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Difficulties in Diplomacy: A Case Study of Relations Between the United States and the Republic of Congo, 1960-1965

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DIFFICULTIES IN DIPLOMACY

A CASE STUDY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN

THE UNITED STATES AND THE

REPUBLIC OF CONGO, 1960-1965

by

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A.A. June 1975, Palomar College
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MASTER OF ARTS

HISTORY

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May 1998

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ABSTRACT

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A CASE STUDY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN
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James R. Hawn Jr.
Old Dominion University, 1998
Director: Dr. Lorraine M. Lees
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Dr. Michael E. Hucles

As he took office, President John F. Kennedy articulated new policies sympathetic to African independence movements, but his policies turned out to be conditional. Aid continued to be granted to resource rich, pro-Western governments.

When the Republic of Congo gained its independence, it retained its pro-Western cultural and economic ties with its former colonial power, France. Lacking natural resources and an industrial base, this country sought large amounts of economic aid from the West to sustain itself. France and the United States failed to live up to the Congo's expectations. Accusations of massive corruption sealed the fate of the government and in 1963, a coup d'état brought forth a new government, one professing a policy of non-alignment.
Continued frustration at the lack of support coming from the West caused the new leadership to turn to the East for support. Pro-Western sympathies evaporated in the Congo, and by August of 1965, diplomatic relations between the Congo and the United States deteriorated to openly sanctioned acts of hostility and the United States withdrew its Embassy. Sources used for this thesis include United States government documents and memoirs.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the professors at Old Dominion University, who stuck with me when military assignments took me away from Norfolk VA. Their patience and understanding enabled me to complete my degree and this work.

I would also like to thank Colonel Samuel Helland, the Commanding Officer of the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), his Executive Officer Lieutenant Colonel Dennis McNulty, and his Sergeant Major, Bruce Panneton. The week before the MEU sailed to Africa to be available should American citizens need to be evacuated during the overthrow of Zairian President Mobuto Sese Soko, I contacted SgtMaj. Panneton, offering to brief him on the region he was going to and my experiences during the previous evacuation in September 1991, in exchange for a beer at the club. In 1991, while assigned as the Detachment Commander of the Marine Security Guard at the American Embassy in Brazzaville, I participated in the evacuation of American citizens from Kinshasa, Zaire during a period of civil unrest. Instead, the SgtMaj. brought me in to brief Col. Helland and LtCol. McNulty. One week later, my bags were packed and I was on board the USS Kearsarge, enroute back to
Brazzaville. Returning to Brazzaville enabled me to walk the streets, revisit old friends, and gain a better understanding of the material I had uncovered during my research. To those three gentlemen, I am indebted and grateful. I never got that beer!

I would also like to thank the African friends my wife and I made while living in Brazzaville, the fate of whom is unknown to us since the civil war that wracked that country two weeks after I left in the summer of 1997. The Congo has the potential to be a beautiful country; it holds a special place in my heart.

To my children Jimmy and Ellie who gave up many weekends with Daddy so that I could write this thesis, and most important of all, to my wife Beryl who supported me every step of the way, and kept the home fires burning during my absences. Thank you Beryl.
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CHAPTER I

AMERICAN DIPLOMACY FOR COLONIAL AFRICA

During the 1960s, a revolution occurred on the African continent. Twenty-two nations achieved independence from their colonial masters; seventeen of them in 1960. These nations, formed on the basis of their colonial origins with borders defined for them without regard for tribal patterns, struggled to find their way in the world. Many African nations looked to America for guidance, as well as moral and financial support.

In the early 1960's, the United States, having emerged victorious a mere fifteen years before from a major world war, now found itself in the center of a new kind of war, a cold one. On the one side stood the United States and its allies, the nations of Western Europe. On the other, the Soviet Union, Communist China, and the Eastern Bloc countries. In the middle stood uncommitted areas, such as Africa.

Long used to dealing with European, Asian and South American nations, the United States had little experience in dealing with colonial Africa. In addition, many African

The style manual used was Kate L. Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.
leaders were poorly trained. In these emerging nations, western-style diplomacy was more the exception than the rule. In some cases, the governments that took control at independence were those that had been groomed by their former colonial masters to rule their new state, while other governments were led by members of opposition groups who had fought against their colonial leaders. Many African leaders were prepared to do little beyond applying local tribal customs to advance their personal agendas. Some nations remained loyal to their former masters and thus firmly committed to the West. Others embraced a new order, preached from Moscow and Peking. All of these conditions insured that diplomacy with nations on this continent presented a new challenge.

The United States had to tailor its policies to each individual nation, for no two African nations were alike. Diplomacy for nations committed to the West was different than that for nations committed to the East. In the short span of five years, the Republic of Congo, a former French colony, presented challenges to both perspectives.

Little has been written in the United States about the Congo in comparison with other nations on that
continent because, from 1965 to 1975, the American Embassy in Brazzaville, capital of the Congo, stood empty. There had never been any major aid or trade agreements with that country, and this it seems caused historians to show very little interest. It is only with the recent declassification of the State Department's files from the American Embassy Brazzaville, 1960 through 1965, that the events that contributed to the difficulties of diplomacy and that led to a cessation of relations between these two nations can be reported.

American policy toward the Moyen-Congo (the colonial name for the Republic of Congo) during the 1940's and 1950's remained fairly consistent with that practiced toward all African regions under colonial rule. Independence movements were just beginning to emerge after the end of the Second World War. With a few exceptions, a general American foreign policy existed for the entire continent. The United States favored the right of self-determination for all nations, but viewed Africa as basically a European problem.

President Harry S. Truman was the first president to confront African independence movements. In his memoirs,
he articulated his position on all resistance movements that sought liberation from a colonial power. Truman wrote:

We, as a people, have always accepted and encouraged the undeniable right of a people to determine its own political destiny. It is our own faith and the foundation of our own political freedom. If this is valid for us, it must be equally valid for other people. There could be no 'ifs' attached to this right, unless we were to backslide on our political creed. But the real problem, as I saw it in its application to immediate events, was not one of principle. We accepted the principle of political freedom as our own and believed that it should be applied elsewhere as well. The real problem was that of procedure and method.¹

Truman's last sentence summed up nicely the difficulty the United States faced in the ensuing years.

Truman's main focus was not on growing African sentiment for independence, but on rebuilding Europe and checking the growth of communism. The reality he faced as far as Africa was concerned was the fact that the European metropoles, particularly France, needed their African colonies to sustain the mother country during its rebuilding.²

Speaking at Northwestern University on 27 June 1951, George C. Mcgee, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, observed that

² Ibid., 269-275.
"Africa today remains oriented toward the free world both economically and politically," providing such strategic materials required by the Western powers as copper, chrome, cobalt, manganese, bauxite, asbestos, tin, industrial diamonds, and uranium. Three-fourths of the continent was under European control. The remaining sovereign countries were tied politically and economically with Europe and the United States. McGee characterized Africa as firmly associated with the free world and noted that the Europeans regarded their African territories as essential to their own economic well-being, their military security, and their political position in the world community.\(^1\)

In the beginning of the 1950s, there was one communist movement in Africa, the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain or RDA. This party existed primarily in French West Africa, but its influence extended throughout French colonial Africa. Mcgee believed that Soviet rulers were gaining an appreciation of the importance of Africa to the free world and were increasing their efforts to gain a foothold on the continent. Low standards of living, attitudes of white supremacy, and disintegration of tribal

authority created a fertile ground for communist agitators. To counter Soviet propaganda, Western nations needed to show Africans that their individual and national aspirations were best achieved by maintaining their alliance with the free world community. This did not mean, however, that the Western powers should grant immediate independence.

As George Mcgee wrote:

The United States Government has always maintained that premature independence for primitive, uneducated peoples can do them more harm than good and subject them to an exploitation by indigenous leaders, unrestrained by the civic standards that come with widespread education, that can be just as ruthless as that of aliens. Also, giving full independence to peoples unprepared to meet aggression or subversion can endanger not only the peoples themselves but the security of the free world.⁴

The basic policy of the United States toward territories under colonial rule in the 1950's under both Truman and his republican successor Dwight D. Eisenhower, was a belief in eventual self-determination for all peoples, a self-determination achieved through an evolutionary development carried out with minimum delay. The key word here is evolutionary. Americans feared that premature independence would be dangerous, retrogressive, and destructive to people long used to being under colonial

⁴ Ibid.
rule. The United States did not want these countries ruled by dictators or communists.

In an address before the World Affairs Council of Northern California at Asilomar on 31 October 53, Henry A. Byroade, Eisenhower's Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, spoke of four factors that caused the United States to stress evolutionary self-determinism. He said "whenever any people attain nominal sovereignty before they are prepared to exercise it, the net result is weakness." The policy of the United States Government was to promote strength and well-being in other parts of the world. The Eisenhower administration wanted dependent peoples to attain a real independence that would endure not only in the face of Soviet imperialism, but in the face of any other form of tyranny. The desire was for a government that would represent the interests of its people, protect their liberty, and promote social and economic progress. But despite these exclamations of support for self-determination, Byroade did not desert the colonial powers. He recognized the economic importance of the colonial areas to the stability of allied European governments, friends who
represented a "major source of free world defensive power" necessary to American security.\(^5\)

The United States walked a tightrope over colonialism, since it professed a value for both self-determination for colonial peoples, and European economic security. In his conclusion, Byroade clarified his thesis, saying that although the United States remained interested in Europe's economic well being, "we most certainly do not propose that the rights of dependent peoples should be subordinated to this interest...it is extremely important that the political evolution of the dependent areas follow a course which will permit these peoples to take their place as respected and equal citizens of the free world."\(^6\)

A National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) dated 22 December 1953 discussed communism in Africa. NIE's were interdepartmental reports providing foreign policy problem appraisals coordinated by the intelligence organizations of the agencies belonging to the Intelligence Advisory Committee. (Organizations represented included the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Departments of State, States, 1952-1954, (Washington D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 11:54-65. Hereinafter referred to as FRUS with year and volume listed.\(^5\) Address by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, 31 October 1953, Foreign Relations of the United \(^6\) Ibid.
Defense, Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Their reports and recommendations were presented to the president under the aegis of the CIA.) Of all the countries and colonies on the African continent, only Madagascar had an organized Communist Party. In French Africa, the Democratic African Rally, associated with a communist movement prior to 1950, was now anti-Communist. 7

When both Truman and Eisenhower offered Africans aid, they did so with deference to European sensitivities. However, in early 1960, when the number of nations receiving their independence escalated dramatically, Eisenhower modified his policy. In April of that year, he approved a new policy to develop aid packages for many of these new nations without regard to their colonial power. This policy did not, however, include those nations that were part of the French Community. Eisenhower felt that since these countries maintained such a close relationship with France, aid to these countries would continue to be coordinated closely with the "former mother country." 8

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More than any other colonial power in Africa, France prepared its colonies for independence. In his book *The Africans*, David Lamb writes "France, in fact, retains an extraordinary influence in its former colonies and in many cases remains the paramount economic and cultural force dominating their affairs." This was especially so in the Republic of Congo where a strong bind between the two countries lasted into independence. France was successful because its colonial policy toward its African colonies differed from those of the United Kingdom, Portugal, and Spain. Lamb calls it a policy of "cultural assimilation." For example, where British colonials would learn the African language, Africans in French controlled lands spoke French. The French groomed African leaders, trained some of them in France, imbued them with French culture, and granted them French citizenship.  

The 1950's were not an easy time for France. The nation was still rebuilding itself from the devastation of German occupation during the Second World War. French territories at the time accounted for approximately 10% of France's foreign trade. The United States considered an

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economically and militarily viable France essential to a free Europe. On 3 May 1950, Raymond A. Hare, Truman's Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs told, among others, Guy Monod, the head of the African Division of the Office of African-Levant Affairs of the French Foreign Ministry, that economic and informational activities of the United States "would not be directed toward undermining France's position overseas."\(^{10}\)

Throughout the 1950's France experience a continual shift of governments, and relations between that country and the United States deteriorated. Then on 1 June 1958, Charles de Gaulle became the President of France, and moved to reassert French prominence. When President Eisenhower visited de Gaulle in Paris in September 1959, the two presidents, the French prime minister, the American secretary of state and the French foreign minister met over several days to discuss relations between the two countries. Michel Debré, the prime minister, was very hard-nosed about French perogitives in international diplomacy. Although the discussion dealt with his threats

to break relations if the United States did not support French policies concerning Algeria, at the end of his conversation, Debré linked United States support for a common French policy for the entire African continent to future Franco/American relations.\textsuperscript{11}

The next day, de Gaulle acknowledged that France was experiencing difficulting in dealing with its loss of power, prestige and wealth, and asked Eisenhower's indulgence. Eisenhower told him that he would not do anything that would undermine de Gaulle's efforts to rebuild France.\textsuperscript{12}

Economics was not the only reason for maintaining good relations with the French colonies in Africa. In the early 1950's the fear of the Cold War heating up was never far below the surface. During the Second World War, soldiers from Africa supported the allies in Northern Africa. Western observers believed that "about 300,000 troops could be drawn from French Africa in event of general war."\textsuperscript{13}

By the end of the decade, colonialism in Africa was

\textsuperscript{11} Memorandum of Conversation between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Charles de Gaulle, 2 September 1959, \textit{FRUS} 1958-1960, 7:262-5.
virtually over. A new political reality in Africa required a new American foreign policy. President Eisenhower's administration neared its end, and perhaps this was good for American relations with the African continent. Stephen E. Ambrose, in his book *Eisenhower, Soldier and President*, referred to Eisenhower's time in office as "the time of the great postponement." Among those things listed by Ambrose as being put off were "the problems of post colonial Africa."\(^4\)

President John F. Kennedy brought a new focus to international relations between the United States and the developing world. A few months prior to his election, he made a speech in the Senate which he entitled "A New Approach on Foreign Policy, A Twelve-Point Agenda." In this speech, he laid out the positions and objectives of his foreign policy. His seventh "point" dealt solely with Africa, favoring a policy designed to sway emerging African nations away from the communist orbit. He recognized the need for the United States to offer more than noble platitudes about African rights to self-determination. He believed the United States should help African nations

educate their people in the technical skills necessary to run their countries. He wanted to send agricultural experts into areas where the land was unproductive and where modern methods of agriculture were unknown. He wanted to provide funding to stimulate African economic growth, and he said he wanted to do this in such a way as to convince these new nations of America's desire to bring freedom and prosperity to Africa.\textsuperscript{15}

Kennedy appeared to be professing an appreciation of non-alignment in his second State of the Union speech, when he said: "Our basic goal remains the same; a peaceful world community of free and independent states, free to choose their own future and their own system...Some may choose forms and ways we would not choose for ourselves, but it is not for us that they are choosing."\textsuperscript{16}

President Kennedy claimed to understand the dichotomy of African growth, for example, the problems of modern uranium mining beside poor subsistence level farming. Observers up to his time seemed to him to have viewed Africa in Western terms, but he believed he appreciated the

hardships of the Africans. His goal was to help create a strong Africa by a large infusion of economic aid targeted for the general population. Kennedy proposed that government do this because private overseas investment had failed. Private investors concentrated their support principally in areas dominated by whites, on ventures with massive economic return, such as copper, gold, diamond and uranium mines. While chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa, Kennedy proposed the establishment of an Educational Development Fund for Africa that would benefit all Africans, and, in cooperation with other nations, a multinational Economic Development Fund.  

Historians depict Kennedy's Africa policy in a somewhat dimmer light. Van Mitchell Smith, in his book *Africa: The Kennedy Years, 1961-1963*, called Kennedy's approach to Africa consistent throughout his administration, but characterizes it as middle road. His policies were more aggressive than that of the colonial powers, yet more moderate than African leaders wanted. To Smith, he most notably accepted the wish of African leaders to maintain their neutrality at a time when the world was sharply

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17 Kennedy, 126-131.
divided between East and West. Other historians have been more critical.\textsuperscript{18}

Wayne Fredericks, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs during Kennedy's administration, minimized the president's contribution, suggesting that the strength of his African policy was more in his choice of State Department representatives than in his own plans. He said: "While Africa was nowhere near the top of President Kennedy's agenda, he did provide openings for us to create sensible policy-to open up new relationships."\textsuperscript{19}

Harlan Cleveland, former Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, claimed Kennedy's interest in Africa was really targeted at black voters in his own country. For this reason, he appointed G. Mennen Williams, former Governor of Michigan, as the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, an appointment Kennedy made before he asked Dean Rusk to be his secretary of state. Williams was a well-known figure in the Civil Rights Movement. Additionally, he was a vocal advocate of


Africa. Cleveland suggested he was the most committed advocate in the administration.²⁰

It was G. Mennan Williams' efforts that set the tone for American policy toward Africa. African Nationalists found hope in that policy. Williams wrote:

Our African policy has five major points. First, and most importantly, we support self-determination for Africa and all corollaries that follow from it, such as the African desire for non-alignment. Second, we encourage the Africans themselves to solve their own problems. We support without reservations those institutions through which Africans can arrive at their own solutions, like the Organization of African Unity and the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa. Third, we hope to raise the African standard of living with our aid and our trade. Fourth, we discourage the build-up of arms beyond the needs of internal security of legitimate self-defense. Fifth, we remind other countries, particularly the European metropoles, of their continuing responsibilities toward Africa.²¹

Such talk was sure to inspire African leaders, but was it really a reflection of Kennedy's true feelings about the continent? Perhaps they were before he took office, indeed before he began his election campaign when he could afford to be altruistic. During the 1960 campaign, the political necessity of gaining "Black votes" may have caused him to place an emphasis that served both his needs. But, as Edward B. Claflin wrote in his introduction to his

²⁰ Ibid., 207.
²¹ Williams, 170.
anthology of presidential memorandums, "the purposes of the Alliance for Progress or Food for Peace programs...were consistently justified in terms of stemming the tide of communist influence. In Africa...American aid was clearly linked to the willingness of the recipient nation to fight communist influence, incursions, or infiltrations."  

African leaders listening to Kennedy were encouraged by his pronouncements of good will, understanding and support. His words came just as a large segment of the continent gained its independence, in the election year of 1960, and the year following when he took office. Unfortunately, what the leaders of the former French colonies did not know was that Kennedy's words were not aimed at them. While Kennedy approved policy revisions to provide flexibility for the United States in supplementing Western European support to newly independent areas, he still showed deference to France, assuring French President Charles de Gaulle that United States interests are only complementary to the French and that Kennedy was, in the main, interested in preventing communist influence in those

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countries within the French sphere of influence as well as the ingress of the Cold War itself into Africa. The leadership of former French Africa did not yet realize it, but Kennedy's promises for Africa did not include them. They were still at the mercy of a European nation who viewed them as a region to exploit for the betterment of the metropole.

President Lyndon Baines Johnson claimed that, in the shadow of Kennedy's death, he felt a need to carry on the fallen president's policies. As vice president, he had gone to Africa in March 1961 at Kennedy's request. He returned with the feeling that a more coherent policy was needed to aid the new emerging nations. His talks with various African Leaders filled him with a sense of mission, to help Africa join the twentieth century.

