ABSTRACT

THE UNITED STATES, THE CONGO, AND THE MINERAL CRISIS OF 1960-64:
A TRIPLE ENTENTE OF ECONOMIC INTEREST

by Kiama Mutahi

One week after the Congo gained independence on June 30, 1960, there was instability. As the largest and richest country in Africa, the Congo found itself in the midst of a volatile political, economic, and social situation, raising the concern about accessibility to resources there. The United States decided to intervene. Several American companies and individuals had direct and indirect economic ties to the Congo. This thesis focuses on those individuals and companies and how they influenced the United States policy in the Congo during the Congo crisis of 1960-64. It analyzes Department of State memos, conversations, newspaper reports, and mineral import data to understand the motivations and decisions made by the Department of State officials in regard to the Congo.
THE UNITED STATES, THE CONGO, AND THE MINERAL CRISIS OF 1960-64:
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A Thesis

Submitted to the
Faculty of Miami University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of History
by
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Miami University
Oxford, Ohio
2013

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Acknowledgements

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the people who have been instrumental in the successful completion of this thesis. I would like to show my greatest appreciation to Professor Allan Winkler. Professor Winkler brought me to Miami University of Ohio from Nairobi, Kenya. I cannot say thank you enough for his tremendous support and help, both as a committee member and as a personal friend.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Amanda McVety, for the useful comments, remarks, and engagements through the learning process of this master thesis. I am deeply grateful for her efforts. Furthermore, I would like to thank Professor Abdoulaye Saine as my thesis committee member as well for his support on the way.

My special thanks also goes to the History Department, Miami University, for financing my research work expenses, the staff of the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) at College Park, Maryland, the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and the Indiana State Library, for their help. I am also indebted to my fellow history graduate students who were also a source of strength throughout my graduate studies at Miami University.

I thank my parents and family for their endless love and support.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Ms. Sophie Lehmann of Johns Hopkins University, Maryland, for letting me stay in her house while researching for my thesis at College Park and at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Sophie, I will be grateful forever for your love.

I hope this thesis serves as an enjoyable reminder to all of you of how much I love you and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Kiama Mutahi
Introduction

I was hardly a teenager when the popular Congolese music, Rhumba and Ndombolo, became a world beat. Ndombolo, in particular, was a dance-music that generated swinging hips and limping movements. The music was said to have been invented in the early 1990s by street children in Kinshasa – the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹ Its catchy rhythms captivated listeners in Kenya and all over Africa as well. The music literally drove Kenyans, including myself, crazy. I remember that the frenzy of discos and live bands playing Ndombolo in the streets of Nairobi, the Kenyan capital, was a booming business that defied all attempts at control.

In the ensuing years, I sought to learn more about Zaire, as the country was then known, and its music, but I had no intention of studying Zaire’s history. Yet, as the country plunged into a political conflict in the late 1990s, my interest in the events of the Democratic Republic of the Congo – a vital strategic location at the heart of the African continent, bordering nine other countries – grew. Indeed, the appeal of my subject for this thesis only intensified as the conflict in the Congo worsened in 2011. I sought to understand the seemingly endless suffering and endurance of the Congolese. The mineral competition in the Congo was high on that agenda. The Congo has been in the limelight for various reasons including for illegal mining creating all manner of gross human rights violations. In the process, I found that while much had been written about the Congo in general, very little had been published on the relationship between individuals and corporations and the Congo’s mineral wealth and how that influenced policy decisions within the United States’ Department of State during the Cold War.

This thesis is about those individuals and corporations with close connections with the Department of State officials. It is through those connections that these individuals influenced state policy to safeguard their economic interests in the Congo. It is about the motives and decisions of those individuals during the Congo crisis in the early 1960s. As the Congo gained independence on June 30, 1960, and the immediate political instability there and in the larger central Africa, economic interests and accessibility to resources became a concern. The Congo was important. As the largest and richest country in Africa, it found itself in the midst of a

volatile political situation. The United States, in particular, fearing that the Congo would dissolve into chaos, sought to eliminate the first Congolese premier, Patrice Lumumba, who was accused of warming up to the Communists, deny the Soviets, and end instability by installing a pro-Western government. Most U.S. officials believed that the Congo’s instability would spread to the rest of Africa providing political opportunities to the Soviets.²

The focus of this thesis is to analyze the key role played by individuals, corporations, and institutions, particularly within the Department of State, and how they influenced the Cold War aims both individually and institutionally and collectively in the Congo. Although the Cold War involved a set of aims, each of the players involved was determined to preserve its economic interests in this competition. It is on that basis that these individuals, corporations, and institutions worked closely to achieve those aims. My focus is on the following businesses, companies, and individuals with interests in the Congo: American Metal Climax (AMAX), a mining company with extensive holdings, Morgan Guaranty Trust, Dillon, Read and Company, Liberian-American Swedish Minerals Company (LAMCO), Leon Tempelsman and Son, Société Générale, among others.

