3. CONFLICT OVER MINERAL WEALTH: UNDERSTANDING THE SECOND INVASION OF THE DRC

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3.1 Introduction

The conflicts which are afflicting the Great Lakes Region today is a continuation of the process of dispossession and disempowerment of the people of this region by European mineral interests which started with the great Scramble for Africa in 1884-85. The story of how this was accomplished has been beautifully told by Thomas Pakenham in his book: *The Scramble for Africa.*[1] The real secret in the understanding of the conflict in the DRC is therefore to unpack the real forces that continue to exploit the mineral and other resources of the DRC and its neighbours. These real forces are continuing to maintain the balance of power in their favour together with those of their African agents against the interests of the native people of the region through a series of alliances and networks. This is what is behind the suffering and insecurity of the people of the Great Lakes region. This chapter locates these forces within the context of the global economy and the effects it has in generating internal regional, ethnic and racial hatred.

We must at the outset turn briefly to the history of the colonisation of the Congo in order to capture some of the moments that set in motion the background to the present conflict and crisis in the Great Lakes Region. Pakenham reminds us that when the European powers met in Berlin in 1885 to carve out Africa for themselves in what was then called the Scramble of Africa, what came to be referred to as the Congo Free State was central to the whole settlement in this division. Congo was looked upon as a free-for-all zone for exploitation by the capitalist world. King Leopold's only commitment, according to the colonial textbook version, was a philanthropic concern for the natives who were in great need of a 'civilising mission'. But E D Morel and his Congo Reform Association began to campaign that this 'free state' must become a Belgian colony of the Congo for the benefit of the Belgian nation alone. Even though alliances for their colonial conquest were established with the United States (US) and Britain, King Leopold and the Belgian State who saw the openings of vast riches from the territory, concurred with Morel and turned the Congo into an exclusive Belgian "possession".

King Leopold's grip on the Congo was overturned with the rise of the Belgian nationalists who took control of political power. As Belgium weakened, the US began to develop its own interests in the region which necessitated its direct intervention after the Belgians were forced to abandon their colonial project. A new situation was opened up after Congo's independence in 1960. For one thing, the US was then one of the two superpowers. In this new situation the US began to play a significant role through the United Nations (UN) to bring "order" to the country after the scramble led to chaos. The Belgium International Association for Africa project had given way to the orgy and violence of rubber collectors and mineral diggers. The US continued to play the role of a global trouble-shooter while it grabbed whatever could be grabbed in its own trail. Now in the Great Lakes conflict, the US appeared to be playing the same old game of redrawing the map of the Great Lakes Region of Africa with new agents. The mission remained the same: of civilising and modernising Africa, except that the new game was called "globalisation".

Currently, the new 'revolutionaries' or what has been called "Africa's new breed of leaders" have even done better for the US interests in Congo. The main actor among these new forces were the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) that fought under the guise of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), to take control of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The RPF claimed that their interest in fighting was to prevent the *Intarahamwe,* and Hutu militias responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide from pursuing another genocide. But by so doing they were committing similar atrocities under the benign eye and complicity of two other western "civilised" countries: the US and Britain. The involvement of the UN to try to unearth the atrocities in eastern Zaire could not make headway because the US and Britain found no urgency in the matter.

The US was reported at the height of this international humanitarian concern, to have told the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, to go "softly, softly" on president Kabila and his Rwandan and Ugandan "allies". This was because of their fear that if Kabila were destabilized at this time, the US would have no other leader to take charge of a rather fragile situation in which they had great economic and geostrategic interests. It turned out that the US army had in fact trained the RPF for this particular war and these trained soldiers were acting as mercenaries of the Anglo-American interests in the former Zaire.

3.2 Congolese mineral resources and the Congo's location in the Cold War

It is the exploitation of the minerals and agricultural wealth of Africa and the other colonial territories in Asia and Latin America that sustained and made what is called the western world and western civilisation, possible. In the words of Lanning & Muller:

> The whole structure of contemporary civilisation in the industrial world is dependent on minerals. Without them there would be no skyscrapers; no cars, no ships, no planes, no typewriters, no central heating, no air-conditioning and none of the provisions of running water and disposal of sewage which an industrial society takes for granted[2]

The most important consumers of these minerals were the US, Japan, Europe and other industrial countries. While Japan did not have any mineral resources, the US had large mineral resources of its own. In the 1920s, it produced a 15 per cent surplus, which it sold to Europe and their dominions as well as to Japan. But since the end of the Second World War, the US had become a net importer of metals and their ores. By 1950, the surplus had become a deficit of 10 per cent. Many of these minerals were of a strategic nature and hence they had to be defended at any cost in the Cold War period and thereafter.

The exploitation of these mineral products in the Congo was handled by concessionaries and one of the most outstanding of these was the Belgian Société Générale group of companies. On the eve of Congolese independence, this monopoly was estimated to control 70 per cent of the Congolese economy outside the subsistence sector. It controlled the production, export and processing of copper, cobalt, diamond, and uranium from the mines it owned and at the same time it had a virtual monopoly over water and rail transportation in the Congo Basin. This was controlled through two main channels.

The first was the parent company, which had, direct shareholders in all the important companies held by Société Générale. These included Union Miniéri, Forminiéri, Miniéri du Beceka, Chemin de Fer du Bas Congo au Katanga and so on, as well as indirect stakes through two Congolese holding companies. The Campagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et I'industrie (CCCI) held stakes in some fifty Congolese-based companies and more than twenty Belgian and foreign companies. The other holding company, Campagnie du Katanga, had a large investment in Union Miniéri.

The second channel of control was the colonial state itself, which had strong stakes in the private sector. It had large direct investments in the big trusts, and a 50 per cent share or more in twenty companies owned by its monopolies. This portfolio was valued at US $ 640 million in 1960 and produced an income of close to US$ 24 million in 1959. The main investment was its two-thirds stake in the Comite Special du Katanga (CSK), whose main holding was its stake in Union Miniéri. Thus the stakes of the state and that of the private sector converged and this is what made the control of the Congo such an intimate affair for all concerned in the Congo, including the Church[3].

Thus when the Congo became independent on 30 June 1960, the struggle by Belgium of holding on to the wealth of the Congo was already being planned. This was reflected in the struggle for the control of the Union Miniéri that became intertwined with the interlocking directorships of the Tanganyika Concessions in 1962. This new interlocking directorships had brought Harry Oppenheiemer of the Anglo-American conglomerate into the Congolese mineral hunt. These struggles sowed the seeds of the secessionist movement of Katanga within a year of Congo regaining its independence. As we now know, it was the manoeuvrings around the maintenance of Belgian interests in the Congo and those of the new entrants that led within months to the assassination of the first nationalist prime minister of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba, and the virtual secession of Katanga where the vast minerals were located.

According to Thomas Kanza, who later became Congo's UN Representative, a meeting was held in 1959 between Patrice Lumumba – the prime minister to be, and a group of American businessmen, all of whom represented powerful financial interests in the US. Lumumba is quoted by him as having said to these businessmen that:

> The exploitation of the mineral riches of the Congo should be primarily for the profit of our own people and other Africans. We have decided to open the gates of the Congo to any foreign investment prepared to help us get the fullest and most immediate value from mineral resources and energy, so that we may achieve full employment, an improved standard of living for our people, and a stable currency for our young country. Belgium will no longer have a monopoly in the Congo.[4]

According to Kanza, a New York banker at the meeting asked Lumumba whether he knew that all the uranium sold to them in the US was legally sold as Belgian uranium. Upon receiving this question Lumumba is quoted as having said that as he had just stated, Belgium had no monopoly over their uranium and that from henceforth Congo was an independent and sovereign nation and that it would be advantageous to both countries if the Congo and the US worked out their own arrangements in the future. On hearing this, the US businessmen are said to have looked at one another and exchanged `meaningful smiles'.

These smiles indeed represented a new interest by the US in the minerals of the Congo. It was a period of the Cold War and the US needed the direct or indirect control of all the vital mineral resources that could strengthen it against the Soviet Union, its bitter superpower rival and enemy. From then on the US was deeply involved, not only in strategic resource management and their use, but also in the politics of the Congo. This is what led it to be the main actor in the murder of Patrice Lumumba because of his `suspected leftist leanings'. It has recently come to light in a *Washington Post* report that former president Dwight Eisenhower was responsible for ordering the assassination of Patrice Lumumba on 17 January 1961.

All these developments demonstrate the centrality of the Congo minerals and other resources to the western alliance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which was responsible for conducting the hot aspect of the Cold War. It also reveals that the idea of eliminating African (and indeed 'Third World') nationalist and radical leaders who stood in the way of the strategic interests of the alliance and, especially, the US was an approved strategy. It is in the pursuit of this strategy that the military coup as a political tool for change in leadership in the then 'Third World', was first worked out. Soon after this strategy was perfected, plans to remove radical 'Third World' leaders such as Nasser of Egypt, Nkrumah of Ghana, Lumumba of Congo, Sukarno of Indonesia, Castro of Cuba, and Ellende of Chile were implemented. President Fidel Castro survived the Bay of Pigs invasion, but others were overthrown in coup d'etats.

According to Lanning and Mueller, Lumumba's appeal for aid from the Soviet Union and the response of the Soviet Union in supplying transport planes to assist him in dealing with the attempted secession of Katanga, changed the situation "fundamentally". As soon as the Kennedy administration was elected, a diplomatic rupture with the USSR had occurred over the Congo because Kennedy felt that the US "would lose all the credibility in African eyes if it did not take strong action".[5] The strong action it took involved stopping the Congo falling into Communist hands.

Using his populist policy of 'Zairean Authenticity' and 'economic nationalism', Mobutu sought to unite the different factions of the Congolese petty bourgeoisie and create 'national unity' based on his one-man rule in concert with the US. Using the 'authenticity' policy, he advanced his interests and those of the Congolese *évolués*, which were privileged by the Belgians and other westerners. As he plundered the natural resources with his Belgian, French and South African backers, he added a debt of US $ 5 billion to Zaire's external commitments, which the Congo had inherited from the Belgians. By squandering Zaire's resources, he accumulated a personal wealth amounting close to US $ 10 billion by the time of his removal.[6] All this accumulation was possible because the Zairean state was organized around the personal dictatorship of former Sergeant Mobutu, who was supported by France, Belgium, and the US in the context of Cold War politics.

3.3 The deprecation and debunking of Mobutu

The war that led to the toppling of Mobutu, was prepared as part and parcel of the process of globalisation that was engulfing the western world. Moreover, the Cold War had come to an end, and the generation of 'freedom lover' dictators was being abandoned in favour of a 'new generation of leaders' who accepted the new creed of globalisation. By mid-1980s the US through the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in pursuance of the policy of structural adjustment as part of the process of globalisation, were demanding that Mobutu dismantle the two state mining companies and open them for liberalisation. In this new period economic liberalisation and privatisation was the new creed, against the old-style nationalistic policies, which contradicted the process of globalisation.

From 1993, the Congolese state was being prepared for privatisation. This arose because by the late 1980s, Zaire had accumulated an external state debt amounting to US $ 8 billion. This amount comprised the debt inherited from Belgium of US $ 5 billion plus US $ 3 billion which Mobutu had added since he took power in 1965. As his fortunes declined, the Zairean state began to default paying and servicing debt. As a result the WB and IMF refused to advance any further loans until Mobutu agreed to the privatisation of the two state owned mineral conglomerates.

