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PRESENT AT THE CREATION?
Canada, United Nations Intervention, and the Congo as a Failed State, 1960–64

Kevin A. Spooner

American secretary of state Dean Acheson could justifiably give his autobiography the impressive title *Present at the Creation*. His years at the helm of the State Department, in the critical post–Second World War and early Cold War period, were undeniably pivotal and speak to the diplomat's clear and assertive appreciation of this. Borrowing his title, however, is done in a spirit of irony and with none of Acheson's self-assurance. Few states or individuals would take pride in any role, intended or unintended, in the creation of a failed state; yet in the case of the Congo, Canada may well have been witness, and even unwittingly contributed, to a critical moment when the seeds of a failing state were sown.

Within weeks of the Congo's independence from Belgium, serious political turmoil rocked the new state and challenged the nascent government's authority to maintain order. After the United Nations was asked to intervene, the first of many requests for various forms of assistance arrived in Ottawa from New York, and Canadian peacekeepers were then soon present in the Congo. This chapter addresses the implications of Canadian involvement in the Congo crisis of the early 1960s, and particularly

explores Canada's role in efforts to develop a program to retrain and reorganize the Armée nationale congolaise (Congolese National Army, or ANC), identified by the international community as a necessary measure to prevent military interference in the Congo's political development. Particularly among Western policymakers, there was a key, if ethnocentric, assumption that the armed forces of newly independent African nations had to be trained to respect the development of democracy and its related governmental institutions. Notably, this was not an exclusively Western point of view. In 1963, when Congolese prime minister Cyrille Adoula visited Washington and met with American president John F. Kennedy, retraining the ANC was the principal focus of their conversation, and both equally recognized that a disciplined and well-organized Congolese military would help to ensure long-term stability in the Congo. Conversely, the two leaders also shared concerns over the potential consequences for the Congo's future of an undisciplined and unrestrained military.

Despite repeated requests, Canada ultimately chose not to contribute to any large-scale plan to reorganize and retrain the ANC. The international community's failure to effectively address the need for ANC retraining and reorganization left the political evolution of a newly independent Congo vulnerable to military interference at a key period in the nation's development—a weakness Joseph Mobutu was then well positioned to exploit.[1] Mobutu, as the ANC's chief of staff in the Congo's first years of independence, very effectively used his station and resources to shape the course of political events at key junctures and, by 1965, had seized power in a coup that established his authoritarian regime, which lasted more than three decades.

As many of the chapters in this book demonstrate, the very discourse of failed and fragile states, and the related debates over how best to understand their origins and address their consequences, are profoundly complicated. Using such loaded terminology certainly has the dangerous potential to shape international responses that ultimately become self-fulfilling prophecy, a real concern highlighted and addressed by David Webster in his contribution to this volume. That said, few would argue with applying the label of "failed," "failing," or "crisis" state to the nation now recognized as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). By the 1990s, the DRC was spiralling into a fragile state that was increasingly unable to provide a stable and secure socio-political framework, leading to a breakdown

in order, impossible living conditions, and ultimately the deaths of more than five million people in one decade. Perennially appearing on *Foreign Policy*'s index of failed states, the DRC finds itself still near the top of the 2013 list: in second position, an unenviable increase in rank from previous years.[2] One of the most systematic and well-known studies defining and quantifying state failure suggests the Congo has in fact experienced state failure for more than half its existence as an independent nation (1960–65, 1977–79, 1984, and 1991–present) and identifies political and military challenges to the Mobutu regime, and its eventual collapse, as key factors in the last and most prolonged period of difficulties.[3]

