leader who owned about 40% of Comiex's capital, according to two of Kabila's former companions.

Comiex is also the main shareholder of the newly formed Banque du Commerce et de Developpement (BCD), into which the \$1m ransom extorted from each member of a group of former Mobutu-supporting politicians was paid. The money went into an account named

"FR" which, loosely translated, means "president of the republic".

MIBA is not the only unwilling provider of the "upper chamber". Rudatenguha claims also to have seen M'Poyo bringing in cash proceeds from oil taxes. On several occasions, the central bank governor, Jean-Claude Masangu, was instructed to deliver money in cash — a monthly amount of \$45m — to the "upper chamber", Rudatenguha claims.

"I had to sign the receipt because Kabila didn't want to," he says.

Kabila also benefited from the Congolese central bank's guarantee for the reimbursement of food imports from Namibia by a private company called Gesac, whose main shareholders are the state president and his relatives. If the Congolese clients do not pay, the bank will step in.

In fact, Gesac is the sole beneficiary of a \$20m monthly revolving credit line afforded by the Namibian government to finance these supplies. Congolese firms which should have benefited from this facility are going out of business, says Rudatenguha.

And as Kabila consolidates his vast wealth, neither the diamond company, MIBA, nor Gecamines are able to pay the salaries of their workers, and most public servants have not been paid for months.

□ Misser is a freelance journalist.

Kinshasa's 'salvation' government heads for autocracy

Francois Mlsser

BRUSSELS — The Democratic Republic of Congo is in danger of becoming increasingly isolated after its cabinet reshuffle on March 13.

Despite advice from donors that opposition representatives should be given some portfolios, the composition of President Laurent Kabila's new "government of national salvation" suggests that the regime's political power base is shrinking.

Kabila has failed in his attempts to seduce prominent opposition figures, such as André Bo-Bolika, the chairman of the Democratic and Social Christian Party, or former Mobutuists like former foreign minister Gerard Kamanda wa Kamanda.

In a country that is not short of political chameleons, no influential opponent would accept a job in Kabila's

Rebuffed in his 'musical chairs' cabinet reshuffle, Kabila prepares to assemble tanks in a war economy

new government, suggesting it offers little hope for constructive negotiations with the rebel groups.

Kabila's failure to recognise all political parties unconditionally, and to allow for negotiations on a joint programme with Kabila's People's Power Committees are other reasons for this boycott.

Moreover, the few members of civil society who were part of the previous government — including former health minister Jean-Baptiste Sondji who criticised Kabila last November — were not reappointed.

The only major change is the appointment of Jean Bemba Saolona, the former chairman of the National Association of Zairean Enterprises, as economy and industry minister. Yet the appointment of this man, who owns

coffee plantations and used to be one of the managers of Mobutu's fortune, is unlikely to restore Kabila's prestige in the eyes of foreign business. Indeed, Bemba still has a case pending in Belgium in connection with the discovery by police of equipment to forge false dollars at his Brussels home in 1993.

In fact, the cabinet reshuffle looks like a game of musical chairs. Pierre-Victor M'Poyo, manager of Kabila's financial interests and former minister of state to the presidency, has been reappointed oil minister. Kabila promoted Abdoulaye Yerodia Ndombasi, his diplomatic adviser who openly incited hatred against the Tutsis, to foreign minister. Kabila's cousin, the much-criticised Gaetan Kakudji, retains the home affairs portfolio.

Beyond these controversial choices, policy guidelines lean towards establishment of an economic autocracy, with Kabila urging government to set up the structures for a "war economy". This will force Congolese industries to manufacture their own tyres, tractors and uniforms. A month ago, Kabila announced plans to assemble tanks in the workshops of the Onatra river transport parastatal company.

There is no indication Kabila has learnt lessons from the disastrous effects of earlier economic decisions. After the foreign currency ban, which depressed economic activity, the government is taking decisions likely to frighten business further.

On Monday, Information Minister Didier Mumenzi an-

nounced that abandoned farms would be handed over to the reconstruction ministry which would send prisoners to exploit the plantations and work in the mines in Katanga province.

Last week, Kabila refused to acknowledge that it was a mistake to nationalise Sizarail, the Belgian-Swiss (Transurb Consult, Spoonet, Artcole) joint venture that managed the railways in eastern and southern Congo from 1955 to 1997.

"These people have destroyed the national railways company. It was a mafia," Kabila told journalists.

Central Bank governor Jean-Claude Masangu Mulongo reiterated at the weekend that all transactions had to be made in the local currency. However, nonresident companies or individuals could apply for special waivers from the central bank to be registered as intermediaries for the purchase of "international services".

Little to celebrate in Kinshasa

By CHRIS MCCARUS

Two years ago, Rwanda and Uganda helped to propel Laurent Desiré Kabila to power in the then Zaire after sweeping across thousands of kilometres of jungle and savannah within eight months. Mobutu Sese Seko, arguably the dean of African dictators for his complete effect on the nation through murder, egotism and kleptocracy, was already sick with prostate cancer.

After 32 years, Mobutu's own army had abandoned him and allowed foreign Tutsi troops with Kabila's collection of teenage soldiers to walk into town without firing shots. "Even a dog," people said at the time, "would be an improvement on Mobutu."

On Monday, Kabila's Government of National Salvation asked Kinshasa's 5 million residents to celebrate the anniversary of their "liberation". At the Martyrs Stadium, teams of men in yellow shirts cleaned the streets with brooms, shovels and wheelbarrows. A yellow tent was raised for dignitaries. Dozens of civic, trade and military groups marched, danced and played instruments as the president watched from his chair. But fewer than 50 000 people turned out. There is little to celebrate. The lives of the country's 40 million other residents have not improved and the Kabila regime looks increasingly like Mobutu's.

The self-proclaimed Maoist, one-time collaborator of Che Guevara and former Dar es Salaam hotel owner promised in 1997 that the country would be rebuilt and that he would organise elections within two years. However, most observers and opposition politicians have ruled out elections this year because the eastern third of the country has been occupied by rebels supported by Rwanda and Uganda.

One of Kabila's problems is his inflated ego, reminiscent of that of his ally in the war, Robert Mugabe. He slammed the phone down on US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, then bragged about it to Congolese journalists. And he refused to receive US Africa envoy and veteran civil rights activist Jesse Jackson.

His Government of Public Salvation, as Kabila calls it, is a pariah both at home and abroad. Since he banned trading in dollars, food cannot be imported from abroad. It is common to hear the elderly speak nostalgically of the Belgian colonial era, when "we all ate three meals a day". There is little money in the national treasury.

While nearly every other African leader today courts the West, Kabila is planning a kind of Eastern Europe in the jungle. Barely a week goes by without word that he has jetted to Tripoli, Khartoum, Nairobi or Harare in search of aid, and condemned "the aggressors" Rwanda and Uganda.

Last month he inaugurated the Committee of Popular Power, or CPP, inside the Palace of the People. Television viewers saw the bald, overweight figure in the Mao jacket addressing the audience in a grand hall. Behind him on the back wall hung a 10 metre-high portrait of himself.

As a first step in the week-long proceedings, first Kabila officially dissolved the liberation movement born in the bush and "gave the power back to the people". Delegates from Kinshasa then began drafting documents on how to "organise in cells" and "defend one's quarter from enemies."

Some delegates attended for fear that pro-Rwandan infiltrators were in their midst. Some came out of respect and gratitude for the man and his movement. And some came because they no longer eat regularly and were hoping that a small sum would be given to all.

Inspired by Libyan ideology instructors and Muammar Gaddafi's *Little Green Book*, the CPP is being implemented by Dominic Sakombi, the "born-again" Christian who advised Mobutu for years.

Down a potholed street leading from the stadium where the "liberation" celebrations took place on Monday, Isabelle, a 31-year-old divorced mother of two, said: "I would have liked to join the celebrations, but someone has to stay here and try to make money."

"One thing you can't argue with is safety on the streets. Mobutu's soldiers would stop and steal your wallet, jewels, television, groceries - anything. Kabila's soldiers will just let you walk on by." Some would say this means they no longer have anything to lose. -IFS



NOW A PARIAN: Laurent Kabila is no saviour and did not liberate Zaire

Kabila at risk in fight for gem fields

SAM KILEY

(258)

CT 21/6/99

LUSAMBO: Broken street lights stand as monuments to decades of dictatorship and corruption. Creepers grow up the insides of once gracious colonial villas in Lusambo. Here Congolese rebels and Rwandan troops are tying a noose to strangle President Laurent Kabila's ability to pay for foreign troops.

The town, which has gradually been returning to the jungle since the Democratic Republic of Congo's independence from Belgium almost 40 years ago, was the last main line of defence for Kabila's Zimbabwean and Namibian allies before the great prize of Mbuji Mayi where, 112,6km south, lies Africa's richest diamond area.

The loss of these real-life "King Solomon's Mines", where gems sometimes worth millions are harvested like potatoes, would spell an almost immediate end for Kabila.

After thwarting the attempts of foreign mining companies to exploit the vast mineral resources of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which include copper, uranium and 60% of the world's cobalt, by a mixture of sharp practice and demands for huge amounts of future profits in advance, Kabila now relies entirely on Mbuji Mayi's diamonds for his survival and for funds to pay his foreign allies.