This then was the beginning of the dismantling of the Zairean state because of Mobutu's weaknesses, which could no longer be tolerated. The new mineral conglomerates which wanted to redraw the African map in their own favour away from the European Berlin one, were no longer interested in large post-colonial states. They preferred 'down-sized', functionally small non-state entities that could be run by private mineral groups. The idea was not an isolated one, but it was inherent in the whole economic globalisation project, which was also being resisted by local communities.

In the case of Zaire, which still continued to be the hub of European domination and exploitation of the African continent, the grand plan to dismantle Zaire was being planned by the Anglo-American political and cultural alliance. The banks connected within this alliance, but using the Bretton Woods system, were organising to cut off any further credit to Zaire in order to force it to conform. This meant that Zaire could not buy new mining machinery, spare parts, and other forms of equipment and essential imports for the survival of the Mobutu order. The old Belgian monopolies always controlled this technology so long as they did not totally own the mines. At the beginning of 1993 the Bretton Woods system cut off credit to Zaire. The WB's Multi-Lateral Investment Guarantee Corporation (MIGA), recommended that Zaire would not get new credit until it agreed to "modernize" by privatising its state-owned mining conglomerates. At about the same time the governments of the US, Britain and France also decided to cut off all official aid to Zaire. This undermined the already weak Zaire currency against the US dollar and other currencies of the industrial nations. Social services collapsed, the infrastructure became inoperative, infant mortality increased and close to 350,000 Zairean children under the age of five died in a year from malnutrition. By 1994 life expectancy had fallen to 53 years, lower than it was in 1990.

Under this attack, Mobutu agreed to open up the Zairean state-mining companies to privatisation, just as Uganda with their Rwanda Patriotic Front cohorts launched their war of `liberation' against Rwanda under president Habyarimana. This invasion of Rwanda coincided with the invasion of new Anglo-American mining conglomerates in eastern Zaire in 1994, which we shall analyse in the next section.These invasions of the new conglomerates took on intensity in 1996 as the actual war of Zaire by Ugandan and Rwandan forces with Laurent Kabila began to take shape. These were the new entrants into the Zairean complexity, propelled partly by their profit seeking and the configuration of the internal conflicts and taking advantage of the vacuum, which since the mid-1970s had existed in Zaire. These internal forces had taken advantage of the vacuums to amass wealth from the Zairean minerals and expand their local power. Now the Anglo-American alliance found that these were the kind of forces they could work with to dismantle the huge Zairean state and its old undercapitalised state-owned conglomerates and take control of the new mining areas in eastern Zaire.

Although clearly a puppet of the Western interests, Mobutu had over the years developed a certain arrogance in dealing with the WB and IMF. As noted above, he consistently refused to privatise the mineral economy, preferring to leave the bulk of it in state hands, which in effect meant leaving it under his own personal control and that of his close cronies. There was therefore good reason, from the point of view of the financiers and new mining interests to get rid of him, if only because it also suited the new economic interests that were emerging in the US, Britain and Brussels to do so.

At the height of the conflict Mobutu for the first time saw the real interests of these foreign powers in Zaire as he was losing control. He said: "I am not a colony of the Westerners… It's because of copper, cobalt, gold and diamonds that they are in the process of arming Kabila".[7]

The official US position regarding Mobutu's fate was transparently ambivalent at the beginning. This was because of her historical role in the country ever since the assassination of Lumumba and their reliance on Mobutu for all their Cold War schemes on the African continent. On the one hand they had decided that Mobutu must go, but on the other, they were unsure of the method to be used in removing him. The ambivalence or lack of policy on the matter became a policy in itself. This policy meant that the US would 'close its eyes' to the Uganda and Rwandan intervention in Zaire while at the same time talking about the need for dialogue, negotiations, and peace between the rebels and the Mobutu forces. In pursuance of this dual policy, they tried to involve South Africa to call for a dialogue and negotiations at a time when the ADFL was on the verge of capturing Kinshasa. While the CIA and US Security agencies worked on the Uganda and Rwanda side to monitor the war and violence on their side at night, they talked of the need for peace and dialogue during the day.

At the beginning of the conflict, the US state department called on Mobutu to expedite the 'democratisation' process, but then the tune changed to arguing for negotiations with the rebels and finally the position changed once more to calling on Mobutu to step down.

Indeed, far from the US feigning ignorance about the Rwanda inspired massacres of the Hutu refugees whom Kagame collectively called "the killers", the US had all along been monitoring with powerful communication gadgets the developments in eastern Zaire. The Nairobi-based *The East African* reported that the US had been "monitoring" the war in eastern Zaire from a satellite system located in Fortportal in western Uganda for two months.[8] It reported that they were planning to relocate to Zaire as the rebels tightened their control over the half of Zaire. Indeed, this happened and they followed all the developments there.

3.4 New Anglo-American Conglomerates in the DRC

Before the war to oust Mobutu began, a number of diamond mines in the Kisangani area were discovered, which may have been the very cause for the involvement of Uganda and Rwanda in the Zairean-DRC war and conflict. These mines are to be found in the north east of the country near the Uganda border. Kisangani stones are similar to those of Chicapa (Angola) and the Central African Republic, but they are of a better quality and colour, although they are smaller in size. In addition there are new gold mines in the same eastern part of the country, 100 kilometres from the Uganda/DRC border.

But who were these new conglomerates that were rushing in to take advantage of the local conflicts and cross-border wars? They were new Anglo-American mineral monopolies that were emerging in the shadow of the globalisation ideology and whose concerns were quite short-term. The new game plan and ideology was the creation of 'globalised free markets' operating under 'free market forces' in which the state was to be 'down-sized' or indeed replaced by a new 'state' of the mafia forces. Under the strategy, called structural adjustment, the African leaders were forced to liberalise their economies by selling their national assets previously owned as state enterprises to the new globalised monopolies in the name of economic efficiency. This was the new global agenda that was being pushed by Britain and the US in the current conflicts in the region under the 'Washington Consensus'.

The new monopolies were also a 'new breed' of globalised business groups, some of them headed by monarchs, former politicians, military leaders, the new 'make money quick and quit' investors as well as criminal elements seeking new opportunities where these could be had on the cheap. They all operated under a secretive umbrella organisation called the Club of the Isles which comprises the House of the Windsor led by oligarchic institutions centred around a tightly knit alliance of European princely families, London-based financial and insurance houses, and food and raw material cartels.

According to an Executive Intelligence Review (EIR) report, this new breed of corporations was a new conglomerate of Anglo-American financial interests which were interested in the mines of Zaire and wanted change in that country.[9] According to EIR, before the out break of the AFDL rebellion, a US Canadian gold mining company called Barrick Gold Corporation was formed.[10] Former president George Bush and former Canadian Prime Minister Mulroney were reported to have control over these new conglomerates in Zaire.

This time, former US president George Bush himself took charge of the Congo Free State and assembled his own *troika* to achieve the objective of continuing to civilise Africa through free market neo-liberal ideology of the 'Washington Consensus' a New Berlin Consensus to redivide Africa amongst the monopolies. This time, the 'Washington Consensus' wanted to recreate the 'free state' in Zaire for a new global capital with interests in all countries without any barriers.

The Barrick Gold Corporation had in early 1996 moved into the region to prepare for the take-over. The invasion of eastern Zaire by the combined forces of Rwanda and the Banyamulenge with the assistance of Uganda coincided with the Barrick and Anglo-American metal grabs in the very same area where the war was being waged. In May 1995 Barrick had announced that it had put together an international advisory board under the leadership of an 'honorary senior adviser', George Bush, and the board included the former prime minister of Canada Mulroney both of whom had just lost their jobs in their respective governments. With the board in place, Barrick extended its operations and in November 1996 the French newspaper *La Monde* disclosed that Barrick had been granted a concession to prospect for gold in eastern Zaire.[11]

At the same time on 21 September 1996, a small Toronto based mining concern Banro Resources also obtained concessions to mine gold in north eastern province of Zaire. Since it was not a known actor in the mining industry, it was to become clear that it was acting as a front for some other company which was no other than the Anglo-American Corporation.

Soon the entire territory of the Kivu province was being leased, or indeed, sold to Anglo-American Corporation. In this *de facto* role, Anglo-American Corporation had also acquired explosives and a supply of weapons for the protection of its properties. That meant, it had the capacity to carry out attacks of its own or to cooperate with those who later attacked the Hutu refugee camps in the same area of its jurisdiction. This was because in the area that it had acquired, there were close to one million refugees from Rwanda who were wholly Hutu near the town of Bukavu. According to Banro, these refugees had to be 'cleared' out before the company could begin operations. This, in our opinion, is what motivated the attack by the Ugandan and Rwandan forces against Zaire from October 1996 – a war that has dragged on up to now.

The second arm of the acquisition of Zairean assets by the invaders was through the state-owned mining company, Gecamines. This was handled by the American Mineral Fields (AMF), which is based in former US president Bill Clinton's home town of Hope in Arkansas, but run from Canada. According to its prospectus: "for the acquisition and development of world-class mineral deposits." The contract was signed mid-April, 1996 between the AMF main shareholder Jean-Raymonde Boulle who said the company strategy was "to go for the highest grades and the largest deposits" and added that Zaire was destined to become the African Chile. He described the change in Zaire as "the triumphant liberation of the people of Zaire.[12]

AMF acquired the copper-zinc mine at Kapushi in Shaba province, which was regarded as one of prime copper-zinc mines in the world. Copper and zinc here are normally mined together. It is known that reserves in this mine stand at 22.6 million tons of copper and zinc, grading 2.1 per cent copper and 13.8 per cent zinc. To make matters even more revealing, AMF was, as we have seen above, the brainchild of Jean-Raymond Boulle, a former executive of South Africa's De Beers Diamonds, which is the diamonds arm of the Anglo-American Corporation. Because of this, it soon turned out that AMF had acquired the Kapushi mine partly on behalf of Anglo-American Corporation. AMF soon signed an agreement with Anglo-American Corporation, which allowed it to invest up to US $100 million in any AMF ventures in Shaba province. This represented a 50 per cent equity stake in the new venture and acquisition, including the Kapushi mine itself. Anglo-American was weaving a web of interests around Zaire for the Club of Isles through these intricate "acquisitions".One of the most interesting twists to all this was the fact that AMF had put at the disposal of Kabila its hired corporate jet during the rebellion. At the same time another company owned by Boulle himself called American Diamond Buyers, had paid US $25,000 to the Kabila forces (instead of the US $150,000 which was payable to the Mobutu treasury) to procure the first diamond trading license from the new government still-in-making.

The AMF main contact was a Belgian former army officer called General Willy Mallants who was at the same time military adviser to Kabila. He was the one who had, according to AMF, introduced them to Kabila in Goma. The AMF had told Kabila that although they had been working with Mobutu, they had now found that they were working "on the wrong side" and "wanted to change sides". They are quoted as saying: " We are business people, not politicians. We just need to know what the rules are and it looks like President Kabila is going to be making the rules".[13]

AMF paid US $1 billion to exploit the mines, but the spokesperson of the AMF told the US newspaper, *The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, that they estimated their holding at Kapushi in eastern Zaire to be worth US $ 4.5 billion and the one at Kolwezi to be worth US $ 16 billion. These figures, according to the report, did not include "the untold wealth under the chunk of Zaire over which AMF has exclusive exploration rights."