Warren I. Cohen, in his book Dean Rusk, rejects the assumption that, in the case of Africa, Johnson carried on Kennedy's programs. He said that Johnson's ideas differed from Kennedy's in that Johnson was not as caught up in the third world "mystique." Johnson was more sensitive to

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American prestige. When he took over, some of the fragile African regimes that had replaced colonial governments a few years earlier were beginning to collapse. As some of these nations degenerated into anarchy, Africans vented their frustrations on the Americans within the diplomatic, missionary, and business communities. Johnson became personally offended when citizens of nations who were receiving American aid attacked American citizens and diplomats. He was quite willing to cut off aid to a nation when there was no benefit for the United States, a fact that figured heavily in relations with the Republic of Congo during his administration.²⁶

In summation, difficulties with diplomacy began with the United States, who had two policies for Africa during the Kennedy/Johnson years. The policy published for public consumption was one that supported the end of colonialism and independence. Promises were made to give foreign aid to those new nations to help them succeed. The second policy, spoken chiefly among the American leadership, held that foreign aid had a price. Foreign aid would go to those countries in a position to help the United States,

those countries with something to trade. Furthermore, foreign aid would go to those countries aiding the United States to contain the expansion of communism. The leadership of the Congo, hindered with having to deal with these two policies, were further frustrated by the deference the United States paid to France when dealing with former French colonies. While these policies might work when dealing with a leadership committed to a friendship between two countries, as we shall see, they could prove very difficult when dealing with a leadership without those friendly feelings. The Congo needed help, patience and understanding. It needed aid from a country with a flexible leadership. It did not need an American leader inclined to turn his back at the slightest provocation, a leader who would dig in his heals in the face of adversity and not consider other alternatives. For new African nations, Lyndon Johnson was clearly the wrong personality to have in the White House dealing with these emerging democracies.27

When the levels of support for emerging states did not live up to the altruistic pronouncements of the

American Presidents, many of those African leaders who had believed them were sadly disappointed. This is the story of one such country, the Republic of Congo.
CHAPTER II

THE CONGO

In 1960, there were two Congos. The larger, more well known Congo on the southern bank of the Congo River, was a Belgian colony prior to independence. Rich in minerals, and comprising a substantial portion of the land mass of the sub-Saharan portion of the continent, this Congo received a great deal of attention from the Western world. The Belgian Congo provided most of the world’s supply of diamonds. In addition, large quantities of cobalt, tin, copper, radium, gold, and uranium came from this region. The United States expended a great deal of energy, money, and political capital to ensure that this Congo remained aligned with the West. The attention paid to this Congo contrasted sharply with that afforded the Congo on the other side of the river.

On the north of the Congo River is the former French Congo. Its principle city, Brazzaville, served as the capital of French Equatorial Africa (Afrique Equatoriale Française or AEF). It was one of fourteen nations to achieve its independence from France in 1960. This Congo had few natural resources of any interest to the United
States. The lack of arable land limited its agricultural export capability. Its people were tied culturally and politically to France. American aid given to this country, both before and after independence, was done so with an eye toward placating the sensitivities of the French.

The Republic of Congo is one of four states carved out of the former AEF. Referred to as Moyen-Congo (Middle Congo) during the colonial period, its capitol Brazzaville served as the administrative center for the entire AEF. The Congo is the poorest of the four countries that made up the AEF in terms of natural resources. The country comprises 135,000 square miles. Most of its arable land, about 20,000 square miles, lies in the Niari Valley near the coast. The population numbered about 800,000 at independence, with the largest concentration in the southern region.¹

One of the points of contention in the early days of independence between these two countries was over the naming of their Countries. The former Belgian Congo

declared its independence first, and laid claim to the name "Republic of the Congo." The former French Congo, incensed at this, also claimed that name for their country. The United States State Department solved the identity crisis for their own purposes by initially referring to the former French colony as "Republic of Congo," differentiating between the two countries by the insertion of the word "the" when referring to the former Belgian colony. By 1962, the shortened names for these nations became Congo (Brazzaville) or Congo/B, and Congo (Leopoldville) or Congo/L. For the purposes of this paper, the name "Congo" will be used throughout to denote the Congolese Republic. In sections when both countries are being discussed, the abbreviations Congo/B and Congo/L will be used to denote the specific countries, and GOCB and GOCL used when referring to the governments of those countries.

An indicator of the interest the United States had in these two countries can be determined by the amount of aid given each one. A listing of aid amounts paid out to African nations in 1963 shows the Congo/B listed among those nations that received less than 1 million dollars from the United States. The Congo/L is listed with those
nations receiving between 1 million and 10 million dollars. At the other end of the spectrum, Nigeria received 53.8 million dollars, and Tunisia received 39.4 million dollars. Interest in the Republic of Congo was just not that significant.²

To lay the groundwork on which to make this diplomatic study, it is necessary to understand the geography, superstitions and colonial power induced expectations of support, all of which contributed to a difficult political climate during the first five years of independence. The absence of a viable law enforcement capability further hampered Congolese rulers. The people frequently took the law into their own hands, retaliating against the perpetrators of their perceived slights. The military and the gendarmerie had difficulty controlling youth gangs that appropriated for themselves the roles of the military.

Ambassador W. Wendell Blanké described the Congo in March 1962 as a country with "few assets and many liabilities," a nation with a small, unskilled population and a dearth of natural resources. The Congo's only important natural resource was its forest land. Harvesting timber

² Ralph Dungan, Memorandum From the President's Special Assistant to President Kennedy, 6 March 1963, FRUS 1961-1963, 21:329-330.
accounted for about two-thirds of that country's export income. Exploiting this resource was a problem, however, for once the trees were cut, there were few roads adequate to transport the lumber to market. This limited local transportation capabilities to only one viable route, the Congo River.

The Congo River enhanced the Congo's economic picture, not only as a terminus for upland logging transportation, but for transshipment of many other products coming down river from nations landlocked in the African interior. The river is navigable from Brazzaville northeastward two-thirds of the way across southern Africa. In addition, several other major rivers empty into the Congo River along its course. Navigation ends at Brazzaville where the Congo River narrows and begins a two hundred mile flow over rapids and waterfalls to the Atlantic Ocean. A railroad line connects Brazzaville to Pointe Noire, the Congo's ocean port, making both cities important commercial centers. While lumber and trade resulting from upriver transshipment activities were principle means of ensuring the Congo's economic growth, they were by no means the only ones.
In the early 1960's, there was some crude oil production and lead, tin and phosphates were mined in small quantities. Although industrial development was negligible, it was present, accounting for about 11% of the national income. There was limited commercial exploitation of a few tropical products such as palm kernels, palm oil, peanuts, bananas, coffee and cocoa beans. Lack of natural resources and arable land were not, however, the only factors contributing to the small economic potential of the Congo. There was a human factor as well.

Ambassador Blanké observed that industrial development and agricultural improvement could only occur with the "active cooperation of the population." Unfortunately, this cooperation was not present in the Congo. The masses were "inhibited by poverty, ignorance, indifference, and a general lack of awareness." In short, while some potential was present, desire was not. The people depended on what financial aid they received just to maintain their current level of survival. More aid was needed. In the 1960's, the most pressing claims on resources were for infra-structure (roads and transport), and for the
development of forestry, agriculture, and fishing.  

In September, 1962, American Embassy Public Affairs Officer John L. Hedges and the Military Attaché LtCol. Donald D. Bridenbaugh took a 1500 mile field trip, driving from village to village. They camped along side the road, occasionally staying with missionaries. They talked to village elders. At the completion of their trip, they wrote a report that painted a vivid picture of a people struggling to come to terms with modern society.  

In his report to Rusk, sent in late March 1962, Hedges described the Congolese government's continuation of the French practice of forcing villages to relocate from their tradition settings deep in the bush to new locations along the new but primitive road system. The government attempted to force villagers to grow a cash crop, something new for these people who had heretofore lived on subsistence farming. Attempts to raise rice and coffee met with little success. Villagers lacked the patience to properly cultivate these crops. The people wanted a crop that required minimal effort, yet produced a maximum return for their meager investment. Coffee seemed to be the most

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3 Blanké to Rusk, 24 March 1962, RG 59, File 770R.00/3-2462.
favored crop because, according to a young Congolese Agricultural Agent, it took only two years of cultivation to produce a biannual crop. But farmers only grew enough to satisfy their immediate needs. While there were a fair number of coffee bushes observed during the trip, there was no indication of large-scale planned production.

Village life was simple. The people lived in wattle and daub huts. Their food consisted of manioc, eggs, bananas, and pineapples. Occasionally, there was some meat. Their life style was slow paced and peaceful, with women doing most of the work. Men were the house builders, hunters and philosophers. Life expectancy was only about 40 years. Village life existed much as it had for centuries, but with growing signs of European encroachment.

Only 10 percent of the population in the bush could read or write, and these were mostly young school children. There was little need for literacy, since there was little exposure to the world outside of their villages. There was no electricity to run radios, nor was there a good means of transportation to bring in newspapers. Those that did learn to read and write tended to leave the village for a better life in the cities.
The Congolese thought in terms of the present and the past, but not of the future, or of the future consequences of their actions. They were superstitious. They believed that the spirits of their departed relatives determined all that was good or bad in their lives. These were not a people forged on the anvil of the Industrial Revolution. They were never imbued with an ethic to strive for self-improvement. Long accustomed to being cared for, when they became exposed to the modern world, they were incapable of handling it. The seeds of corruption and exploitation found perhaps the only fertile ground in an otherwise infertile region.⁴

The Congo is home to many ethnic and tribal groups. In many cases, their homelands spill across the Congo's boundaries into neighboring countries. There are about 50 separate tribes and sub-groups that fall generally into three major primary groups when considering the country's politics. The three are the Bakongo in habitating the region around Stanley Pool and Brazzaville, the M'Bouchi who lived in the northern part of the country and the M'Villi who lived near the coast. Politics in the Congo was governed

⁴ Ibid.
by tribal affiliation more than by personalities or doctrine, of which more will be said later.\(^5\)

On 15 August 1960, the day of its Independence, the Congo was still, despite French preparation, a primitive society, bereft of the means and the desire to adequately fend for itself. With little to trade, a preparation probably not understood by the majority of the people outside of the city, and expectations ripe for political and diplomatic exploitation, the Congolese people were not ready to join the world as a sovereign nation. They needed more time, more help, more education, and more support. They were not a cohesive community of like minded people striving for their own betterment. They were a target for political and economic intrigue, and a pawn in the world political arena.

Economically the Congo was at independence, and remained so throughout, firmly tied to France. As stated earlier, all United States offers of aid were proffered with a continuous regard for French sensitivities. In April 1961, a NIE predicted that African nations, unable to attain the level of aid they wanted from the West would

\(^5\) Ibid.
seek assistance from the East.\textsuperscript{6} The State Department's Policy Planning Counsel cautioned Secretary of State Dean Rusk during July 1961 that the United States needed to demonstrate to Africans that the United States was a disinterested friend, fully supportive of their desire to run their own affairs free from outside influence.\textsuperscript{7} Despite these warnings, the United States never waivered from its policy. Aid continued to be offered to those former French colonies in such a way as not to offend the French.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{7}Ibid., 295.
\end{thebibliography}
CHAPTER III

YOULOU AND THE FIRST REPUBLIC

Before 1946 the AEF had no political institutions or parties. The region was represented in Paris by one person, an appointed member of the Conseil Supérieur des Colonies. The governor-general of the AEF was named by the French government. He was aided by an administrative council, an advisory group made up of eight federal officials, four local French citizens selected by the Chamber of Commerce and four French speaking Africans chosen to represent the native population.¹

The Conference of Governors of French Black Africa (Brazzaville Conference) had convened in Brazzaville in early 1944 to discuss the management of post war French colonial policy. Delegates to this conference were exclusively French officials. These delegates had specifically rejected the idea of African self-government, instead proposing that the colonies send representatives to the French Constitutional Assembly when it convened after the war and that the colonies be granted political

representation in a future federal assembly.²

At the end of the Second World War, a constitutional assembly was convened in France to draft the Constitution for the Fourth Republic. Felix Tchicaya was elected to represent the Moyen-Congo (and neighboring Gabon as well) in the French Constitutional Assembly. For the first time, African delegates had the opportunity to discuss the grievances and aspirations of their fellow Africans. When the resulting draft constitution failed in the French referendum held during May 1946 (despite a majority of affirmative overseas votes), a second assembly was convened, and Tchicaya was again elected as a delegate. At this assembly, delegates reached a compromise between advocates of independence for colonial areas and supporters for a French dominated federal system. The plan for the resulting French Union was written into the draft constitution which ultimately became the Constitution of the Fourth Republic.³

Under the French Union, two territorial councils were established in the Moyen-Congo, one consisting of local Frenchmen, the other of Africans. Real power, however,

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
remained vested in the French assembly. Though lacking political power, the African territorial council did provide the impetus for the growth of political consciousness and experience in the political process.  

The most significant legislative act in the political development of the French colonies was the *loi cadre* (enabling act) passed in June 1956. This law provided the legal framework for increased African participation in government. The *loi cadre* granted universal suffrage and established one council with broad legislative powers, giving equal political rights to Africans and French expatriots.  

Charles de Gaulle returned to power in June 1958, bringing with him a new constitution for the Fifth Republic and a new type relationship for France's colonies. Henceforth, colonies could choose to become an autonomous republic in a new French Community, within which France was the senior partner. In November 1958, the Moyen-Congo became the Republic of Congo, an autonomous member of the French Community. France, as the senior partner, retained jurisdiction over, among other things, foreign policy and

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4 Ibid.
5 Gauze, xxiv; *Congo Country Study*, 18.
defense. After independence, the French military maintained a detachment of personnel in the Congo to help develop the Congolese armed forces, and to provide military assistance upon the request of the Congolese government.6

In the waning days of the 1950's, as French rule came to a close, several organizations and individuals emerged to control events in the Congo after independence. For the most part, the establishment of parties followed tribal lines. Platforms adopted by the candidates closely followed tribal priorities since the personalities of the candidates were not as important beyond tribal boundaries.

The principle political parties in the period prior to independence included the Parti Progressiste Congolais or PPC, founded by Félix Tchicaya in 1946. The PPC was affiliated with the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain or RDA, a West African political movements allied with the French Communist Party. Tchicaya's PPC, however, was more a tribal-based party consisting of the M'Villi tribesmen from the Kouilou region, that portion of the Congo closest to the ocean. Tchicaya was an important player in the 1950's but lost prominence towards the end of that decade,

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and was eclipsed by Stéphane Tchichelle. For a while, the PPC's only viable opposition was the Section Française de L'internationale Ouvrière (SFIO) under the leadership of Jacques Opangault, leader of the M'Bouchi tribe that inhabited the northern most sections of the country and contained less than 10 percent of the population. After 1957, this party changed its name to the Mouvement Socialiste Africaine (MSA). 

Also after 1957, with the rise of Fulbert Youlou, the Union Démocratique pour la Défense des Intérêts Africaine (UDDIA) became the leading opposition party to the MSA. This party, based on members of the Bakongo tribe who lived in Brazzaville and the region around Stanley Pool, rapidly absorbed members of the PPC to become the largest political party in the Congo. The leaders of these three parties became the primary players in the new Republic upon independence. Their power bases and ability to mobilize public opinion led to the continuous shaping and reshaping of the governmental structure throughout Youlou's regime.

Youlou was a Lari, part of the Bakongo tribe. He was born near Brazzaville on 9 June 1917 and received his

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7 Gauze, 259; Blanké to Rusk, 12 June 1962, RG 59, File 770R.5/6-1262; Congo Country Study, 19.
8 Ibid.
secondary education in mission schools. He was baptized a Catholic in 1926 and 20 years later, in 1946, ordained a priest. Already in trouble with the church for his lack of zeal and discipline, Youlou was forbidden to exercise his vocation when he decided to enter politics in 1956. He served first as Mayor of Brazzaville in November of that year, then as Vice President of the Moyen-Congo's first government council 6 months later, and finally as president of the new republic in 1960. Although defrocked by the Church, diplomats continually referred to Youlou as "Abbé" in their dispatches, and that convention is used in this report as well.⁹

The second important figure in the elections of 1960 was Jacques Opangault, the M'Bouchi tribe leader. He was born 13 December 1907 and also received his education in a Catholic mission school. In 1938 he served as a clerk in the judicial service and entered politics after the Second World War. Completely loyal to France, Opangault served as vice-president and later premier of his country's first government council. In February, 1959, Opangault found himself the target of a conspiracy and was thrown in jail.

⁹ Gauze, 262; Blanké to Rusk, 12 June 1962, RG 59, File 770R.5/6-1262.
The conspiracy developed when riots broke out in Brazzaville in that month between his M'Bouchi and Youlou's Lari tribesmen. In the end, 100 people were dead, 200 injured, and approximately 300 dwellings destroyed. Council Vice President Fulbert Youlou allied himself with the only other important political leader, Stéphane Tchichelle, to outmaneuver Opangault in the government council's assembly, and blamed him for the riots. This did not spell the end of Opangault, however, for six months later he was released, and by 1960 was the minister of state in Youlou's new post-independence government. In 1961, Opangault became vice president of the republic, only to be demoted the following year.\(^\text{10}\)

Another important personality in the political arena was the aforementioned Stéphane Tchichelle. A M'Villi from the Kouilou region, he was born 12 January 1915. As with the others, he was educated in mission schools. From 1946 to 1959, he represented Kouilou in the territorial assembly and served as Pointe Noire's Mayor in 1956. Pointe Noire is the second largest city in the Congo, situated on the Coast, in the heart of M'Vili country. He served in

\(^{10}\) Gauze, 70 and 257; Blanké to Rusk, 12 June 62, RG 59, File 770R.5/6-1262.
Youlou's pre-independence government as minister of labor and health in 1957, as minister of the interior in 1958, and deputy premier and minister of foreign affairs in 1959. He became vice president of the Congo in July 1962. Although his party, the *Parti Progressiste Congolaise* (PPC), was founded by Tchicaya, Tchichelle became its primary focal point.\(^{11}\)

One last political personality needs to be introduced here, not so much in recognition of his contributions to the Congo at independence as for his role in later politics. Alphonse Massamba-Debat served as president of the national assembly from June 1959 through May 1961. A Bakongo, he attended a Protestant secondary school, becoming a teacher and later a school principal. His role in politics prior to independence was as a subordinate to Youlou in the UDDIA. Ambassador Blanké, the first United States ambassador to the Congo, considered Massamba-Debat to be one of the more capable political leaders during the first republic.\(^{12}\)

A significant fact, common in these biographies, is the education level of the people concerned. None were

\(^{11}\) *Congo Country Study*, 19f; Gauze, 259; Blanké to Rusk, 12 June 1962, RG 59, File 770R.5/6-1262.

\(^{12}\) Gauze, 252; Blanké to Rusk, 16 May 1961, RG 59, File 770R.21/5-1661.
university graduates. All received their education in mission schools. Their strength came from their popularity within their respective tribes. The significance of this becomes apparent later in this thesis.