All these companies had direct or indirect connection to the American government either the company’s directors or chairmen of the boards were serving as state official or were close allies to the President Dwight D. Eisenhower or President J.F. Kennedy. Some of the names of individuals who ran these companies or involved in it include: Allen Dulles, the Director of Central Intelligence Agency, William Burden, United States ambassador to Belgium, Christian A. Herter, Secretary of State, C. Douglas Dillon, Under Secretary of State, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, President J.F. Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson, a senior Department of State official, L. Edgar Detwiler, an avid American businessman, Maurice Tempelsman, and the Rockefeller family.

At the height of the Congo crisis, David Newsom, who became the United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, asked a British diplomat if the British Foreign office consulted directly with the mining companies on the situation in Katanga – the mineral rich region of the Congo. In his response, the diplomat answered, “Nothing formal. You see, our ministers and the heads of the companies all went to the same schools. They speak to each other

in unfinished sentences.”³ That response is the basis of this thesis as it seeks to unravel the connections between individuals, corporations, and institutions and how they influenced each other in the making of the U.S. policy in the Congo. It would also become clear why U.S. policy makers since the time of President Dwight D. Eisenhower have committed time, effort, and resources to a country so far away.

The story about the Congo is little appreciated yet it is a highly significant episode of the Cold War. This large country played a vital, if not fully understood role, in the Cold War. The Congo was considered the “Heart of Africa” with great economic and political potential at the critical time of the Cold War.⁴ Unfortunately, when historians focus on the Congo crisis – that involved an army mutiny one week after independence, Katanga secession, and questions about the legitimacy of the United Nations intervention in the Congo – they do so primarily to highlight the extension of political rivalry between Washington and Moscow to Africa.⁵ The narrative of the Cold War, therefore, remains as an idea of United States’ efforts to contain the Soviet Union in Africa. Yet, the Congo’s events were unquestionably complex with multiple factors affecting the crisis.

In most cases, historians miss the critical role that resources of the Congo played to influence policy decisions to safeguard the interests of the American investors in the Congo. The problem has been aggravated by the fact that some historians have maintained that the Congo and sub-Saharan Africa, in general, have never been important to the interests of the United States. And that official U.S. “attitudes and policies” about Africa have been at worst marked by “indifference and neglect.”⁶ These assertions have made it difficult to ascertain some of the factors which determined the U.S. policy in the Congo during the early 1960s. To achieve this objective, historians must transcend the Cold War myth that describes America’s general Cold War policy merely as part of a struggle with Communism and also take seriously the role of the politics of decolonization, individual interests, corporations, government institutions, and international organizations in that entire crisis.

⁵ Mazov, A distant front in the Cold War, 3.
The international Cold War propaganda between Washington and Moscow in Africa was central to the Congo crisis. This, however, was just one of the means of promoting the aims of the two different ideologies as presented by each side. Both Washington and Moscow were interested in the accessibility and control of mineral resources of the Congo for security and economic reasons. U.S. military strategy, for instance, during the 1950s and 1960s, relied heavily on nuclear defense. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) depended on the presence of warheads in strategic locations. The construction of those war machines and installation required specific minerals, uranium and coltan, for which at that time, the only producer outside the non-communist world was the Katanga province, in the Congo. Control of the Congo, moreover, would give the Soviet Union in particular a near monopoly on the production of cobalt, a critical mineral used in missiles and many other weapons systems, since the Congo and the USSR were the world’s main suppliers of the mineral. In the event that happened, then the United States’ own weapons and space programs were at a severe disadvantage. The competition to access and control these resources, in a critical period of the Cold War, intensified the political divide between Washington and Moscow. In part, this competition formed the basis of Washington’s official foreign policy in the Congo and in the African continent.

However, there was the significant role of individual interests in this “Battle for Africa.” It is a part of the U.S. Cold War in Africa which has been neglected or ineffectively studied. The United States, through the Department of State, played a significant role in the Congo tensions partly due its citizens with interests in vast mineral and wealth deposits in the Congo. With the installation of a friendly government in the Congo, Washington could count on unswerving anti-communist stance, support in international forums, and an establishment of a favorable economic system. Most of the American investors in the Congo were no ordinary citizens. They were directly or indirectly connected to the government; either they were officials at the Department of State, or enjoyed a close personal or business relationship with Department of State officials or with Presidents’ Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy. These connections, however, have been downplayed by those involved strictly because their motives and decisions never came out clearly in their conversation. As a result, there are no firm conclusions of how Department of