Within two weeks of the deal, AMF stock had risen by 100 per cent on the New York stock exchange from about US $ 3 to $ 7 a share. Its capitalisation went up to US $ 37 billion. The report said, AMF expected the shares to go even higher "as Kabila's government consolidates its power". To reveal its exploits, AMF arranged a show-trip for 35 investment bankers, newsletter writers and US House of Representatives member, Cynthia McKinney, a Georgian Democrat. Indeed this high profile show-trip revealed the confidence these leading investment bankers, such as SBC Warburg and Dutsch Morgan Grenfell, 'the biggest bank outside of Japan', had in the new changes that had taken place in Zaire.

Around the same time, Consolidated Eurocan of Vancouver of Canada finalised a deal which enabled them to purchase a 55 per cent stake in Gecamines Tenke-Fungurume copper-cobalt deposits, which were also located in Shaba province. It was agreed that Euroscan would pay a quarter of a billion dollars over 72 months for deposits which were potentially valued at over tens of billions of dollars in revenue to the Zaire state.

According to a statement made by the Eurocan spokesman on 18 December 1996, Tenke-Fungurume represented the largest operating cobalt reserves in the world. It has a geological reserve of 222 million tons of copper and cobalt, with potential reserves of one billion tons. It was speculated that Eurocan had no capacity to operate the mine and that it had to sell the acquisition to Iscor and Gencor – both South African companies – which are part of the British raw material cartel. All these acquisitions taking place within such a short time of one another while the invasion was taking place showed that there was a grand plan to dismantle Zaire as a single state and create miniscule state run by Anglo-American mining companies. According to the Executive Intelligence Report, referred to above:

> Barrick Gold Corporation and South African Oppenheimer family's Anglo-American Corp are at the cutting edge of a Club of the Isles drive to recolonize a severely depopulated African continent, by busting up the post-colonial nation-state, beginning with Zaire, and then creating privately owned micro-states, in which what is left of the indigenous population is pressed into slavery [14].

Anglo-American Corporation is the world largest mining company and a key cog in the international oligarch's Club of the Isles raw materials cartel. Its acquisitions and those of Barrick Gold Corporation stretch all the way along the territories now controlled by Ugandan, Rwandese and Zimbabwean troops. It added:

> The rich concessions start in the town of Bukavu, and extends southward. Bukavu was the site of one of the major Rwandan (Hutu) refugee camps in Zaire, which was teeming with half-starved women and children. Banro needed this site cleared of people, to begin its mining operations; the clearing started with Uganda's invasion of Zaire in mid-October.[15]

Several other Canadian based mining interests were trying to get a share of the fields and the Kabila rebel group was already busy selling concessions and indicating that they intended to privatise most of the state-held mines in Zaire as soon as they assumed power in Kinshasa.

Thus the new mining monopolies were already on the tails of Ugandan and Rwandan forces with their Laurent Kabila rebel ally. These companies were busy signing contracts with the rebels even before they had taken power in Kinshasa. This meant that even if the whole country did not fall under the Kabila forces eventually, the new monopolies were prepared to do business with any faction able to hold power in any corner of the country and indeed anywhere on the continent. This meant, as we have noted above, buying off entire territories in which the corporations had full political and physical control of territory and population. This is what the recolonisation process called globalisation came to mean for Zaire. The idea was to "deconstruct" the old European colonial states if necessary and create new ethnically based mini-states. This represented a new policy of divide and rule under new conditions. The British and other economic monopolies seemed to be eagerly pushing this scenario.

It is also worth noting that in September 1996 Barrick Gold Mines registered itself in Uganda just a month before the rebellion began and carried large amounts of equipment just in time to do the job immediately the rebellion began. A search at the Companies Registry in Kampala revealed that it had its operations located somewhere in the north of Goma which had been taken early in the rebellion by Kabila's alliance. It also had its offices in one of the posh areas of Kampala, the Uganda capital.

3.5 The Role of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi in the Anti-Mobutu alliance

Keen observers of this war regarded the 'security' claims by Rwanda and Uganda and a 'struggle for democracy' by the 'rebel groups' as pretexts under which they violated Congolese sovereignty and territorial integrity for the benefit of the Anglo-American alliance.

According to some sources associated with a Congolese network called New Congo Net (NCN), Museveni's objective is to annex the northern DRC and reach westwards toward the Atlantic in much the same way as the successive American presidents reached westward toward the Pacific. According to the NCN, this was the real mission of the 'Motherland' and not the removal of Ugandan rebels from eastern Zaire. In the same breath, it must be said that Kagame's use of the *Intarahamwe* as an excuse to invade DRC was working in the same direction: to annex eastern DRC and make it part of a Greater Rwanda which will be part of the Anglo-East African Community.

As noted above, the new US, British and Canadian mineral and raw material conglomerates, such as Barrick Gold Corporation, are the new entrants into this area and are clearly interested in breaking up the DRC as a state so they can plunder the territories under their control without the supervision of a state. All they need are weak political units which where they can provide their own security through private agencies or local, but more disciplined military groups, who also just want to join the plundering of the resources of the DRC, just like all the mafia forces seen all over the world.

3.5.1 The Washington Consensus Alliance: As we noted above, the real purpose of invading and dismantling Zaire was to build a new network of alliances amongst African leaders that would protect the new economic interests that were being shaped in Great Lakes Region. The US was also taking advantage of the new positive political attitudes of a 'new breed' of leaders in order to exploit the region with a new global agenda. All this praise centred on the fact that these new leaders led by Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, had adopted the neo-liberal policies of economic liberalisation and the embracing of free market ideology

The new regimes were seriously carrying out privatisation of their economies in which foreigners were buying off whatever they wished from the old state firms at give-away prices. This also gives us an indication as to the motivations behind the Great Lakes conflict. This is not to underrate the struggle of the people of Zaire, who have been waging their own struggles for democratic and national rights for a long time. But it is also true that these internal forces were weak and that their own agenda for the removal of Mobutu was not the same as that of the new Anglo-American global alliance. What was happening now was that the new economic interests who wanted Zaire dismantled were setting the agenda with Presidents Museveni and Kagame as their close allies.

Clearly, the US saw in Museveni someone who would play the role of a regional power broker on behalf of the Anglo-American alliance. The US was in favour of the emergence of a 'new breed' of African

leaders that supported the US sponsored 'Washington Consensus'[16] as part of its globalisation strategy. Museveni had already embraced these reforms, which made it easier for the Anglo-American alliance to redraw the map of Africa in the post-Cold War period. However, Museveni did not want Kagame to emerge as a challenger to that role.
This 'Consensus' called for the overthrow of old African leaderships to create way for newer and more energetic African leaders with whom the US would work to create a more stable Africa for its own version of development based on this global 'consensus'.

There had also been a growing fear in some circles, that President Museveni was using Western support to build up and restore the old Chwezi dynasty based on Hima and Tutsi hegemony in the whole region. In fact this argument was used in Zimbabwe as part of the reason for the SADC alliance, which intervened on the side of the government of the DRC. This dynasty is mystically connected with a phase of Ugandan history and, it seems, was considered alien by the local population and is said to have 'disappeared' with no explanation. This fear seemed to have been resurrected when the 'Banyamulenge' rebellion broke out in eastern Zaire.

In analysing the real force behind the Great Lakes conflict, we have therefore to look closely at what was happening on the economic front. If we do this, we see a new set of conglomerates from the US, Britain and Canada seeking to replace the old conglomerates, who supported Mobutu and who were benefiting within the state-supported enterprises. This new struggle was being played out in conditions that required a new alliance of political forces, which would take apart institutions that operated on the premise that wealth was produced and distributed through control over the state. This in effect meant dismantling those interests, and if need be, the state itself.

3.5.2 The Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL): The emergence of Laurent Kabila as the leader of the AFDL has to be explained in the context of the forces that shaped Congo's political arena in the post-colonial period. Congo's aborted national independence as a result of the assassination of Lumumba, led to an immediate uprising of the people led by Gizenga. These forces, known as the Lumumbaist forces, were later joined by a revolutionary group of young men which included Kabila.

Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja has argued that in the course of the struggles for Congo's 'second independence', Kabila formed his own *Parti de la Revolution Populaire* (PRP) in December 1967, to continue the struggle against the Mobutu regime.[17]. But as Nzongol-Ntalaja notes Kabila had for all purposes turned into a warlord who was incapable of mobilising the peasantry and other classes for a real revolutionary victory against Mobutu. Hence, Kabila did not constitute a major threat to the Mobutu regime from his Uvira-Fizi *marquis*.[18] How then did he gain sufficient leverage and strength to overthrow the Mobutu regime in April 1997?

To answer this question, one must understand the new forces that led to Kabila becoming a "hero" of liberation. Subsequently, we must turn to a group of Tutsis in eastern Zaire called the Banyamulenge. The Banyamulenge came to symbolise the problems of a minority ethnic group in a bigger configuration of political forces in Africa's third largest country. On the one hand, here was a group of people whom the Zairean State was trying to disenfranchise and who in their own defence were asserting their basic human rights of citizenship.

On the other hand, here was a huge and potentially wealthy African country being brought down to devastation by the single man rule of Mobutu, who nevertheless was supported for a long time by the US, France and Belgium. For a long time, the crisis of the post-colonial state in Zaire centred on this issue of regime maintenance by foreign powers who were also plundering the resources of the country and impoverishing the population. These two situations are interlinked.

3.5.3 Uganda and its role as 'regional broker': Uganda in particular, right from the beginning of its independence, has increasingly found itself caught up in the conflicts of Rwanda. What is less understood is how this involvement could flow over into Zaire.

It is possible that Museveni in the beginning never had any long-term plan to extend his fighting to Rwanda. But with the large numbers of Rwandese in the ranks of his guerrilla army, the issue of pushing on to Kigali emerged. Officers like the late Fred Rwegima, Baingana and later Kagame, held

very high profile positions in the first Museveni government from 1986 to 1989. They used their positions in Museveni's Army, the National Resistance Army of his National Resistance Movement (NRM/A), to amass weapons, money, food and other logistics for the invasion of Rwanda during Juvenal Habyarimana's rule.
Moreover, Uganda also had an interest in intervening in the former Zaire in order to dislodge a rebel group that had emerged on the western front in eastern Zaire and which was being used by Mobutu's Zaire to destabilise Ugandan western districts of Kasese and Kabarole. This rebel group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), which is reputed to be a Muslim fundamentalist group supported by Sudan, had become a troublesome force in this area. Under the pretence that they were fighting the ADF, the Ugandan army actually entered Zaire on several occasions and occupied its territory. The US accepted that Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi had in fact occupied eastern Zaire' to protect their security interests. It is clear that this was being said in order to protect the new mining interests, which were invading and recolonising this area.

As noted above there are strong global economic interests propelling the conflict in the Great Lakes Region. But these economic interests alone cannot explain why Uganda got involved in the invasion of the DRC. To argue so would be rather one-sided and mechanical. Therefore, apart from the above political background, which in part explains why the Uganda government supported the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) in their war against Habyarimana, there are also economic motivations that propelled the Uganda leadership to collaborate with these global interests. In short, it could be persuasively argued that the interests of the global economic actors converged with those of the Ugandan and Rwandan leaderships to warrant such close corroboration which involved the use of their armed forces and that these interests included their own economic and political interests.