Lusambo was overrun last week. Now only diplomatic peace moves involving President Thabo Mbeki lie between the Rwandans and an assault on the Congo's treasure trove.

The battle for Lusambo raged for a week. The first to run were Zimbab-

wean and Namibian prisoners of war said to be Kabila's loyalist Congolese forces. Flight was less easy for the professional soldiers from Southern Africa.

Some, like Namibian Private Albertus Witbooi, were specialist desert fighters, men ill-trained to cope with Central Africa's dense forests.

"They have no idea how to survive in this environment. They have scattered into the bush, but they will have to give themselves up or starve to death," said Jose Kanku, the deputy commander of the rebel "task force".

In their latest advance, the Rwandans and the Congolese rebels outwitted Kabila's allies by encircling their positions and using guerrilla bush craft to creep beneath the arc of heavy artillery shells and wipe out Zimbabwean and Namibian positions.

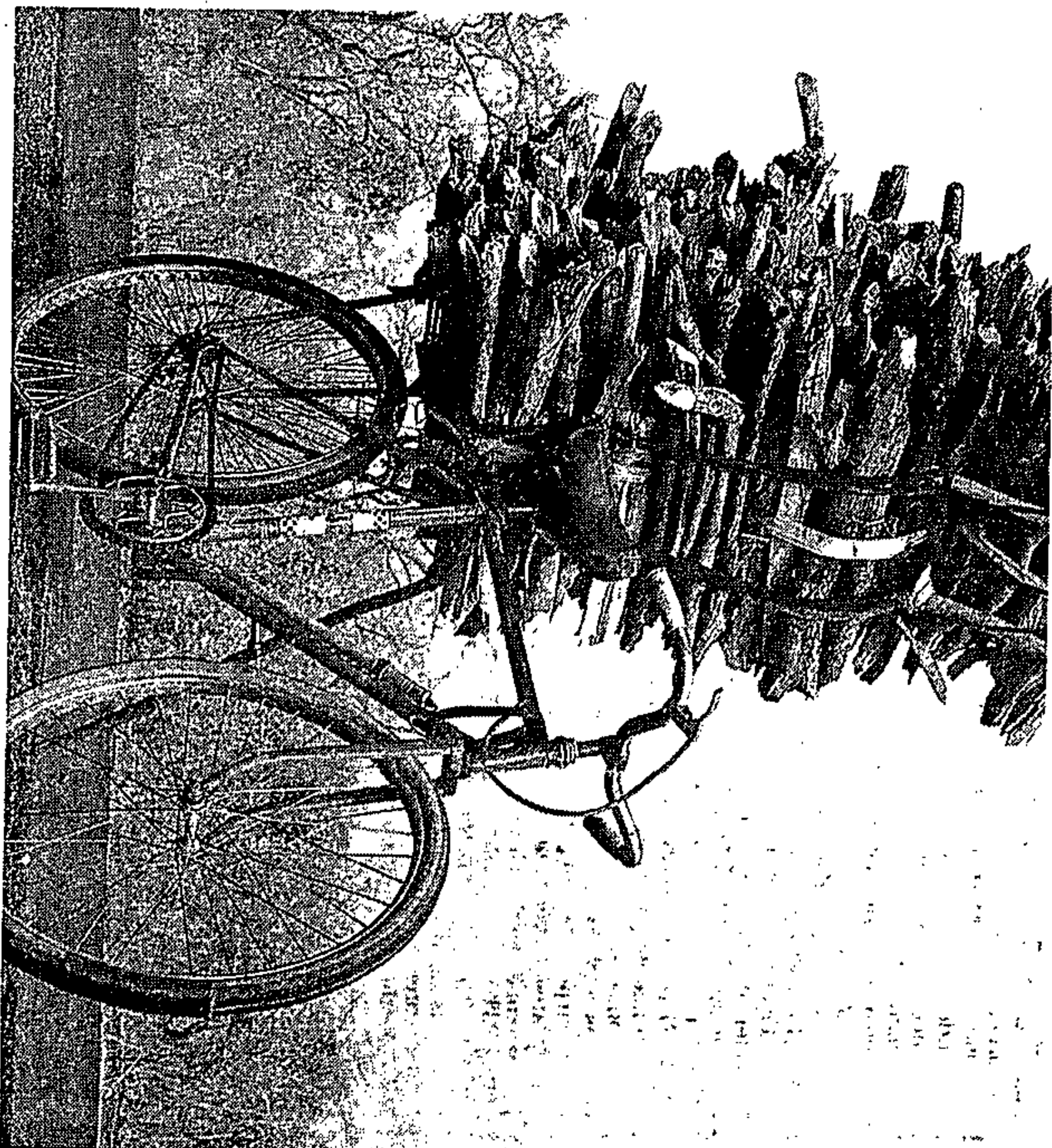
The shock of the final assault on Lusambo forced Zimbabwean and Namibian troops into a fast retreat, leaving their dead and wounded behind. Some, Rwandan intelligence officers said, were believed to have regrouped and were heading for Mbuji Mayi. Others were left to face capture by rebels who, they had been told, would shoot them.

None of the warring parties in the Congo's civil war, which has pitted Hutu militia, Sudan, Angola, Namibia, Chad, Zimbabwe and Kabila's men against the rebels backed by Uganda and Rwanda, has an honourable reputation for the treatment of prisoners.

"I'm afraid of dying here," said Private Philipus Petrus Mwato. "They don't have to worry," Commander Kanku said. "We are going to treat them well." — *The Times*, London

Kisangani slides into heart of darkness

The jungle town's economy has been hit hard by the war, which has virtually cut it off from the rest of the country, writes Helen Vesperini



Some niche markets have sprung up in economically battered Kisangani — one of them is bicycles.

THE Congolese jungle town of Kisangani was immortalised in VS Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*. The Congo river still flows past the town but the cranes in the port stand idle as the last boat from Kinshasa arrived a year ago.

The war that a rebel group from the east and its Rwandan and Ugandan backers started last August against President Laurent Kabila has cut Kisangani off from the capital Kinshasa. Now Kisangani's only links with the outside world are by air with the Democratic Republic of Congo's neighbours to the east.

"The war has had a very negative impact on business because everything is blocked," said Raymond Mokeni Ekopi Kane, the provincial head of the Congolese employers' association. "The biggest victim of the war isn't Kabila — it's the economy."

Congo's economy was already in big trouble when Kabila came to power two years ago. Three decades of neglect and corruption under the late Mobutu Sese Seko had left the country's infrastructure in ruins.

Given the inadequate infrastructure, the region of Kisangani relied completely on the river. It is now cut off from both its market and its supply centre in the capital, Kinshasa, which lies 1 600km downstream.

Kisangani's economy lies in tatters. The streets in the administrative centre of town are in good condition, but a chronic lack of petrol, which used to arrive by barge from the capital, means that handcars rather than trucks are used to ferry goods and foodstuffs around town.

Before the war cut the Congo into two, Kisangani got all its supplies from Kinshasa. Local production — palm oil, coffee and timber — used to be sent out via Kinshasa. Businessmen estimate that between 4 000 and 6 000 tons of products used to arrive every month here by river.

Now palm oil goes out on a small scale by air to Kigali, and the sawmills serve as military bases. About 1 000 tons of goods — from salt and flour to cement, radios and used clothes — make it in by air every month from Kampala and Kigali.

The roads, which used to link Kisangani with the Kivu provinces in the east and with Uganda and Rwanda, became impassable a long time ago. "There are still roads here, but they are roads it is better to walk along," noted one military commander.

Mokeni's big complaint is that the industrial sector has ground to a halt, and with it what little formal paid employment there was. He says that what economic activity there is of the casual, often short-term, sort that does not create jobs, a state of affairs with which Congo has long been familiar.

Some new niche markets have sprung up. One is bicycles. Rocketing petrol prices and a lack of vehicles, even if you have the money to pay for petrol, means that at least one Indian trader is doing good business with cycles that he brings in pieces from Rwanda and assembles here.

The area around Kisangani is rich, even by Congo standards. The province has gold and diamonds. Coffee grows year-round. When the season is finished in one district, it starts

in another. The forest that covers the region is virtually untouched, and the land is fertile beyond compare.

"You don't even have to plant cassava here," one Kisangani resident noted. "You just break a stick in two and throw it on the ground, and it grows."

The construction business came to a stop with the start of the war. Air freight tariffs for galvanised sheeting and sacks of cement are prohibitive. Cement prices have more than tripled. Moreover, the population is reluctant to build anything as long as there is still a risk of looting.

Perhaps the companies hardest hit are those with headquarters in Kinshasa. "Even getting in touch with the head office is something we have to do in secret by radio," the manager of a general trading company complained.

Companies say they are having to lay staff off. "Unemployment has become the norm here," said Mokeni. "For any given job, you have a hundred candidates capable of filling it."

Yet on the currency front, at least, life is easier in Kisangani than in Kinshasa where dollars are outlawed. Here the currency, the Congolese franc, introduced a year ago by Kabila as a symbol of national unity, and that currency's predecessor, the New Zaire, are freely interchangeable. One dollar buys New Zaire 400 000 or four Congolese francs. Before the war one dollar bought about New Zaire 140 000. The Congolese franc was launched at a parity of about 1,4 francs to the dollar.