Labor unions played a major role in pre-independence Congolese politics, although African labor organizations were not political parties per se. Their membership included skilled workers, junior bureaucrats, and teachers. Many of these people attended schools in Europe and were thus better educated. Although their focus concerned better pay and working conditions, unions wielded a great deal of influence among the African people. Union power could, on occasion, be focused on political issues, but their influence weakened with the growth of indigenous political parties.\(^\text{13}\)

Gauze tells us that unionism in the Congo was different than that of the rest of Africa. Where labor unions were made up of masses of people, those in the Congo were made of primarily of leaders. The general membership fluctuated as members tended to participate only so long as there was some immediate gain. The principle labor union

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in the Congo was the Confédération Générale Africaine du Travail (CGAT), formed in October 1957. Among its leaders were Aimé Matsika, Julien Boukambou, and Abel Thaulay-Ganga. All three were trained at the Marxist labor union school at Gif-sur-Yvette in France. The CGAT received backing and propaganda materials from the World Federation of Trade Unions at Vienna, as well as Russian, Hungarian and Chinese labor unions. In an effort to minimize opposition from this group in December 1958, Youlou included a CGAT hard-liner, one Dominique Sombo-Dibele, in his government. Six months later when members of Opangault's MSA consented to join the government, the Abbé felt strong enough to remove Sombo-Dibele. As a result of this slight, the CGAT became staunch oppositionists to Fulbert Youlou.\(^\text{14}\)

The last group with a significant power base were the youth. Unemployment among this group was significant. Many youth organizations were formed in the Congo, chief of which was the Union de la Jeunesse Congolaise (UJC). The term "jeunesse" referred both to members of this organization, and to youth in general. These groups were easily

\(^{14}\) Gauze, 51-58, 242, 252, 260.
excitable, exploitable, and often uncontrollable. With no employers to answer to, and little else to occupy their time, the youth provided a ready group of agitators from which to draw participants for demonstrations against the government.¹⁵

Youlou's government outlawed the UJC, and tried to restrict youth groups from assembling by implementing curfews and prohibiting them from going into bars. Attempts to placate the youth through the formation of voluntary work camps and schools had limited success. Dissent among this group of Congolese was never very far below the surface. Their numbers and their youthful strength made them a viable political tool. Their immaturity made them an easily manipulated weapon. Youth groups could be mobilized by opposition leadership to protest government actions.¹⁶

These were the conditions, and the major actors, when the Republic of Congo became an independent nation in 1960. On the surface, there appeared to be a nation, matured and ready to take its place on the world stage. Independence should have brought happiness and prosperity. Surely, with

¹⁵ Gauze, 52.
¹⁶ Equatorial Africa Vice Consul to Secretary of State, 2 February 1960, RG 59, File 751U.00/2-260 and 4 April 1960, RG 59, File 751U.00/2-460.
the end of colonial rule, most Congolese reasoned that now the riches of their country would be exploited for Congolese gain, and not for that of their colonial power. Reality came as a blow to these people. Instead of harmonious government, tribes jockeyed for power. The nation's mostly unemployed youth sought outlets for their frustrations. Political leaders intrigued to gain an upper hand. Focus was on power, not on national prosperity. Government leaders found their economic health inextricably entwined with the French, and the former colonial leaders were not willing to surrender their hold without a price.

The first United States Ambassador to the Congo was W. Wendell Blanké. His previous State Department assignments included postings in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Berlin, Germany, Havana, Cuba, Hanoi, Vietnam, Vientiane, Laos and Frankfurt, Germany. He had no previous African experience prior to his assignment to Brazzaville, but he had served in regions under French colonial rule.\(^\text{17}\)

The Deputy Chief of Mission during Blanké's tenure was Hendrick van Oss. Van Oss's previous experience included postings in Shanghai, China, Saigon in then French

Indo-China, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, and Vienna, Austria. Van Oss had prior experience in Africa, serving as the Consul General in Kampala, Uganda before going to Brazzaville. A year of study at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies separated his tours in Kampala and Brazzaville.¹⁸

The government of the First Republic in the Congo, made up of people who had benefited from French rule, was decidedly pro-western. This stance necessarily restricted the government to seeking aid solely from Western nations. The problem was that the Congo was a former French colony. What economic assistance and trade the United States conducted with the Congolese was done with an eye toward not offending French sensitivities. Further complicating the Congo's economic plight was the lack of anything to trade. The dearth of marketable resources simply made the Congo an unattractive trading partner. There was only so much aid to give, other African nations had more to offer, and the Congo was in France's sphere of influence. From the American perspective, there were three strikes against the Congo. Into this reality stepped the first President

of the Congo, Fulbert Youlou.

Youlou's ascendency to the Presidency of the Republic of the Congo began at a meeting of the Territorial Assembly of the Moyen-Congo held on 28 November 1958. Realizing that the MSA was about to lose control of the Government Council to a new political party, Youlou's UDDIA, Tchicaya and his political opponent, Opangault, conspired to check Youlou's growing popularity. They orchestrated a crowd scene designed to disrupt the assembly's meeting. The attempt failed. After the city police and gendarmes cleared the meeting hall of these agitators, the assembly-men unanimously voted to become an autonomous state within the French Community, taking the name "Congo Republic."

Then, declaring that a constitutional project proposal made by the UDDIA was unacceptable, members of the MSA walked out of the assembly meeting. The UDDIA members, in of themselves sufficient in number to constitute a quorum, unanimously passed the contested proposal, which became the republic's first law. The Assembly then named Fulbert Youlou Prime Minister. He held this position throughout the Congo's transition from colony to sovereign nation.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{19}\) Gauze, 64-65.
President Youlou hated communism. In May 1960, armed with new laws against subversion, press criticism, and public meetings, Youlou rounded up the few known communist leaders living in the Congo. Among those arrested were the three founders of the Congolese Communist Peace Movement. Two of them were Aimé Matsika, President of the CGAT and Julien Boukambou, CGAT's Secretary General. Although neither of the two union leaders stayed in jail very long, most observers at the time felt that this round up effectively destroyed any meaningful communist movement in the Congo. Two years later, Blanké reported that there was no visible threat of a communist insurrection movement in the Congo. However, as events later showed, while the CGAT leaders may have been down, they were far from out.

The Republic of the Congo became an independent nation on 15 August 1960. The burst of patriotic pride, the three day celebration of parades, gun salutes and festivities briefly masked the underlying problems faced by the government. Youlou needed to bind the wounds created by tribal jealousy and political intrigue during his nation's transition to independence. Although he

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wanted a government made up of loyal members of his UDDIA, he needed, at least initially, a government that included members of both major political parties if he was to achieve his goal of national unity. Youlou also needed the acceptance and support of his primary opponent, Jacques Opangault. Lastly, he needed to contend with mounting criticisms and charges of corruption already being raised about his closest advisors.²¹

If there is one consistent characteristic of Fulbert Youlou's regime, it was his frequent reshuffling of cabinet positions to minimize opposition. The first cabinet shake-up occurred on 11 January 1961, barely four months after independence. Youlou gave up his foreign minister portfolio to Stéphane Tchichelle and designated him the first vice president of council. To placate the opposition, Youlou added 2 key members of the opposition MSA party to his cabinet. Jacques Opangault became minister of justice and second vice president, and Simon Kikhounga N'Got became minister of national economy, water and forests. Both Opangault and N'Got's appointments serve as examples of how African politics can create strange bedfellows. As already

²¹ Gauze, 95-97.
mentioned, Opangault was once imprisoned by Youlou. So was N'Got.

Prior to his appointment, N'Got served 6 months for plotting to overthrow the government in favor of a communist government. After his release, he disavowed communism, and converted to Islam. Western observers thought his political renunciation and religious conversion a sham, designed to make himself more attractive to Youlou and win a place in his government. Regardless of the motive, the western perception of N'Got was that he was not a stable personality. Youlou's perception was that he had achieved a government that showcased national unity.22

The cabinet was now comprised of 9 ministers from the UDDIA, 4 ministers from the MSA, and 1 minister from the PPC, Tchichelle's old party. The National Assembly included 51 representatives of the UDDIA and 10 representatives from the MSA. This is the closest Youlou ever came to a government of national unity, but it didn't last long. Four months later another shakeup occurred, this time in response to allegations of corruption within the Youlou government.

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Stéphane Tchichelle was accused of excessively spending government funds while on official trips. Youlou reassigned him from the Interior Ministry to the Foreign Ministry. Another minister, Prosper Gandzion, considered to be Youlou's hatchet man, was removed from the Ministry of Youth and Sports due to criticism of his excessive spending and extravagances. With these changes, Youlou thought he had squelched corruption, or at least the talk of it, in his regime. He was mistaken. Allegations of corruption appeared again.\footnote{Ibid.}

On 26 March 1961, the Republic of Congo held its first presidential election after becoming a sovereign state. Youlou, as expected, won the election with 97.56% of the vote. The only political leaders who could have opposed him, Tchichelle, Opangault and Massamba-Debat, were all members of the government and threw their support behind Youlou. Among the remaining votes were approximately 10,000 that were turned in blank. If these ballots indicated voter disenchantment or opposition for Youlou, he did not seem to be concerned. With the aforementioned leaders now part of his government, there was no one left
around on whom an opposition could coalesce. These ballots were merely counted as void. Voter turnout was high, more than 90% of registered Congolese voted in this election. In addition, about 10,000 local French residents participated. With this mandate from his people, Youlou now felt stronger, better able to pursue his personal agenda without fear from any organized outside opposition. It was now time for him to neutralize potential opposition from within. Youlou's first target was Alphonse Massamba-Debat, president of the National Assembly.24

Massamba was a member of the UDDIA party, but his own views often differed with those of the president. Youlou considered him a threat and successfully maneuvered, apparently with everyone else's general consent, to remove him from the Presidency of the Assembly. When the 1961 session of the National Assembly convened, Massamba sat on one of the back benches, rather than at his customary place on the rostrum. The Assembly members elected a new president, Marcel Ibalico, another Youlou lieutenant. In a farewell speech given the following day, Massamba reiterated his continued support for Youlou, but noted that

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24 Blanké to Rusk, 5 April 1961, RG 59, File 770R.00/4-561; Gauze, 104.
he disagreed with him at times.  

Rumors circulated that Youlou offered Massamba a post at less than cabinet level and that Massamba refused it. Ambassador Blanké respected Massamba, and believed him to be one of the better politicians in the Congo. He reported that "Massamba's departure from the Assembly removes from a position of some independent influence a political figure who in the past two years not only gained prominence but has also proven himself a vigorous, able and respected leader and, as such, a potential focal point of opposition in the future." Blanké wrote: "If the talents of the energetic and capable Massamba are to be lost to the country, presumably because he dared speak out independently, it will be too bad for the Congo." This early indication of Ambassador Blanké's high regard is repeated again throughout his tenure as ambassador to the Congo.  

Throughout his presidency, Youlou demonstrated his capability to reshape his government anytime he felt a threat. Blanké saw Ibalico as more compliant than Massamba, easier for Youlou to control. With the National Assembly under control, it was time for Youlou to remove

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26 Ibid.
the next thorn in his side, Jacques Opangault.\textsuperscript{27}

In a 5 June 1961 decree, the president made Opangault the sole vice president of the republic. On the surface, this seemed to achieve Youlou's goal of national unity, but beneath that surface, Opangault's ascension was not a total accommodation. In an attempt to maintain control over his opposition, Youlou failed to clearly define the new vice president's role in the government. Ambassador Blanké predicted that Opangault would not be given any important ministerial responsibilities. The former first vice president, Stéphane Tchichelle, remained foreign minister of the Congo, and the real number two man in government. Youlou believed he had Opangault under control.\textsuperscript{28}

Opangault lost no time proving Youlou wrong. Soon after the decree, Opangault asserted himself, expressing the need for a general election following the upcoming adoption of a new constitution. He claimed to control almost half of the votes in the country and wanted more representation in the National Assembly. Of the 61 seats in the assembly, his party, the MSA, held only 10.\textsuperscript{29} Youlou only thought he had his vice president under control.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Blanké to Rusk, 15 June 1961, RG 59, File 770R.12/6-1561.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
On 4 July 1961, the next governmental shift occurred, a new player entered the Congolese government stage, and another was resurrected. Dominique N'Zalakanda became minister of interior and Massamba re-entered the Cabinet as minister of planning. N'Zalakanda rose to prominence through managing Youlou's UDDIA. His main qualification was his firm loyalty to Youlou. Youlou's faith in N'Zalakanda was such that when the president visited the United States from 8-13 June, he entrusted his own two portfolios, defense and interior to this new minister, rather than to his vice-president.\(^\text{30}\)

Tensions between Opangault and Youlou continued to grow as 1961 drew to a close. In December, during a debate on the national budget in the National Assembly, Opangault "was set upon" by UDDIA representatives in a stormy session which left him with bitter feelings of resentment toward the President. He considered Youlou's failure to intervene during this incident a betrayal of the principle of national unity.\(^\text{31}\)

Opangault's resentment grew. In addition to Youlou's lack of support, there was evidence that a spy had been

\(^\text{30}\) Blanké to Rusk, 8 July 1961, RG 59, File 770R.13/7-861.

planted on Opangault's staff. Antoine Lethembet-Ambily served as Opangault's Directeur de Cabinet, and was the secretary general of the Opangault's political party, the MSA. Lethembet-Ambily appears to have been the person largely responsible for bringing about rapprochement between Youlou and Opangault in 1960. Soon after the National Assembly episode, Opangault, believing Lethembet-Ambily to be a spy planted by Youlou, dismissed him. Youlou gave credence to Opangault's suspicions by promptly taking Lethembet-Ambily on his personal staff.32

Opangault now focused his complaints over his anger with Youlou's failure to quickly move to improve conditions in the north. His political credibility among his fellow M'Bouchi tribesmen was on the line, and they were growing restless. Without some accommodation in this regard, his political life was in jeopardy. There were continued reports of minor incidents indicating popular dissatisfaction at the governments failure to provide roads and other public improvements. Adding fuel to the fire were new complaints about ministerial bribe-taking leading to the dismissal of yet another youth and sports minister,

32 Ibid.
Paul Gouala.\textsuperscript{33} Conditions seemed to be deteriorating rapidly.

Ambassador Blanké downplayed the significance of these events, reporting that although "continuing manifestations of discontent and lack of confidence in President Youlou's government do not augur well for the future, a real crisis does not seem imminent." Blanké was confident that the president could maintain control of the population, as well as the political opposition. Only Opangault was willing to confront Youlou. The other members of government would not. Blanké was confident that Youlou could control any stirrings of opposition, any rumblings of popular discontent. Since Youlou hated communism and was firmly committed to the West, Blanké and the United States were firmly committed to Youlou.\textsuperscript{34}

In the closing days of March 1962 Opangault talked about resigning from the government. His fellow MSA ministers persuaded him several times to remain, seeing no gain to be made by leaving the government. His followers in the M'Bouchi dominated Poto-Poto district of Brazzaville agitated in support of Opangault, and the general feeling

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
was that an explosion was imminent. Finally on 6 April, Opangault's resignation of the vice presidency was accepted. In addition, he gave up the Ministry of Justice in favor of the portfolio for public works. Perhaps he saw in the new portfolio a means of influencing progress of public works for his northern tribesmen. Opangault personally interceded with his followers to restore calm in Poto-Poto.\(^35\)

If Opangault's resignation weakened Youlou's oft pronounced image of a government of national unity, in reality, his political position was strengthened. The Ministry of Justice portfolio went to N'Zalakanda, Youlou's trusted advisor. The combination of the justice and interior portfolios under a person intensely loyal to the president, increased the authoritarian nature of the administration. It also demonstrated the fear Youlou had of opposition movements.\(^36\)

Opangault retained public Works, transport and tourism portfolio until 20 November 1962. He resigned this last position "for reasons of personal convenience." Fears that Opangault's resignation would result in the


\(^{36}\) Blanké to Rusk, 10 April 1962, RG 59, File 770R.00/4-1062.
disintegration of the government of national unity were not realized. The other MSA ministers, Bazinga (industrial production), N'Got (economic affairs) and Okomba (public works) stayed. Rumors of reasons for why they stayed ran the gamut from those professing noble intent, a desire to support Youlou and forge a single party, to the cynical, the desire of the ministers to not give up their salaries and perks. Whatever the reasons, Opangault no longer stood alone in the administration, he was sitting it out on his own in the north.

He reappeared in early 1963, visiting various embassies. For the most part, his discussions dealt with occurrences across the river in the other Congo, but he was usually incoherent and he rambled from topic to topic. Those who listened to him said that he was dissatisfied, irritated, and felt unappreciated. A month later, Opangault surprised the diplomatic corps by showing up for a session of Parliament and taking his seat as a deputy. But he remained low key. Jacques Opangault was finished. Like Tchicaya before him, he was never again a prominent player in Congolese politics.\footnote{Blanké to Rusk, 20 April 1963, RG 59, File Pol 6 Congo.}
For the most part, Youlou now had a government that, even if it was not one of national unity, was at least one he was confident he could control. Blanké reported that those who might become centers of opposition appeared firmly in the Abbé's camp, but that the general population was still disenchanted with the excessive extravagantspages of many of his followers.

From the very beginning of Youlou's regime there were frequent accusations of corruption among those close to the President. Youlou made several changes to his cabinet throughout his tenure to replace ministers accused of bilking the treasury for personal gain. One of his earliest was the removal of Gandzion from the Ministry of Youth and Sports on 11 January 1961. Although Gandzion was considered a staunch Youlou supporter, Blanké refers to him as the "Abbé's hatchet-man," he was often criticized for his extravagant spending habits, and his "flashy car." With accusations such as these, the Ministry of Youth and Sports was the last place to have Gandzion work. Uncontrollable gangs of youth proved to be the most prone to take action over perceived injustices. Yet in spite of these accusations, Gandzion retained his Education portfolio, proving
that, while Youlou felt the need to remove him from Youth
and Sports, he was still in the President's good graces.
Youth and sports must have been a lucrative ministry, for
Youlou had to remove the next minister, Paul Gouala, who
was also accused of corruption."

In September 1961, a letter of unknown origin attacking abuses of power infuriated Youlou. He ordered the confiscation of all copies and the punishment of its authors. Within 48 hours virtually every copy was found, but the authors were never determined. One copy that Youlou did not get was given by a businessman in Pointe Noire to the Portuguese ambassador, who furnished a copy to Ambassador Blanké.

The letter charged the "ruling clique" with using the national treasury to pay for their personal pleasures. Specific accusations included taking money to pay for cars and motorcycles for their concubines and allowing these ladies to use ministerial cars. Some ministers were accused of abuse of power for sending concubines and family members to European schools and universities. The author questioned the utility of sending a chauffeur to France for

a training course when he could as easily been trained locally. And he asked rhetorically, who pays for these round trips and traveling expenses?

The letter further accused the government of tampering with voting lists. The author called the president, his ministers and their deputies "double-talking bullies...who serve only themselves, not the country," people who make promises that can't be fulfilled. He called for the government to cast out tribalism, and use French and Common Market aid funds to create jobs rather than subsidize their personal extravagances. The demanded that the government dismiss "lackey political leaders," repeal the constitution that prohibited freedom of the press, of opinion and of the right to strike, realign legislative districts, the number of seats available and hold new legislative elections, and limit the size of the cabinet to 7 ministers.

The language used in the letter was obviously designed to enflame public opinion. Blanké thought that the style and approach taken in the letter did not appear to be the work of the reportedly restive elite student class. Most of them were still studying in France when
this letter circulated. He reported that the feeling among the diplomatic fraternity was that the letter was probably written by one or more disgruntled minor bureaucrats in Pointe Noire. In Blanké's opinion, the letter was important because, in 1961, there was so little criticism of Youlou's autocratic methods. This lack of criticism seems to surprise him.  

Blanké refers obliquely to government corruption in a 24 March 1962 memo to Washington. In describing financial problems in the Congo, and the free flow of CFA Francs to France, Blanké categorized the "congolesse elite" (a phrase normally used to denote people in political power) who are able to accumulate wealth with French expatriates who are building a nest-egg in case of repatriation. The inference was that if the country dissolved into anarchy, the Congolesse elite would escape to France where they will be able to live comfortably.  

In March 1962, a second minister of youth and sports was accused of corruption and removed. There was a growing climate of "popular disillusionment and dissatisfaction" with the Youlou regime, due in part to the scandal.

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40 Blanké to Rusk, 13 September 1961, RG 59, File 770R.00/9-1361.  
41 Blanké to Rusk, 24 March 1962, RG 59, File 770R.00/3-2462.
involving Paul Gouala, minister of youth and sports. Charges of large-scale embezzlement of funds led to the firing and arrest of Gouala and lesser officials. In a foolish move, however, youth and sports was given back to Gandzion.\footnote{Blanké to Rusk, 26 March 1962, RG 59, File 770R.12/3-2662; 10 April 1962, RG 59, File 770R.004-1062.}

During the summer of 1962, political observers in the embassy began receiving indications that Youlou was again consolidating his position in the government, in part due to the growing public criticism of waste, inefficiency and corruption. Government leaders talked about cracking down on profiteering and the misuse of government funds. There were reports of an ordinance providing for accelerated judicial procedures in these cases. But every time it looked as if Youlou had gained control of corruption, new cases were discovered.\footnote{Blanké to Rusk, 2 August 1962, RG 59, File 770R.008-262.}

In November, Marc Dhellot, Youlou's private secretary, went to jail for embezzling $40,000 from Youlou's personal funds. Since this occurred during a time of growing rumors of political unrest, Blanké opined that Youlou offered up Dhellot as a scapegoat to soothe public
opinion."