What were the economic motivations that warranted the intervention by Ugandan troops in the DRC, and how did those economic interests arise? There is strong evidence to prove that Uganda's involvement in the then Zaire was very much influenced by the existence of rich minerals in the eastern parts of that country. The global actors who convinced them that it was in their joint interest to work together to gain access to those resources gave this information to them. In support of this argument, there are those who have argued that President Museveni is Pan-Africanist and as such he believed that the opening of this part of Zaire would create a large market for African development and modernisation.[19]

Mobutu complained just before his fall from power that the rebellion against him led by Kabila and his Ugandan and Rwandan allies was motivated only by interest in the minerals which were located inside Zaire very close to the Uganda and Rwanda borders. He must have known what he was talking about because his own interests were locked up in these mines. To be sure, a mineral survey which had been carried out just before the 1996 invasion had revealed that this area had a lot of concentrated mineral deposits of copper, silver, cadmium, diamonds and gold of rich concentrations. As noted, the Zaire state-owned enterprises, which carried out the survey, could not expand their mining activities in this area because of the obsolescence of their mining machinery and equipment. It is in this area that the legendary King Solomon's mines were said to be located. Another survey carried out by the National Centre of Geological and Mine resources in 1999 revealed that the soils in the Ituri region are so rich in gold that, with modern extraction methods, it is possible to extract pure gold at a medium of 6 to 7 kilogrammes per ton, just by excavating rock masses around the former mines of the Okimo. According to the report, the extraction could reach astronomical levels of concentration of 18 kg pure gold per ton, compared to the average of 11 kg in the best mines in other parts of the world. The single mine called Senzere contains an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 tons of gold, worth between US $ 20-30 billions.

It can therefore be stated with certainty, that it was this discovery of richly concentrated minerals that gave rise to the new mining conglomerates taking steps to remove Mobutu from power. This had the implication of taking over these areas from the control of the central government in Kinshasa and placing them in the hands of localised political authorities, which were more amiable to their interests.

For Museveni who saw matters from a narrower perspective and the maintenance of personal power, the taking over of these territories was to ensure the expansion of his political power into that of a regional power broker. To him the suffering of the people in these regions was of little concern so long as he achieved his ambitions, forgetting that Mobutu had also been used to engage in those kinds of dreams and ambitions. To understand the massacres that took place in this area, which was barely 100 kilometres from the Uganda/Rwanda borders, one has to appreciate this fact.

Leading figures of the Uganda government, especially those closely connected with President Museveni, have been accused of 'looting and plundering' the DRC. Right from the beginning of the first rebellion against Mobutu, Major General Salim Saleh, a half-brother of president Museveni, and at the time the Military Adviser to the Minister of Defence, admitted publicly that his company, Caleb International, was involved in the gold and diamond business in Zaire. He was quoted by the Uganda opposition weekly called *The People* as saying that his company was in the advanced stages of establishing a mining affiliate in eastern Zaire and had applied for mining concessions to the Kabila 'administration' which was still in the infancy of the rebellion.

In another submission to the Team of Experts appointed by UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, the DRC linked the war going on in their country with the existence of mineral wealth in the areas occupied by the invading forces and their Congolese collaborators. The report implicated Major General Saleh, who in collaboration with the Rwandese had formed various companies involving Lebanese, Israelis and Thais based in Nairobi and Kigali, and the minerals exploited are located in Kivu. Their main interest is gold and diamonds in the Kilo Moto mines owned by an Israeli General called David Agmon. Their submission added that a South African controlled company working in joint-ventureship with the RCD-Goma and the Rwandese government had now moved part of their operations to Gbadolite in areas controlled by the Ugandan army.

Besides these connections, high ranking military officers in the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) in eastern DRC were engaged in smuggling stolen four-wheel drives from Kampala that were sold in eastern DRC, Rwanda, Burundi and even Tanzania.[20] The vehicles were robbed at gun point, repainted and then exported in the dead of night by equally mysterious planes which too were stolen from Hungary or Ukraine. According to another report[21], these stolen planes were also repainted at the military airport at Entebbe, their licences forged and then put into service to run errands between Entebbe and eastern DRC. On return they carried commodities such as minerals, timber, and coffee – all of which were plundered in the Congo.

In the meantime, the pro-Rwandan government paper, *New Times*, attacked Salim Saleh, for having reduced the UPDF in the DRC into a 'thieving gang'. It turned out that Major General Saleh and his wife were also operating an airline, named Air Alexander that operated passenger and cargo services between Entebbe and Kigali. For all practical purposes therefore, Saleh's business interests, particularly in the minerals of the DRC, was his main concern and not the operations of the army. The UPDF was there to advance the 'security concerns' of Uganda, the Anglo-American alliance, as well as those of Saleh and the other business interests of Uganda.

The *New Vision* also reported that on other deals, the Uganda government had been chartering two Russian-made planes for daily flights from the Old Entebbe Airport (now a military airstrip), to places like Gbadolite, Gemena, Basankusu, Isiro and Buta where UPDF forces were still deployed. The paper reported that the army paid Uganda shillings 100 million for each plane per day. Russian personnel, whose expenses and fuel were paid for separately, piloted both planes.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that Uganda's defence expenditure in the DRC has been rather small compared to the much-published over-expenditure of Zimbabwe in its own operation on the side of Kabila, despite the fact that Zimbabwe has fewer soldiers in the DRC than Uganda. This is because Uganda's defence expenditure has over a number of years, since it entered the DRC, been covered by the sale of gold exploited by the Ugandan Army from the eastern parts of the DRC.[22] Together with diamonds and other valuable minerals transported out of the Congo, the loot was then sold to private companies within Uganda and then exported as Ugandan minerals. Uganda does not produce any of these minerals from its mines, which in any case do not exist as productive units. But gold had become the second largest export of Uganda next only to coffee, which is also boosted by the coffee plundered and added to the Uganda stock for export. Uganda was said to be making one million dollars a day from its pillaging of the DRC.[23]

This same report pointed out that the World Bank was not keen to discuss these revelations, or to comment on the fact that despite this economic plundering of the DRC, Uganda was still the most favoured country to benefit from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). On the contrary, the Bank was keen to hide these figures from the official World Bank records in order to give Uganda a favourable record. The report added:

> The actual military expenditure is ignored. Uganda has in other words been rewarded for waging war in Congo despite the official rhetoric from both the World Bank and the European Union, who have repeatedly called for Uganda to withdraw from the Congo according to a peace agreement reached last year between the warring parties.[24]

This led William Reno, a renowned scholar on Africa, to conclude that "the WB are supporting Uganda's war in Congo".[25]

3.5.4 The Rwandese Patriotic Front/Army (RPF/A) and its role: The Rwandan invasion of the Congo was very much part of its own internal conflict, which gave rise to the 1994 genocide. The genocide was part of a larger history that was rooted in the colonial manipulation of the ethnic differentiation between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi populations – the Tutsi were made out to be superior while the Hutu were relegated as primitive.[26] At independence in 1959, the *coup d'etat* by Hutu leaders led to the influx of Tutsi refugees into Uganda. It is these refugees and their children born in Uganda who became part of the Museveni rebellion which prepared the way for their invasion into Rwanda in 1990.

Although the RPF/A invasion of Rwanda began in 1990, it made little progress until 1994 when Uganda assisted the effort as the battle neared Kigali. The situation changed very quickly when the Rwandan President, Juvenal Habyarimana, and his Burundian counterpart, were killed as a result of their plane being shot down over Kigali. A recent revelation suggests that the plane was shot down on the orders of the RPF/A leader, General Paul Kagame. This incident provoked the uncontrollable massacre of over 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu 'moderates'.

The defeat of the Hutu regime of Habyarimana by the predominantly Tutsi invading forces under the RPF/A brought about a new situation. It was a reversal in roles of the two communities despite the claims by the RPF/A that it now represented a coalition of national forces and a 'broad-based government' which was 'all inclusive'. It was clear that the RPF/A was a minority ethnic, English speaking faction which was not even representative of the total Tutsi population. It was clearly an anti-Hutu armed group whose agenda was not very clear.

The victory of the RPF/A led to a huge influx of Hutu refugees in Eastern Zaire and Burundi. Estimates of these refugees ranged between two to three million people. Some of these refugees were members of the *Intarahamwe* militia and troops of the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) who had been involved in the 1994 genocide. With French support, the Hutu refugees provided cover to the *Intarahamwe* and the ex-FAR, from were they began preparing to invade Rwanda and overthrow the RPF/A regime.

These cross-border activities were at the centre of the flaring up of the 'rebellion' to overthrow Mobutu. The then Rwandan vice-president and minister of defence, Paul Kagame, argued that the reason for the anti-Mobutu rebellion was to get rid of the *Intarahamwe* militia and the ex-FAR, encamped in eastern Zaire.[27] He stressed that the situation in Congo was directly linked to the security of Rwanda and the failure of the international community to take action (to stop the genocide) meant that the RPF/A would have to take such action on its own.[28]

This came in handy for the new global conglomerates who wanted Mobutu removed so that they could dismember Zaire and exploit the mineral resources in that part of the country. During this time the US was training the Rwandese Patriotic Army to prepare them for their 'direct involvement' in the overthrow of Mobutu. At the same time the US was extending military support to Uganda ostensibly to strengthen Uganda to fight the Islamic government in Sudan. It has also been reported that early in 1996, the US established training facilities at a place called Kabamba in western Uganda where US instructors trained both Ugandan and AFDL forces, just before the 'anti-Mobutu rebellion' broke out.[29]

3.5.5 Burundi Enters the Scramble: The suspicion of the Hima-Tutsi dynastic ambitions in the region were further strengthened when Major Pierre Buyoya staged a coup against the Hutu led

Burundian government in July 1996. This was seen in many quarters as part of a planned conspiracy by Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi Tutsis to control the three countries before the anti-Mobutu rebellion could begin. Rwandan vice-president, Paul Kagame, openly supported the coup and President Museveni although in his characteristic manner played the ambivalent appearance of being against it in public, supported it in the background.

The Buyoya coup led to the Hutu rebels, namely, the Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD) and the Forces for National Liberation (FNL) intensifying their attacks inside Burundi, coming sometimes very close to the capital, Bujumbura, where most Tutsi elites were concentrated. Given that FDD and FNL operated from Eastern Zaire, Buyoya had legitimate grounds to support the anti-Mobutu rebellion. In fact, there were reports that the Clinton Administration had secretly been fuelling the anti-Mobutu AFDL rebellion through Burundi. According to the respected *Wall Street Journal,* a South African pilot claimed that in September 1996, he had flown a cargo load of assault rifles from South Africa to Burundi. Once in Burundi, both a Burundi government official and a US Embassy representative greeted the pilot. The US government denied this involvement, but its support to the Buyoya coup in Burundi was an open secret. Burundi's own involvement in Zaire was at first denied, but as the war progressed, its involvement became clearer particularly after the second anti-Kabila 'rebellion' in August 1998.

In May 1999, the Burundi government issued a statement in which, while denying involvement in the DRC conflict, admitted taking "legitimate measures" to protect its borders. The statement added that Burundi had no territorial claims on DRC, but terrorist groups were spreading insecurity along the common border and infiltrating Burundi from the DRC. What was complicating matters was that the FDD and FNL were fighting side by side with the Intarahamwe and the ex-FAR of Rwanda. They were enjoying the backing of Kabila and also fighting alongside his forces against Ugandan, Rwandan and Burundi government forces. This fact alone made it difficult for the Burundi conflict to be solved with the mediatory efforts of Nelson Mandela without the DRC conflict itself being addressed.