□ Vesperini is a freelance journalist.

SA lends weight to Congo peace talks

Dlamini-Zuma, Lekota leave for Lusaka to help thrash out ceasefire deal

Claire Pickard-Cambridge,
and Sapa-AFP

SA MINISTERS who left for Lusaka last night are expected to add weight to moves towards a ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of Congo where it is proposed that troop withdrawals begin next month.

Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and Defence Minister Patrick Lekota are to meet several of their Congolese counterparts after officials in the region reportedly reached a tentative agreement on dates for a troop withdrawal over a three-month period.

Many stumbling blocks remain and preparatory ceasefire agreements will have to be endorsed by heads of state at a summit meeting set for tomorrow in the Zambian capital. President Thabo Mbeki is expected to attend tomorrow, but Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and Congolese President Laurent Kabila cast doubt yesterday on whether the summit would go ahead.

After two days of consultations with Kabila in Zimbabwe, Mugabe said heads of state would not meet unless an "acceptable" draft ceasefire agreement had been drawn up. Kabila complained that there were too many draft ceasefire documents in circulation.

A draft agreement circulating in Lusaka and several European and African capitals early this week envisages the establishment of a joint military commission and observer groups within a week of the signing of the peace agreement. The ceasefire would take effect seven days after the signing on July 3.

The document sets out mobilisation

of military observers within two weeks of the signing, but is vague about the release and exchange of prisoners of war, saying only this would take place over a period of "one to 12 months".

Deployment of a peacekeeping operation should take place before the withdrawal of foreign forces from Congolese territory although both steps would take place within one to three months after the peace agreement.

The United Nations (UN) is understood to be committed to providing the political, financial and logistical resources needed to support the peace effort. However, the document does not make it clear whether a peacekeeping operation would take place under UN auspices or what the number and nationality of troops deployed would be.

Outlining the principles of the agreement, it says that the signatories — all the warring parties, including Chad which has already withdrawn its troops — would have to allow the prompt treatment and evacuation of the wounded. Signatories should allow immediate access to the International Committee of the Red Cross, enabling the organisation to arrange the release of prisoners of war, recovery of the dead and treatment of the wounded.

All the parties would be compelled to facilitate humanitarian assistance through opening up "humanitarian corridors" and by providing enabling conditions for assistance to refugees.

The document envisages the rebels signing under the umbrella of the United Front, but it was not clear last night whether all three rebel factions would be attending. The Zambian government

said on Wednesday that rebel leaders of two factions, Jean-Pierre Bemba and Emile Ilunga, were in the country.

A Congolese delegation from the Union for Democracy and Social Progress led by veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi is expected to attend, and representatives of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the UN and the Southern African Development Community are also in Zambia.

While officials are still thrashing out ceasefire modalities, sources say the main sticking point is determining which side should pull out first. The Congolese government and its southern African backers are insisting that Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi — who support the rebels — should withdraw their troops first because they "invaded" Congo, while the rebels and their allies prefer simultaneous withdrawal.

Walter Themba Thabethe, SA's high commissioner in Lusaka, said yesterday the atmosphere at the discussions was positive and there had not been any walkouts. He said it appeared that the summit would still take place.

However, Mugabe warned in Harare yesterday: "The war continues and to us the most important thing is that we strengthen our defence forces and strengthen our own lines of resistance and resist more ground being taken and occupied by the invading forces."

Zambian President Frederick Chiluba, assigned by regional leaders, the OAU and the UN to mediate peace in the Congo, is spearheading the preparations for the Lusaka talks.

More troops: Page 9

BD 2/7/99

SANDF outlines plans to deploy troops to Congo

Stephen Laufer (358)

SA COULD field a contingent of 2 000 troops plus air, medical, and possibly naval support in a larger African peacekeeping force for the Democratic Republic of Congo, defence officials said yesterday.

Civilian and defence department experts are weighing SA's options following President Thabo Mbeki's announcement that SA will commit troops to a peace exercise. Reluctant to talk numbers, the officials stressed the need for caution until a clear ceasefire agreement and an international peacekeeping mandate were in place.

It is understood Mbeki met Defence Minister Patrick Lekota and defence force chief Siphile Nyanda immediately after his announcement to Parliament.

Nyanda said any peace enforcement role which would see SA troops in combat with militias in order to disarm them was "a crazy notion. It's a nonstarter." Those who had armed them should take responsibility for their future. The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) was looking to avoid a peacekeeping role in which it might have to separate belligerents militarily. "It's not manageable."

Another senior official said the peacekeeping mandate would have to make room for "more robust peacekeeping" than just monitoring. Under a monitoring mandate, peacekeepers may only carry sidearms for limited self-defence.

The official said the United Nations (UN) failed in Angola because its troops could not intervene when the ceasefire was breached.

Troops from SA, Nigeria, and Egypt have been mooted for an African force under a UN security council mandate. It is likely they will receive logistical support, including transport and backup sup-

plies, from countries with a larger military capability, including the US, UK and possibly France.

Uniformed and civilian sources were unanimous that any SANDF deployment depended on a binding ceasefire pact spelling out the acceptance of a peacekeeping force by all Congo belligerents. Clear exit criteria defining the circumstances under which peacekeepers would leave had to be laid down before troops went in, including agreement on what level of stability would allow a withdrawal. Renewed, unstoppable fighting should also trigger a withdrawal.

Nyanda said warring parties had to make a crucial contribution by policing the ceasefire themselves so the foreign force would simply have to monitor the peace.

He refused to discuss numbers, but senior officers and civilian defence officials said SA could field two battalions, totalling roughly 2 000 soldiers. They could be supported by at least one 16-strong squadron of helicopters, several C-130 and C-160 transport planes and up to five surgical field units with 150 medical staff each.

Depending on where the SA contingent was deployed, the navy could provide logistical support.

A senior source said a contingent of 4 000 had been considered, but SA's internal security needs and the need for a standby force should Lesotho's democratisation process be derailed led to numbers for Congo being scaled back.

Meanwhile, as ceasefire negotiations edged forward in Lusaka, the UN refugee agency said heavy fighting in eastern Congo had prompted a steady flow of refugees across the border into Tanzania. Refugees arrived in Kigoma, in western Tanzania, at a rate of 100 per hour last weekend, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said.

SA troops may be flying off to DRC sooner than later

Congo War over

By CHIARA CARTER
and Sopa-AFP

AFTER several days of intense negotiations, representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo and rebel leaders yesterday reached an agreement to end the bloody conflict which has claimed thousands of lives and displaced millions in the vast central African state.

Although the finer details of the agreement are still to be hammered out, the ending of hostilities also means that South Africa could be forced to send a peace-keeping force to the DRC sooner than many expected.

The breakthrough paves the way for the much-delayed summit of African heads of state to go ahead as soon as possible.

The highlight of this summit will be the signing of the ceasefire agreement by DRC President Laurent Kabila, rebel leaders, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni and Rwanda's strongman Paul Kagame, who backed the rebels.

This summit was originally scheduled for last Saturday in the Zambian capital Lusaka and was to be attended by President Thabo Mbeki, leaders of the Southern African Development Community, Organisation of African Unity secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim, and several other top international figures as well as representatives from the United Nations.

This weekend President Mbeki, in an interview with the SABC - clearly in anticipation of a breakthrough in the talks being held in Lusaka - said South Africa had a moral responsibility to take part in such a peace-keeping exercise.

Mbeki said critics who claimed that South African troops would end up fighting on the ground in the DRC were misinformed because the soldiers would merely be there at the request of international bodies to uphold the peace agreement.

The SA National Defence Force would be operating under the overall command of the Organisation of African Unity.

The SABC broadcast will be on Channel 2 at noon today.

A week after talks between the warring factions began in the Zambian capital, forces from the rebels' side and from the DRC government agreed on a ceasefire and a "national dialogue".

Measures to restore peace to the DRC are likely to include an African peace-keeping force which will almost certainly contain South African soldiers from the SANDF.

Defence Ministry spokesperson Puso Tladi said Mbeki's statement was a policy statement. The practical details would have to be worked out before troops could be sent anywhere.

The country would only act at the request of a body such as the UN or OAU, Tladi said. Such a request for military help would have to define the nature of the mission, say how many troops were needed and how the costs were to be covered.

The peace agreement has far-reaching consequences for Africa, where several countries have been drawn into the conflict.

A change in the state of play could affect Angola's ongoing conflict with UNITA as well as the fate of rebel militias who have posed a threat to Rwandan security.

Diplomats said the moves towards peace in the DRC and the role of African states in the peace-keeping process were likely to be discussed at an OAU meeting scheduled for later this month.

In a statement, the two sides said they had "decided to enter into discussions to establish a new political order and national reconciliation". This would begin "as soon as a ceasefire agreement comes into force".

The statement said Kinshasa and the rebels had agreed on ways of absorbing rebel forces into the Congolese army. No details were released about who would command the army - a critical issue because the rebels had refused to fall under the ultimate authority of Kabila.