The 7 March 63 issue of La Semaine Africaine, a local journal written by the Catholic Church, carried an article critical of the Congolese government. This article directly accused the president and his cabinet of extravagant living. The government ordered the entire issue of the periodical confiscated. They secured all but approximately 1000 copies which were airmailed to Bangui in the Central African Republic and Fort Lamy, Chad (present day N'Djamena) before the ban could be completely enforced. 45

Opangault joined those accusing the administration of corruption by describing civil service extravagances that occurred during a trip he and five others took to Lagos, Nigeria during January 1962. Each person, he alleged, was given 600,000 CFA for expenses. While in Lagos, housing, food and entertainment were provided for them. Upon their return, only Opangault gave back his unused expense money. The others, he said, kept their money. He felt that the others could not understand or appreciate why they needed to return unused money. 46

During March and April of 1963, Youlou made another

44 Blanké to Rusk, 8 November 1962, RG 59, File 770R.00/11-862.
45 Blanké to Rusk, 2 April 1963, RG 59, File POL 2-3 CONGO.
46 Blanké to Rusk, 20 April 1963, RG 59, File POL 6 CONGO.
attempt to stem criticism and gain control of corruption in his regime. He established the Commission on Administrative Reform and placed his cabinet director, N'Zingoula, in charge. The object was to gather competent and efficient citizens together in an atmosphere of "appropriate publicity" to examine the workings of government and to work on the problems of inefficiency and corruption. The American Embassy was less than optimistic about its success.\(^{47}\)

Youlou could probably have gotten away with continuous government shakeups and allegations of government corruption if he had produced a means for prosperity for his people. This, however, he was unable to do. With no resources of any consequence to offer, he was unable to generate any interest or large aid packages from more prosperous nations to lift his people into the twentieth century.

One of the first trials in international diplomacy between the United States and the Republic of Congo came about when President Youlou attempted to convince the United States to support construction of the Kouilou Dam

\(^{47}\) Blanké to Rusk, 23 April 1963, RG 59, File POL 2-3 CONGO.
project. This project was like an emerald in the crown for Youlou's administration. René Gauze, Chef de Sûreté for the Moyen-Congo in 1958, and political advisor to Stéphane Tchichelle when he became minister of foreign affairs, wrote "Youlou feared for the stability of his government unless he could offer the Kouilou project as an outlet for the energies of Congolese youth and as a means of enabling them to work for better living conditions." The Kouilou Dam was more important than independence itself to the Congolese.\textsuperscript{48}

The Congolese Government wanted to build this dam on the Kouilou River at a point where the river flowed through the Sounda Gorge, about 75 miles from the port city of Pointe Noire. When finished, this dam would generate enough electrical power to fill the needs of Pointe Noire, and to process manganese ore in nearby Franceville. Youlou believed the project would provide enough jobs to placate the growing restless unemployed in Pointe Noire. He hoped the French would support the dam's construction. When there was little French interest in this project, the president began looking elsewhere for support.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{48} Gauze, 89.
\textsuperscript{49} Gauze, 79.
Youlou visited the United States in June 1961, stopping in Washington DC and New York. While in Washington, he had lunch with President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson, and afterwards met with Secretary of State Dean Rusk and other State Department officials. Youlou brought up funding for the Kouilou Dam project. Having heard Kennedy's earlier pronouncements of more and better support for Africa, Youlou felt confident he could gain support for the dam project from the United States. The president's rhetoric proved, however, to be an empty promise. Youlou came away from the Washington portion of his trip empty handed. While long range economic assistance for hydro-electric power was discussed, there were no promises for immediate financial assistance. Despite Youlou's efforts, Secretary Rusk refused to make any promises. Youlou's pro-Western stance and the stability of his government worked against him. In 1961, American officials simply did not see a need to provide financial assistance. In New York, Youlou's meeting with businessmen, including representatives from American banks and General Electric, also proved fruitless. When Youlou returned to the Congo, he had to save face. Acknowledging his lack of success with
the United States would have been political suicide for Youlou.  

Back in the Congo on 17 June after a brief stop in Paris, Youlou gave a speech during which he expanded on the truth. He announced his acceptance of aid from the United States, and said that this aid must be directed toward the Kouilou Dam project. He tempered his remarks however by downplaying the importance of the project. He added that in talks with financial and industrial representatives in both New York and Paris, proposals had been made. He did not mention any specifics, but left the impression that the proposals made increased the chances of the project going forward. In the meantime, his comments gave the impression that he was a capable negotiator in the international economic arena when he focused on private financial interests for the Congo.  

That the Kouilou Dam was important to Youlou was driven home in a conversation between M. Leprette, a representative from the French Foreign Office on African-Malagasy Affairs, and Ambassador James M. Gavin, the United

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States Ambassador to France in November 61. Leprette stated that Youlou had fully committed his personal prestige to the early construction of the Kouilou Dam. The French foreign officer inferred that the Kouilou project was one of several France was dealing with, and that the government thought the project basically sound, provided a Western consortium could be created to fund it. In a press conference held at the end of November 1961, Youlou thanked Europeans for their help in bringing about the new Congolese state. He tied the price for peace among the youth directly to the continuation of the Kouilou project. Youlou's prestige was on the line. Completion of the dam would reduce criticism that he was incapable of improving the country's infrastructure, prove that he was capable of negotiations on an international scale, and provide jobs for an under employed population. The government of France, however, was not forthcoming with funding, and the United States was not inclined to step into the breach. Youlou was not successful during 1961.

United States policy for the Republic of Congo continued to be one of displaying little interest as 1961

came to a close. The Department Of State proposed a "very modest aid program" for the Congo for 1962. There was some interest in participating in the Kouilou Dam project, but only after a more thorough and careful examination of its viability. Although an aide-memoire, presented to the Congolese ambassador by the State Department, asked for additional information about the Kouilou Dam and its economic viability, the American Embassy in Brazzaville received instructions not to push for answers. It was felt that by doing so, Congolese expectations would be falsely raised which the United States would not be able to satisfy.  

Youlou's inability to control corruption in his government, and his inability to attract large doses of foreign aid all contributed to a growing disaffection with him among the citizens of the Congo. His answer was to increase the authoritarian nature of his government as a hedge against opposition. This led to what was perhaps the final straw in his tenure, an attempt to forge a "Parti Unique," a single political entity under his control. Designed to merge the UDDIA, the MSA, and the PPC into one

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party, and to forbid the formation of other opposition parties, the Parti Unique became a cause célèbre for a growing anti-Youlou movement.55

Ambassador Blanké, having nothing to offer, found himself in the role of a mere observer. The United States, by virtue of its disinterest, could do little to influence the events about to unfold.

55 Blanké to Rusk, 2 August 1962, RG 59, File 770R.00/8-262.
CHAPTER IV

THE FALL OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC

Youlou's quest for a "Parti Unique" ultimately served as the catalyst for his downfall. Touted as a political organ designed to promote national unity, the Parti Unique really was merely a new attempt by Youlou to crush opposition. The political leadership and the legislature that unanimously accepted this plan were made up of Youlou supporters, and not representative of the masses. Youlou did not factor in the rising tide of popular discontent caused by increasing unemployment which had reached approximately 31% of the adult male population, and their disgust at the unchecked, seemingly sanctioned corruption among Youlou's henchmen in government. The Congolese people were not fooled. Angered by what they saw, these people found a new voice in the form of labor unions.¹

Labor unions had existed in the Congo for several years, but had not been particularly vocal or important in political affairs. This changed abruptly in 1963, and the catalyst for this change was a state visit by President Sékou Toure of Guinea. At the time, many considered Toure

¹ Gauze, 151-152.
as Francophone Africa's leading revolutionary. Expected to endorse Youlou's concept of the single party system, Toure instead energized Congolese labor unions in a speech during which he endorsed the single party system concept but inferred that a single party government led by Youlou constituted a threat to organized labor in the Congo.

Three labor unions, the Confédération Africaine des Travailleurs Croyants (CATC), the Confédération des Syndicats Libres (CCSL) and the Confédération Générale Africaine du Travail (CGAT), combined forces. Their leadership constituted a group called the Fusion Committee, a leftist dominated cabal comprised of union leaders primarily from the CATC and the CGAT, that had recently seized the initiative in the labor field from more moderate elements.2

Initially, the Fusion Committee resisted incorporation into a Single Union ( Syndicat Unique) within Youlou's proposed Parti Unique. The leaders believed that their roles would thus be controlled and minimized. The committee issued a declaration critical of the Youlou government on 6 July. Labor leaders combined a list of demands

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2 Gauze, 9, 15, 24; Blanké to Rusk, 14 August 1963, RG 59, File POL 25 CONGO.
popular among the general urban population (removal of corrupt, high-living ministers and reduction of unemployment) with criticisms of the Parti Unique popular among younger, better educated second-echelon government officials to galvanize popular opinion against the government. They succeeded. When the Fusion Committee realized just how large their support base had grown, they reversed their position and on 13 July announced their support for the Parti Unique, provided they had a stronger role.\footnote{Gauze, 9, 15, 24; Blanké to Rusk, 14 August 1963, RG 59, File POL 25 CONGO.}

Youlou initially seemed to acquiesce, but during meetings held the first week of August to discuss the statute for the Single Party, his vision of Labor's role was far more moderate than Labor anticipated.

Labor's position became increasingly more radical when it appeared that Youlou was not prepared to give them the role they wanted in the Parti Unique. The leadership developed a list of demands calling for government reform, new legislative elections, and dismissal of corrupt ministers, specifically listing N'Zalakanda. Youlou countered, outlawing meetings of a "political character" until after the establishment of the Single Party. The
Fusion Committee called for a general strike to protest the ban on public meetings and to demonstrate the Union's growing popularity and the power it could wield within the urban population.

The explosives were in place, and the fuse was set. All that was needed was a match to set off the explosion. Youlou accommodated the labor movement by arresting four of its leaders on 12 August. Three of them, Julien Boukambou, General Secretary of the CGAT, Aimé Matsika, and Abel Thaulay-Ganga, were men of previously known but discounted communist affiliations.

The strike took place the next day, 13 August 1963, closing all of the businesses in Brazzaville. In deliberate disregard for Youlou's ban on public gatherings, a crowd of about seven to ten thousand, mostly unemployed and under employed people, gathered in front of railway station. Organizers with bull horns incited the crowd to go to the Presidential Palace to confront Youlou, and to the prison to liberate the union leaders arrested night before.

Suddenly, without warning or provocation, the

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gendarmerie moved on the crowd using tear gas and plastic concussion grenades. They succeeded in splitting the crowd into two groups. One group moved northward toward the Poto-Poto district, the predominantly M'Bouchi enclave of the city. A small number of people remained behind at the railroad station throwing stones at the gendarmerie. The police retaliated, again using concussion grenades and tear gas. Within the hour, the downtown was quiet, with only one injury observed. The second group, numbering between two and three thousand people proceeded eastward in an orderly manner toward the prison.

All orderly manner disappeared once the crowd reached the prison. As their numbers grew, a nervous guard fired a shot and the crowd surged forward. In the ensuing melee, one Congolese was killed and 25 others wounded by small arms fire. Despite the gunfire, the crowd was not afraid. They swarmed through the prison, releasing every prisoner, including criminals, and burning all the files. They then went next door to ransack the Palace of Justice. Their final target was the radio station which went off the air at 12:45. The crowd then dispersed. In all of the
rioting, only three Congolese lost their lives.  

The rioting took the diplomatic community by surprise. They either missed the signs of growing restlessness, or overestimated Youlou's control over his country. The president was shaken. In an attempt at damage control, Youlou quickly offered to reform his government. He sacked most of his ministers, keeping Opangault, Tchichelle, and the one minister the Fusion Committee wanted fired, N'Zalakanda. It was too late. An unconfirmed report said that the president offered to resign and appoint either Opangault or Minister of Finance Pierre Goura as president (probably not true since Goura was one of the ministers sacked), but was refused by union leaders. Another rumor mentioned former minister Alphonse Massamba-Debat as a possible successor. Labor leaders, now free from prison, refused to negotiate.  

The dusk to dawn curfew declared on 13 August was extended throughout the following day. At Youlou's request, French troops from the Central African Republic were flown in and the combined military force (French and

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5 Blanké to Rusk, 14 August 1963, RG 59, File POL 25 CONGO; 15 August 1963, RG 59, File POL 25 CONGO.

6 Gauze, 153; Blanké to Rusk, 14 August 1963, RG 59, File POL 25 CONGO; Blanké to Rusk, 7 September 1963, RG 59, File POL 2-3 CONGO.
Congolese) was placed under the command of French General Kergaravat. The army took charge. Soldiers manned posts throughout the city, and downtown Brazzaville was quiet.

The African sectors, however, were anything but quiet. Mobs of Congolese, restricted from the city proper, burned down the houses of virtually every minister, deputy, and functionary not living downtown. Cars parked at the National Assembly building were burned. The police did nothing.⁷

In the morning hours of 15 August 1963, thousands of Congolese, bypassing road blocks that had earlier contained them in the African sectors of Bacongo and Poto-Poto, converged on the Presidential Palace. The crowd conducted themselves in a peaceful, orderly manner. Leaders in sound trucks orchestrated crowd control, entreat ing them through the use of bull horns to "go there peacefully." Embassy observers speculated that the crowd appeared more organized, possibly because the leaders had been released from jail and were back in control.

The combined armies, backed by French armor, surrounded the palace with an impressive number of troops,

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⁷ Blanké to Rusk, 15 August 1963, RG 59, POL 25 CONGO.
approximately three thousand soldiers and several thousand gendarmes, ostensibly to protect the president. This did not deter the crowd, and as their numbers grew around the Presidential Palace, Youlou panicked. He ordered the French commander to fire into the crowd.

General Kergaravat remained calm and telephoned Paris for instructions. He told his superiors that if he obeyed the orders of the Congolese president to fire on the crowd, the result would be approximately eight hundred dead Congolese. French President Charles de Gaulle told the French commander not to fire. The French, he said, were there only to maintain order and protect the government, not to save individual personalities.  

Emboldened by the massive number of demonstrators gathered at the palace gates, labor leaders changed their demands. One senses that, just as diplomatic observers were surprised, so too were the leaders of this revolt. They felt empowered by the way events were unfolding in their favor, and broadened their goals. A greater role in a new government was no longer enough. Labor leaders now wanted Youlou to step down. At 1:00 PM on 15 April 1963,

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8 Cecil B. Lyon to Rusk, 16 August 1963, RG 59, File POL 25 CONGO.
faced with a large hostile crowd and no longer in control of his own army, President Fulbert Youlou resigned. He was immediately placed in army custody. An interim committee of four Congolese army officers assumed control of the government to "assure order".

Late that evening, a provisional government was announced under the leadership of Alphonse Massamba-Debat. This new government was made up principally of technicians, most of whom had not had a previous role in government. Youlou and all of his ministers with one exception, Minister of Industrial Production Bazinga, were now in the custody of the Congolese army.  

Although a member of Youlou's UDDIA party, Massamba was not a Youlou crony. Youlou had relieved Massamba in 1961 from his post as president of the National Assembly and later as minister of planning for expressing too many independent ideas. When Youlou offered him the post of ambassador to Paris in May 1963, Massamba refused, believing that Youlou was merely attempting to get him out of the country.

The selection of Massamba was somewhat of a mystery

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9 Blanké to Rusk, 15 August 1963, RG 59, File POL 25 CONGO; 7 September 1963, RG 59, File POL 2-3 CONGO.
to American Embassy personnel. They were not sure at what point Massamba began to take an active role in the coup d'état. Nor could they determine if he was the choice of the labor leaders or the army. It is quite probable that Massamba was chosen because he was the most experienced political leader available. Certainly, that opinion was held by the American ambassador. Ambassador Blanké thought Massamba a known quantity, having an established track record of independence and opposition to the former President. People like Alphonse Massamba, he reasoned, were in short supply, and experienced leadership was needed to carry the nation through its crisis. Although labor leaders found themselves thrust into leading roles in both Youlou's overthrow and the selection of the new provisional government, they did not assume any positions in the new government. Their statements cited a need to concentrate on union activities and the desire to leave the task of government to better trained technicians. Ambassador Blanké made the cynical observation that Labor's real goal was probably a desire to retain their freedom of action and right to criticize.  

10 G. Mennan Williams to Acting Secretary of State, 19 August 1963, RG 59, File POL 15 CONGO; Lyon to Rusk, 16 August 1963, RG 59, File POL 25 CONGO; Blanké to Rusk, 7 September 1963, RG 59, POL 2-3 CONGO.
With the exception of the chief of government and the minister of interior, none of the new ministers had held political office before. They represented a new breed of government official. The ministers of the old regime were educated in local mission schools and were, for the most part, people not only known and trusted by Youlou, but also intensely loyal to the old president. Most of the new ministers were young university graduates, trained in Europe. Many had formerly held directorships in the ministries they were now controlling. Ambassador Blanké believed many of them to be friendly toward the United States.

Both the new president and the new foreign minister had visited the United States under a "Leader Grantee" program administered by the American State Department, Massamba in 1962 and Charles-David Ganao in 1963. Blanké believed that these two key members of the new government were inclined to favor the United States. In the early days of the new administration, there were no immediate indications of any specific political orientation of the new cabinet. The one common bond between most of the new members of government was their known dissatisfaction with
the former regime's corruption and waste. Blanké predicted that these young members of the elite would support a more "nationalist" stand than Youlou.

Williams's evaluation of the coup d'état in Brazzaville was also favorable. He reported the new government's immediate pledge to maintain all the international relations and agreements of the previous administration, and noted the Congo's reaffirmation of its special friendship with, and gratitude toward France for that country's noninterference by the its Army during the events on 15 August which enabled the coup to succeed.\(^\text{11}\)

As with any fluid political situation, particularly one in which a government has been overthrown, in the early days of the new regime, the American Embassy had scant information on which to make predictions or recommendations. In a business that depends on contacts within the host nation's governmental structure, the diplomats from the American Embassy were at a loss. They did not know who was in charge, labor or the army. Most of their previous contacts were in jail. Nor were they certain if the new government would survive. They were unable to determine if

\(^{11}\) Williams to Acting Secretary of State, Information Memorandum, 19 August 1963, RG 59, POL 15 CONGO.
there was any possibility of the Youlou comeback. Most important, especially to the new government, was the question of recognition. As with its policy towards the Congo in the past, the United States was taking its lead from the French. The French were taking their time, watching events unfold, avoiding being closely identified with Massamba, or being closely aligned with the coup d'état and any concomitant allegations of neo-colonialism.  

In the days following the coup, the new president took steps to determine the state of his nation, directing his government to examine the financial situation left behind by the former regime. In an interview between the new president and Ambassador Blanké, Massamba stressed that despite rumors and reports to the contrary, this was just an investigation to determine where they were; it was not a witch hunt. Massamba gave assurances that his government would hold elections for a new National Assembly, but did not say when. Although he credited Guinean President Sékou Toure's visit and speech with providing the spark that touched off the "crisis," Massamba called the coup d'état "wholly native." He then took the opportunity to seek

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12 Lyon to Rusk, 16 August 1963, RG 59, POL 25 CONGO.
acceptance of the legitimacy of his government, stating that it was incumbent on other countries to first recognize the provisional government.¹³

Congolese Chargé d'Affairs Elie Dinga had lunch with Lloyd M. Rives, Officer in Charge, Congo (B) Affairs, and future deputy chief of mission of the American Embassy Brazzaville, in Washington on the 29th of August. Dinga told Rives that pressure had been building for some time between the labor unions, the young "elite" of the Congo, the military, and the former president. The first group, upset with governmental corruption and Youlou's inability to bring progress to the Congo, had wanted him to dismiss his Cabinet. Youlou had at first appeared to accede to the demands placed before him. He had agreed to schedule new municipal and National Assembly elections at year's end. Labor, young elites and the military then agreed that Youlou could remain as chief of state. Tensions escalated when it became apparent that Youlou would renege on his promises. Dinga believed that the establishment of a "Parti Unique" in and of itself was a popular idea in the Congo, but not if it was to become a mechanism solely

¹³ Blanké to Rusk, 22 August 1963, RG 59, POL 26 CONGO.
designed to advance Youlou's personal agenda.