3.6 The Second Invasion of DRC

Despite pretensions that all was well within the alliance of forces that toppled dictator Mobutu, it soon became clear that Kabila was playing a game which both US conglomerates and the Ugandan and Rwandese leadership did not support. Once in Kinshasa, Kabila tried to establish a space for himself while an anti-foreigner nationalist sentiment began to emerge amongst the Congolese people. The feeling was strongest against the Rwandese forces as well as against the Banyamulenge. There were reported clashes between the Rwandese and the populaton, especially around the University of Kinshasa. In fact, soon after the new regime came to power, there were reports of armed conflicts taking place in Goma and Uvira, Eastern DRC, involving the Mai Mai against the Tutsi and Banyamulenge in these areas. In August 1997 over 10,000 Tutsi refugees sought sanctuary in Rwanda from these areas after an attack on them by the Mai Mai.

Thus, although there was at first jubilation by the new economic conglomerates that a new alliance of African leaders in the region had emerged, there still remained the problem of who was in charge in the DRC and what the alliance was about.

Within Rwanda itself, the dismantling of the Intarahamwe militia camps in eastern Zaire had not eased the security situation inside Rwanda. On the contrary, reports indicated a much-intensified conflict taking place within Rwanda itself from the returned Hutu refugees and militias who had inflitrated themselves amongst the refugees. Instead of solving the regional crisis, it appeared that Rwandese and Ugandan intervention in Zaire had worsened the situation and brought to light new elements of conflict.

According to Amnesty International, there were increasing reports of government atrocities amounting to genocide being committed by the new Tutsi dominated army in Rwanda against the Hutus and a section of "moderate" Tutsi's who opposed the RPF/A. This became clear as the situation developed further. Even in Uganda, the original intention of clearing eastern Zaire of Ugandan rebels did not seem to have taken place. Instead, a growing rebellion in western Uganda continued to displace thousands of Ugandans internally. In mid-1997, over 25,000 displaced Ugandans were reported to have sought refuge in eastern DRC. Former Zairean soldiers as well as some of the Hutu Intarahamwe and ex-FAR were also said to have joined the Ugandan rebels of the Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF) and to be operating within the Ugandan borders to fight the Uganda government jointly.

It therefore appeared that instead of solving the Mobutu "problem", the conflict in the former Zaire had become a galvanising point for disintegrating the other post-colonial states in the region. What started as a crisis of a "decayed" Zairean state had now become the crisis of all the post-colonial states in the region. The conflict in Burundi was becoming more dangerous with each passing day. The trial of those involved in the 1994 genocide within Rwanda, also tended to intensify the hostilities between the Tutsi regime and the Hutu majority, instead of healing the wounds the genocide had created between the two communities.

On the other hand Kabila felt pressured by the Rwandese and Ugandans who had come to play more or less a sovereign role in the new DRC. He felt he was being held hostage. There were demands that he declare the Banyamulenge citizens of the DRC. Due to the anti-Rwandese and anti-Banyamulenge feelings amongst the population, Kabila wanted this matter to be referred to a consititutional assembly which he wanted to set up. At the same time, Kabila also publicly denounced the plunder of diamonds, gold and timber through concessions which were being made by both Rwandese and Ugandan agents in the areas under their control without the knowledge of his government.

Uganda and Rwanda began to complain about Kabila's "unpredictability" and "uncontrollability". They accused him of helping the Intarahamwe and not doing enough to honour his part of the "deal" in declaring parts of Zaire to be part of Rwanda. As Kabila began to feel that his security was at risk he was forced to rely more and more on the Congolese, especially his ethnic group the Baluba from the Katanga province to ensure his personal security.

What worsened matters, was the negative campaign that began in Brussels against Kabila after he seized a consignment of weaponry at Kinshasa airport. The weapons were being sent to the Belgian embassy from their consulate in Lubumbashi, allegedly to be used to "evacuate" their citizens at the very time Kinshasa was falling to Kabila's forces. The Belgian government apparently was fearful that the Kabila forces might fail to take Kinshasa from the Mobutu army. Kabila seized the weapons and accused the Belgians of being a "terrorist state".

By early July 1998, a rebellion of the Banyamulenge against Kabila's government was already taking place in the South Kivu province. This happened when an attempt to disarm them early in the year proved unsuccessful. The Banyamulenge had been trained and armed by RPF/A and were used in the fight to topple Mobutu on the understanding that they would gain Congolese citizenship. After the victory, they refused to be led by military commanders from other parts of Congo. When Kabila in late July 1998 ordered the Rwandese troops to withdraw from the country, the stage was set for a fully-fledged second "rebellion" by the "Banyamulenge" Tutsis against the Kabila government.

In short, what the "Banyamulenge" and RPF/A wanted, was the maintenance of their own army as an indedpendent force in the DRC and hence the country to be ruled by two armies. This meant that the DRC would be partitioned into two or even three parts by use of force of the new invading armies. Indeed, as the second war progressed, it appeared that this was exactly what Uganda and Rwanda wanted to achieve in eastern and north eastern DRC. The Rwandese army clearly wanted to control the eastern part of the Congo to be part of Rwanda. This understanding would seem to confirm the call by Kagame for a "second Berlin" conference to redraw the boundaries of Congo in favour of Rwanda.

Given this atmosphere, in late July 1998, Kabila announced that he was putting to an end the military cooperation with Uganda and Rwanda. Uganda and Rwanda did not take kindly to this and proceeded to assemble former Mobutu soldiers and the Banyamulenge in the northern and eastern parts of DRC, from where they attacked Kabila's forces.

Uganda and Rwanda refused to accept the idea of a regional conference on the Great Lakes region proposed by Kabila to discuss the conflict. Instead, they chose to pursue a full-scale war against the Kabila government wanting his regime toppled in the same way they had toppled the Mobutu regime in 1996. Their calculation was that Kabila could be toppled within weeks.

This influenced their strategy of airlifting whole battalions of the Rwandese and Ugandan troops to take over Matadi port and the Inga dam in the south west of the country. It is alleged that this airlifting of troops was done by the aircrafts of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The effort failed because of the intervention of Zimbabwean, Angolan and Namibian troops. What had started as a genocide in Rwanda and a Banyamulenge "rebellion", transgressed very quickly into what became a protracted warfare, dubbed "Africa's First World War"[30].

3.7 The Rise of the Rally for Congelese Democracy (RCD)

It is clear that in order to wage this second "rebellion" both Uganda and Rwanda needed a Congolese "cover" or "face". The use of the Banyamulenge "rebellion" alone as justification for the new offensive was seen to be problematic as a propaganda ploy. What was required was a "broad alliance" of all Congolese groups which wanted to fight for "democracy" against Kabila's "dictatorship" which they were responsible for installing.

Having moved very quickly to occupy Goma, Bukava and Uviira, they declared a rebellion in the name of the Banyamulenge and other disgruntled Congolese groups on 2 August 1998. What they wanted was a well-structured organisation that could take over the propaganda work while the Banyamulenge, Rwandese and Ugandans fought on their behalf. This is what led to the creation of the "rebel movement" named *Ressemblement Congolais pour la democratie*, the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD).

The reason given for the new "rebellion" was that Kabila was a dictator just like Mobutu, and that he was supporting the Intarahamwe who had committed genocide in Rwanda. The other reason was that Kabila had failed to dislodge the Ugandan rebels who were still operating from inside DRC. All these were lame excuses for launching the rebellion since the Ugandan and Rwandese armies were controlling the eastern parts of the DRC where these Intarahamwe and Ugandan rebels were operating.

The Assembly of the RCD comprised only 28 members from groups which were approved by Uganda and Rwanda. Some of the leaders such as Wamba-dia-Wamba and Arthur Ziahdi Ngoma had the direct backing of the Americans, the Belgians and the French. As it turned out, the "rebellion" was not popular and the "liberators" in the eastern part of the DRC where the rebellion was based, were hated and called "collabos" or "traitors and puppets of foreign interests". As time passed, the differences between the different groups and individuals within the RCD came to reflect differences between the "real invaders" – Uganda and Rwanda. The RCD soon began to fall apart.

On 17 May 1999 the RCD split into two violently opposed factions. One was led by Prof Wamba-dia-Wamba who was supported by Uganda. This faction was named RCD-Kasangani because it moved its headquarters to Kisangani where it had the protection of the Ugandan army. Soon thereafter the RCD-Kisangani was renamed *RCD-Mouvemeennt de Liberation*, RCD-ML. The bigger faction led by Dr Emile Ilunga and which was mainly associated with the Banyamulenge leaders was supported by Rwanda. Similarly, this faction was named RCD-Goma because it was based in Goma.

To complicate matters even more, Museveni created another "front" with a different leader called Jean-Pierre Bemba, a businessman who was at first used as a business agent by Museveni in his business exploits in the north east of the country. Bemba's movement was called the Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC).

This split was a serious blow to the claim by Uganda and Rwanda that the rebellion in DRC was a united peoples' resistance against Kabila. When the Lusaka Peace Accord was being negotiated in Lusaka, it became difficult to know which RCD should sign the Accord on behalf of the rebellion. As it turned out, the different supporters of the different factions of the movement sponsored them for a seat at the conference in Lusaka. Later both were recognised as separate movements. Rwanda and Uganda carried along their own factions for which they wanted recognition.

But the real test as to whether the two RCD factions really represented the interests of their country came out clearly when Wamba and Ilunga began to dance to the tune of Rwanda and Uganda and their foreign backers over the management of the mineral wealth in the eastern part of the country. At first Wamba was reported to have signed a deal with some foreign banker to manage the revenue collection and mineral wealth in Kisangani.[31] The report revealed that Van A Brink, a US citizen and the founder and owner of the First International Bank of Grenada (FIBG), had struck a deal with Wamba to manage the resources in the area occupied by the RCD-Kisangani.

Brink signed what was called a “humanitarian and development agreement” with Wamba’s RCD in Kisangani and a number of local “chiefs and tribes”. Under the “deal” it was agreed that a new company by the name of the African Union Reserve System (AURS) would be formed, which would run mining projects in areas of the DRC that were controlled by the Ugandans. AURS was to set up the ”Central Bank” of DRC and manage it for 60 years. In return AURS would pay a “Commission” of 35 per cent of whatever they declared to have been made as profits in the Congolese government of Wamba. Later it turned out that the FIBG was a front organisation linked to a global network of money laundering and investment fraud and that the “Wamba-Brink deal” was in real fact connected to the “scramble for two major precious and rare minerals vital to global military technology, tantalum and niobium”[32].

In the meantime the RCD-Goma faction was plundering the DRC’s resources through a company called SONEX that controlled all mineral contracts and mineral concessions in Rwanda. SONEX works closely with the South African mineral giant Anglo-American Corporation (AAC). SOINEX was established in Kigali with the founding members of the RCD-Goma as its founding board of directors. These were Lunda Bululu, a former prime minister of Mobutu, Alex Tambwe and Emmanuel Kamanzi, the RCD minister of finance.

Another company controlled by the RCD-Goma but working closely with the Rwandese government was the diamond mining company SAROPA. It had its operations in the Rwanda controlled area of Banalya, 60 km north of Kisangani City. The same RCD directors who control SONEX also control SAROPA which is also said to have a link with AAC. Both are mere “fronts” for the Rwandese government who approves all decisions they make. The mining equipment for the SAROPA mining project is said to have been flown in five trips by large South African registered C-130 Hercules planes.