The accord would now open the way to a summit meeting of Great Lakes heads of state, a western diplomat in Lusaka said. An earlier planned summit was postponed a week ago because of the lack of progress between the two sides.

Major military advances by the rebels last month placed pressure on Kabila's government to make significant concessions lest it lose control of its last remaining major diamond-producing area.

The two rebel movements, the Congolese Rally for Democracy and the Congo Liberation Movement, formed a "common front" for the Lusaka peace talks.

(398) 08417199

Formal Congo deal signals end of war

'It looks like the dawn of a new era'

ART 8/7/99

Lusaka - A draft ceasefire deal on the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is due to be signed here by rebels and heads of involved states on Saturday, Zambian President Frederick Chiluba said today.

"I do not think we will have any arguments. All problems have been thrashed out. I'm optimistic that they will sign," said Mr Chiluba, who has been mediating the peace process.

He said ministers of defence and foreign affairs who yesterday agreed on the draft ceasefire had been in constant touch with their capitals, "therefore we don't expect any issues that will delay the process further".

A ceasefire in the war which has sucked in more than six African countries was due to have been signed in Lusaka on June 26, but was delayed by haggling over the details and the political future of the vast central African coun-

try formerly known as Zaire.

"Despite the length of discussions, it's an African paper worked out by African ministers," said Mr Chiluba.

"I commend the ministers and the Congolese Rally for Democracy and the Congolese Liberation Movement who sat together during the meetings," he said of the two main rebel groups.

"It's a paper that is a product of serious negotiations between all warring factions, especially the rebels and Congolese government officials."

Mr Chiluba said he hoped there would be the political will to stick to what had been agreed, adding that, along with the ceasefire pact in Sierra Leone, also reached yesterday, "it looks like the dawn of a new era in Africa".

Yesterday's draft ceasefire plan, reached after two weeks of negotiations, doesn't go into effect until 24 hours after it has been signed by the heads of the six

nations involved in the war, leaders of the three Congolese rebel groups and other regional and organisational leaders.

It was not clear whether rebels fighting in eastern Congo had accepted the draft plan, but rebel leaders attending the talks and their main backers, Rwanda and Uganda, signed the deal, officials said. Rebels currently occupy the eastern third of the country.

"We have adopted the document. I am very happy. The war is over now," Congolese Foreign Minister Abdulaïye Yerodia said.

The ceasefire calls for a joint military commission of belligerent forces to implement the peace accord and the creation of a unified army after a 90-day national dialogue on Congo's political future.

It also calls for peacekeeping troops from the Organisation of African Unity or the United Nations to oversee the accord. - Sapa-AP

Thumbs-up for ceasefire in Congo war

LOSANK: African defence and foreign ministers yesterday endorsed a long-delayed draft ceasefire document designed to end the crippling war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

"The parties agree to a ceasefire among all their forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," said the document, which was endorsed by the DRC government and its Southern African military allies Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

The two rebel factions and their backers, Rwanda and Uganda, also adopted the deal.

The endorsement was witnessed by host nation Zambia, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the UN and ministers from the 14-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The ceasefire will take effect within 24 hours of the draft being signed by heads of state at a date to be announced by mediator, Zambian President Frederick Chiluba.

The truce document calls for the cessation of hostilities between all forces in the DRC, and prohibits military movements, reinforcements and hostile actions, including propaganda. It also outlaws attempts by any of the forces in the DRC to occupy new ground and movement of military forces and resources from one area to another without prior agreement between the parties involved in the conflict.

The document, hammered out after 13 days of difficult talks in the Zambian capital, said the UN Security Council would be requested in collaboration with the OAU to constitute, facilitate and deploy a peacekeeping force under a Chapter Seven enforcement mission.

"In this respect, the UN Security Council shall provide the requisite mandate for the peacekeeping force," the document said, adding that a Joint Military Commission would be formed by the belligerents in the Congo "with responsibility for executing immediately after coming into force of this agreement, peacekeeping operations until the deployment of the UN force".

It also calls for national dialogue between Congolese political groups, the creation of a new national army, release of prisoners of war, facilitation of humanitarian assistance throughout the DRC and finally the withdrawal of foreign armies involved in the conflict.

The parties to the conflict also agreed to address the security concerns of Rwanda and Uganda, which triggered the latest war, and in this context committed themselves to the process of locating, identifying, disarming and assembling exiled Rwandan Hutu militia and exiled Ugandan armed factions.

"Countries of origin of members of the armed groups commit themselves to taking all the necessary measures to facilitate their repatriation. Such measures may include the granting of amnesty in countries where such a measure has been deemed beneficial," it said. - Reuters

How the ceasefire will work

Lusaka - These are the main points of a draft ceasefire agreement on the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict reached at talks here.

■ The cessation of hostilities shall come into force within 24 hours of signing the agreement.

■ The United Nations security council, acting in collaboration with the Organisation of African Unity, shall constitute, facilitate and deploy an appropriate peacekeeping force in the DRC to ensure the implementation of the agreement, and track down all armed groups.

■ The parties to the conflict will set up a Joint Military Commission, which, with a UN/OAU observer group, will be responsible for carrying out, immediately the deal is in force, peacekeeping operations until the deployment of the UN peacekeeping force.

■ The final withdrawal of all foreign forces within nine months of a withdrawal schedule drawn up by the UN, the OAU and the JMC.

■ There shall be a mechanism for disarming militias, especially the Interahamwe, the Rwandan Hutu group responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and an

important factor in the DRC war.

■ All parties have committed themselves to the process of finding, identifying, disarming and assembling all members of armed groups in the DRC.

■ The parties shall ensure that armed groups operating alongside their troops or in the territory under their control comply with the processes leading to dismantling of those groups.

■ The parties shall release detainees or hostages and allow them to relocate to any provinces or country where their security is guaranteed. - Sapa-AFP

No cheers in Congo

(358) *seeleton 12/7/99*

KINSHASA – Mathieu Pindi has fond memories of Mobutu Sese Seko's three decades of rule, even though the economy was dilapidated and military thugs abounded under the corrupt dictator.

At least he had a job then. Things have got worse since rebels toppled Mobutu more than two years ago and a rebellion against his successor, Laurent Kabila, erupted a year later.

Now, a new ceasefire plan has revived Pindi's fragile hopes, although it's easy to understand other Congolese who don't share the enthusiasm.

The latest fighting has carved Congo, formerly known as Zaire, into vast, undefined zones of rebel and government control. Millions of people have lost their homes and major industries – including the country's potentially lucrative mining sector – have all but collapsed.

"In the days of Mobutu we suffered, but at least we had peace," Pindi said. "Now we are in trouble that we never believed could exist. We are hungry and desperate. We are a country with nothing."

Pindi (50) lost his office job with a small air charter company shortly after the war broke out last August, disrupting business and forcing the company to fold. Now he can't pay school fees for his children, who some days go without food.

Like many other desperate residents of Congo's capital of Kinshasa, Pindi hopes the ceasefire holds. The deal was reached after two weeks of intense negotiation in Lusaka, Zambia.

Leaders of the six African nations involved in the war cobbled together the accord, which was signed late on Saturday, but without the signatures of the rebel groups who have been fighting to oust Kabila.

"If this ceasefire works, we can begin attacking the real problems of Congo. We can start working for food, working for a future," Pindi says.

Tension wracked the capital last week as residents listened nervously to hand-held radios, waiting for news of progress in the talks. There was no jubilation in the streets at the news of the accord, though.

"We are victims of this war and until we see real change, we will remain victims," said Leonard Ntwaremba, a corporate manager of Desco, a Swiss-based industrial equipment firm that has lost millions and laid off scores of employees since the war began.

Most Congolese government officials in the capital were also cautious, although foreign minister Abdulaye Yerodia said he was "happy the war is over now".

Finance minister Mawampanga Mwana Nanga said Congo's government remains wary

There was no jubilation in the streets of Kinshasa as the peace accord was signed. The residents were too busy trying to survive, writes **Kamanga Mutond**



Democratic Republic of Congo president Laurent Kabila signs the ceasefire agreement at the Molongushi summit hall in Lusaka.

of Rwanda, which it accuses of backing the rebels in a bid to gain territory.

Rwanda says it merely wants to end the threat posed by the Congo-based Rwandan Hutu militia, who carried out the 1994 genocide of some 800 000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

The rebels, for their part, accuse Kabila of power-grabbing, corruption and nepotism.

For many residents of the capital, the political wrangling has taken second place to more pressing daily concerns, such as skyrocketing inflation.

The country's chamber of commerce estimates that Congo's economy is working at less than one-sixth of its capacity. The Congolese franc, which replaced the Mobutu-era currency, has lost 80 percent of its value since it was established a year ago.

The state-controlled Gecamines, which controls much of the country's mineral rights, has laid off 15 000 of its 25 000 employees, company officials said.

Isabel Malinga, a street vendor selling a few wilted fruit in a Kinshasa market, blamed Kabila for the country's woes but said she would forgive him if he could end the war and put food back on her family's table.

"I don't know how to explain how miserable we are," Malinga said. "All I can say is that we should all do whatever it takes to bring peace and fill our stomachs. This is our last hope." – *Sapa-AP*

Fact file

LUSAKA – The signatories to the ceasefire agreement are president Laurent Kabila's government and his allies Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia, as well as rebel backers Uganda and Rwanda.