In response to a query by Rives, Dinga stated that members of the new government, well known Congolese picked by labor and "young elite" leaders, could prevail in future elections. He appeared convinced that it had the full support of everyone, including the military and the unions. Dinga seemed to scoff at the idea of serious communist influence.¹⁴

At this point, absent any apparent direction within the new Congolese government, Williams and Blanké were completely in the dark about how to proceed with regard to relations between the two countries. Their concerns focused on recognition of the new provisional government and the State Department's concern for the safety of Americans residing in Brazzaville in the face of mounting tensions created by youth groups manning barricades and searching diplomatic vehicles. In addition, remembering the pro-communist leanings of several of the principle coup leaders, the State Department was concerned about the potential for the new government's recognition of Eastern Bloc countries.

¹⁴ Memorandum of Conversation, 29 August 1963, RG 59, File POL 26 CONGO.
While Dinga was scoffing about communist influence, the Soviets were making their first moves. Impatient at delays in recognition, and resentful of what they perceived to be slights by Western governments, the PGOC allowed the Soviet Chargé from Leopoldville to come to Brazzaville for a visit. The Soviet diplomat offered to take all measures at his disposal to development friendly relations between the Congo and the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{15}

The Communist Chinese government and the government of North Korea also expressed interest in developing diplomatic ties. When Deputy Chief of Mission Hendrick van Oss visited Ganao on 20 September to ask about the PGOC attitude toward those two communist nations, Ganao replied that, in general, he did not expect any change in the Congo's pro-Western international policy.\textsuperscript{16}

The safety of Americans residing in the Congo became an increasing concern to the State Department and the American Embassy staff. When labor leaders incited youth groups to help them achieve their governmental takeover, they unleashed a powerful entity with much pent-up hostility that they were then unable to control. Even

\textsuperscript{15} Blanké to Rusk, 20 September 1963, RG 59, File POL 15 CONGO.
\textsuperscript{16} Blanké to Rusk, 21 September 1963, RG 59, File POL 17-4 CONGO.
after the new government was established and functioning, gangs continued to set up road blocks throughout the city, and harass foreigners and diplomats. On 16 September, three union Fusion Committee leaders went on the radio to persuade the youth gangs to stop searching vehicles. Each using a different language, labor leaders lauded the revolutionary zeal of the youth and suggested that their future actions be restrained to remaining vigilant and to report counter-revolutionary meetings and acts. They further stated that gangs erecting roadblocks and harassing drivers would be dealt with as bandits if this activity continued.\(^\text{17}\)

The government, apparently not as concerned as the labor leaders with the lack of control exhibited over these gangs, seemed to sanction their activities. Foreign Minister Ganao acknowledged to DCM van Oss his awareness of appropriate international customs of dealing with diplomats, but justified their actions saying it was, in his view, more important to protect the new government from subversion. Ganao said that orders to search would remain in force. The searches continued.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{17}\) Hendrick van Oss to Rusk, 17 September 1963, RG 59, File POL 23 CONGO.
\(^{18}\) Blanké to Rusk, 21 September 1963, RG 59, File POL 17-4 CONGO; Blanké
During the first months of the new government's reign, it focused on internal matters, but international relations were not far beneath the surface. The government seemed to be moving quickly to honor its pledge for a prompt return to a popularly elected constitutional government. Although domestic affairs were of prime importance, growing criticism by the PGOC for failing to quickly recognize the new government, and a fear that members of the diplomatic community were concealing plots against the government within their cloak of diplomatic immunity fueled a growing resentment toward the West. Within Congolese press circles, Youlou's *L'homme Nouveau* was no longer being published, and the *Congo Presse*, an organ of growing importance, began publishing articles using communistic type rhetoric. Articles released by the Congolese Information Agency became increasingly anti-Western in tone as time passed and Western recognition of the PGOC was not received.\(^{19}\)

Official recognition was uppermost on the minds of Foreign Minister Ganao and Congolese Ambassador Dadet during Ganao's visit to Washington in early October.

\(^{19}\) Blanké to Rusk, 5 October 1963, RG 59, File POL 2-2 CONGO.
During a visit with G. Mennen Williams, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Ambassador Bartlett, Director of the Office of African and Malagasy Union Affairs and Mr. Walker A. Diamanti, Officer-In-Charge of Equatorial States, Ganao and Dadet sought to induce the United States to take the lead in recognizing the Provisional Government of the Congo. Governor Williams told Ganao that although the United States had warm feelings for the Congo, he felt it wiser to withhold recognition. It was important in his eyes for African nations to take the lead in legitimizing the new Congolese government. Williams felt that other African states might misinterpret early United States recognition of the Congo either as acceptance of coup d'états as a political tool, or as a neo-colonial attempt to control events in that country. In line with its policy of support without offending the French, it was also important that the United States not be seen as trying to upstage them by recognizing the new government first.

Ganao acknowledged Williams's concerns saying that other governments were also waiting for the African States to recognize first, but that those states were also afraid that early recognition might encourage similar movements in
their countries.\textsuperscript{20}

Western nations finally began to extend recognition of the PGOC in late September of 1963. France and West Germany led the way, with the Republic of China (Nationalist Chinese) and Israel following during October. The French normalized relations by simply announcing that relations had never been broken and no new letters of credence or other specific act of recognition were required. In November, the United States recognized the Massamba government and harassment and searches of diplomatic vehicles abated.\textsuperscript{21}

One important result of the August coup was the realization of the power youth gangs held in the Congo. Although Youlou was the target of a youth led demonstration in 1958, both he and Blanké discounted the power of the youth movement, believing them incapable of mounting any serious opposition. As we have seen, while young Congolese were not, in and of themselves, a viable political entity, they were a mass of people which could be manipulated by serious opposition groups to perform the dirty work. After

\textsuperscript{20} Memorandum of Conversation, 3 October 1963, RG 59, File POL 1 CONGO.
\textsuperscript{21} van Oss to Rusk, 19 October 1963, RG 59, File POL 2-3 CONGO; van Oss to Rusk, 12 February 1964, RG 59, File POL 2-3 CONGO; Chargé d'Affaires to Rusk, 16 October 1963, RG 59, POL 1 CONGO.
the coup of 1963, the youth movement came into its own. A new organization was formed, called the Consultative Council of Youth to the Liaison Committee for Consolidation of the Revolution, or the CCJ. The purpose of this group was to act as a conduit, to channel the views of various youth movements to a government liaison committee. This liaison committee, consisting largely of trade unionists, gave advice to the central government. The CCJ elected André Hombessa as their president. Hombessa previously served as president of the Protestant Student Movement and of the National Youth Council, a coordinating group sanctioned by the Youlou government, but given little to do by that regime. Youth groups were organized after the revolution to perform cleanup campaigns in Brazzaville and in a number of provincial centers.\textsuperscript{22}

Although some of the speakers at youth rallies in September were known leftists, the American Embassy did not perceive a communist threat. By November, this perception changed. The French received and passed on to the American Embassy in Paris reports that student groups were pressing for a more leftward movement. Blanké reported that the

\textsuperscript{22} van Oss to Rusk, 19 October 1963, RG 59, File POL 2-3 CONGO.
Congolese government was succumbing to pressure from leftest labor leaders and "was allowing anti-western and pro-bloc manifestations to occur."\(^2^3\)

As the weeks passed after the August coup, the Congolese media took an increasingly anti-West and anti-United States tone. As reported earlier, the press picked up on racial problems in the United States, presenting them in a negative light to Congolese readers. This quieted down after the Embassy complained to Massamba, Ganao, and other lesser officials in the information field. On 18 October, however, Pascal Ockiemba, chairman of the Fusion Committee, made a radio broadcast during which he accused Europeans of working against the current government in an attempt to restore the former regime. He accused them of using "fétilcheurs" to cast evil spells on government leaders. In his address he inferred that the plotters were either French, Belgian or American and threatened violence from youth militias if these plotters did not cease their intrigues. Embassy officials originally considered Ockiemba as one of the more moderate activist union leaders. They thought now that Ockiemba was either

\(^{23}\) Charles E. Bohlen to Rusk, 21 November 1963, RG 59, File POL 15 CONGO; Blanké to Rusk, 23 November 63, RG 59, File Pol 2-3 CONGO
becoming more extreme, or giving in to pressure from extremists to take a more anti-foreign line.\textsuperscript{24}

As 1963 came to a close, several things occurred that led to the deterioration of future Congolese/American relations. The government concluded elections on 19 December and Massamba emerged as the president of the Congo's Second Republic. In making up his new cabinet, he drew in some new people who were somewhat more leftist than had been the case previously. The new cabinet consisted of the following people. American Embassy staff personnel analyzed the new regime and its personnel as follows:

a. Pascal Lissouba was named Minister of Agriculture and Rural Economy, and also selected by Massamba to be Prime Minister. Only 32 years old, Lissouba held a Doctorate in Science from the Sorbonne. His wife was a French woman, believed to be a member of the French Communist Party. The best educated of all the governmental leaders, the American Embassy staff considered him intelligent, but inexperienced.

b. Charles-David Ganao, 35 years old, retained his portfolio as Foreign Minister and added that of

\textsuperscript{24} Blanké to Rusk, 23 October 1963, RG 59, File POL 23 CONGO.
Information Minister. Trained in local schools, he visited the United States under the auspices of a "Leaders Grant" prior to the August 1963 Coup.

c. Dr. Bernard Galiba, a medical doctor, was retained as Minister of Health.

d. Germain Bicoumat, at 57, one of the older members of the cabinet, retained his portfolio as Minister of the Interior. He was the leader of the left-wing faction of the PPC and served as a minister in Youlou's government from 1960-62.

e. Pascal Morlende-Ockiemba was named Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Seals. A leader of the CATC, he was a key player in the August Coup. Considered to be one of the most capable labor leaders, Okiemba was also considered to be one of the more leftist oriented members of the Cabinet with a history of travel and training within the communist bloc.

f. Aimé Matsika became Minister of Commerce, Industry, Mines, ASECNA and Civil Aviation. He was one of those whose arrest by Youlou in August led to the Coup d'état. Matsika was not only among the most capable of labor leaders, he was among the most active communist
agents, having been arrested by Youlou for smuggling in communist propaganda when he returned from his extensive travels throughout the communist bloc in April of 1960.

g. Gabriel Betou was named Minister of Labor and Civil Service. He was an unknown quantity, having recently returned from training in France.

The selection of so many people with either left leaning political philosophies or outright known communist sympathies engendered a shift in policies for the Congo Republic, and sparked fear among Western diplomats. Those fears were not long in being realized as the new government began its work.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{25} van Oss to Rusk, 27 December 1963, RG 59, File POL 15-1 CONGO; G. McMurtie Godley to Williams, 31 December 1963, RG 59, File POL 15 CONGO; Williams to Rusk, 10 Jan 64, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO; Gauze, 239-262.
CHAPTER V

THE LEFTWARD SHIFT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

Diplomatic difficulties for the United States became virtually diplomatic impossibilities in dealing with the Second Republic. As the new government settled in during the early days of 1964, they quickly established their credentials as a leftist organization, with policies inimical to the United States. During the August 1963 coup, all but one of the senior government officials were arrested. Second level administrators were elevated to positions of authority to run the government. These people were mostly younger, better educated, and better trained to run their departments than their former political bosses. Many of these bureaucrats attended European schools, and were exposed to European political systems. Some were exposed to Eastern Bloc political systems, and others were heavily influenced by the French Communist Party. The Diplomatic Corps (refers to the collective group of Ambassadors posted to Brazzaville) referred to these new Congolese educated elites as "syndicalistes." These people now made their presence felt. Their capabilities were recognized by and depended on by the new political appointees, some of whom
themselves were syndicalistes.

Labor union members who declined participation in the transitional government became very involved in the Second Republic. Some were known to have communist sympathies. The three men, Aimé Matsika, Julien Boukambou, and Abel Thauley-Ganga, whose arrest by Youlou kindled the August 1963 coup, all attained high positions in the new government. Matsika was in the cabinet. Boukambou became first vice president of the National Assembly and Thauley-Ganga became the Congolese ambassador to the Soviet Union.¹

Boukambou's selection as Assembly vice president was particularly significant. Under the new constitution, the president of the National Assembly, and not the prime minister, was first in line to become chief of state. The president of the Assembly was a political lightweight named Leon Angor. Personally a moderate, Angor could be easily manipulated by Boukambou and the other leftists. There were four leftists holding principal positions. They were, in addition to Boukambou, First Secretary Mme. Pierrette Kombo, Second Secretary Mr. Victor Oko, and First Questeur Mr. Martin Beri. Within the National Assembly, Boukambou

¹ van OSS to Rusk, 25 January 1964, RG 59, File POL 15-2 CONGO.
also served as president of the commission dealing with Foreign Affairs and National Defense. Beri served as Secretary and Alphonse Mouandat-Zahoud, another known leftist, as a member. With important issues on the Congolese agenda such as the basing of French troops in the Congo, diplomatic recognition of Eastern Bloc countries, policies towards the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Leopoldville) and Angola, these people were in a position to influence a left-leaning, more radical posture than the West wanted. With these people in prominent positions in government, Massamba became less the "vigorous, able and respected leader" that Ambassador Blanke knew, and, from the standpoint of the United States, more the puppet of the leftist syndicalistes. Massamba's biggest fan in the American Embassy was gone. Ambassador Blanke had completed his tour and departed the Congo during December, 1963.²

In the United States, the government was also undergoing a transition as Lyndon B. Johnson assumed the presidency after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. In the early days of his administration, international challenges were, at that moment, relatively calm and Johnson focused

² van Oss to Rusk, 2 January 1964, RG 59, POL 2 Congo; van Oss to Rusk, 25 January 1964, RG 59, POL 15-2 CONGO.
mainly on domestic issues, and those associated with the transition. He did not advocate any shifts in American foreign policy initiatives. Johnson stated in his book *The Vantage Point, Perspectives of the Presidency 1963-1969* that "it was equally important for the world to understand that I intended to continue the government's established foreign policies and maintain the alliances of Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy." Thus continued support for emerging nations in the context of French sensitivities continued to be the policy of the United States government. During a meeting on 26 November 1963 with Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan, Johnson professed a desire to improve relations with the Soviet Union and to reduce tensions in the world. But on 2 August 1964, the *USS Maddox*, on station in the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of North Vietnam, came under attack from North Vietnamese patrol boats, and Johnson's policies vis-a-vis communist countries became confrontational.³

Another important change in Congolese/American relations also occurred during this time. During 1964, Ambassador Henry Lloyd Thornell Koren replaced Ambassador

³ Johnson, 21-22, 112.
Blanké, who had departed the Congo in December 1963. Ambassador Koren's previous assignments included postings in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Bern, Switzerland and Manila, Philippines. Prior to his assignment in Brazzaville, he served in the Office of South East Asian Affairs at the State Department in Washington DC. Unlike his predecessor, however, Ambassador Koren served in the military with the United States Army during the Second World War, and with the Central Intelligence Agency for two years before joining the Foreign Service. As we shall see later in this work, it seems that his military and intelligence service tended to make him more rigid than his predecessor in dealing with the new government of the Congo.  

In the interim between Blanké's departure and Koren's arrival, van Oss served as Chargé d'Affairs in Brazzaville. Van Oss departed soon after Koren's arrival and was replaced by Lloyd Michael Rives. Rives's previous postings included postings in Germany, Hanoi, Vietnam, Vientiane, Laos, Guatemala City, Guatemala, and Paris, France. Like Koren, Rives also had a military background having served in the United States Marine Corps during the Second World War.

The left-ward shift in the Congo became evident in the opening days of 1964. Massamba faced problems stemming from stagnation of trade, large-scale unemployment, and a growing loss of confidence in the business community. Chargé d'Affairs van Oss's political outlook report was pessimistic. He saw uncertainty in the Congolese future, with a "slow trend towards socialization and single-party rule at home, and non-alignment abroad..." He still referred to the new president as a "courageous and realistic" leader who was trying to keep a precarious balance between the extremism of syndicalistes and youth groups who helped bring him to office, and the orthodoxy of the business community and Catholic hierarchy - paying lip service to revolutionary slogans, but also making reassuring statements to bolster the confidence of those on whose presence the fragile economy of the country so heavily depends.  

In other words, he was the leader, but had no control. He was playing both sides against the middle in an effort to maintain some form of government. The Congo was still heavily dependent upon the French for financial support. Massamba wanted to run the Congo free of French influence, but he could not afford to antagonize them. He needed the

5 Ibid., 1786.
6 van Oss to Rusk, 2 January 1964, RG 59, POL 2 Congo; van Oss to Rusk, 25 January 1964, RG 59, POL 15-2 CONGO.
French to maintain his country's economy.

Despite promises for improvement made soon after the August 1963 Coup, the nation's economy remained stagnated. Unemployment continued unabated. People continued to migrate from the hinterlands to the capital compounding the unemployment situation. Lawlessness abounded. The outlook for the immediate future looked bleak. Van Oss predicted that foreign investors would wait until the political situation was more stable, trade deficits would increase and economic stagnation would continue as foreign merchants adopted a wait and see attitude.

Frustrated Congolese vented their anger on those foreign merchants. French merchants were particularly targeted by the government. Several were expelled for perceived slights against the new government. Others were restricted from taking profits out of the country. With the government unable to control the gangs of unemployed youth roaming the city, many merchants refused to fill their shelves with goods for fear of loosing them in a riot. French technicians, some fed up with the societal deterioration, others forced from their government jobs by the new regimes policy of africanization, left the Congo. The Congolese
were poorly trained and ill-equipped to assume the positions left open by the "French Flight."\(^7\)

Problems associated with the lack of exportable goods still hampered the Congo. There was little to export beyond wood and some tropical agricultural products. Potash and diamonds smuggled from across the river seemed the only a bright prospect. At a time when Massamba needed foreign investment the most, his actions, or in some cases lack of action, drove investors away.\(^8\)

Instead of seeking their help, Massamba blamed Western nations for his country's problems. Speeches comparing "good whites" with "bad whites" became his staple. "Good whites" were those who quietly went about their business, while "bad whites" were those that conspired against the new regime. During February, 1964, Massamba made several speeches referring to "good whites" and "bad whites" and inferred that members of the opposition, in conjunction with the "bad whites", were obtaining aid and assistance from Western embassies.

This last comment referred to an uprising that took place on 7 February 64, during which several hundred

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\(^7\) van Oss to Rusk, 12 February 1964, RG 59, POL 2-3 CONGO.

\(^8\) Ibid.
people, mostly from the deposed president's Lari tribe, attempted to free Youlou from prison. The demonstration was quelled by the gendarmerie. Soon after, van Oss reported a radio speech made by Massamba during which, speaking in the Lari language, he denounced those who received money from "certain embassies" to organize "counter-revolutionary activities." At a National Youth Council (CNJ) rally held the next day, speakers claimed they had "proof of interference" showing that the embassies of the United States, the United Kingdom and France were aiding the opposition.