The reality and consequences of state failure in the Congo may be unambiguous, but the origins of this complex situation are less obvious. If it is accepted that there is a continuum of fragility ending in state failure for the Congo, when did the trouble start? In other words, when was this failed state's point of *creation*? In reality, for the Congo, there is no shortage of potential starting points. The near pathological colonial reign of Belgian King Leopold II, documented well by Adam Hochschild, comes immediately to mind.[4] However, as the Congo's most recent and violent tribulations are tied much more directly to the collapse of Mobutu's regime, it is logical to seek out the roots of this failed state in his rise to power. For this, it is important to turn to the days immediately after the Congo achieved independence in June 1960, when the new state erupted in civil and political turmoil. At the request of the newly formed Congolese government, the United Nations dispatched a military and civilian peacekeeping force, the Opération des Nations Unies au Congo (ONUC), to help restore law and order. While the maintenance of law and order was a consistent ONUC objective, evident in the mission's mandate from the outset, the UN Security Council soon also recognized that it was critical to retrain and reorganize the ANC in order to protect the new state's political development from military interference.

It is worth spending a moment to review the relevant UN resolutions. From 1960 to 1961, five Security Council resolutions were passed and an additional supporting resolution was adopted by an emergency session of the General Assembly, meeting from 17 to 20 September 1960. From its earliest response, in the very first two Security Council resolutions, the UN addressed both the role of the Congolese military and the need to restore order. First, Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld was authorized
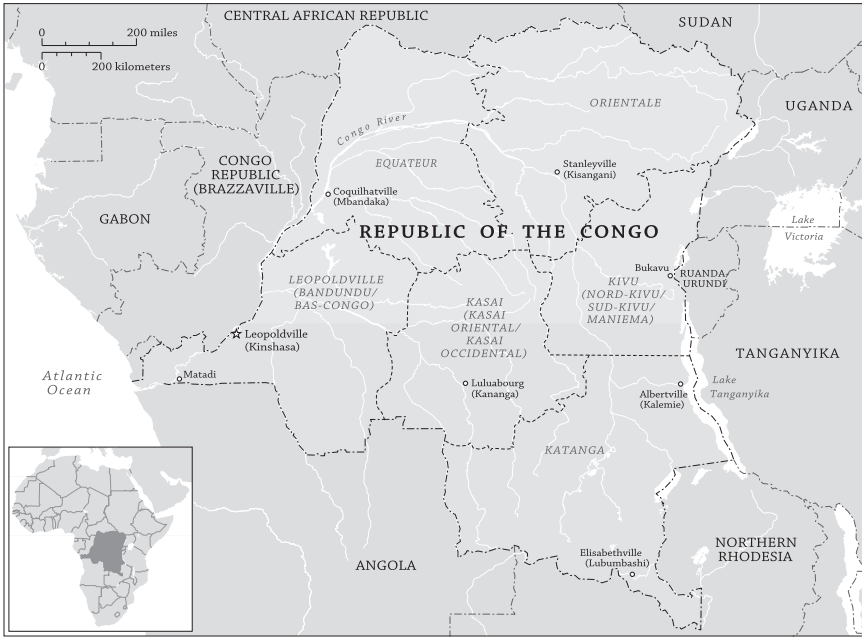
Figure 1: Map. (Credit: Marilyn Croot)

to provide the Congolese government with military support to enable the security forces to carry out their role in maintaining order. Second, the UN recognized that "the complete restoration of law and order" in the Congo would contribute to international stability, so that all countries were urged not to take any action that would undermine or impede the Congolese from restoring "law and order."[5] The provisions of these resolutions were reaffirmed by a subsequent Security Council motion passed at the beginning of August.[6]

By early 1961, the Congo situation had deteriorated further—especially as a result of the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the first Congolese prime minister. At this point, the Security Council became deeply concerned at the prospect of "widespread civil war and bloodshed" and by the "general absence of the rule of law in the Congo." Once again, provisions in earlier resolutions were reaffirmed, but the Security Council now also urged "that Congolese armed units and personnel should be reorganized and brought under discipline and control, and arrangements made on

impartial and equitable bases to that end and with a view to the elimination of any possibility of interference by such units and personnel in the political life of the Congo."[7] A final resolution was passed in November 1961, as fighting erupted between ONUC personnel and the military forces of the breakaway province of Katanga, who were supported by a legion of foreign mercenaries. Once again, the earlier resolutions were invoked and the Security Council unambiguously declared its full support for the central Congolese government, assuring it of UN support for its efforts to maintain law, order, and national integrity.[8]