Chad had also backed Kabila, but its troops pulled out of the country several weeks ago.

The Tutsi-led rebels, who failed to sign the accord amid a simmering dispute within their ranks, have captured huge swathes of territory in the east and south of Africa's third largest country.

Some of the highlights of the draft pact:

- It calls for the cessation of hostilities on a date to be agreed.

- The United Nations Security Council shall be requested to send a peacekeeping force to the Congo.

- If the UN does not send a force, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) will be mandated to carry out peacekeeping operations.

- A joint military council comprising senior military commanders for each of the signatories will also oversee the peace process.

- The parties agree that all armed forces in the Congo shall observe a standstill, remaining in the positions they occupy when the agreement comes into effect before being sent to designated bases by peacekeeping forces.

- The Congolese parties shall administer the areas they control until an agreed interim arrangement is in place to re-establish a central authority.

- It calls for the disarmament of all renegade forces in the region, including the Lord's Resistance Army, which launches attacks against Uganda, and the Interahamwe Hutu militias that played a key role in the 1994 genocide of an estimated 800 000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda.

- A special task force under the joint military council will track down mass killers and human rights abusers and bring them to justice. – *Reuters*

OAU is to appoint a commander for Congo ceasefire

Stephen Laufer

ALGIERS — The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was close to appointing the commander of the joint military commission to oversee the ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of Congo, President Thabo Mbeki said yesterday.

Mbeki said he had discussed the appointment with OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim on the fringes of the organisation's summit meeting in Algiers.

Sources said the commander

was likely to come from a country outside southern Africa. Nigeria, Algeria and Egypt were the leading contenders to supply a senior officer to take charge of the verification of the cessation of hostilities, the disarmament and demobilisation of renegade militias and the integration of Congolese regular and non-statutory forces.

The commander is also to play a significant role in assessing the level and type of a United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force to be deployed in Congo. Mbeki said the of-

ficer would convene commanders from the belligerents within days.

Mbeki said he did not expect much conflict in conjunction with the ceasefire agreement, even though it called for the enforced disarmament of militias active against Rwanda and Uganda. Virtually all of them were organised in military formations under the command and control of regular officers of the armies supporting Congo President Laurent Kabila, he said.

Mbeki said the appointment of a facilitator for the internal Con-

golese political dialogue envisaged in the ceasefire agreement would be next on the agenda. He was confident the talks could bring democratic elections because Kabila had accepted that he was just one of several participants.

Separately, Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad said that once the Congo peace was in place, attention in SA would have to turn to resolving the conflict in Angola.

The OAU summit called on member states to intensify the campaign to isolate rebel leader Jonas

Savimbi, saying he had "deliberately excluded himself from the democratic process in Angola by violating the Lusaka peace accords."

On the peace agreement in Sierra Leone, Mbeki said he had been asked for SA assistance in the creation of a truth and reconciliation commission. During a brutal civil war, rebels who have been included in the government underscored their claim on power by hacking limbs off citizens at random.

There's little hope of union for

mtG 16-22/7/99

Several dubious assumptions underlay the Congo peace talks, which are unlikely to deliver more than a de facto partition of the country, write Ivor Powell and Howard Barrell

A failed ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of Congo will open the way for the break-up of the country that straddles the heart of Africa and could usher in a prolonged period of instability, directly affecting nine other states bordering on it.

As the harsh realities and costs of implementing last week's ceasefire agreement in Lusaka are assessed, it is becoming clear that the negotiations that preceded the drawing-up of the peace plan were dominated by wishful thinking.

Negotiators made several dubious assumptions, including:

- that the belligerents are serious about the search for peace;
- that foreign states will be prepared to commit military forces to peace enforcement and the arrest of those responsible for atrocities in one of the world's most remote, inaccessible and inhospitable environments; and
- that the United Nations will be able to persuade the major powers to provide the financial and logistical backing for an operation which will have to involve between 15 000 and 50 000 troops to have any hope of being effective.

The head of early warning at the Pretoria-based Institute of Security

Studies, Richard Cornwell, remarked that the agreement was "so remote from the realities on the ground in the Congo as to defy belief".

The ceasefire agreement — which has yet to be ratified by rebel groupings opposed to the regime of Congo President Laurent Kabila — achieves little more than the de facto partition of the unruly territory into a rebel-controlled east, and a western part still under the control of Kabila.

Just how those zones would break up, however, remains uncertain, with numerous reports this week of continuing engagements. Especially at stake is the diamond capital of Mbuji Mayi at the centre of one of Congo's two richest mining areas.

Zimbabwean troops at Mbuji Mayi and nearby Kabinda, bolstered and supplied by Angolans and fed via Angolan supply routes, continue to hold out against rebel attacks despite a three-week offensive. According to unconfirmed reports, part of the difficulty for the rebels lies in the fact that the area around Mbuji Mayi has been heavily mined — a difficulty the rebels have met by driving cattle over the minefields.

Securing Mbuji Mayi would give rebel forces control over the two richest mining areas in Congo, while cut-



King Congo: Laurent Kabila (left) signs the ceasefire agreement. His ascent to power was no improvement on Mobutu Sese Seko (below right) and his betrayal of his allies Uganda and Rwanda led to new hostilities in the huge country. PHOTOS: AP

ting off Kabila's regime from much-needed funding for his war effort. It is not expected that Rwandan-sponsored Congo rebels will commit themselves to any ceasefire until the front has finally been won or lost.

In terms of the proposed ceasefire, it is only after the various rebel groupings and the government army have been integrated into a national

defence force and "inter-Congolese political negotiations" have led to the creation of a new political dispensation that the two Congos might be brought together again.

Meanwhile, international diplomats, backed up by yet-to-be-mustered peacekeeping forces under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organisation for African Unity,

will still be scrambling to find ways of bringing order to not only Congo itself but nearly half of the African continent as well.

Congo is bordered by Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda — all of which are experiencing their own domestic turmoil — as well as Tanzania and Zambia.

As it stands, the ceasefire agreement is essentially a compendium of preconditions for restoring order in the central African region — the original site of the scramble for Africa in the late 1800s. It was, in fact, Congo that prompted the Berlin conference of 1885 at which the European powers drafted the rules for the carving up of Africa between them.

Historical sequence of a disaster

Howard Barrell

● Berlin conference of European

powers in 1885 declares what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo the private property of King Leopold II of Belgium. Ruthless colonial plunder follows. Belgian government takes control of colony in 1908.

● The vast territory of the Congo and what are now Rwanda and Burundi were sites of ancient ethnic rivalries, among others between Hutus and Tutsis. These enmities were exacerbated by the colonial administration. Belgian authorities outlawed any cross-ethnic political organisation by Congolese and encouraged mainly Tutsis from what is now Rwanda to settle on territory in the eastern Congo, which was claimed as ancestral land by other groups. These settlers from Rwanda were known as the Banyamulenge.

● Belgium grants independence to the desperately underdeveloped, ethnically complex Congo in 1960. Within a fortnight, the army mutinies, the mineral-rich province of Katanga tries to secede and a rebellion is launched in the east. Years of chaos follow.

● Simultaneously, serious ethnic conflict between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda led to another influx of Rwandans into Kivu province in eastern Congo.

● In the early 1960s, as the Organi-

sation of African Unity is formed, the Congo and the Great Lakes re-

gion to the east of it emerge as the

earliest and most serious threats to the organising principle of the map of Africa: the retention of colonial borders between states. Most of the nine countries bordering on Congo — namely Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Angola and Sudan, Congo, Brazzaville and Central African Republic — experience their own ethnic, religious or anti-colonial conflicts, which impact on and are in turn affected by Congo's internal conflicts. Only neighbouring Tanzania and Zambia are stable.

● A Colonel Joseph Mobutu stages a successful coup in Congo in 1965, changes the name to Zaire, creates a one-party state, leading to decades of misrule and plunder by the unscrupulous autocrat and his henchmen. Mobutu's form of rule is to install a henchman as governor of a district of a country with unrestricted rights of plunder, provided suitable tributes reach Mobutu himself and the henchman does not emerge as a rival. This is government by banditry, and no institutions of state or civil society are fostered.

● Cold War allies Belgium, France and the United States support Mobutu as a bulwark against communism. In 1977 and 1978, Zairean insurgents operating from Angola and Zambia

invade Shaba province in an attempt to topple Mobutu, who is backed by

France and Belgium.

● Mobutu salts away billions of dollars in foreign bank accounts before, sick with cancer, he eventually bows to pressure and hesitantly sets about reforms in 1991. The next year, a Sovereign National Conference installs veteran opposition politician Ethenne Tshisekedi to oversee transition to democracy, but the attempt fails and Mobutu remains in charge.

● In the early 1990s, Tutsi-Hutu rivalries explode in Rwanda and Burundi. Hutus mount anti-Tutsi genocide in Rwanda. Ugandan-backed Tutsi forces enter Rwanda, drive Hutu chauvinists out of the country and take power. They then invade eastern Congo, where they join up with their local Tutsi kin among the Banyamulenge to destroy remnants of Hutu militias and create a buffer against further genocide.