American, British, French and West German chiefs of mission protested the accusations. Although the government relented and tensions eased, the damage had been done. Any chance of Massamba remaining moderate evaporated in the aftermath of this episode. Angered because the United States took so long to recognize his government and disappointed by the size and nature of the American aid program, Massamba became increasingly difficult to deal with, his speeches progressively anti-American. The theme was usually the same: he talked about "disturbances thrust upon" African states by foreign elements, "petty foreign
maneuvers" and "people of bad faith who every day call into question our sincerity and security."  

At first, van Oss gave Prime Minister Lissouba credit for easing the tension and restoring an appropriate diplomatic climate with regard to the foreign community. He came away from interviews with Lissouba feeling that the prime minister had a grasp of the realities of the situation in the Congo, and was not susceptible to believing rumors of Western involvement in his nation's internal affairs. Lissouba went so far as to make a conciliatory radio address. Van Oss and other Western diplomatic chiefs were therefore surprised when they received a note from the minister of foreign affairs dated 17 February 64, signed by Lissouba, paraphrased by van Oss below:

Minister foreign affairs draws attention all embassies in Brazzaville to most regrettable fact that, since Congolese people installed institutions of Second Republic, members of certain embassies have been indulging in activities or taking initiatives of which least one can say is that they certainly do no honor to countries of origin of these diplomats.

If true that one role of embassies is to create currents of sympathy for this or that social system, of life, form of thought, or pattern of action, GOC-B in liberally permitting such manifestations by means of broad circulation of their national press does not intend to leave free
rein to an intoxication, or conditioning of the opinion of its country by professional agitators thus jeopardizing the country's internal and external security.\textsuperscript{10}

Van Oss knew that the 7 February uprising was not incited by anyone from his mission and was reasonably sure the same held true for the other Western embassies. He thought it possible that Congolese leaders were using the excuse of foreign interference to cover their own internal weakness. Instead of just acknowledging the incident as a local aberration, handled vigorously by the gendarmerie thus demonstrating the control of the present leadership, the government used the opportunity to further its left leaning goals.\textsuperscript{11}

Van Oss met that same day with Foreign Minister Ganao to discuss false rumors that were hampering American/Congolese diplomatic relations. During the interview, Ganao acknowledged that these rumors were being spread by extremist youths and the editors of the leftist newspaper Dipanda. As a result of his efforts to curb Dipanda, Ganao was now being referred to as a "'slave' in the pay of the US government." He further stated that the Government had no evidence to substantiate the rumors and suggested that

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{10} Van Oss to Rusk, 21 February 1964, RG 59, File POL 23-8 CONGO.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{11} Van Oss to Rusk, 29 February 1964, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO.}
the rumors not be taken too seriously.¹²

Coinciding with these activities, and perhaps influencing them as well, was the rapid establishment of diplomatic relations with communist countries. Under the guise of promoting a policy of "non-alignment," it seemed as if this rapid shift to the left was either in response to demands from native leftist movement, or a grasp at foreign aid from wherever the government could find it, especially in light of French flight. This should not have alarmed the United States. The 1961 NIE predicted that African nations, unable to attain the aid they wanted from the West would seek assistance from the East.¹³

During a conversation with van Oss, Ganao professed a policy of "true non-alignment," basing his acceptance of the Foreign Ministry portfolio on the belief that his nation would pursue friendly relations with "all peace-loving countries who respected Congo sovereignty." He further stated that, if non-alignment really meant joining the communist bloc, he would resign.¹⁴ What seems more likely however, is that Ganao's non-alignment professions

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¹² van Oss to Rusk, 22 February 1964, RG 59, File POL 15-1 CONGO.
¹⁴ Ibid.
about "respect for the Congo's sovereignty" really meant nations who respected the Congo's need for aid.

Had this coup occurred during 1961, Ganao's words might have been taken at face value. Kennedy professed an understanding and tolerance for non-alignment.\textsuperscript{15} The Johnson Administration was little likely to accept those words in 1964. In 1950, when the Communist Chinese moved into Korea, Johnson made a speech during which he stated "We are at war not merely with Communist China, but with all the military strength and both the physical and human resources behind the Iron Curtain. Our primary and immediate goal in this war is survival."\textsuperscript{16}

Kennedy and Johnson's policies always took a tough stand against encroaching communists. By 1964, tolerance of a "non-aligned" nation courting support from communist countries was too much for Johnson to bear. In the long run, as we shall see later in this chapter, the Congo's recognition of communist regimes at the expense of pro-Western nations occurred in such a way as to expose the sham on the Congo's professions of non-alignment.

The first communist nation to attain diplomatic

\textsuperscript{15} Williams, 32.
\textsuperscript{16} Barber, 88-89.
relations with the Congo was the People's Republic of China. On 22 February 1964, two days after the above meeting with United States Chargé d'Affairs Hendrick van Oss, Congolese Foreign Minister Ganao announced the establishment of diplomatic relations with that country at the ambassadorial level. In making the announcement, Ganao stated the following basis for that relationship:

mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality and reciprocal advantages, peaceful coexistence, two governments are unanimously in agreement to develop friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries.\(^{17}\)

At first glance, one would question why communist nations were so interested in this poor nation. Trade was not the answer. The Congo had little to give, and even less to spend. The only attraction the Congo offered the Chinese Communists was its location and its loyalty. Both could be bought by a cash strapped nation. For the Chinese, simply luring the Congo away from the West would have been a victory in itself, but van Oss thought there was a different, more important reason. He thought that if the Chinese Communists succeeded in establishing a mission in the Congo, they would be in a position to influence

\(^{17}\)van Oss to Rusk, 24 February 1964, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO.
events occurring in other, nearby nations. Brazzaville made an ideal base of operations for promoting discord across the river in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a nation that had denied them diplomatic recognition. The Congo's coastal region with its port city, Pointe Noire, could be used as a base of operations for communist incursion into Angola and the neighboring Portuguese enclave Cabinda.¹⁸

Despite Ganao's pronouncements of non-alignment and neutrality, the Congo's shift toward the left and the pro-marxist tone of the new government increasingly alarmed Western powers. Congolese youth demanded a pro-communist course. This in itself would not be so frightening were it not for the fact that these same youth were armed. Dipanda continued to publish scathing articles against the United States that further inflamed the Congolese population.¹⁹

Recognition of other communist regimes rapidly followed. On 10 March 1964, Ganao departed on a trip to the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. Within two weeks, he announced the establishment of relations with Moscow and Prague. On 16 July, the Congo

¹⁸ Ibid.
¹⁹ NYT, 2 May 1964, 4.
established relations with the government of North Vietnam. By December, relations with Bulgaria and North Korea were announced.²⁰

The recognition of North Vietnam was particularly insulting to the United States, since this recognition came at a time when the war in South Vietnam was escalating, a fact presented to the Congolese government by the new American ambassador to the Congo, Henry Koren. It raised questions about non-alignment in view of former good relations between the GOCB and the United States. Koren told the Congolese that their recognition would not go unnoticed by the United States.²¹

In July 1964, despite warnings and dire predictions by his people in the field, G. Mennan Williams, Africa's champion in the State Department, still seemed unfazed by the Congo's quest for Eastern Bloc relations. He considered these developments to be "harmless gestures" made by moderates to placate leftists in the government, trade unions and youth movements, and as another source for aid.

²⁰ van Oss to Rusk, 10 March 1964, RG 59, File POL 7 CONGO; van Oss to Rusk, 28 March 1964, RG 59, File POL 7 CONGO; Koren to Rusk, 16 July 1964, RG 59, POL 7 CONGO; Koren to Rusk, 17 July 1964, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO; Rives to Rusk 24 December 1964, RG 59, POL 17 CONGO; Rives to Rusk, 7 January 1965, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO.

²¹ Rusk to Bohlen and Saigon, 30 July 1964, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO; Koren to Rusk, 17 July 1964, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO.
no longer available from the West. In his mind, relations between the United States and the Congo were hampered solely due to Congolese perceptions and their belief that rumors of the United States working against them were true. His report to Secretary of State Dean Rusk placed the blame for poor relations and the United States' inability to influence events in Brazzaville on the limited aid program advanced thus far. He was right, that more aid from the United States could have made a difference, but his words came too late. Although he believed there was still hope for reconciliation, events in Brazzaville had gone too far. The mood of the country had swung completely from Youlou's pre-Western policies and sympathies toward the East. That the Congo wanted to establish relations with North Vietnam at a time when the United States was working hard to shore up the South Vietnamese government showed just how far the Congo had drifted from the West.\footnote{Williams to Rusk, 21 July 1964, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO.} William's words had to have fallen on deaf ears. In foreign affairs, once Johnson's mind was made up, he rarely changed his stance. Johnson expected complete conformity to his views from his subordinates, and would only listen to those who told him
what he wanted to hear. He was not one to tolerate listening to both sides of an argument.²³

The Congolese Foreign Ministry adopted a new style of diplomacy, insulting and difficult to deal with. The first example occurred when the Congo announced the establishment of relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Nationalist Chinese, the Republic of China (GRC), already had a mission in Brazzaville. When news that the Congo was considering such a move reached the Nationalist Chinese Embassy, Ambassador Shen sought an audience with both the president and the prime minister. Both assured Shen that the establishment of relations with the PRC would not affect relations with GRC. However, once relations were announced, Shen was unable to obtain an appointment with Congolese officials. The Congolese Government took the unprecedented stance that on the date the Congo and the PRC established relations, the GRC simply disappeared and therefore a formal break in relations was unnecessary. The Congo felt no need for further action, either in withdrawing recognition or expelling Ambassador Shen and his staff.²⁴

²³ Barber, 80, 89.
²⁴ van Oss to Rusk, 29 February 1964, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO; van Oss to Rusk, 6 April 1964, RG 59, File POL 2 CONGO.
Ten months later this novel method of diplomacy was repeated. Upon hearing that a dialogue had been opened between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Congo, along with an invitation to Congolese leaders to visit North Korea, the ambassador from the Republic of Korea (ROK) visited Massamba. Once again, the President assured an ambassador that the Congo would never break relations with his country. However, when the ROK Ambassador thanked Massamba for turning down the invitation to visit North Korea, the president reportedly kept a dead pan expression on his face and made no comment. The ROK ambassador recognized the potential for a repeat of the Chinese recognition episode, and sought reassurance. The Congolese government strung him along, while maneuvering in the background with the DPRK. In December, one day after the South Korean Chargé was again reassured by the prime minister that the Congo was not contemplating relations with DPRK, Lissouba met with the North Korean ambassador to Guinea and announced the establishment of relations. Thereafter, the Congolese government refused to see diplomats from the South Korean Embassy.  

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25 Koren to Rusk, 16 July 1964, RG 59, File POL 7 CONGO; Lloyd M. Rives to Rusk, 24 December 1964, RG 59, POL 17 CONGO; Rives to Rusk, 7 January 1965, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO.
The Chinese wasted no time in making their presence felt in Brazzaville. They used propaganda and promises of aid to sway public opinion on their behalf. Congolese officials received invitations for free visits to Peking. Chinese Communists handed out cash to people on the streets in Poto-Poto. (Poto-Poto is one of two large "quartiers" within Brazzaville, inhabited primarily by Congolese from tribes other than the Lari Tribe. Ba Congo is the other large "quartier," inhabited primarily by the Lari, Youlou's tribe. At this point, inhabitants of Poto-Poto comprised the bulk of Massamba's support base in Brazzaville.) The type of aid the Chinese Communists provided alarmed the American Embassy. After the coup d'état of August 1963, and in light of the rising anger directed at Western diplomatic missions, Rives was, perhaps rightly, concerned that the first Chinese ship to arrive carried weapons.26

The combination of lawlessness, leftist control of the Government, and the recognition of Eastern nations took its toll on Western aid and assistance. Throughout 1964 and into 1965, France, the Congo's chief Western ally,

26 Rives to Rusk, 10 October 1964, RG 59, File POL 2 CONGO.
maintained a patient low profile, unwilling to take decisive action to stem the Congo's drift to the left. Despite the indignities visited upon their citizens both official and unofficial, the French Embassy did not wish to force the Congolese to make a choice between Communist China and France. They feared that the decision would go against them. In his Christmas holiday message, Massamba praised France, calling her the Congo's "number one friend," but he saved his highest praise for the Chinese Communists." The French chose to ride out the storm.27

Coinciding with Ganao's trip through the Eastern Bloc in February 1964, Finance Minister Babakas departed on a trip to the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands and West Germany. He went to enlist Western aid for his new "Congolese Rural Development Plan." Babakas hoped to convince Western nations to provide up to 8 million dollars, which he would then spend in donor countries to purchase tractors, trucks, and farming implements. Babakas's trip began on the same plane as Ganao's Eastern Bloc swing, a fact quickly noted by American Embassy observers. His trip was viewed more as a political

27 Rives to Rusk, 10 October 1964, RG 59, File POL 2 CONGO; Rives to Rusk, 31 December 1964, RG 59, File POL 15-1 CONGO; Williams to Averell Harriman, 28 February 1964, RG 59, File POL 23-7 CONGO.
move, meant to enhance the Congo's "non-alignment image" by
diffusing the importance of Ganao's trip. Van Oss advised
the State Department that Babakas's trip was "hastily con-
ceived," Babakas having been given only a days notice that
he was to take this trip. This perception unfortunately
overshadowed the Congo's actual need for aid. In Washing-
ton, Babakas visited Averell Harriman, Under Secretary of
State for Political Affairs, and Assistant Secretary of
State for African Affairs G. Merman Williams. Harriman
resorted to a rehash of original policies that the United
States did not wish to compete with French interests in her
former colonies. Babakas countered that the Congo had a
culture and a history of its own in an effort to change
Harriman's mind, but Harriman remained firm.\(^28\) The United
States was simply not interested. Once again, a Congolese
official went home empty handed.

Despite entreaties from both the Youlou and Massamba
governments, American investment remained small throughout
the early 1960's. There were two reasons for this. First,
as stated earlier, the United States viewed the Congo as
being in France's area of interest. What attempts were

\(^{28}\) van Oss to Rusk, 10 March 1964, RG 59, File POL 7 CONGO; Memorandum of Conversation, 13 March 1964, RG 59, File POL 7 CONGO.
made by American investors fell victim to the second reason, high tariff. The Congolese placed such high tariffs on American goods that American businessmen showed little interest in investing there. When the rise of radical leftists in the Second Republic propelled the Congo squarely into the East-West struggle during the summer of 1964, relations between the United States and the Congo plummeted to new depths and American aid programs evaporated.\(^29\)

By mid summer relations between the Congo and the United States were at a dangerously low level. As if there were not enough problems between Brazzaville and Washington, events unfolding across the river in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the role taken by the United States in those events, gave Massamba further reason to distrust the United States.

The Congo (Leopoldville) had been suffering its own problems brought about by Belgian intrigue and a woeful lack of preparation for independence in 1960. An immensely popular and charismatic leader, Patrice Lumumba, became his country's first prime minister, with his chief political rival, Joseph Kasavubu, as president. However, soon after

\(^{29}\) Koren to Rusk, 11 February 1965, RG 59, File POL 2-3 CONGO.
independence, the army mutinied, the country dissolved into civil war and anarchy with Lumumba loyalists holding the region around Stanleyville (present day Kisangani) and Kasavubu holding Leopoldville (present day Kinshasa). The Belgians began a massive military buildup, primarily aimed at protecting their economic interests in the Katanga Province (a southern province containing most of the country's mineral wealth). Katangan Premier Moise Tshombe attempted to secede from the Congo and create his own nation. He was backed by the Belgians. Lumumba sought support from the United States, the United Nations, and the Soviet Union, in that order. With the army in open revolt, the United Nations stepped in to restore peace. When conditions failed to stabilize, Lumumba again appealed for support and in September of 1960, Soviet military equipment and technicians from the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia arrived in the Congo/L.

At first the United States adopted a hands off policy, preferring to let their Belgian allies handle their own problems. But despite the fact that Lumumba appealed to the United States first for assistance, the Eisenhower

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administration came to regard Lumumba as unstable and a likely proponent of communist incursion in central Africa. Kasavubu maneuvered to have Lumumba fired. By the time Kennedy took office, Congo/L was for all intents three separate sections, each fighting for control of the government. Days before Kennedy's inauguration, Lumumba was arrested by Kasavubu and General Joseph Mobutu. Mobutu turned Lumumba over to Tshombe, who promptly killed him.

The United Nations ultimately prevailed and the three sections reintegrated into one country. In August 1961, the reunited parliament selected Cyrille Adoula as its prime minister. Kennedy was caught in the middle, between wanting to contain the growth of communism, and the desire to support nationalist movements. The Lumumbist movement was a nationalist movement driven to seek support from the East. Patrice Lumumba had been extremely popular among other African leaders. Kennedy chose to support Kasavubu, and his successor Adoula, against communist incursion. Further complicating the new president's African initiatives was the anger felt by many African leaders over the handling of Lumumba. Mobuto's involvement in Lumumba's

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31 Cohen, 115-118; Wallerstein, 48-49.
death directly implicated the United States as Mobuto was viewed by African leaders as a creation of the Central Intelligence Agency.\textsuperscript{32}

By 1964, several African nations were flirting with communist governments. The context for African nation support in the United States shifted from support for nationalism to the containment of communism. The Congo/L presented an excellent battlefield for East/West confrontation. The United Nations, having maintained a modicum of peace in the Congo/L for two years, prepared to leave. Lumumba loyalists, now openly hostile toward the United States, seized the opportunity and revolted. They received support from the Chinese Embassy and Congolese sympathizers across the river in Congo/B. Then, in July 1964, Tshombe replaced Cyrille Adoula as prime minister of Congo/L.\textsuperscript{33}

By now Tshombe was considered as an acceptable alternative to the leftist Lumumbists. The new United States president, Lyndon Johnson, seemed to like him. Warren Cohen, in his book \textit{Dean Rusk}, writes that Johnson did not share Rusk and Kennedy's aversion for Tshombe. Cohen suggests that this was because Johnson was not one to moralize

\textsuperscript{33} Cohen, 229-230; \textit{NYT}, 16 August 1964, 9.
about the shortcomings of one like Tshombe. As far as
Johnson was concerned, so long as a person was loyal,
"deviations could be tolerated." In addition, Cohen sug-
gests that Johnson seemed to admire Tshombe for his ability
to continually come back fighting regardless of the number
of times he was knocked down.34

Herein lay two problems for United States policy in
that region. Johnson supported a leader unacceptable to
the Brazzaville government who viewed Tshombe as a European
lackey, and the Brazzaville government, openly courting the
Communist Chinese and other Eastern bloc nations, was no
longer viewed as loyal by Johnson.

In this context, problems began while Cyrille Adoula
was the prime minister. Lumumbist loyalists were using the
Congo/B as a safe haven in their forays across the river.
Massamba believed that the United States was working with
the Adoula government to overthrow Massamba. When Congo/B
officials deigned to see American diplomats at all, the
Americans were treated with hostility. This hostility was
broadcast many ways, through diplomatic meetings, and
interviews with the foreign press. During a luncheon on 16

34 Cohen, 230.
June 1964 with Koren, Mr. Gavin Young, a reporter from the
Observer of London, related the essence of a conversation
he had had with Massamba three days previous. He mentioned
the strong anti-American statements made by an excited
Massamba who walked around the room waving his arms, re-
peatedly asserting that the Americans were to blame for the
chaotic conditions across the river and that Adoula was an
American puppet. For these reasons, the Republic of the
Congo was unable to get along with the Americans. Massamba
denigrated Western economic assistance, saying that it was
all tied with political strings. He discounted the Western
perception that the Congolese government had gone com-
munist. He claimed that, despite American beliefs, the
Leopoldville exiles living in Brazzaville were harmless.

The United States disagreed with Massamba about the
passivity of the Congo/L refugees living in Brazzaville.
These refugees constituted a large group of potential
aggressors who, supported by the Brazzaville government,
and armed by the Communist Chinese, crossed the river and
interfered with the American efforts in the Congo/L.