Taken together, these resolutions demonstrate not only the international community's concern for the breakdown of law and order within the Congo, but also quite specifically the potential role—both good and bad—of the Congolese armed forces in contributing to either the continued turmoil or future stability of the state. In part, this focus on the ANC can be traced to the early days post-independence. The immediate cause of the July 1960 crisis was an uprising within the Force Publique, the Congolese gendarmerie inherited from the colonial period. Along with the Force came a cadré of Belgian officers, including the commander, Lt. Gen. Emile Janssens. The very day the revolt began, Janssens had met with officers and scrawled the phrase "before independence = after independence" on a blackboard.[9] The Congolese rank-and-file quickly and violently demonstrated their unwillingness to cooperate with this arrogant, colonial attempt to carry on "business as usual."

As the mutiny sparked wider political unrest and violence, most notably in the capital but also in other parts of the country, the new Congolese government of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and President Joseph Kasavubu immediately moved to Africanize the Force; it was at this point that Mobutu, who had befriended Lumumba while the two were in Brussels in the late 1950s, became its chief of staff. A short two months later, as a brief period of cooperation between Kasavubu and Lumumba came to an abrupt end and the two leaders fought one another for political control, Mobutu took to the airwaves and announced that the army was temporarily taking power. This, Mobutu's first *coup d'état*, was said to be an attempt to neutralize both politicians, but it effectively strengthened Kasavubu and weakened Lumumba. The coup certainly heightened awareness internationally for the need to retrain the ANC to achieve greater distance

Figure 2: Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba meeting with Prime Minister John Diefenbaker in Ottawa to discuss the prospects of Canadian technical assistance for the fragile new country. 30 July 1960. (Credit: Ted Grant/Library and Archives Canada, e011074241)

between the military and government, and to lessen the likelihood of any future political interference.

The integral role the Canadian Armed Forces played in ONUC—providing vital signals support, serving at force headquarters, and organizing air operations—helps to explain why there were repeated bilateral and multilateral attempts to engage Canada directly in the ANC retraining and reorganization effort. The earliest attempt to involve Canada actually originated with Ghana, just weeks after the Congo Crisis erupted. President Kwame Nkrumah hoped Canada might provide twenty

French-speaking soldiers to cooperate in an initiative to train Congolese cadets at the Ghana Military Academy. Ghanaian motives were immediately questioned. A suspicious member of the Prime Minister's Office observed, "In free Africa, as in free Asia, power politics are regarded as the monopoly of the West—or, at least, of East and West," but added, "can it be, nevertheless, that a game of African power-politics, with strictly African goals and within African regional confines, is also emerging?"[10] The Department of National Defence was also cool to the idea, citing a shortage of French-speaking personnel, and the Department of External Affairs expressed concern at the bilateral rather than multilateral nature of the Ghanaian proposal.

The idea was raised in Cabinet, but by then a competing, and more welcome, training request had arrived from Secretary-General Hammarskjöld. By the end of August 1960, Canada had officially declined Ghana's request and had informed Hammarskjöld that between fifty and one hundred personnel could be provided for the UN scheme. The secretary-general then temporarily shelved the plan, as he dealt with urgent, fast-moving political events taking place in the Congo.[11] This episode was significant, though, because it revealed a key dilemma that ultimately plagued all subsequent efforts to reorganize and retrain the ANC: should this be accomplished through the UN or by direct, bilateral arrangements with the Congolese?