They press on towards Kinshasa, the capital, where they instal a group of Congolese, Rwandans and Ugandans with no local political base or experience of government. This leadership group is headed by a one-time anti-Mobutu rebel leader and latter-day brothel-keeper Laurent Kabila.

Kabila renames Zaire the Democratic Republic of Congo, has himself declared president, outlaws other political activity and rules by decree.

● Kabila disappoints his Rwandan and Ugandan backers by failing to

act against Hutu militias in eastern

Congo. Kabila responds to pressure from Tshisekedi and other Congolese to break with his foreign backers and Tutsi-Banyamulenge allies, who are not accepted as true Congolese by other groups. Kabila announces the expulsion of foreign troops. Feeling betrayed, Rwanda and Uganda provoke a second rebellion — this time against Kabila.

● A major vehicle of this second rebellion is the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD), heavily backed by Rwanda's mainly Tutsi government, which takes east-central Congo.

A second rebel group around Jean-Pierre Bemba, a former senior officer in Mobutu's regime, receives backing from Uganda and operates in northern Congo.

Both major groups contain a myriad different ethnic and personal tensions. They also form a working alliance with Unita guerrillas operating against the government of Angola from bases in south-western Congo.

● Angola, afraid of having a pro-Unita regime in Kinshasa, gives heavy military backing to Kabila. He also gets armed support from Namibia, Chad, Zimbabwe and Sudan, which has a longstanding dispute with Uganda.

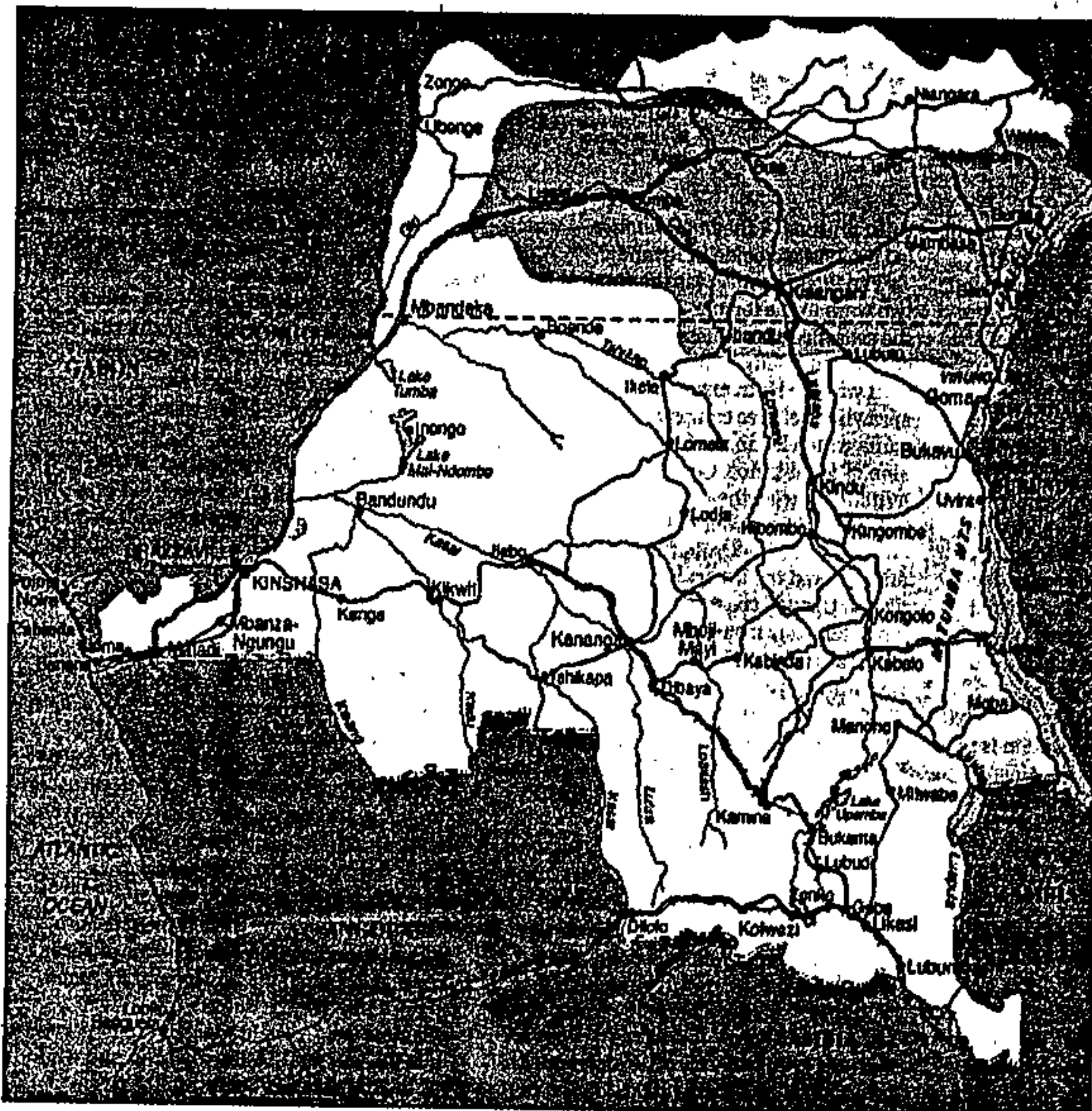
In the early 1960s, a few weeks after Congo had achieved independence, rebellion and an attempt at secession by the mineral-rich province of Katanga produced the first major challenge to the organising principle of the map of post-colonial Africa: the retention of colonially established borders. Now, 40-odd years later, the country again threatens to blow apart the post-colonial map.

A key consideration in the stitching together of a ceasefire in Lusaka last week was an attempt to satisfy the requirements of the various belligerents. For there is little to suggest any agreement will hold unless the individual bottom lines of the major players are met.

But, even if these requirements are met, the "war economy" that has developed inside the Congo will provide additional complications. This economy has developed a strong set of dynamics that serve a number of groups and powerful individuals extremely well. There is no guarantee that mere agreement among the major belligerents to seek a peace will lead to the unravelling of the interests that may need the war to continue.

Equally problematic are the logistics of peacekeeping. With its resources depleted by peacekeeping ef-

the divided heart of Africa



CONGO COALITION
Leader: Laurent Kabila
General area of operations: western and southern Congo.

Forces: Armed Forces of the Congo (FAC): 40 000 to 45 000 poor-quality troops, most of them formerly in Mobutu's army, collected by Kabila and stationed around the country. Angolan armed forces: 2 500 to 3 000, stationed mainly around the diamond mining centre of Mbuji-Mayi and guarding the Kinshasa-Matadi railway line. Zimbabwe National Army: 10 000, also mainly at Mbuji-Mayi, Kaminda, Kamina and Lubumbashi. Chadians: none left; departed recently through Central African Republic leaving chaos in their wake. Mai-Mai: about 2 500 warrior/hunters; formerly known as Simba rebels; they regularly rebelled against Mobutu in Shaba (aka Katanga) province. Ngilima: about 1 000 to 1 500 warrior/hunters. Interahamwe: about 40 000; Hutu militia and former Hutu members of Rwanda's armed forces responsible for anti-Tutsi genocide; now filtering back into Kivu province bordering on Rwanda in hope of renewing offensive against Rwandan Tutsis. Other Hutu militias: more than 13 000, including several obscure groups known as Palipehutu, Frolina, CNDD/FDD and the Tigers.

RWANDA/RALLY FOR CONGOLESE DEMOCRACY (RCD)
Leaders: Paul Kagame for Rwanda; RCD leadership split between "politicals" around Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, and "militarists" around Emile Ilunga and

Deogracias Bugera. Reason for split appears to be Wamba dia Wamba's concern that, under Rwandan influence, the issue of security for Rwanda and the Banyamulenge is dominating what should be a broader struggle for democratisation in the Congo.
General Area of Operations: east-central Congo.
Forces: RCD: 45 000 to 50 000, mainly former soldiers in the army that initially brought Kabila to power, then turned against him. Rwandan armed forces: the pick of the belligerents; about 12 000 highly motivated and relatively well-trained troops in Congo, mainly on the front near Mbuji-Mayi; also operating in Kivu province bordering on Rwanda to clear out genocidal *interahamwe* and other Hutu militias. Unita: about 3 000 to 4 000 of the Angolan rebels are situated in rear bases in south-central Congo around Tshikapa; some are also involved in training Bakongo rebels operating under Rwandan officers near Mbanza-Ngungu in far south-western Congo. Burundi: about 1 000 Burundian Tutsis operating against Hutu militias mainly along the shores of Lake Tanganyika.

UGANDA/MLC
Leaders: Yoweri Museveni, for Uganda; Jean-Pierre Bamba, wealthy Congolese businessman and former Mobutu ally, for the MLC.
General area of operations: northern Congo.
Forces: MLC: 5 000 to 10 000 soldiers, mainly former pro-Mobutu troops and recruited largely in Equateur province. Uganda: 16 000 troops, stationed in, among other places, Bunia, Isiro and Buta.

forts in Kosovo, the UN appears to be reluctant to commit itself to sending in more than a contingent of 400 or 500 peace monitors and leaving the actual business of keeping the peace to belligerents mustered under the auspices of a joint military commission. And there are few indications that the United States, the only global power in a position to support a major peacekeeping operation, has sufficient interest to involve itself in a possibly irresolvable Third World conflict.