New Vision reports have also shown that the largest and most controversial mining company in the Rwanda controlled territory of the DRC is *Resources Miniere Africaine* (RTM). This company controls diamond, tantalum, gold and niobium mines in Kindu, capital of the Maniema province. According to *New Vision*, RTM was the chief source of revenue for RCD-Goma which is “personalised” by Victor Ngezayo Pregojine and two former Mobutu prime ministers Lunda Bulula as well as a Brussels-based Kengo Wa Dondo.

This led Antoine Lokongo, a Congolese journalist, to write:

> “Not having genuine political, economic and social policies that can appeal to the Congolese people, the various rebel factions have transformed themselves into mafia-style structures (or simply relays of international ones) whose major aims are the control and exploitation of Congo’s natural and mineral resources, and the tightening up of the stronghold on the territories they control in order to safeguard those interests.”[33]

3.8 The Widening Conflict and War: The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Alliance

As noted, the second invasion of the DRC by Rwanda and Uganda immediately drew a challenge from a number of countries, which came to the assistance of the DRC, leading to “Africa’s First World War”. Four other African countries were drawn into the war. These were Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and Chad. At one time, Sudan was also said to be involved in support of the Kabila regime. The names of Cameroon, Gabon and Libya have been mentioned as having a role in the conflict in one way or another.

The three SADC members, Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, justified their intervention under international law. Chapters seven and eight of the United Nations Charter, especially articles 51 and 52, provide that nothing in the Charter shall impair the right of countries either individually or collectively to engage in self-defence “if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations”. Article 52 provides that the Charter does not preclude the existence of regional arrangments or agencies for dealing with such matters. It was clear that SADC was such a regional agency for collective self-defence.

This is what SADC allies did in coming to the assistance of a member whose security was immediately threatened by two neighbouring countries. Moreover, these two countries had assisted the installation of President Laurent Kabila which the UN and the Security Council had thereafter accepted as a legitimate government of the DRC. Now that some of the same countries were attacking this new legitimate governmentl it was quite in order for SADC to come to its assistance under international law. It was also clear that if SADC allies had not come to the immediate assistance of the DRC, the invading forces would have effectively dislodged the legitimate government of the DRC within weeks.

At first South Africa and the other members of SADC distanced themselves from the intervention by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia. However, at a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Durban, SADC met and jointly agreed to identify themselves with the allied forces.

Indeed, following UNITA attacks against the government well after Angola's DRC involvement, it was Angola's president José Eduardo Dos Santos who hosted the one-day regional summit in Luanda on April 8, 1999 to agree on the modalities of the alliance. This summit was attended by the four heads of state who were in alliance in the DRC, presidents José Eduardo Dos Santos, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Sam Nujoma of Namibia and Laurent Kabila of the DRC himself. The four heads of state agreed on a regional peace pact under which it was stated that if any of their four countries were attacked, the other countries would come to the assistance of the country under aggression. At the end of the summit the four heads of state condemned the invation of the DRC by Uganda and Rwanda and their assistance to the rebels fighting there.

The entry of these other countries meant a new era in the politics of Africa had begun. War was not just "politics by other means", but more significantly had become the "politics of the export of internal conflicts to a neighbouring country". This form of war enabled countries with internal conflicts to project them into a single "theatre of war" in which the state had virtually disintegrated – in this case the DRC. But it also appeared as if the post-coloial states in Africa were consuming themselves in the new "proxy wars", especially for those who were interested in Africa'a gold and diamonds while old and new mineral conglomerates were calling the tune and paying the piper.

3.8.1 Zimbabwe's intervention and the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS)

The first country to announce its intervention in the DRC was Zimbabwe. President Robert Mugabe was chairman of the SADC OPDS. In justifying Zimbabwe's involvement on the side of Laurent Kabila, President Mugabe argued that since the DRC was a member of the SADC, Kabila was entitled to a collective self-defence of its territory by the whole region. At the time former South African president Nelson Mandela, who was then the chairman of the SADC, did not support this argument, but instead appeared to support the Uganda and Rwandese intervention and invasion of the DRC. At this stage, South Africa was understood to be supplying weapons to these two countries, especially to Rwanda after the 1994 genocide.

The condemnation of the SADC intervention has especially been focused on Zimbabwe because of the fact that the Zimbabwean government has serious internal problems that emanated from the seizure of white-owned farms for distribution to the landless Zimbabwean peasants. Britain and the USA launched an international campaign against Zimbabwe, cutting off all aid.

The condemnations against Zimbabwe for its involvement in the DRC were also based on the goounds that it was spending too much money on the war and that this had undermined its economy. Even the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have gone as far as looking into Zimbabwe's books to check on its military spending in the DRC, when they have never raised a voice against the defence expenditure of Uganda and Rwanda. Indeed, as noted above, the World Bank has gone out of its way to obscure Uganda's actual defence expenditure by ignoring the huge amounts being extracted from the DRC minerals. Furthermore, Zimbabwe has been attacked for "plundering" DRC, but no similar accusations have been made against Uganda and Rwanda, or even against the US, British, Canadian and South African mining conglomerates we have referred to above.

There is in fact very little evidence that Zimbabwe has engaged itself in plundering mineral resources from the DRC, apart from attempts being made to reach agreements between the two governments for joint exploitation of some minerals to assist their war effort.

Zimbabwe's economic arrangements with the DRC are unlike the activities of Rwanda and Uganda which created rebel factions for the purposes of plundering the DRC. It can be argued that Zimbabwe has entered into legitimate economic arrangements with the Kabila government, some of which have not succeeded. Because of its inability to organise such economic arrangements through its state agencies, it has entered into arrangements with private companies based in Zimbabwe or elsewhere to carry out some mining activities, but with very little success.

One of the first deals was an arrangement by Zimbabwe to increase electric power imports from the DRC generated at the Inga dam. This economic deal was intended to enable Zimbabwe to pay for the additional power in local currency instead of US dollars due to shortage of foreign exchange. Air Zimbabwe also entered into an agreement with the Congolese Airline (CAL) for joint flights to regional and international destinations.

The first mining agreement between Zimbabwe and the DRC involved the Zimbabwean based businessman, Billy Rautenbach. His company Ridge Pointe was granted a concession to mine cobalt and copper. It is also said that Rautenbach was given a controlling position on the DRC state-owned Gegamines with the intervention of Zimbabwean Minister of Justice, Emmerson Mnangwangwa. However, the DRC government revoked these concessions on the grounds that the company had failed to fulfil the conditions outlined in the decree, which allocated the concessions. His controllig position on Gecamines was reduced to that of an ordinary member.

Another economic involvement by Zimbabwe was that of Oryx Diamonds which was floated on the London Stock Exchange as a new mining consortium in partnership between Zimbabwe and the DRC, for the purpose of mining diamonds. This deal was aimed at enabling the two governments to raise money to finance the war against the invading forces. The deal involved a profit sharing arrangement between the Zimbabwean OSLEG (*Operation Sovereign Legitimacy*) and a similar DRC set-up called COSLEG (*Congo Operation Sovereign Legitimacy* – formerly Congo's Comiex – a private company linked to the Presidency in Kinshasa). Under the arrangement, Oryx's share would have been 40 per cent, OSLEG's 40 per cent and COSLEG's 20 per cent.

It was said that the political brains behind this arrangement was Commander Lieutenant General Zvinavashe of the Zimbabwe Defence Force (ZDF), Zimbabwe Justice Minister Mnangwangwa and Moven Mahachi, the late Minister of Defence. Mahachi's motivation was to expand Zimbabwe's diplomatic and commercial reach into the DRC and to match Zimbabwe's military clout with the commercial activity. It was believed that this model was copied from that of the Chinese Peoples' Liberation Army.[34]

However, this "deal" did not work out as expected because the Zimbabwean military lacked the finance and technical skills to exploit such opportunities. The objective of the deal, according to the partnership agreement, was to raise "resources to protect and defend, support logistically and assist generally in the development of commercial ventures to explore, exploit and market the minerals, timber and other resources held by the state of the DRC".[35] Oryx claimed that the concessions given to them amounted to about US $1 billion, but it was calculated that their real value stood nearer to US$280 million.

The picture painted above indicates that there has been relative transparency in the Zimbabwe-DRC economic arrangements. The arrangements have the common objective of prosecuting the war against the invaders and so-called rebels, but the arrangements are also aimed at developing commercial and economic links between the two countries in the region. There is no doubt that particular government officials and military officers have used their positions to line their pockets, but they have not been as successful as those in Uganda and Rwanda, otherwise Zimbabwe's economy would not be in the bad shape in which it finds itself.

3.8.2 Angola and the problem of UNITA

On September 17, 1998, the Angolan Ambassador to the US issued a statement to the House International Relations Sub-Committee of the US House of Representatives in which he argued that the conflict in the DRC represented "a direct threat to Angola's strategic national interest". The statement further noted that the security of Angola's extensive border with the DRC, and its relations with many of its neighbours, was at stake.

The statement went on to indicate that there was a threat to Angola's petroleum assets posed by the rebels operating on DRC soil. It also argued that it was necessary to intervene on the side of Kabila in order to pre-empt UNITA from utilising the instability in the DRC to further stall the Angolan peace process and exploiting the situation to circumvent UN sanctions, specifically regarding the re-supply of military equipment and the movement of UNITA military personnel across the border. In short, Angola was arguing that it had "legitimate security concerns" apart from the need to act collectively in the defence of a member of SADC.

It can be seen here that Angola's motives, although part of the SADC collective self-defence, nevertheless reflected its own concerns with its security which were bound too closely with those of the DRC, since UNITA was able to move freely across the two borders to destabilise the Angolan government. Despite the fact that UNITA had agreed to the Lusaka Protocols signed on 20 November 1994, it had still maintained a belligerent position against the MPLA government in Luanda. This guerrilla war against the Angolan government which had gone on since 1975 was being transformed into conventional warfare.

For this reason, between 1994 and 1997 UNITA got most of their supplies through Mobutu's Zaire. Savimbi approached Mobutu for the supply of more weapons, and from 1995 planes from Eastern Europe arrived in Kinshasa. Most of the planes arrived at night with arms packed in bags to disguise them as food or clothing. Some of the weapons were stockpiled around Kinshasa and Gbadolite from where they were loaded onto other planes and delivered to Andulo or sometimes Bailundo.

This went on until 1997, and the transactions normally involved the procurement of end-use certificates from Zaire by agents of UNITA who then used them to procure the weapons from Eastern Europe, especially from Bulgaria. When the situation in Zaire looked precarious with the advancing Ugandan and Rwandese troops alongside Kabila's ADLF forces, from 1997 onwards, UNITA shifted its supply base to Burkina Faso. This involved the use of "Burkinable" end-use certificates for the procurement of weapons and their delivery to Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dualasso from where they were delivered to UNITA and other end users.

Perhaps the most intriguing relationship of this whole affair was that which developed between Rwanda with UNITA. Although UNITA had made deals with Mobutu right up to the point of his defeat, the hostilities with Rwanda did not prevent the two parties from getting into some kind of arrangement to advance Rwanda's interests in the DRC and UNITA's war effort against the MPLA government. Perhaps Rwanda had no choice. When their troops were dislodged from Inga dam by Angolan and Zimbabwean troops in August 1998, the RPA found that the only route they could take to avoid being annihilated by the Angolan treoops was through UNITA controlled areas in Angola.