The next approach to Canada for training assistance came directly from the Congolese. It, too, raised the same troubling question of whether military assistance should be provided bilaterally or under a UN umbrella. The Canadian consul general in Léopoldville, William Wood, received inquiries about military studies in Canada, and he was aware that Mobutu had approached a number of Western embassies to discuss officer training. By September 1960, though, the UN General Assembly has passed a resolution that explicitly called upon "all States to refrain from the direct and indirect provision of arms or other materials of war and military personnel and other assistance for military purposes in the Congo during the temporary period of military assistance through the United Nations, except upon the request of the United Nations through the Secretary-General."[12] Once again, Ottawa decided to steer clear of bilateral requests for assistance but remained open to the idea of helping the UN with plans it was developing for an officers' training school located in the Congo,

even though this was not an agreeable solution to Mobutu, who preferred the idea of sending candidates abroad for training.[13]

Reform and training of the ANC became an issue again in early February 1961, when Hammarskjöld visited the Congo and concluded that a more active approach was needed. He was supported in this conviction by the new US administration of President John F. Kennedy. In a statement to the Security Council when it reconvened that month, Hammarskjöld called for a number of far-reaching measures, including "the reorganization of the national army, preventing it, or units thereof, from intervening in the present political conflicts in the Congo."[14] He was effectively calling for the disarmament of the ANC, even though the Congolese opposed this. In any case, news soon broke that Patrice Lumumba had been assassinated, and the political upheaval surrounding the deposed prime minister's demise quickly overshadowed any controversy about ANC retraining.

At first, the Congolese authorities greeted Security Council Resolution 161 (1961), passed in the wake of Lumumba's murder, as tantamount to a declaration of war—particularly given its provisions related to the ANC. However, in the months following the resolution, Hammarskjöld dispatched emissaries who managed to smooth over relations. It was in this new spirit of cooperation that Mobutu and the secretary-general's acting special representative, Mekki Abbas, finally reached an agreement that would see ONUC organize the training of ANC officers. Mobutu stipulated that instructors would have to speak French and be either French or Canadian.

Michel Gauvin, by this time Canada's consul general in Léopoldville, having learned of the agreement from a reliable ONUC source, immediately contacted Ottawa. Canada, he presumed, would seriously consider the request if it was raised in the Secretary-General's Advisory Committee on the Congo and if the "more extreme Afro-Asian members" agreed to the plan. He was right. In Ottawa, Secretary of State for External Affairs Howard Green indicated that he was "prepared to give full backing" to the use of Canadian officers as instructors for the ANC. National Defence was already engaged in preliminary planning for a retraining scheme. With both External Affairs and National Defence backing Canadian participation, the UN then failed again to follow through with a retraining plan. Months later, Gauvin met with a frustrated Mobutu, who was still waiting for a response to his request for Canadian or French instructors. Canada,

Mobutu said, was welcome in the Congo. He wondered why Ottawa was so careful not to offend the Afro-Asians. Gauvin reassured him there could be any number of reasons why Canada had not provided officers; the reality was that Canada was still waiting for an official UN request because, to comply with existing UN resolutions, all military assistance had to be channelled through the organization. The matter was dropped and not raised again until September.[15]

That fall, the UN finally approached Canada with a request to provide French-speaking personnel to assist with plans to reorganize the ANC, a request endorsed by the Americans who instructed their Ottawa embassy to ask External Affairs for its "most sympathetic consideration."[16] However, National Defence now proved less optimistic and enthusiastic about the provision of bilingual personnel, concerned about the impact on its other commitments. Before this new attitude could be communicated to External Affairs, open hostilities broke out in Katanga, and Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, en route to the Congo to help end the fighting, died when his airplane crashed.

Overtaken again by events, plans for reorganizing the ANC were suspended until General Iyassu Mengesha, the senior military adviser to the Congolese government, raised them directly with Gauvin in November. He asked Canada to provide eleven officers, and even threatened to resign if the UN did not take action to establish the training school. "If Canada replied affirmatively and quickly," General Iyassu thought, "the U.N. would be willing to fill the most important positions by Canadian officers, leaving other appointments to other nationalities."[17] Given National Defence's reluctance, External Affairs decided not to raise the issue in New York. If the UN broached it, the diplomats would advise the Secretariat that Canada was unlikely to provide the necessary personnel.