Even South Africa, whose President Thabo Mbeki earlier indicated a willingness to send in troops to secure the peace, appears to be backing down. Now, in the words of a security source quoted by monitoring agency Central Africa Watch: "South Africa still wants to play a role but a low-profile one."

Independent analysts have estimated that securing the peace would, conservatively estimated, demand between 15 000 and 50 000 troops. Analysts point out that disarming militias like the Rwandan Hutu *interahamwe* cannot be left to the good offices of their allies and comrades in arms — and that peace deals will almost certainly run aground if these provisions in the ceasefire agreement are not fulfilled.

In the case of Rwanda, the major backer for the rebel forces, the bottom line for disengagement is the disarming and repatriation of an estimated 40 000 Hutu *interahamwe* militias, many of them perpetrators of the 1994 genocide on Rwandan Tutsis. The *interahamwe* continues to be sheltered by the Kabila regime and to fight alongside Congo government troops.

Indeed, it was after Kabila called



for a genocide on Tutsis in Congo that the Rwandan-sponsored rebellion was launched nearly a year ago. More recent reports have linked the Hutu *interahamwe* militias to the Zimbabwean war effort, with intelligence filtering through of ongoing military training of Rwandan Hutus inside Zimbabwe as well as Congo.

Whether Kabila and his allies are able to and are willing to deliver the *interahamwe* could prove the decisive factor in the conflict. Unless they do, there is little doubt that Rwanda — whose strongman Paul Kagame hinted earlier this week, despite Rwanda's having signed the ceasefire agreement, that the war might yet be far from over — is unlikely to pull out of the territory.

Uganda, the other major backer of the Congo rebels, is also concerned primarily with its own security, and specifically with the expulsion of anti-Ugandan rebels, notably the

Sudanese-backed Lord's Resistance Army from bases inside Congo.

However, Ugandan enthusiasm for the war has diminished after the fragmentation of the rebel movement into the Rwandan-backed Goma faction and a Ugandan-backed Kisangani faction. Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni is also believed to have been under mounting diplomatic pressure from the US, his major international ally.

Like the Rwandans, Kabila's Angolan allies have reasons associated with their own security for their involvement in the conflict — and are equally unlikely to withdraw from the region until their particular concerns are convincingly addressed. Angolan involvement has from the start been motivated less by any real support of the Kabila regime than by its own civil war with Jonas Savimbi's Unita.

Angola first entered the war in re-

sponse to a marriage of military convenience between Unita and the Congo rebels, which had Unita launching attacks into Angola from bases inside the south-east of Congo. More recently, however, Unita diamond advisers have reportedly been brought in by Congo rebels to assist in diamond-mining operations in the central diamond fields.

By linking up with this source of supply, Angola fears, Unita could further supplement the diamond income that has funded its war effort for the past three decades. But, with Unita making advances inside Angola, the country's MPLA government will be satisfied with an arrangement that will secure its own borders — and a non-Unita-friendly government in Congo. In the short term, the presence of UN peacekeepers could guarantee such a situation.

Zimbabwe's case is markedly different. With opposition to the war reaching fever pitch at home and industrial unrest rising to levels that could well spill over into a real threat to President Robert Mugabe's hold on power, the Zimbabweans have for some months been looking for ways to pull out of a distant and increasingly unprofitable war.

All that has been missing has been the opportunity to save face and to secure financial compensation against an investment in the war which on occasion ran to an estimated \$1-million a day.

Both of these bottom lines appear to have been secured. Mineral concessions currently held by Zimbabwe have been guaranteed in terms of the ceasefire deal, and provision

made for a relatively small contingent of Zimbabwean troops to remain behind as part of a transitional arrangement.

Zimbabwe has indicated that it will pull out its approximately 10 000 combatant troops within three months. Following on the heels of troop pullouts by Kabila allies Namibia and Chad, the Zimbabwean pullout will almost certainly alter the balance of power in the region — and could prove the turning point in the conflict.

Indeed the envisaged ceasefire would leave Kabila's hold on power much diminished. With rebels currently in control of nearly all the eastern mineral fields, and the diamond centre of Mbuji-Mayi hotly contested, Kabila lacks the resources to wage war without external allies. In the first six months of this year, only 10% of budgeted government revenues in Congo were actually realised.

But though the writing is on the wall, it is unlikely that Kabila will voluntarily hand over power by subscribing in good faith to ceasefire agreements. It was after the former Rwandan-backed rebel leader faced massive internal protest on sweeping to power in 1996 that he reneged on undertakings to convene a national conference leading to democratic elections in Congo, instead proclaiming himself president.

He is even less likely to win through by democratic process today, and, like the Rwandese, has darkly hinted that it will be business as usual for the warmongers of the Great Lakes.

Sad thing is, he is probably right.

Current Affairs

CONGO

TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK ON PATH TO STABILITY

Principal backers sign peace deal while rebels split apart

The refusal by rebels of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to sign a peace deal in Lusaka last weekend denied southern African leaders a prize they were keen to display at the Organisation of African Unity summit in Algeria this week.

It would have been an auspicious entry on to the world stage for SA's Thabo Mbeki, attending his first summit as head of state, to have arrived with the deal under his belt. He has spent more time and effort on the DRC peace talks than on any other issue since his inauguration a month ago. His Foreign Minister, Nkosazana Zuma, has concentrated on little else since her appointment.

The peace accord, such as it is, was signed by DRC President Laurent Kabila, his backers Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola, and rebel backers Rwanda and Uganda. SA, Zambia, the OAU and the UN witnessed the deal.

The "agreement" calls for an immediate ceasefire, an international peacekeeping force deployed within four months, the withdrawal of all foreign troops, the disarming of guerrilla forces, formation of a national army made up of government and rebel forces, and the commencement of a national dialogue leading to elections.

It came a day after a similar agreement ending a gruesome eight-year civil war was signed between government and rebels in Sierra Leone. The two events were seen by some as the dawn of a new era for the continent.

But the agreement will not stick until the people who are doing the fighting agree to sign and lay down their arms.

Fighting continues in the DRC. It would be folly to send peace monitors there before the rebels resolved their differences.

The process hit a snag in Lusaka last Saturday, when Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, who early this year was ousted as leader of the main rebel group, the Rally

for Congolese Democracy (RCD), insisted on signing on behalf of the RCD. His successor as RCD leader, Emile Ilunga, thought he should sign.

The irony is that it took almost a year to convince Kabila to agree to face-to-face talks with his enemies. Kabila refused because, he argued, the rebels were merely pawns of Uganda and Rwanda.

The rebels have always insisted they were ready to seek a peaceful solution should Kabila agree to talks. But with that objective having been achieved, they failed to agree on who should sign it.

Suddenly Kabila, along with his minder, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, looks like the good guy. "Depending on how Kabila behaves from now on, he has the chance to gain the moral high ground," says Owen Sichone, acting director of the University of Cape Town's Centre for African Studies. "And that would deny the rebels the democratic credentials they

insisting on Kabila's immediate removal from power. He was in Algiers with a firmer spring in his step.

"Most of the heads of state at the summit will sympathise with Kabila. They're all wary of coups and guerrilla incursions," says Sichone. Similar sentiments were expressed by Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo: "We must condemn coups and let the violators know there is no room for them in our company."

Forty-five heads of state showed up, the biggest attendance at an OAU summit in a long time and a sign, perhaps, that calm may be returning to many African countries. Many African leaders tended in the past to fear being removed from power in their absence.

Obasanjo arrived at the summit straight from engineering the peace deal in Sierra Leone — a deal that many democrats have trouble swallowing.

Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) took to the bush after losing an election to a government led by Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, and for eight years plundered, maimed and killed civilians. Kabbah's government was kept in power by the West African peacekeeping force, Ecomog, led and paid for by Nigeria.

When Obasanjo came into power, he vowed to bring the soldiers back home because the war was too costly for Nigeria. Kabbah was forced to negotiate with the RUF, whose leader, Foday Sankoh, may now become a vice-president in a government of national unity.

By contrast, what seems to have happened in the DRC conflict is that all parties exhausted their resources. "It makes for a graceful exit for all involved," Sichone observes.