In order to rescue his trapped troops from the encirclement, vice-president Paul Kagame initiated contact with Savimbi for permission to enable his troops to retreat into the adjacent territory controlled by UNITA. Savimbi agreed to the request and the troops were air transported from there to Rwanda. Despite the UN embargo against helping Savimbi, Kagame did not find it difficult to evade the embargo in view of the fact that the US and Britainsupported Rwanda's invasion of the DRC, to further their own economic interests in that country.

3.8.3 Namibia's intervention in the DRC

Namibia did not at first accept or deny the presence of its troops in the DRC. Later, they argued that as member of SADC, they were entitled to assist Kabila after the DRC had requested assistance from the regional block. On 18 September 1998, President Sam Nujoma at a press conference, admitted that his troops were in the DRC to "safeguard Namibia's future security. We should not delude ourselves into thinking that the peace and stability that we are enjoying today will remain forever".[36] He added that:

> "As the Commander-in-Chief, I took the necessary action to come to the aid of an oppressed neighbour and fellow member of SADC. I did so conscious of the inherent dangers and problems including death of our troops. It is an honourable act of enlightened self-interests. The very worst was in store for us."[37]

President Nujoma did not elaborate what he meant by the last statement. According to him during the consultations between the presidents of Angola and Zimbabwe, the conclusion was reach on the legality and political legitimacy of giving assistance to Kabila in the face of "naked aggression". Nujoma argued that it was a response to an urgent appeal by the Congo to the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security to intervene. He said that regional conflicts and civil wars in SADC could disturb "tranquility, happiness and convenience" which many people took for granted. He further justified Namibia's action under article 51 of the UN Charter. Nevertheless Namibia's involvement compared to that of Zimbabwe and Angola was limited to a small contingent of troops, not exceeding 2,000 soldiers, which provided logistics to the other members of the allied forces.

Namibia's interest in the DRC's minerals was also publicly expressed. It is a producer of diamonds itself and has an agreement with De Beers to exploit its resources for the benefit of the Namibian economy. On 25 October 1999, the Namibian government expressed its interest in mining and selling gold and diamonds from the DRC. Home Affairs minister, Jerry Ekandjo, told the National Assembly that the government would accept an invitation to explore any mineral enterprise, if invited by the Congolese people. He added that their primary mission in the DRC was to maintain security, but if the Congolese people came up with an offer, they would take it, but by following proper channels. This demonstrated that Namibia's interest in the DRC was to stabilise the situation, which could thereafter permit this kind of economic cooperation.

3.9 The clashes between Uganda and Rwanda in Kisangani

The clashes between Uganda and Rwanda in Kisangani cannot be understood outside the struggle by the different countries and rebel factions for a share in the minerals of the DRC. The clashes that took place in Kisangani in 1999 and 2000 also clearly exposed the real intentions that motivated Rwanda and Uganda to invade the DRC with the support of the US and British governments.

The first clashes, which took place in May 1999, claimed the lives of 213 soldiers and unnumbered civilians. The second and third clashes were reported in May and June 2000. In these battles, the city of Kisangani was almost completely demolished and over 1,000 civilians were killed in the fighting between the two sides and their local supporters. According to the French Press Agency (AFP), the fighting was over gold.

Although a joint military investigation team was set up to find out the facts behind the fighting, the Ugandan side did not approve the findings of the joint team and insisted on further investigations of their own. These clashes virtually led to the division of the City and north-eastern Congo between Rwanda and Uganda and their factions of the RCD.

According to Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, the hostilities between the two countries was the result of differences on how to relate to the Congolese in the process of resolving the Congo conflict. He argued: "Whereas Uganda wishes to extend a hand of support and assistance to the Congolese population to manage their own internal politics, Rwanda would appear to prefer playing a more assertive role".[38] He indicated that Rwanda's intention in the DRC was to impose its own faction of the RCD to control the Congo, or at least those parts of the country that Rwanda was able to procure. According to then vice-president Paul Kagame, Rwanda had taken Kisangani from Kabila's forces three weeks before the Ugandan forces could arrive in the city.[39] It was clear that Kagame accused Uganda of having different motives from the ones they had declared, while claiming that their own concerns were truly to do with their security.

These explanations by both sides provided only a partial picture of the intentions of the two sides, which led to the Kisangani clashes. Evidence noted above about the economic interests of Uganda and Rwanda and their Congolese factions provided a better explanation as to the real motives behind the clashes. There were, of course, personality problems between the two leaders. A possibility was that

President Museveni wanted to maintain the role of regional broker alone and harboured ambitions for leadership in the region. There were also indications that Kagame did not want to be treated as a mere accompaniment and appendage to Museveni's ambitions in the DRC, since Rwanda has its own interests which were different from those of Uganda.

There was also a feeling, particularly in Uganda, that the second and third clashes were a result of the "humiliation" the UPDF suffered at the hands of RPA in the first clash and the "lack of appreciation" by the Rwandese of what Uganda had done for them in the liberation of their own country.

The factionalisation of the "rebel movements", which were created by Rwanda and Uganda, had further been complicated by the "ethnicisation" of politics in the region under their control.
Uganda found itself engaged in ethnic strife in the area under the control of the RCD-ML and the UPDF. In February 2000 the *Kenya Daily Nation* reported that some 5,000 people had been killed after six months of fighting between the Walendu and Wahema ethnic groups who inhabit the Ituri province near the mining area of Kilomoto gold mines. This area is under the control of the Ugandan forces. By August 2000, over 40,000 people were reported killed. The Walendu, who are said to be the natives of the area, accused the Uganda forces (UPDF) of helping the Wahema, who are ethnically related to some ethnic groups inside Uganda and are migrants in the area.

The introduction of Ugandan troops and their tendency to support the Wahema worsened the situation. The Uganda government semi-official *New Vision* reported that certain UPDF officers had taken sides in the ethnic conflict between the two ethnic communities. Two such officers were named as the Bunia sector commander, Lieutenant Colonel Arocha and his deputy, Captain Kyakabale. They were reported to have "overstepped their mandate to make UPDF support the largely wealthy Wahema".[40] The UN Secretary-General had as a result of this micro-conflict, established an investigative mission to assess the damage that was done by the Rwandan and Ugandan troops during the clashes.

3.10 The impact of the conflict on the people of the region

This conflict resulted in the disruption of the economic, social, political and cultural life of the people of the DRC and even those involved in the conflict. The large-scale killing of hundreds of people in the areas occupied by the invading forces around Kisangani and the wanton destruction of property in that city and its surrounds, has already been noted above.

The destruction of property during the fighting between Ugandan and Rwandese forces in Kisangani was so serious that even the US and Britain called for reparations by these two countries for the destruction they had caused in that city. In a resolution passed by the UN Security Council on 16 June 2000, the Council voted unanimously in calling on these countries to award reparations for the loss of life and property damage they had inflicted on the civilian population in Kisangani. There was also a demand that the two countries withdraw from the city of Kisangani, in which during the June fight, over 160 civilians were killed and over 1,000 wounded.

In another related report released to the UN General Assembly on 20 October 2000, the independent UN Human Rights Investigator, Robert Garreton, accused Uganda and Rwanda of recruiting children as young as 10 years to fight in the DRC. He added that Uganda used these children to lay anti-tank and anti-personnel mines in the areas under its control. The report condemned Uganda and Rwanda for causing "the greatest damage" to the civilian population in the Congo by "massacring large numbers of people and keeping others in a state of fear and humiliation", adding: "the war has destroyed the country".

The report confirmed that "more than half the population has been affected by the war. All public monies are being diverted to the war effort". It blamed all parties involved in depriving the people of the Congo their human rights and "massacring and torturing them despite promises to end the violence". It accused the government of Laurent Kabila of "routinely" detaining journalists, lawyers, religious leaders, human rights workers and politicians for violating a ban on political activities. The report regretted that although the Central African country is "a region of great riches, its inhabitants are living in extreme poverty".[41] It ended:

> "Eight national armies and numerous armed groups are involved in the primary war between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, which may rightly be called the first world war in Africa, and nine more armed conflicts are taking place in the same country."[42]

Another report compiled by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a relief agency that operates under conract from the US government, concluded that over 1.7 million deaths had resulted in the eastern DRC since the second invasion of the DRC by Rwanda and Uganda in August 1998. This rate of death, according to the report, equated to 77,000 deaths per month of which 26,000 (34%) were children. These figures did not take into account the thousands of Congolese from the affected areas who had taken refuge in the neighbouring countries such as Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda and the Central African Republic and who were living in terrible conditions in overcrowded camps with little medicine and food.

The IRC had also concluded that the figure of 1.7 million deaths was a "very conservative estimate' due to a number of factors. The majority of the people in the areas surveyed had either no medicines in their local clinics or they could not afford the cost of going to the clinics. The IRC report added: "In places like Kabare, there is little violence, yet the mortality is double what it should be, and infant mortality is three to four times what was normal when economic activity was occurring". Moreover, malnutrition appeared to be "a disproportionately female phenomenon". In addition, violence against the civilian population appeared to be indiscriminate. The report noted that 47 per cent of the violent deaths reported were against women and children, "only 53 per cent of those killed were males over 14 years of age". Even then, it must be accepted that this was a very high death toll for men.

In the area of diseases, the IRC report noted that eastern DRC was "an unchecked incubation zone for disease". Several major disease outbreaks were detected during the period of the five surveys. Examples reported included an estimated 870 suspected meningitis deaths in Kisangani. Cholera and dysentery in three of the five surveyed areas were also reported. In February 1999, the DRC conducted a mortality survey in the Katana Health Zone and this revealed a measles outbreak that had killed 1,400 children. The report added: "The overall mortality rate during the year 2000 is higher than it was in 1999. Thus the monthly death toll of 77.000 attributed to this war shows no sign of declining".

This slow genocide that took place in the DRC by forces claiming to be fighting to restore democracy in the country, far exceeded the 1994 Rwanda genocide. In the case of the DRC, the genocide took place in the full view of the same "international community" that failed to prevent the Rwandan genocide. On many occasions, the churches and human rights groups have reported serious violations of basic human rights of the Conglese by the invading forces as well as the soldiers of the central government in the DRC. None of these custodians of "western civilisation" and protectors of "democracy and universal human rights" are showing much meaningful concern.

In addition to the above situation in the DRC, large movements of refugees and displaced persons running away from the conflicts have affected the people in Angola, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and even Zambia. In all these countries, such as Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Angola, the movements of the people were caused by the activities of rebel forces fighting within those countries. For example, in October 2000, it was reported that large numbers of refugees had been sighted moving from Angola to the DRC seeking sanctuary from the attacks of the UNITA rebel forces.

3.11 Mineral Wealth, Conflict Diamonds and the United Nations

African countries such as Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the DRC are tragically beset with a terrible paradox – that of having enormous mineral wealth and at the same time "devastating civil conflict". Most of this mineral wealth is mainly diamonds, which are produced in large quantities. The most highly valued diamonds are from alluvial mines which are only found in Africa. Although the security of operations raises the cost of production, diamond mining in these African countries has thrived because of the high quality of its alluvial diamond deposits compared to such holdings in Australia. Whereas the diamonds mined in Angola fetch US$200 per carat, the alluvial diamonds mined in Australia and Indonesia, fetch only US$ 3 to 4 per carat.