The issue did arise again in December, when acting Secretary-General U Thant directly asked Prime Minister John Diefenbaker for fifteen French-speaking officers to assist in the training of the Congolese army. In advising Diefenbaker, Air Chief Marshal Frank R. Miller, chair of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, expressed his reluctance to stretch the French-speaking officer corps any further than it already was; National Defence expected that training the ANC would be a lengthy commitment, so while the request was not rejected outright, it was abundantly clear that the military was not keen. External Affairs drew attention to the request's

advantages: retraining the Congolese army would eventually permit the withdrawal of ONUC; providing assistance would be consistent with Canada's support of ONUC and its policy of helping the Congolese help themselves; aiding the Congo would demonstrate that Canadian assistance in Africa was not exclusively for English-speaking countries; and Canada was one of the very few acceptable sources of French-speaking instructors who could exert a Western influence on the Congolese. An uncertain Cabinet reviewed these arguments on 28 December but postponed a final decision because Defence Minister Douglas Harkness was absent.[18]

Under increasing pressure from the Congolese government to address the training issue, the UN pressed Ottawa for a decision. In the Congo Advisory Committee, UN Under-Secretary for Special Political Affairs Ralph Bunche revealed that both Canada and Switzerland had been approached for officers, but the Swiss had turned down the request. "Everything now depended on Canada," according to Bunche.[19] On 26 January, Cabinet debated the merits of providing assistance. Howard Green argued in favour of providing officer instructors; Harkness opposed the plan. The position of the minister of national defence prevailed, primarily because fighting in Katanga highlighted the Congo's political instability and raised doubts as to the wisdom of sending more Canadians. UN Secretary-General U Thant was told no French-speaking officers with the required qualifications were available.[20]

It did not end there, however. U Thant persisted. In a telegram to Diefenbaker, he pleaded, "We are so desperately in need of French-speaking officers for this purpose that I feel that I must renew my appeal to you in a modified form as sole means of avoiding necessity of abandoning training project altogether and informing Congolese of our inability to assist them in this training."[21] The UN launched a lobbying offensive. Bunche approached General E. L. M. Burns, then serving as Canada's principal advisor on disarmament. The two were very well acquainted, having worked closely together while Burns led the United Nations Emergency Force in the late 1950s. Bunche asked Burns to speak directly with the Canadian army on the UN's behalf. Bunche also lobbied William Barton, a diplomat at Canada's Permanent Mission in New York. Sounding utterly desperate, Bunche stressed his hope that Canada would come through with the required officers. The UN, he added, would be happy to use retired or reserve officers, and was no longer expecting Canada to assume sole

responsibility for the training mission. Diefenbaker was not unsympathetic, but the prime minister was also unwilling to press this issue with Harkness if the minister felt unable to make any officers available. During a further discussion in Cabinet, the original decision not to provide any officers from the active list was confirmed, but ministers agreed to tell the secretary-general that the government was looking into the possibility of making available six or seven officers from the retired list.[22]

By this time, both Mobutu and Congolese prime minister Cyrille Adoula were growing impatient with the UN. Mobutu, in particular, was opposed to the idea of a school operated by a mixed group of officers from various nations. Adoula wrote to ONUC HQ, "It appears to me that [Canada] which has never been a colonial power which has no political or economic interests in Africa and which possesses good military schools could furnish these few instructors who are needed."[23] Mobutu again spoke directly to Gauvin, asking the consul general to make one last appeal to Ottawa. Though some in the Department of External Affairs began to question the wisdom of Canadian involvement in a school operated by a number of nations, especially if Mobutu was opposed to this UN approach, Ottawa still asked the Permanent Mission in New York to find out the specific appointments, ranks, and qualifications for the six or seven officers Canada could provide. Whether the Congolese government and Mobutu would agree to UN plans for a school operated by officers of various nationalities remained to be seen.[24]

The final round of conflict between ONUC and the separatist elements in Katanga again interrupted the efforts to reorganize the ANC. The project was revisited in early 1963, once the secession was at an end, and attention was focused more directly on what needed to be accomplished to facilitate the withdrawal of ONUC. This time, the United States took the initiative. A plan was developed based on information provided by Colonel Michael Greene of the US Army, who had been dispatched to the Congo the previous year to assess ANC requirements. The Greene plan, as it came to be known, called for a series of bilateral aid programs to train the various services within the Congolese military, all coordinated by the United Nations. Canada, Belgium, Italy, Norway, and Israel were asked to participate. In the ensuing months, Canada was asked to provide training for both officers and communications units, and the senior officer to oversee the entire training mission. Washington, Brussels, and