Massamba was upset for two reasons. The first reason
was political. The United States supported Adoula, and his
successor Tshombe. Massamba was sympathetic to the Lumumbists. The second reason was economical. Massamba was jealous. The aid offered by the United States to Congo/L far outweighed the offer of aid made to Congo/B.35

The events occurring across the river in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the summer of 1964 played a heavy role in influencing relations between the Brazzaville government and the United States. In June, the "Popular Army" of the "National Liberation Committee" under a self-proclaimed general named Nicholas Olenga, captured Stanleyville. This rebel force, controlling approximately a fourth of the country, reportedly received aide from the Chinese Communists. In July, Moise Tshombe, another leader viewed by GOCB officials as an American puppet, took over the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.36

In August, the New York Times reported accusations flowing both ways across the Stanley Pool. Massamba accused COGL leader Tshombe of organizing a coup d'état against him, pointing to a large cache of arms and munitions that had been captured on the Congo/B side of the river. Tshombe countered, warning the Congo/B government

35 van Oss to Rusk, 20 June 1964, RG 59, File POL 15-1 CONGO.
36 Cohen, 230.
to "stop subversive activities." He also pointed to a large cache of arms discovered on his side of the Congo River, saying that exiles living in Brazzaville were organizing an invasion of his country supported by Massamba, and that the entire rebel movement in Congo/L was being supported by Brazzaville. Massamba lashed out at the United States, saying that while he did not hold Tshombe personally responsible for the tensions between the two countries, "The Americans and the Belgians are advising him and furnishing him with arms to massacre the population of his country." Then Tshombe increased tensions between the two Congos by expelling all GOCB citizens from his country, and a large refugee exodus ensued.37

The GOCB formalized their frustration in a Démarche dated 10 August which stated that they would hold the United States Government responsible for any acts of aggression undertaken by the Tshombe government against them. The State Department responded that the Congolese government's statement was unacceptable and that the United States declined "to be held responsible for acts of other sovereign governments." The statement further denied any

37 NYT, 16 August 64, 9.
control over Tshombe and stipulated that the sole purpose of American assistance to the Leopoldville government was to help it in establishing peace, stability, and prosperity. The statement ended with the assertion that it was "specifically forbidden" for a country to use American aid for aggressive purposes against another country.  

As the drama surrounding the Congolese Démarche and the State Department's reply unfolded, G. Mennen Williams visited Africa. After visiting Leopoldville to speak to Tshombe about the Congo Crisis, Williams crossed the river to Brazzaville. Massamba and Lissouba believed that Williams was in town only to complain about perceived GOCB interference across the river, and in light of the mounting tensions in relations between the two countries, refused to see him.  

Soon after, Ganao summoned Ambassador Koren for a meeting. Koren took the offensive, asking if demonstrations occurring outside the American Embassy and anti-American speeches made by government officials reflected the GOCB's position vis-a-vis the United States. Ganao's responses were somewhat patronizing, saying that the demon-

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38 Rusk to Koren, 11 August 1964, RG 59, File POL 1 CONGO.
39 Koren to Rusk, 20 August 1964, RG 59, File POL 1 CONGO.
strations were peaceful and restrained, and that they "obviously reflected" the sentiments of the people on the street. He also complained about American aircraft involved in the hostilities in Congo/L that were flying low over portions of his country. He then reiterated Massamba's warning that they would hold nations aiding the Tshombe government responsible for any aggressive acts perpetrated against the GOCB. The conversation deteriorated to the point where Ganao, in response to a query asking if he thought the United States had any intentions against the GOCB, stated that, personally, "he thought the USG had evil intentions against his country." When asked about accepting an American offer of aid for the refugees from Leopoldville, he stated, again personally, that he would not accept aid from the United States. Koren asked if Ganao believed that the United States government was being duplicitous and giving aid only to subvert his country. Ganao said yes. Koren dressed down the foreign minister, saying that Ganao had a closed mind, and that he found it useless to argue with a closed mind. Although Ganao repeatedly stressed that the views he was expounding were only his personal views, Koren held him accountable,
saying that as foreign minister, Ganao's views carried a lot of weight. It was obvious to Koren that Ganao was so poisoned against the United States, that, in Koren's opinion, the only thing that could ease tensions between the two governments was abandonment of Tshombe, a leader totally unacceptable to the GOCB, and a position totally unacceptable to the United States.40

During September 1964, Koren met with Lissouba and discussed relations between their two countries and the GOCL. Lissouba said that Tshombe was totally unacceptable to GOCB, and any assistance to him was considered to be directed against Brazzaville. Lissouba and his government were convinced that the United States was behind everything the GOCL did, and that the United States controlled Tshombe. The price for improved relations was either the removal of Tshombe or his drastically changing his policies. Tshombe had to stop threatening Brazzaville, and he had to stop using white mercenaries.41

The Congolese continued to direct their creative diplomatic style at the United States. As mentioned earlier, the Congo adopted the viewpoint that when they

40 Koren to Rusk, 25 August 1964, RG 59, File POL 1 CONGO.
41 Koren to Rusk, 4 September 1964, RG 59, File POL 1 CONGO.
normalized relations with Communist China and North Korea, they simply chose to ignore the Nationalist Chinese and South Korean missions already established in Brazzaville. There was no move to break relations, nor was there any move to expel diplomats. Those missions just ceased to exist. A new manifestation of this creative diplomacy occurred during a meeting when Koren presented the new DCM, Mr. Lloyd M. Rives, to Prime Minister Lissouba. He thanked the prime minister for seeing him, mentioning that he had been trying to get an appointment with the president for two weeks. Lissouba stated that he was able to receive Koren because he, Lissouba, was not a diplomat and did not have to follow diplomatic rules. Diplomatic rules, in Lissouba's opinion, meant that when relations between two countries were bad, diplomats did not speak to each other. Koren responded that diplomacy meant the opposite because when diplomats did not speak to each other, it was impossible to present views and resolve differences. This explained the difficulty Koren was having in getting appointments to see various members of the government. Diplomatic snubbing was a standard practice of the new Congolese government. The only difference between their
treatment of the United States, and that afforded the Nationalist Chinese and the South Koreans is that the United States had too much money to give.\textsuperscript{42}

In early September 1964, a new point of contention arose between the United States Embassy and the Congolese government. The MNR Politburo published a communique asking the party secretary general to require the American Embassy to immediately close the United States Information Service (USIS) Information Center. Politburo members believed that the center was a conduit for imperialist propaganda that was corrupting the minds of those who visited.\textsuperscript{43}

Koren finally, after a three week wait, secured an appointment to see Massamba on 19 September to discuss this and other recent developments. Koren asked Massamba why there were so many attacks on the United States and why the politburo wanted to close the USIS Office. He asked why prominent people in the government were making anti-American statements, citing as an example a recent declaration by Boukambou in Peking that accused the United States of subversive plots. Finally, Koren wanted to know

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{42}{Ibid.}
\footnote{43}{Koren to Rusk, 2 September 1964, RG 59, File Pol 1 CONGO; Rusk to Koren, 3 September 1964, RG 59, File POL 1 CONGO.}
\end{footnotes}
why the GOCB was publicly declaring a refusal of American aid for refugees while at the same time cashing American checks. Assuming that Koren's report to the State Department reflects the forthrightness of his comments to Massamba, one can read his frustration with the president, and his no-nonsense approach.

Massamba's response was a rambling discourse of the United State's support for Tshombe, and accusations of interference and meddling in Congolese affairs. Massamba's diatribe and answers to Koren's questions grew more and more vague, and ended much as it had begun, with Massamba, in Koren's eyes, as close-minded and anti-American as ever.44

While Massamba and Ganao were intransigent and closed minded, Lissouba acted like a true politician. When the subject was money, Lissouba could be very friendly. This occurred on 14 January 1965, when Rives met with Lissouba.

Lissouba told Rives that, in his mind, there were no real problems between the GOCB and the USG, only some divergence's of views on American policies on other matters. These differences, he said, were perfectly

44 Koren to Rusk, 21 September 1964, RG 59, File POL 7 CONGO.
natural and should not affect bilateral relations. Rives saw through this bonhomie.

Rives knew that American investors were about to visit the Congo to consider the safety and advisability of investing in Congolese potash mining. The Libbey Company, an American corporation involved in the Niari Valley Pineapple project, had recently decided to pull out in favor of investing in a safer country. Lissouba was concerned. He needed American investment. He said Libbey's decision to leave was based on a mistaken perception of poor relations between the two countries. Rives responded that further American interest in the Congo was difficult when all that those Americans saw and heard was constant official and unofficial attacks against the United States. Libbey employees had been isolated in their back country location. They had been subjected to harassment by the local jeunesse and their cars continually searched at roadblocks. This was why they had chosen to remove their investment, and seek a safer place. Rives cautioned Lissouba to control his youth lest other American investors follow Libbey's lead.45

45 Rives to Rusk, 14 January 1965, RG 59, File POL 23-9 CONGO.
As 1964 came to a close, relations between the two countries were at their lowest ebb ever. With the exception of the prime minister, government leaders were largely incommunicative. Lissouba's desire to maintain any semblance of cordiality during the few times he deigned to talk to American diplomats was directly proportional to the amount of aid involved. Government leadership had swung to the left, and new institutions were patterned along communist styled lines. The American Embassy staff predicted that the Congo would soon mirror communist countries by nationalizing their economy and establishing state run enterprises.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{46} Koren to Rusk, 11 February 1965, RG 59, File POL 2-3 CONGO.
CHAPTER VI

THE END OF AN EMBASSY

From the beginning, a siege mentality gripped the Massamba regime. The police became overzealous in their attempts to control subversion. Youth gangs roamed the city unchecked, erecting roadblocks and harassing people. Government officials became increasingly remote, and when meetings could be arranged, those officials were difficult to talk to. Ambassador Koren and his staff endured the unpardonable rudeness of the Congolese government. Youth gang harassment, roadblocks, protesters demonstrating in front of the American Embassy, and official snubbing by government officials severely hindered American efforts to conduct meaningful diplomacy. The Johnson administration, disinclined to deal with a nation seemingly focused on becoming communist, showed no interest in enticing the Congo with the one thing they really wanted, foreign aid. In the end it was the outright endangerment of Americans and the sanctioned police harassment of the Congolese who worked at the Embassy that caused the Ambassador to say enough was enough.

On the heals of the August 1963 coup, youth gangs had
set up road blocks around the capital. The stated purpose for the roadblocks was to search vehicles for weapons and evidence of counter-revolutionary activities. All vehicles were searched, especially those belonging to the diplomatic and ex-patriot community. Eventually government efforts brought the gangs under control, and the roadblocks disappeared. After the 7 February 1964 uprising, roadblocks reappeared, and the harassment of American citizens and diplomats resumed. In normal diplomatic practice, vehicles bearing diplomatic license plates are considered as inviolable as the diplomats themselves. An example of the degree of ridiculousness to which the paranoia that gripped the country had become occurred 15 July 1965. Upon his return from a meeting with the foreign minister, Ambassador Koren was stopped seven times by patrols.¹

Foreign Service Nationals, the Congolese that worked for the Embassy, became targets of the Sûreté. On 10 February 1964, a police inspector from the Central Commissariat questioned USIS employee Antoine Villa-Ganga. The interrogator, believing that Villa was fluent in English and worked with the "premier conseiller", demanded that he

¹ van Oss to Rusk, 22 February 1964, RG 59, File POL 15-1 CONGO; Koren to Rusk, 22 July 1965, RG 59, File POL 29 CONGO.
tell about activities going on inside the Embassy. Villa denied any knowledge, since he worked in the USIS office, not the Embassy. After an hour and a half, Villa was released. It appears that Villa was subjected to this interrogation because another employee at the embassy, he suspected a driver named Isaac Loko with whom he had previously had problems, may have turned him in to the government as a possible subversive.  

The first incident of Americans being singled out for harassment occurred that same month. The embassy received verbal guidance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that, henceforth, all diplomatic personnel wishing to visit the interior of the country required permission from the government. When embassy personnel investigated, they found that no other embassy knew of this new policy. When questioned as to why other embassies had not been asked to follow this procedure, Ganao said that this policy was for all diplomatic missions. He admitted that the Foreign Office had erred in not providing written guidance, and would soon do so. In the future, all diplomatic personnel would be required to obtain permission to travel outside

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2 van Oss to Rusk, 15 February 1964, RG 59, File POL 17-6 CONGO.
the Capital.\textsuperscript{3}

Harassment of Americans turned more vicious with the arrest of Mr. Stanley Baranson, an AID affairs officer at the Embassy. Soon after he arrived in the Congo, he was picked up by the police and held for several hours, ostensibly because of visa irregularities. On 4 November 1964, the police arrested him again and held him incommunicado for two and a half days. On 6 November 64, the Police took him to the airport and he was expelled from the Congo.\textsuperscript{4}

Ambassador Koren was in the United States when this incident occurred. Rives, acting as Chargé d'Affairs, tried in vain to see Baranson. He was denied access to Baranson on the grounds that he lacked an exequatur. An exequatur is a document issued to a consular officer by the country to which he is accredited authorizing him to carry out consular functions. Normally the lack of an exequatur only hinders consular functions. Rives, in his capacity as Chargé, was the senior diplomatic representative of the United States present in the country and thus charged with the protection of American citizens and interests. Denying him access to Baranson violated one of the basic tenants of

\textsuperscript{3} van Oss to Rusk, 22 February 1964, RG 59, File POL 15-1 CONGO.
\textsuperscript{4} Rusk to Rives, 9 December 1964, RG 59, File POL FR-CONGO; Rusk to Koren, 30 July 65, RG 59, File POL 17-2 CONGO; NYT, 4 February 1965, 8.
diplomatic practice, and on its own merit should have resulted in the termination of diplomatic relations and the withdrawal of all diplomatic personnel. That the embassy did not close should have been evidence enough of American resolve to maintain good relations with the Congo. However, the Congolese seemed to have taken this as American acceptance of Congolese actions.⁵

The United States instead chose another way to protest the treatment of its citizens. On 17 November 1964, Congolese Chargé d'Affairs Dinga requested permission to present the new Congolese ambassador, Jonas Mouanza. State Department officials refused to see him. Instead, they reminded Dinga that his government owed them a response to an Aide Memoire requesting an explanation for their handling of the Baranson case.⁶

A week later, Ganao called Rives in for a dressing-down. He called the State Department's refusal to accept Mouanza's credentials "an unfriendly act." In retaliation, Ganao informed Rives that an exequatur (already pending 3 months) would not be issued. He pointed out that without this exequatur, Rives would not be able to act to protect

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⁵ Rusk to Rives, 24 November 1964, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US.
⁶ George Ball to Rives, 10 November 1964, RG 59, File POL 17-5 CONGO.
American citizens. Rives replied that until his government received a satisfactory response to the Baranson incident, the new ambassador would not be received. The United States was finally holding the Congo accountable for its "creative diplomacy."

The Congolese government refused to provide the response. Instead, Congolese Chargé Dinga continued the diplomatic standoff by revoking visas issued to an Air Force Sergeant and his wife prior to Baranson's arrest. They were enroute to their new assignment with the Defense Attaché's Office in Brazzaville. Dinga, acting in accordance with instructions received from Ganao, offered no explanation for this reversal, but it was clear to the State Department that the next shot in this battle had been fired.

On the 23rd of November, a French priest and 3 female teachers were arrested. This, coupled with the Baranson incident, alarmed embassy officials. The Chargé ordered the destruction of classified files from 1962 and 1963, a normal precaution taken anytime conditions in a given country deteriorate to the point where the embassy

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7 Rives to Rusk, 23 November 1964, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US.
8 Williams to Ball, 30 November 1964, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US.
contemplates closing.\(^9\)

Villa-Ganga was arrested a second time on 3 December. Once again, he was held for an hour and a half and questioned about Embassy activities. During an earlier police interrogation for suspicion of subversive activities, a man named Frank Neguebert implicated Villa. Villa confronted his accuser, and recognized him as someone who had recently visited the USIS Center. Embassy personnel considered Neguebert to be a "shifty character." Apparently the police had the same opinion of Neguebert. Villa denied any dealings with the man. After others implicated by Neguebert were brought in to testify, Villa was cleared and released.\(^{10}\)

Problems with passports and visas continued in Brazzaville. Several staff members planned to depart the Congo during December. The Embassy delivered their passports to the Foreign Ministry to obtain departure visas. The Foreign Ministry refused to stamp and return the passports. On 8 December, Rives tried in vain to get appointments with the acting foreign minister and the secretary general of the Foreign Office. He held other passports for personnel

\(^9\) Rives to Rusk, 24 November 1964, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US.
\(^{10}\) Rives to Rusk, 5 December 1964, RG 59, File POL 29 CONGO.
also wanting to depart, but was reluctant to turn them in for fear of not getting them back.\footnote{Rives to Rusk, 8 December 1964, RG 59, File POL 17-2 CONGO.}

Meanwhile, the issue of Baranson and the Congolese Ambassador continued. On 11 December, both Ganao and Secretary of State Dean Rusk were in New York visiting the United Nations. Ganao talked to Rusk about Mouanza's inability to present his credentials. Ganao tried to downplay the Baranson incident. He said his government deplored that incident and others involving Congolese Security Forces and the United States Government. He tried to present, what he called, an accurate account of the incident. The Congolese government considered all of the harassment incidents to be minor problems, certainly not serious enough to warrant the treatment being given their new Ambassador. Rusk dissembled, stating that the reason the presentation had not occurred was due to President Johnson's heavy work schedule, but that presentation could be made in a week to ten days. Rusk added, however, that the United States viewed the Baranson case very seriously. It wasn't until 16 January 1965 that Johnson finally received Mouanza. The Baranson incident was never
resolved.  

Discussion about aid in general occurred when Lissouba summoned Koren for a late night conference on 18 February. Lissouba was concerned about aid packages and American investment in light of recent meetings with potash investors. For some reason known only to him, Lissouba chose this time to confront Koren about the American lack of concern over Congolese security. Koren countered, saying that such talk of aid seemed strange in view of the treatment received by Baranson, chief of the Aid Department in the American Embassy. Koren asked him how he thought the United States could carry out aid projects when government officials arrested and harassed American representatives, and jailed them under inhuman circumstances. Lissouba countered, saying that the Baranson episode could have been avoided had the ambassador introduced the new aid director when he arrived. Koren responded that he had done just that, but with the responsible minister, not with the prime minister. Koren pushed his point. He told Lissouba to try and imagine Washington's reactions to this and other incidents, citing the recent arrests of French technicians.

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12 Ball to Rives, 15 December 1964, RG 59, File POL 17-1 CONGO; Rusk to Rives, 16 January 1965, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO.
Lissouba gave up, and did not mention aid again that night.\textsuperscript{13}

On 11 May 1965, Villa-Ganga was arrested for a third time. For two weeks there was no word on his whereabouts or welfare. Then a second Foreign Service National, Samuel Goma, a chauffeur and projectionist working for USIS, was arrested on 26 May. He was picked up in the morning and released that same evening. Under the pretense of wanting to talk to Goma about his activities with the Congolese Red Cross (he was an official of that organization), police had lured him out of the embassy building.