The profitability in the diamond trade is what makes it even more deadly and bloody. The industry profits from conflicts generated in these conflict-ridden areas. In spite of the risk involved, the diamond companies raise higher profits because diamonds are cheaply exploited. It is these qualities that make Africa a target for profiteers who can make large profits mining these gems from very cheap sources. The irony is that this scramble for such minerals has led to violent conflicts aimed at controlling the sources of supply of the gems, resulting in the industry increasingly becoming a mafia-like activity, constituting one of the pillars in the criminalisation of the global economy. Perhaps it is not correct to refer to this phenomenon as ironic, but rather as the end-result of colonisation, exploitation, pillage and plunder that has characterised the economic and social relations of European and now Anglo-American, imperialism in Africa.

In a speech delivered at the UN Millennium Session of the General Assembly, the then foreign minister of the DRC, Yerodia Abdoulaye Ndombasi, called the Ugandan and Rwandan forces in his country (and by indirect implication of Anglo-American conglomerates) "gemocrats". He argued that since they invaded his country under the pretext that they were there to stop those who had committed genocide and rebels attacking their countries, they had at no time announced that they had captured any perpetrators of genocide live or dead, but instead had been busy plundering Congo's minerals.[43]

The motivation behind Angola's intervention in the DRC was also to stop UNITA having an access route for the sale of its diamonds, the revenue from which it was using to fuel its war against the MPLA government. From being supported by the US in the Cold War games, UNITA had found that it could pursue its war against the government of Angola by creating routes for the sale of the diamonds it was able to produce in the areas of its control. It has been estimated that at the height of its revolt, UNITA was selling diamonds to the value of US $5 billion per year.

In short, the end of the Cold War had created a vacuum, which rebel forces filled to fight new wars of attrition in their countries. In other words, both the national and international law regimes were being undermined by what has been called "the criminalisation of the global economy".[44] Not only were the rebel movements, drug cartels, criminal gangs and mafia forces getting involved in this bloody and deadly trade, but also legitimate economic enterprises and even national governments. The real question was to what extent were governments and the UN prepared to deal with this new threat to international order and stability.

The structure of the diamond industry is such that it promotes the extraction of diamonds, which easily find their way into the world gem markets. It is difficult to identify from which particular country such diamonds come, although technically it is possible to do so. This is because the definition adopted by the industry for identifying the sources of diamonds is too narrow to enable such diamonds to be traced to the source. There is now evidence that attempts are being made to deal with this problem, but because of the large profits that are derived from the deadly mineral, the attempt may not be that successful.

The current definition of what are called "conflict diamonds" (as coined in 1998 by De Beers), are those "diamonds that originate from areas in Africa controlled by forces fighting the legitimate and internationally recognised government of the relevant country".[45] This "working definition" is deficient because most blood diamonds go through countries which are under legitimate and internationally recognised governments and countries. The clearest example is the situation involving diamonds produced in areas controlled by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone which were sold through the legitimate and internationally recognised government of Liberia.

De Beers was also accused of buying diamonds having full knowledge of the origin of such gems. Two-thirds of the world's diamonds go through the De Beers Central Selling Office in Holborn, London, and taxes from these sales contribute hugely to the tax revenues for the British government. Until a year ago when the issue of "blood diamonds" became a hot issue in the world, De Beers openly admitted buying UNITA diamonds "second-hand" on the open markets in order to protect its cartel through which it maintained the diamond prices. Therefore the line between the "legitimate trade" in diamonds and "illicit" blood diamond trade is a thin one.

The tragedy of this situation is connected with the process of globalisation that arose from the collapse of the USSR and the Cold War. According to a *Global Witness* report:

> "Since the end of the Cold War protagonists have not had access to the funds needed to maintain the apparatus of a military or a political regime. Instead they have turned on any commodity that has a fiscal worth and a readily accessible and consumable market such as timber, animal trophies, gold and diamonds. The wars in Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo are currently the most notable examples of where rebels have used diamonds in this way."[46]

In other words, the end of the Cold War did not result in any "peace dividend" for the people of the world, but instead led to more localised conflicts. This is because the trade in commodities and diamonds by rebel groups were connected with the arms industry of many countries, some of which are members of the Security Countil. The rebel and bandit forces in these areas of conflict found that the only way they could continue their struggles was to control mineral and raw material resource areas of their countries so that they could exploit those resources to obtain the necessary weaponry.

The wealth that commodities in conflict ridden areas produces, is vast on a world scale. The total world production of diamonds for 1999 was estimated at US$ 6.8 billion. Of this amount, US$ 3.8 billion was from countries that were well regulated (South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Canada and Australia). Russia produced US$ 1.6 billion with doubtful regulatory capacity and the rest of US$ 2.4 billion was from countries such as Angola ($600 m), DRC ($ 800 m), and the rest from those countries where regulation was non-existent. In short, something like 60 per cent of the diamond production came from countries with doubtful, dubious or non-existent regulatory mechanisms. Some of it, like in Russia, could be linked to mafia-like criminal groups and gangs and the rest from conflicts of one kind or the other.

Illegal diamond trafficking is quickly joining other commodities under the fulll or partial control of the international mafia and criminal gangs. With the weakening of the national state in countries like Russia, Eastern and Central Europe, there is emerging a multi-billion dollar network of the businesses run by global criminal gangs who are increasingly becoming part of the very process of globalisation of financial services. For instance, it has been reported that the proceeds from "conflict diamonds" are being used by Asian diamond trading enterprises in Belgium as "fronts" for laundering drug money.

The issue of the growing strength of criminal gangs engaged in global economic and financial activities is becoming a major concern by governments throughout the world. According to Manuel Castells, the flexible connections of these criminals "constitute an essential feature of the global economy, and of the social/political dynamics of the information age".[47] In Castells's view these flexible connections are in the following global criminal activities: weapons trafficking, trafficking of nuclear materials, smuggling of illegal immigrants from country to country, trafficking in women and children, trafficking in body parts, and money laundering. Overall profits from all kinds of criminal activities were estimated at about US$ 750 billion to US$ 1 trillion a year.[48]

The diamond trade therefore became the major cause for fuelling the conflict on the African continent and the Great Lakes region, in particular. All the players seem to be fighting for mineral zones from which they are able to generate financial resources to line their pockets and continue with the war. Thus Africa's minerals have become a curse for the region and the people of Congo and Angola are caught up in destruction of their territories at the hands of new forces of plunder and exploitation in which warlordism and mafia-like organisations have become a factor in the region. Diamonds, just like gold and rubber under King Leopold, are the Congo's curse.

One can, therefore, conclude that even if the UN through these different initiatives succeeds in isolating the causes to the conflict in the DRC and the Great Lakes region in general, there is very little likelihood that their attempt to stop the conflicts will succeed. During the Millennium Session of the General Assembly, an item was inserted on the agenda of the Assembly about "The Role of Diamonds in Fuelling Conflicts". Many of those who took part in these debates were themselves involved in the sale, trafficking and trading in "blood diamonds". The Assembly came to the conclusion that it recognised that conflict diamonds were a "crucial factor in promoting the brutal wars in parts of Africa". But they were quick to add "legitimate diamonds contribute to the prosperity and development elsewhere on the continent". This was the dilemma. How do you identify one from the other? Are there institutional structures and political will to put a stop to the "blood diamond" transactions?

The problem may not be in the diamonds themselves, but in the politics of the modern state and its geostratic value for the international community which has contributed in the past, and continues to do so, through business. In this age of cultural and indentity politics, some of which are recognised by governments as legitimate, no such international requirement, even when it is backed by sanctions, can work, short of the UN becoming a world government with a structure that accommodates the identity as well as the economic needs of the communities in conflict.

Africa being at the bottom of the world system, and rich in mineral resources, is a victim of these global forces and unless it is able to put its own house in order, it will continue to be preyed upon by these global mafia-forces in which some Africans are part, because they benefit from it. The people of Africa must not accept the consequences of these forces that are exploiting the weaknesses of the continent, but to do so they must reorganise themselves in stable political institutions that can lead to an African rebirth and renaissance in which Africa can assert its identity and control over its resources.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter began with the hypothesis that the present predicament in which Africa finds itself is the result of its having been colonised and subjected by European powers in the last century. The Berlin Conference of 1884-85 was the opportunity for the scramble for Africa, which became a scramble for the “piece of the cake” that that continent appeared to offer in terms of rich minerals and raw materials. At their stage of transformation, Europe needed these resources for its own modernisation and development. Africa was partitioned and taken by the different imperial powers that needed “a garden in the sun” and “underdeveloped” in the process.[49]

The exploits of King Leopold of Belgium in his personal “Congo Free State” brought an end to the independent economy of the Congo, which had enable the Congolese the use of their minerals for their own needs. These resources were then exploited for the needs of Europe and thus meant the use of unparalleled violence against the people of the Congo. The violence used by the Belgians against the Congolese was later fictionalised in Joseph Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness*. This is the legacy that European “civilisation” has bestowed on the Congo, the Great Lakes Region, and indeed the whole African continent.

The independence which the African countries managed to wrestle from the European powers was only formal. It was a territorial nationalism that took over all the attributes of the former colonial states. General Mobutu, a former Sergeant in the Belgian colonial army, was put in place by the US Central Intelligence Agency to run the Zairean state on behalf of the same forces that are now on the loose in the DRC after they assassinated the first popularly elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba. The “New Breed” African leaders such as Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Paul Kagame of Rwanda, have joined the new parade of the same old plunderers under new guises.

The Savimbis of this world were created in the process of these struggles and conflicts that European rule and economy introduced on this continent. The combination of these colonial relics and the globalisaton process that fragments societies, has ensured the continuation of conflictrs which are being exploited by the new, “free-for-all”, mineral conglomerates. These conglomerates, as we have demonstrated, are now dismembering the Congolese state and in the process contributing to the weakening of all the African post-colonial states.

The dismantling and weakening of the African state means the creation of new forms of “states” under the control of mafia forces, which are part and parcel of the global economy and weak economies. It is these new forces working with the global economy that are fuelling the conflicts on the African continent. Unless the Africans get their act together, they will be consumed in these predatory activities of the new exploiters. These are the forces which are behind the channelling of “blood diamonds” to fuel conflicts and wars on this continent. The present world order is powerless in the face of the activities of these forces.

End Notes

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10 Ibid.
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19 *The Sunday Monitor,* April 6, 1997.
20 Quoted in the Uganda government semi-official newspaper, the *New Vision*, March 2, 2000.
21 *New Vision*, April 2, 1999.
22 This was revealed in a research done by two Danish freelance journalists whose findings were published in the Danish newspaper *Aktuelt* of June 17, 2000, which the Uganda newspaper *The Monitor* reproduced in their issue of June 21, 2000.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 First the Germans destroyed the checks and balances of the feudal system and replaced Rwanda's only Hutu chiefs with Tutsi chiefs. This prompted a short-lived popular uprising in 1910 between the two groups. Thereafter the Belgians introduced forced labour and appointed the Tutsi as administrators of the Hutu labourers, who were compelled to work for nothing in return. The Tutsi were systematically favoured in with education and in the colonial administraction. For more indepth explanation of this dynamic see G Vassall-Adams, "Rwanda: An Agenda for International Action", *Oxfam*, Oxford 1994.
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28 Ibid.
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30 Former US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, described the DRC conflict as "Africa World War I" during her address to the Security Council meeting on the DRC on 24 January 2000.
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