Léopoldville pressed Ottawa to agree to a Canadian contribution. From Léopoldville, Gauvin reported that Mobutu appeared unwilling to take no for an answer: "Where there is a will there is a way," the Congolese general insisted.[25]

Both National Defence and External Affairs immediately raised the multilateral red flag, arguing that Canada should contribute only if military assistance was directed by and through the UN. Moreover, they argued, the Greene plan appeared problematic because it relied heavily on NATO countries. Canada's permanent representative at the UN, Ambassador Paul Tremblay, was instructed to speak to U Thant and to suggest that African nations, such as Nigeria and Tunisia, be included. The ambassador told the secretary-general that any request for Canadian assistance would only be considered by Ottawa if it came from him and was supported by the Congolese government. Notably, when U Thant subsequently raised the plan in the Congo Advisory Committee, he framed the effort as a program of bilateral assistance, with the UN serving as an umbrella, and guided by a coordinating group of African states, including Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Tunisia.

As anticipated, the plan now ran into political difficulties. Tremblay reported on the Advisory Committee meeting, noting the African and Middle Eastern members "found it psychologically and politically difficult" to approve the plan.[26] The African states were clear: either they should be included in the actual training mission or the plan should be developed entirely on a bilateral basis without any UN involvement. Not including the UN, however, directly contradicted Canada's precondition for participation.

Very quickly, the secretary-general found himself under considerable pressure, from both the Communist Soviet Union and a group of African and Asian states, to keep the UN out of this ANC retraining plan. Indeed, after a further meeting with U Thant, Ambassador Tremblay came to believe that the secretary-general would have to "wash his hands" of it.[27] This left the UN with a significant dilemma. Ideally, the ANC needed to be retrained and reorganized before UN forces withdrew, but political realities now seemed to rule out both direct bilateral military aid and aid provided through the UN. Before the Advisory Committee met again to consider the matter, Prime Minister Adoula wrote to U Thant, insisting that any attempt to prevent the Congolese government from securing

bilateral assistance would "constitute an unjustifiable and intolerable restriction on its freedom of action."[28] African members of the committee were divided: some argued that the Congolese government could not solicit bilateral assistance so long as ONUC was present in the Congo, while others came to share the Canadian view that the Congolese should be allowed to make their own arrangements if the UN was unable or unwilling to meet their needs. In the end, noting the lack of unanimity in the committee, Canadian officials correctly anticipated that U Thant would not object to bilateral military training assistance for the Congo. In effect, the secretary-general turned a blind eye to training programs later established with Belgium's assistance. In a report to the Security Council, U Thant simply said, "I have no official knowledge of subsequent developments."[29] Although this diplomatic maneuver enabled the Congo to enlist the help it needed to retrain its army, it also closed the door to any possibility that Canada would provide assistance to the Congo on a multilateral basis through the United Nations.

Though Canada had consistently demonstrated a preference for multilateral over bilateral military assistance, the Congolese persisted in their pursuit of Canadian help. Prime Minister Adoula favoured Canadian support on the grounds that Canada was considered "a non-colonial country politically acceptable to most African opinion."[30] Moreover, he did not want Belgium to dominate completely the training program. The United States also pressed Canada to participate. In Washington, the assistant secretary of state for African affairs, G. Mennen Williams, approached Canadian Ambassador Charles Ritchie and intimated that both Italy and Norway were awaiting a Canadian decision before determining their own participation. Gary Harman, the Canadian diplomat at the embassy in Washington responsible for consultation with the US State Department on African issues, later recalled that the United States was pushing the retraining proposal and counting on Canada to be more supportive.[31] A meeting in Washington between Kennedy and Mobutu in May 1963, when the issue of ANC training was raised and the president asked what steps the United States was taking to secure the participation of other countries, undoubtedly prompted the American overtures.[32] After returning to the Congo, Mobutu grew increasingly impatient. In an interview with the Congolese press, he stated, "Italy, Canada and Norway