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State officials and friends influenced the government to act for their own interests. The furthest one can get is to infer the motives and decisions of these officials in relation to their personal or business connections within the Department of State.10

Although the official U.S. policy to the Congo was not solely determined by the interests of these individuals, business interests influenced U.S. foreign policy in the Congo during the Cold War period.11 Suffice it to say, the objective of Washington’s policy in Africa was meant to protect its people from being undercut by the Soviets in doing business in the Congo and in the African continent. President Kennedy’s policy in the Congo, for instance, during the Cold War was shaped by men who had Communism in mind, protection of their business abroad and also got concerned with America’s involvement in Africa.12 The result was a prolonged conflict of interests between Washington, Moscow, Léopoldville, and Brussels over the control of the political and the economic interests in the Congo during the so-called “Congo crisis.”

The Congo crisis started soon after independence. Soon after independence, the Congolese army mutinied. Support for Katanga secession gathered momentum. Nowhere else in Africa was the political scene so turbulent. As Belgium prepared the ground for granting independence, there were questions about whether the Congo – the Heart of Africa – would become a haven for Communism and consequently a threat to the interests of the Free World there. With its mineral wealth, the Congo was also the largest and richest of the 16 African states listed for independence in 1960. The Russians and Americans were therefore playing for high stakes.13

That crisis, part of what was sometimes referred to as the “crisis of decolonization,” was a surprise to the Western allies. The United States, United Kingdom, and Belgium did not expect a radical nationalist and a presumed anti-West troublemaker, Patrice Emery Lumumba, would become the first Congolese premier. The lack of a Western strategy to groom a moderate leader provided a good opportunity for Moscow and the People’s Republic of China to secretly engage the left-leaning Congolese politicians for a possible entry to the Congo after independence. The United States and its allies, led by Belgium, were concerned by those events. The United States,

11 John Kent, America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War conflict in the Congo (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2010), 4.
in particular, had large stakes in the Congo, not because of its direct investments, but because of the possible impact that the Congo instability would have caused on the West and the world copper prices if its supplies were cut.\textsuperscript{14}

In this case, the U.S and its allies’ intervention in the Congo were driven by security and economic needs during the Cold War. Behind these needs was the Western capitalism that combined a number of requirements, including a rhetorical arsenal of fear that Communism would provide a more efficient political and economic system to the newly independent African states. It had, therefore, to be fought from all sides. This project was spearheaded by individuals who either had ties to the Congo’s mineral wealth or who genuinely believed that Communism was a disease that needed to be contained.\textsuperscript{15}

That debate about the Congo crisis has been in the limelight in the past and it is still growing. Madeline Kalb, for instance, the acclaimed author of the \textit{Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa from Eisenhower to Kennedy}, disagreed on the level of United States influence in the Congo. Kalb argued that while Moscow approached the Congo based on its need for a strategic partner in Africa, Washington seemed lost. Indeed many observers including Donald Rothchild and Edmond J. Keller, in \textit{Africa-US Relations: Strategic Encounters} argued that Africa was never central to U.S. foreign policy prior to the 1960s.\textsuperscript{16} Many Americans did not pay much attention of what happened in sub-Saharan Africa or in the Congo. However, Kalb observed, that there was a general feeling in America that all nations under colonial rule should be unchained. Notably, Kalb discovered that there were a few Americans who paid attention to what happened in Africa. She noted that Chester Bowles and Aldai Stevenson, who became influential figures in Department of State, were interested in independent African states. Despite them caring about their interests in the region, they were also aware of what Moscow was up to, especially in the Congo. These individuals will be discussed in length in another chapter of this thesis as part of emphasizing the role that individuals, through the Department of State, played to influence state policy in a bid to promote and protect their interests in the Congo.\textsuperscript{17}

It has been a challenge, however, defining the general U.S. policy in the Congo, particularly during the Cold War. Gabriel Kolko, in \textit{Confronting the Third World, US foreign policy 1945-80},

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[16] Rothchild and Keller (eds.), \textit{Africa-US relations : Strategic Encounters}, 3.
\item[17] Kalb, \textit{The Congo Cables}, preface xxvi.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
argued that American policy was complex in its formulation and application with its defining goals and interests. This was because the nations that United States sought to relate with were incredibly diverse with different needs. This challenge always confronts historians interested in American foreign policy. And in most cases, Kolko argued, historians fail to see the crucial distinction between the intended objectives in the causes of policies and the frequently surprising and unintended outcomes. Part of this challenge is that interests are conceived, interpreted and enforced by a specific group of people of which their motives are held in secret. Of course, Kolko further argued, there are outright reasons that guide American formal objectives, and then there are covert considerations like military power and geopolitics. Unlike Rothchild and Keller who argued that Africa was never important to the interests of the United States prior to the 1960s, Kolko observed that indeed after the Second World War, the U.S. had a conscious policy focused on the poorer and colonial regions. The policy was designed as an ideology aimed at reshaping the entire global political and economic structure to suit the interests of the U.S. That ideology touched on so many concrete issues of U.S. interests that allowed various powerful individuals to define them to their own needs. And it is along these lines that promotion of individual and corporate economic interests such as the one experienced in the Congo soon after independence should be understood.\(^\text{18}\)