Embassy officials made quiet inquiries with the local Red Cross and other sources, but were unable to discover where Goma had been taken. Rives attempted to see the foreign minister and the interior minister, but was shunted off to a lesser official who promised to take notes for the foreign minister. Rives told him that he viewed the Goma arrest very seriously since the police had entered the embassy and used a ruse to get him out. This is strictly against common diplomatic practice. He asked that the foreign minister officially notify the embassy of when and

\textsuperscript{13} Koren to Rusk, 18 February 1965, RG 59, File CONGO-US.
why employees are arrested, again in accordance with common
diplomatic courtesy. He stipulated that if their reason
for the arrest involved the embassy and its activities, it
was appropriate that the Foreign Office discuss these
activities with embassy officials, and not with its local
employees. Strangely, that afternoon the Sûreté called the
embassy. They said they were holding Goma, that he was
hungry, and that they wanted the embassy to send some food.
Then, twenty minutes after the Sûreté called, the public
affairs officer received a call from Villa's brother saying
that Villa had just been released from prison. Upon their
release, both employees reported that they were questioned
about embassy activities.¹⁴

Rives requested a meeting with the foreign minister
to discuss the arrests of Villa and Goma, and to ask why
they were being questioned about embassy affairs. Ganao,
distressed at these infringements on diplomatic immunity,
stated he would try to get Interior Minister Hombesa's
agreement that any police matters dealing with foreign
embassies be handled by a specific group so that the
Foreign Office would know whom to call in the event of any

¹⁴ Rives to Rusk, 28 May 1965, RG 59, File POL 29 CONGO.
difficulty. Ganao also said he would brief this group on the privileges and immunities granted to embassies and diplomatic personnel. Ganao agreed it was stupid to question locals about activities within embassy walls.\textsuperscript{15} 

Incidents of harassment and cruelty from other sectors in Brazzaville contributed to the embassy's growing sense of discomfort. It seemed as if the entire Western community was being targeted, if not with the Congolese government's expressed support, surely with their tacit approval. In late December 1964, the editor of \textit{La Semaine Africaine}, was released from prison where he had been tortured and left in a weakened condition. Then two weeks later, a counselor from the French Embassy told Rives that they had been subjected to a second incident of harassment. Two French aid officials had been stopped by three drunken policemen in northern Congo and accosted by a crowd of approximately 150 Congolese who immediately surrounded the French shouting anti-French and anti-white slogans. The French ambassador called on Lissouba, informing him that if another incident occurred, all French AID personnel and French funded projects would be withdrawn from the northern

\textsuperscript{15} Rives to Rusk, 5 June 1965, RG 59, File POL 29 CONGO.
Congo. The Counselor reported that Lissouba was very disturbed and said that the policemen would be punished and dismissed and the situation would be brought under control. The French were pleased that both embassies were applying pressure on the Congolese government to control their people. 16

During March 1965, Koren asked Ganao for visa extensions for his air attachés. The air attaché maintained an aircraft in Brazzaville for embassy use. In an apparent move to draw down the embassy staff, Koren decided to move the aircraft and its crew to Fort Lamy, Chad. The problem centered around the passport for the aircraft's crew chief. Ganao, although denying it, was dragging his feet, purposefully making it hard to move the aircraft. 17

On 16 July 1965, the Congolese Sûreté struck again. At one o'clock in the morning, Sûreté officials went to a hotel and arrested Voice Of America (VOA) representative, Jack Adkins, and his partner, a Belgian VOA contract employee named Marcel Lefebvre, and confiscated electronic equipment consisting of a portable radio, and two tape recorders. The two were taken to Sûreté Headquarters for

16 Rives to Ball, 31 December 1964, RG 59, POL 15-1 CONGO; Rives to Rusk, 15 January 1965, RG 59, File POL CONGO-FR.
17 Koren to Rusk, 23 March 1965, RG 59, File POL 23-10 CONGO.
questioning. The interrogation session was short lived, since Adkins did not speak french, and the Sûreté Officials did not speak english. Adkins and Lefebvre were separated, and taken to a Police Station. Adkins was beaten, and denied food and drink. The Embassy did not know that the two were arrested until eight that morning when they dispatched a car to the hotel to pick them up.18

When Adkins and Lefebvre arrived in Brazzaville via the ferry from Leopoldville, they did not have visas. In the Congo to cover the African Games, a pan-African sporting event held in Brazzaville that summer, they had been unable to obtain visas from the French Embassies in Monrovia and Leopoldville prior to arriving in Brazzaville. The Director General of the Games, a Mr. Ganga, had assured the American Embassy that the journalists would have no trouble entering the country. When they arrived at the ferry landing in Brazzaville, the two were asked to leave their passports with the Sûreté. The following day they filled out visa applications. Then the Sûreté came for them. After fifteen and a half hours, Adkins was released to Mr. Haverkamp, an American Embassy representative.

18 Koren to Rusk, 17 July 1965, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US.
Before releasing him, Adkins was asked several questions by the Police which Haverkamp translated. The police then gave Adkins his passport, containing a 15 day Visa.¹⁹

Ambassador Koren discussed the incident the next day with Ganao, who went on the offensive. Ganao's defense was that Lefebvre was a sportscaster from Leopoldville who had made radio broadcasts critical of the Brazzaville government. He further claimed that, when he was arrested at one in the morning, Lefebvre was attempting to communicate across the river using a transmitter he had in his room.

Koren drew similarities between this case and the Baranson case. Both had been arrested, held incommunicado, denied food and water, and beaten by Congolese officials. During Koren's talks with the foreign minister over the next several days, Ganao, who initially had been uncharacteristically reasonable, became increasingly hostile, stubborn, and argumentative. Koren pressed home the fact that Washington's reaction to his report of the incident would be violent. Ganao seemed unimpressed with Koren's threat. In the meantime, the Department of State and the embassy decided to withdraw VOA coverage of the games and Adkins

¹⁹ Rives to Rusk, 5 August 1965, RG 59, File POL 29 CONGO.
departed Brazzaville on 18 July. Lefebvre left the next day. The Congo lost an opportunity to have coverage of the games broadcast over Voice of America Radio.\(^2^0\)

On top of the Adkins and Lefebvre incident, came another similar incident, that of the detention and expulsion of a newly assigned embassy staff member. William Mackey arrived in Brazzaville on 27 July 1965, without a Visa. Prior to leaving the United States, Mackey requested Visas for himself for a July arrival and September arrivals for his family. These requests had been appropriately submitted to the Congolese Embassy in Washington. The consular office there made mistakes. Rives then contacted the secretary general of the Foreign Office on two occasions to request assistance, each time being assured that Mackey would have no difficulty entering the country.

Sûreté officials at the airport refused to allow Mackey to enter the Congo. They detained him at the airport for five hours, then took him to a hotel and held him incommunicado overnight. Rives attempted to see Mackey twice at the hotel and was twice denied. After many attempts to reconcile the situation, the embassy learned

that afternoon that the Congolese had placed Mackey on a morning flight for Paris.

Ganao called for a meeting with Koren the morning of the 28th, and took Koren to task for the three incidents, blaming them on the United States government and the embassy staff. From the tone of Koren's message to the State Department, the exchange must have been very heated. Ganao accused the United States government of creating incidents between the two countries that disregarded Congolese sovereignty. He accused the ambassador of having ulterior motives for knowingly allowing Mackey to come without a visa. In Ganao's mind, the United States was creating international incidents to embarrass the Congo.

Koren responded by showing Ganao evidence that his Embassy in Washington had made mistakes, and that high ranking members of Ganao's own Ministry had approved Mackey's entry. Ganao did not back down, and stated that Mackey had to leave and could not return until he received the proper visa. Koren asked if the prime minister agreed with him. Ganao said yes. Koren stated that Ganao's conduct was unbelievable, and that he wanted to see the prime minister. Both Lissouba, allegedly home ill, and
Massamba refused to see the ambassador.\textsuperscript{21}

In Washington, Williams called in Congo Chargé Loufoua and lodged a strong protest on 29 July. He stated that, regardless of the visa, Mackey was an American diplomat and should not have been held incommunicado. He made the point that the Foreign Ministry knew of Congolese mistakes, and had given assurances that Mackey would be allowed to enter the Congo. Williams called the incident "extraordinary, intolerable," and a display of a "complete lack of understanding" of the rules of international relations. He directed Loufoua to immediately register his strong protest with the Congolese government. Loufoua, to his credit, seemed embarrassed.\textsuperscript{22}

Williams received a memorandum on 30 July from the Under Secretary of State instructing him to present "a strongly worded note covering all three incidents and requiring a full apology." The instructions concluded that if a suitable apology was not received, he should make preparations to break relations.\textsuperscript{23}

Williams then sent two messages to Koren. The first instructed him to see the highest ranking government

\textsuperscript{21} Koren to Rusk, 28 July 1965, 29 July 1965, RG 59, File CONGO-US.
\textsuperscript{22} Rusk to Koren, 29 July 1965, 30 July 1965, RG 59, File CONGO-US.
\textsuperscript{23} Jacob M. Myerson to Williams, 30 July 1965, RG 59, File CONGO-US.
official possible to present a written protest. The telegram further advised Koren that, if he did not receive a satisfactory reply by Tuesday at the latest (the message was written on 31 July, a Saturday), he should immediately return to the United States on extended consultations. Absent a favorable apology, the American potash AID guarantee was canceled and State would further reduce the embassy staff.\(^{24}\)

Koren saw Massamba that same morning. Massamba became very defensive when told the purpose of Koren's visit, and tried to focus the conversation on the visa irregularity. Koren focused on the "unheard of treatment" of an American diplomat. Massamba said that each country had its own methods of security. Koren described his earlier meeting with Ganao, during which the foreign minister said he was acting under orders from the president to find out why the United States wanted to create incidents and why they were indifferent to Congolese sovereignty. Koren told Massamba this whole episode was "incomprehensible and unbelievable," and that the incident had been created by Congolese. The United States, he said, viewed the Mackey

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\(^{24}\) Rusk to Koren, 30 July 1965, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US.
case most seriously. Koren asked the president to read a note which, he hoped, would demonstrate the gravity of the incident in the eyes of the United States. His response, Koren said, would govern relations between the two nations for the foreseeable future.

Koren had finally gotten the president's attention. Massamba read the note. He then, acting more soberly, muttered something about there being a "possible mistake." Massamba then attempted to refocus the blame on the United States, saying that according to Sûreté files, there were no other cases of visa irregularities with citizens from any other countries; only the United States. The conversation became heated. Koren maintained that the Americans had acted in good faith. Massamba then, incredibly, retaliated, saying that the ambassador should not deal with lower level people, the crux of his argument being that the ambassador should have gone to the proper people. Koren explained that he thought he was dealing with the correct people, and it was nevertheless the Congolese government's place to properly deal with diplomatic incidents. Massamba repeated that perhaps an error had occurred, but questioned why the United States government did not take precautions
to avoid occurrences of this nature.

Koren then pinned Massamba down with an accusation. He asked why Americans were continually discriminated against. He cited, as an example, the fact that two Englishmen who arrived the day Mackey was expelled were admitted without any trouble. One had an expired visa, the other no visa at all. This obviously stumped the president. He said he would look into this immediately, but if such discrimination existed, he would be surprised. Massamba made one last attempt to place the blame for the Mackey incident on the United States government, and Koren repeated his arguments. The president professed a desire for friendship, something not recently heard. He refrained from making his usual wild accusations. Koren left believing that he had impressed Massamba of the seriousness of situation. But Koren also left with the feeling that harassment would continue. Koren asked permission to delay his departure two additional days, against the hope that, while late, the Congolese would make some sort of formal apology. After some discussions between the ambassador and Williams, the State Department agreed.25

25 Koren to Rusk, 31 July 65, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US; Koren to Williams, 2 August 1965, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US; Rusk to Koren, 2 August 1965, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US.
One would have thought that, finally, the Congolese president had seen reason, and things would get better. Unfortunately, this was not the case. On 3 August, the Foreign Ministry presented its response, stating that "he rejects completely all the allegations contained therein... and the unacceptably incorrect manner in which the ambassador presented the facts." Ganao called Koren a liar, accusing him of deliberate misrepresentation. Not only Koren, but the whole United States Government was trying to subvert Congolese sovereignty. The rest of the note cast blame everywhere else but where it justly belonged, with the Foreign Ministry. Ganao accused the United States of deliberately creating incidents designed to "compromise the relations between Washington and Brazzaville," and demonstrate "the slight regard the American government has for the sovereignty of the Congo." If there had been any hope in Koren's mind that relations could survive, they were dashed here.26

The State Department's reaction was swift. Koren was told to return the note to the Foreign Office as unacceptable. Koren was further instructed to depart the country.

26 Koren to Rusk, 3 August 1965, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US.
as soon as was possible, crossing the river to Leopoldville if no other means was available. By the 7th of August, Koren was gone, and Rives presided over an embassy staff preparing to depart.\textsuperscript{27}

At this point, there were 30 people, dependents and staff members, working in the American Embassy, Brazzaville. In addition, there were 17 American missionaries that would need to be evacuated. On 6 August, a proposal for breaking relations with the Congo the following week was presented to the Under Secretary.\textsuperscript{28}

By August 9th, the embassy was virtually deserted, all personnel having evacuated the Congo through Bangui, Central African Republic. American Chargé d'Affairs Rives and at least one communicator remained. The State Department notified Rives that it planned to announce a break in relations with the Republic of Congo on 12 August 1965.\textsuperscript{29}

On 11 August, the State Department decided that rather then break relations, it would announce that the United States government was merely withdrawing its

\textsuperscript{27} Rusk to Koren, 3 August 1965, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US.
\textsuperscript{28} Douglas MacArthur, Memorandum of Conversation, 5 August 1965, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US; William C. Trimble to Ball, 6 August 1965, RG 59, File POL CONGO-US.
\textsuperscript{29} Rives to Rusk, 9 August 1965, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO; Ross to Rusk, 10 August 1965, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO.
diplomatic and consular personnel from Brazzaville. Rives was told to make the announcement orally only. If asked, he was to tell the government that the United States was not breaking relations and the GOCE was not required to close its embassy in Washington nor to withdraw its personnel. The American Embassy closed on 13 August 1965.30

The Congolese also closed their mission in Washington. All diplomatic and consular personnel were moved to the Permanent Mission to the United Nations within a week of the closure of the American Embassy in Brazzaville. In their notification to the State Department, Loufoua referred to the USG actions as suspending relations. State Department representatives repeated that relations were not suspended, or broken. American personnel had merely been removed.31

Regardless of what terminology was used, the result was a chill in relations that lasted for 10 years. There was never a chance for normal relations between the United States and the Republic of Congo. In the beginning, pronouncements of good will, support for an end of colonialism, and promises of aid resulted in what the leaders of

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30 Rusk to Rives, 11 August 1965, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO; POL 17 CONGO; Rusk to Circular (All Posts), 11 August 1965, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO.
31 Memorandum of Conversation, 13 August 1965, RG 59, File POL 17 CONGO.
the Congo saw as empty promises. When the United States decided to base its aid programs on maintaining France's goodwill rather than the Congo's needs, the United States lost whatever leverage it might have had to help the Congo mature. The argument can be made that massive infusions of money would only have resulted in fat purses for a select few members of the government, but some of it would have been spent where it was needed. Aid could have been given in the forms of equipment and supplies rather than money. With the means to create work, and the tools to perform the work, the Congolese could have gotten an early start in becoming some sort of product exporting country. While Youlou's choice of cabinet secretaries was certainly ill chosen, he did try to curtail corruption. With the short time that he was in a leadership role, one does not know if he would have matured sufficiently to move the Congo toward development, but the evidence seems to support a decision that he had the potential, and the desire.

The times were not right for Youlou to succeed. The fear of the spread of communism colored every Western leader's reasoning. This is borne out in the real but unpublicized policy of the United States. Supporting
nations that stood against communism, but only those that had an abundance of natural resources, created an imbalance that was unfair to the Congo. In August of 1963, this policy backfired, and the Congo's swing to the left was very rapid. The August coup was not a communist uprising. It was a native reaction to government abuse of power, and the lack of progress in life-style improvement. Unable to attract Western aid, it was easy for the Congolese to believe those leaders with communist sympathies who offered a different path to prosperity. The Congo looked to the East, and Communist China was only too happy to fill the void. But once again, the Congo found itself the victim of another nation's personal agenda, for Communist China was not really interested in the Brazzaville side of the river. Their real goals were the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola. The massive aid the Congo thought it would get was, in reality, disappointingly small.

President Massamba-Debat proved not to be the saving grace for the Congo, despite what Ambassador Blanké thought. Within six months, he led his country, in the name of non-alignment, from the Western orbit to the East. Perhaps a more understanding American president and
ambassador could have checked this leftward swing, but Kennedy, the most tolerant of the four presidents discussed, still considered the Congo a French challenge, and he was assassinated three months after Massamba took over. Blanke left the Congo the month after that. While Kennedy and Blanké were probably the best and most tolerant people for Massamba to work with, they were not around long enough to do him any good. In their places came two gentlemen who were not cut from the same cloth. President Johnson was certainly of the type to be less inclined to be tolerant of Massamba's diplomatic naivété, as well as his policy of non-alignment and his courting communist recognition while the United States was itself becoming mired in confrontations with those same countries. Ambassador Koren, arriving after the leftward swing began, came in not enamored with Massamba as Blanké had been. One can see when reading their dispatches, that Koren, and later Rives, grew frustrated with the pettiness of the Massamba Government, and their less than diplomatic remonstrances merely added to the hostility coming from the Congo. Also, Cold War events occurred between 1960 and 1965 that colored United States perceptions of non-alignment movements. The
Cuban Missile Crisis and escalation of the Vietnam War caused the United States to distrust nations that openly courted support from the nations of the Communist Bloc.

Yet one cannot fault Koren and Rives. They had to deal with the reality presented them when they arrived in Brazzaville. Many of the ministerial and legislative leaders were, if not communists, at the least anti-American. The government could not control its population. At times it appeared as if Massamba was riding a surf board on a large wave, maintaining a precarious balance lest he become swallowed up in the surf. He had no means of maintaining law and order, only some poorly trained thugs who used their positions in the Sûreté and the police for personal gain or satisfaction. This was enough to scare away any Western investors that might have had an interest in helping the Congo.

Their paranoia against the West originated with the Chinese Communists, who used racist propaganda to establish a unity of the black brothers aligned with the yellow brothers against the evil white brothers. Speeches referring to "good whites" and "bad whites" were prevalent early on in Massamba's move to the left. This paranoia was
further enhanced when the United States supported a government in neighboring Congo/L that was unacceptable to Brazzaville. With each Congo supporting rebel incursions and refugees from the other side, the United States was bound to become a villain.

Diplomacy among equals is easy because each has similar potential and desires. It is difficult when the survival of one depends on the largess of the other. This is the condition on which diplomacy between the United States and the Republic of Congo became based. So long as money and material was available, and a pro-Western government was in place in the Congo, relations were good. But the United States continued to defer to the French, and never granted any large aid agreements. When the United States failed to live up to Congolese expectations and relations soured, diplomacy became difficult. The Congo went to the Communist Bloc in search of other sources. The Congo's profession of non-alignment, and its recognition of nations at odds with the United States did not induce any improvement in their relations. The situation was further exasperated when communications between the embassy and the government deteriorated. Diplomacy moved from difficult to
impossible when Americans became targets. In the end, it became nonexistent when the American Embassy closed.
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SECONDARY SOURCES


SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCES CONSULTED


APPENDIX A

MAP OF THE CONGO
VITA

James R. Hawn Jr. was born on 11 September 1952 at Camp Lejeune, NC, and grew up in New Jersey. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in January 1970. He attended Palomar College under the auspices of the Marine Corps Associate Degree Completion Program, where he graduated with an Associate of Arts Degree in History in 1975 and received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Liberal Arts from the University of the State of New York in 1987.

His military duties included a tour as the Detachment Commander of the Marine Security Guard at the American Embassy in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo from April 1991 to November 1992. He was in Brazzaville when that nation's government changed from one of a Marxist ideology to one democratically elected. He also participated in Operation Safe Haven, the evacuation of American citizens from Zaire during September 1991.

He is married to the former Beryl Joan Fisher and they have two children, James and Elizabeth. This thesis completes his requirements for the Masters Degree from the Department of History, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, 23508.