Figure 3: Ottawa justified its refusal to join an ANC training mission by citing the substantial burdens already shouldered by Canadian Signalmen in the Congo. (Credit: Department of National Defence/Library and Archives Canada, e010786584)

seem to be hesitating. And I have [the] impression that these countries will not do anything as long as [the] UN does not confer its patronage on this organisation."[33]

A definite decision not to participate in the training of the ANC was finally taken in the fall of 1963 by Prime Minister Lester Pearson's new Liberal government. By then, the UN had decided to extend ONUC's stay in the Congo through to mid-1964. Canadian peacekeepers, because of the key communications and administrative tasks they performed within the peacekeeping mission, were expected to stay until the end. This extended commitment, in addition to an affirmative response to an ONUC

request to provide an officer to serve as chief of staff, were cited as the reasons why Canada could not commit further military resources for service in the Congo. In October, Prime Minister Adoula met with President Kennedy, who promised personally to impress upon Canada the importance of assisting with ANC retraining. However, regardless of the pressures applied by Washington, the following month Gauvin in Léopoldville received instructions from Ottawa, advising the consul general to express Canada's regret at being unable to meet the Congolese request, but in doing so to make reference to the "considerable amount of time, manpower and money which [Canada] has expended in Congo to date as evidence of our continuing concern for [the] future stability of [the] country."[34]

From the outset of the Congo crisis, the association between the Congolese military and state stability was a concern for the international community. Mobutu's first *coup d'état* in 1960 illustrated how easily the military could be used to influence the political direction of the country. Was this the point of creation of a failed state? It has been argued that this coup condemned the Congo to political instability and dependence, a situation that even now requires "the Congolese leadership to reorient the military toward external defense by keeping it out of domestic law enforcement" as a means to "constrain the military to stay out of politics by making it uncomfortable in power."[35] While Mobutu did relinquish control for a brief time after the first coup, the precedent was certainly set. Canada's first ambassador to the Congo, J. C. Gordon Brown, was present in the capital for Mobutu's second coup in 1965. He recalls being summoned, along with other members of the diplomatic corps, to meet with Mobutu. According to Brown, Mobutu denied his takeover was a military *coup d'état*, even as he "wryly" acknowledged that the martial music on Radio Leo might have "convinced listeners otherwise."[36]

As an historical case study, this episode is important because it illustrates some of the fundamental issues still associated with international intervention in fragile, failing, and failed states. While ONUC accomplished almost all the objectives established by its mandate, its failure to deal effectively with retraining and reorganizing the ANC from the earliest days of the Congo crisis helped to create a situation whereby Mobutu could readily use his position within the military to seize power and to establish his kleptocratic regime. In this respect, the UN, and Canada as a member nation actively engaged in the failed and protracted diplomacy

related to ANC retraining, must shoulder some responsibility for the outcome of events in the Congo. But in this failure, there are also lessons.

Canada's appeal as a potential contributor to so many of the plans for ANC retraining can be attributed partly to the Canadian Forces' bilingual capabilities, but also, critically, to the perception that Canada, though of the West, was not a colonial power. Canada's disinterestedness was key. Without an obvious or hidden agenda in the Congo, Canada was a nation capable of acting without pursuing self-interested motivations; this explains both its attractiveness to the Congolese as a non-threatening contributor/partner, and the persistent and pressing requests for Canadian participation. This does, however, raise an interesting dilemma for current foreign policy. Today much emphasis is placed on self-interest in assessing policy options. Yet intervention in fragile or failing states might best be accomplished through cooperation with nations that have no vested interests—beyond broadly shared humanitarian objectives—in the state concerned. This paradox should be resolved by reconsidering the degree to which self-interest must consistently and universally be applied as the most important determinant in foreign policy.