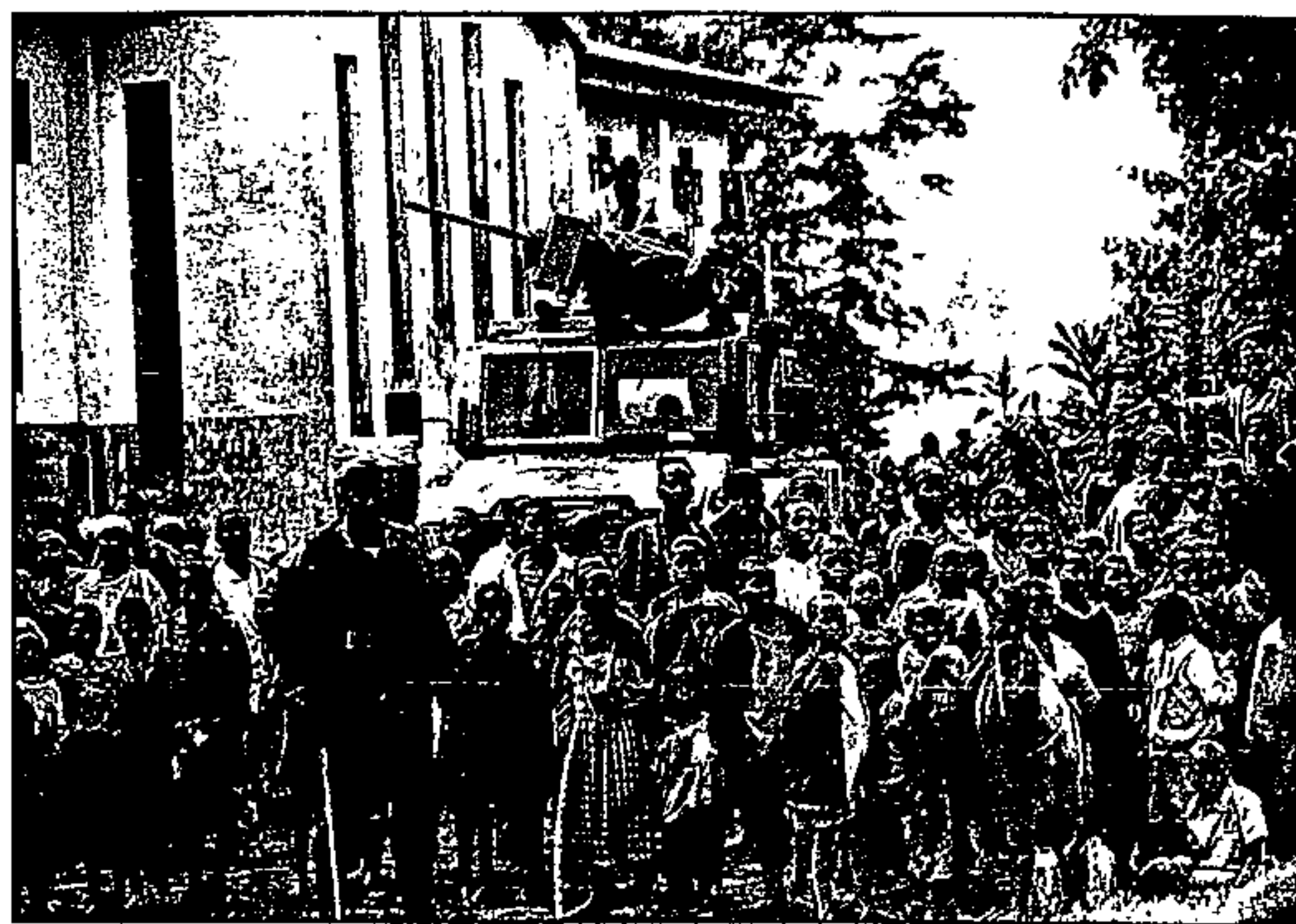
Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, for instance, wants to concentrate on problems with Sudan.

But the key to peace in the Great Lakes lies in Rwanda. The Tutsis now in power are a minority, and they will lose any democratic elections to

the Hutus, who were responsible for the 1994 Tutsi genocide before fleeing to the DRC.

Nearer home, the resolution of the DRC conflict will help relax the tension between SA and Zimbabwe — a good beginning for Mbeki's presidency.

Barney Mthombhozi



Change of power . . . chance of a graceful exit from conflict for all

have been claiming. They may have shot themselves in the foot."

Sichone says the weight of international opinion may yet force the rebels to sink their differences and sign.

While Kabila has been forced to acknowledge the legitimacy of the rebels, they in turn have compromised by not

Rebels urged to sign agreement

LUSAKA — The European Union (EU) on Saturday urged rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo to sign immediately the Lusaka ceasefire agreement endorsed by the six belligerent African countries involved in the conflict.

In a statement issued in Lusaka by the Finnish embassy, the EU appealed to the Rwandan and Ugandan governments to prevail on the Rally for Congolese Democracy leadership to settle their internal wrangles and sign the ceasefire agreement to foster peace in the Congo.

The EU warned that future relations with belligerent countries would be tied to respect for the ceasefire accord, and it could probably affect donor aid to countries that disregarded the Lusaka ceasefire agreement.

The EU said it would scrupulously follow the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and the respect for the accord by the belligerent countries and the rebels alike.

Finland issued the statement in its capacity as the president of the 16-nation EU, which provides financial aid to African countries for economic and social development.

The EU considered that the political credibility of the rebel leaders depended on their willingness to put the interests of the Congolese people before their personal leadership ambition.

"The EU reiterates that it considers the agreement reached in Lusaka as a crucial step towards restoration of peace in the Congo and the entire region," it said.

The EU would financially support the implementation of the ceasefire agreement provided the belligerent parties respected and implemented it.

The rebel faction led by Emile Ilunga and the Movement for the Liberation of Congo's Jean-Pierre Bemba have vowed to continue fighting, saying they were not part of the ceasefire agreement reached in Lusaka.

The rebels could not append their signatures to the ceasefire document because differences arose as to who was legitimate leader for the Rally for Congolese Democracy leadership.

The EU said it would facilitate the return of refugees and the reintegration of disaffected soldiers and other combatants and encourage national reconciliation. — Sapa-DPA.

(378)

BD 19/7/99

Congo fights on as envoys meet

LUSAKA — Envoys of nations with troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo began talks yesterday to set up a joint military commission to enforce a fragile ceasefire in the 11-month Congolese war as fighting continued.

The closed talks were chaired by Eric Silwamba, minister of state in the office of Zambian President Frederick Chiluba. A Ugandan official said Chiluba's trip to Kisangani was delayed until later this month. Zambia's leader is the main mediator appointed by southern African countries to end the war.

He was due to visit Kisangani last weekend to familiarise himself on the ground with the Congolese Rally for Democracy rebels' leadership dispute. The movement did

not sign a ceasefire document in Lusaka after disagreements about who should sign on its behalf — disputed leader Ernest Wamba dia Wamba or rival Emile Ilunga.

Silwamba said signatory nations yesterday formed a political commission of regional defence and foreign ministers to whom the military body would report.

The ceasefire was signed in Lusaka on July 10 by Congolese President Laurent Kabila and allies Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Uganda, backers of rebels trying to unseat him, also signed. Rebel leaders were not at yesterday's meeting.

United Nations (UN) ambassador to the Lusaka talks Bernan Dinka said yesterday the absence

of the rebels would not affect the establishment of the military commission because rebel leaders agreed to its composition though they had not signed the ceasefire.

The ceasefire terms charge the commission with policing the disengagement of hostile forces and probing alleged violations until UN or Organisation of African Unity peacekeepers are deployed.

Two Zimbabwean planes bombed Ikela in eastern Congo at the weekend, rebels said yesterday. They claimed that they took two villages there.

Official radio reported shooting in the northwest Congolese border town of Zongo, prompting nearly 1 000 people to flee to adjacent Bangui. — Sapa-AFP.

PD 21/7/99

(348)

Kabila abandons SADC summit

By 18/8/99

(358)

(279A)

MAPUTO: Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila left here unexpectedly yesterday after informal talks preceding a regional summit failed to deliver a breakthrough in the search for peace in his country.

Meanwhile, the leaders of Uganda and Rwanda yesterday agreed a ceasefire to end three days of fighting between their troops in the DRC city of Kisangani. The deal came after marathon talks between Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame.

Mozambique President Joaquim Chissano told crowds who gathered at a rally to hear leaders of the Southern African

Development Community (SADC) that Kabila had gone home suddenly "because of the security situation in his country".

Congo Justice Minister Mwenze Kongolo said Kabila felt his colleagues in the 14-nation SADC had failed to accept the reality of the year-old conflict in the former Zaire. Saying he spoke for Kabila, Kongolo said: "The fighting in Kisangani between Rwanda and Uganda is abundant proof that there are no rebels in the Congo only aggressors."

He said Kabila had told SADC leaders that the July 10 truce signed in Lusaka had been irretrievably damaged by continuing rebel activity and conflict between

the rebels' allies, Uganda and Rwanda. "As far as we are concerned, the Lusaka Protocol is dead and the international community and the SADC must concentrate on getting the aggressors out of the Congo," said Kongolo.

"They (Rwanda and Uganda) are fighting in Kisangani over gold and diamonds. This is equivalent to highway robbery, which the international community must be bold enough to condemn. It is understood that several leaders — including outgoing SADC chairperson, President Thabo Mbeki — met over an informal dinner and talked into the early hours of yesterday. Mbeki's spokesperson, Parks

Mankahlana, said the President had spoken separately to the presidents of Uganda and Rwanda, whose countries are not SADC members, about the conflict between their forces in the rebel-held DRC city of Kisangani.

Kabila met President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, President Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola and Namibian President Sam Nujoma before the dinner to discuss the Kisangani situation and brief them on new developments. Zambian President Frederick Chiluba, mandated by the SADC to seek peace in the DRC, said efforts to revive the collapsing Lusaka accord would dominate today's SADC summit. — Reuters