This episode also demonstrates Canada's clear preference in this period for addressing international crises in newly independent states through multilateral institutions, the UN in particular. This, too, resulted in a particular policy paradox for Canada—this time with respect to sovereignty. Intervention by the international community, even when done at the request of a nation, can be taken as an indication that the state is incapable of governing itself. This was a highly sensitive issue for countries that had only just achieved independence, but remains a point of concern for nations today. It is not unreasonable to expect that states would attempt to protect sovereignty and freedom of action when confronting—indeed, even when welcoming—international intervention. This was most in evidence in discussions over whether military retraining assistance should be provided on a bilateral or multilateral basis. The Congolese government vociferously argued for its right to obtain bilateral assistance to retrain the ANC, but faced stiff opposition in the UN Secretary-General's Congo Advisory Committee, where some members insisted on a multilateral program. Canada was caught in the middle: there was little enthusiasm in Ottawa for a bilateral aid program, and a clear preference in many quarters for schemes organized through the United Nations; but the Canadian

government was also supportive of the principle of the Congo's right to secure bilateral assistance, if the UN did not deliver—even if Ottawa had no intention of contributing. This is but one specific example of how intervention in fragile states can be complicated by sovereignty, and in the case of Canada, how a clear preference for multilateralism can sometimes have unintended consequences.

By the summer of 1964, Howard Green had been out of office for months, having been defeated in the 1963 election. He stayed current with world events, though, and was a regular contributor to the *Victoria Colonist*. As ONUC prepared to leave the Congo, Green wrote in his column: "If it turns out that the Congolese authorities cannot cope with the situation which arises upon the withdrawal of the United Nations force the result will be severe criticism of the United Nations and a verdict around the world that it has failed in the Congo. This despite some excellent achievements during the years the force was in the country."[37] Green could not have been more correct. For the most part, ONUC had managed to carry out its complex mandate. But it failed in one important respect: the retraining and reorganization of the ANC. Just as Green predicted, all of ONUC's successes were soon overshadowed and forgotten when, less than two years after its last peacekeepers left, Mobutu's second coup established a ruthless and corrupt dictatorship that endured for more than three decades.

Notes

1   Joseph-Desiré Mobutu is better known as Mobutu Sese Seko; his regime ruled the Congo from 1965 to 1997. In the early 1970s, Mobutu "Africanized" names—both his personal name and many place names. The country became Zaire, and many cities' names were changed (e.g., Léopoldville became Kinshasa). To avoid confusion, and because this chapter addresses the period 1960–64, I will employ names commonly in use at that time.

2   "The Failed States Index," http://http://fsi.fundforpeace.org/rankings-2013-sortable (accessed 14 November 2015).

3   Jack A. Goldstone et al., *State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings* (McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation, 2000), 112, http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/ (accessed 20 April 2012). Though the methodology of this study's approach has been challenged because of its broad and inclusive definition of state failure, its Congo

findings are consistent with widely supported views of that country. For a critique, see Jonathan Di John, "The Concept, Causes and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of the Literature and Agenda for Research with Specific Reference to Sub-Saharan Africa," *European Journal of Development Research* 22, no. 1 (2010): 15–16.

4   Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

5   United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Resolution 143 (1960) [S/4387]; UNSC Res 145 (1960) [S/4405].

6   UNSC Res 146 (1960) [S/4426].

7   UNSC Res 161 (1961) [S/4741].

8   UNSC Res 169 (1961) [S/5002].

9   Catherine Hoskyns, *The Congo since Independence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 88.

10   Diefenbaker Canada Centre, John G. Diefenbaker Papers, File MG1/XII/C/114: "Memo for Prime Minister: Crisis in Congo and the Role of Ghana, August 1960."

11   Kevin A. Spooner, *Canada, the Congo Crisis, and UN Peacekeeping, 1960–64* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 88.

12   United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Resolution 1474 (ES-IV).

13   Spooner, *Canada, the Congo Crisis, and UN Peacekeeping*, 102.

14   Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote, eds., *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations*, vol. 5, *Dag Hammarskjöld 1960–61* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 332–36.

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