David Gibbs, in *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention, Mines, Money, and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crisis*, discussed those interests in a business conflict model. He explored the factors that motivate intervention and especially the influence of business interests. Gibbs called the attention to the quiet involvement of business persons who exerted pressure on the U.S. foreign policy making process to promote their economic interests in the Congo. He further showed how political divisions such as the one experienced in the Congo can influence foreign policy and interventionism. Policymakers, according to Gibbs, linked to business through government and private sector hiring, are likely to make policies consistent with their business interests. The conflict in the Congo, Gibbs observed, served the purpose of those interested in the Congo. It allowed the conflicting parties to each form formidable alliances to agitate for a compromise and to seek an amicable solution to the Congo problems. In the case of the Congo, Gibbs added, the United States supported Belgium in its bid to dominate the Congo and secure Katanga which was the center of the Congo crisis. Although many would argue that Gibbs’

model lacks concrete evidence to directly link policymakers with business interests, and perhaps that is true because rarely do policymakers make their interests known, his model deserves attention in relation to countries suffering from conflict due to competition for resources.\(^{19}\)

James Bill, in *George Ball: Behind the Scenes in U.S. Foreign Policy*, rejected Gibbs’ business conflict model. Bill argued that policy makers are not always influenced to perform their duties by external forces. He cited George Wildman Ball, who was US Under Secretary of State, as an example of a policy maker who was driven by his “intellectual brilliance” and a “total commitment to his political calling.” Bill’s analysis of Ball’s motivations and policy decision is important as Ball was Kennedy’s “commander in chief” during the Congo crisis. Bill cited Ball’s actions and decisions in the Congo to show that personal networks do not necessarily translate to influence. For instance, although Ball had close personal ties with businessmen such as Tempelsman, Hamilton and big businesses such as LAMCO which had ties with the Congo, Bill argued, there was no evidence that Ball’s decisions were based on these relations. However, Gibbs’ model and argument should not be dismissed based on Ball’s impartiality in policy making. In any case, Ball was only one of the many officials who worked for the Department of State, each of them guided by different motives.\(^{20}\)

American policy in the Congo has also been described as an ideological battle between Washington and Moscow. In other words, it was a battle between those who stood for “good” and “evil” respectively. Eric Foner, in *The Story of American Freedom*, explained that soon after the Second World War, the language of freedom permeated American politics, culture, and society. Later, the politics of the Cold War reshaped that freedom’s meaning and practices, identified it with anticommunism and free enterprise making it a foundation for America’s foreign policy. In that regard, the U.S. believed that it had the responsibility to support the freedom of free-loving people wherever they were threatened by Communism. Foner, however, argued that in practice, America’s role in the world as a champion of freedom was often less messianic than it implied. Instead, geopolitical and economic interests shaped U.S. foreign policy as much as the idea of freedom.\(^{21}\)


Of course, this should be seen within the milieu of the Cold War propaganda which thrived on perceptions. Although the language of freedom remained throughout the Cold War period, it was only invoked to justify the American interventions. Most important, that freedom became fully identified with free enterprise more than political democracy or freedom of speech. And eventually, what united the nations of the free world was an economic system resting on private ownership with free enterprise taking its place as a fundamental freedom and as part of the American way of life. The aggressiveness of Americans to preserve the Congo for the free world, therefore, rested on the belief of promoting free enterprise in a free world. The free market had become part of American foreign policy ideology as an idea, a logical extension of the virtues of capitalism and universal liberty exported to every corner of the world by individuals and corporations.

Odd Arne Westad, in The Global Cold War: Third World interventions and the making of our times, supported Foner. According to Westad, the Cold War was more about ideas and beliefs than about anything else. After the Second World War, Westad observed, the traditional European system disintegrated both at home and in the colonies of Africa leading to a global vacuum. For the Americans, that vacuum needed to be filled by creating a new and moral political and economic world order. The most important aspects of the Cold War, Westad claimed, were neither military nor strategic, nor Europe-centered, but connected to political and social development in the Third World. That way the interests of the free world would be safeguarded. The policymaking elites from each side saw its ideology as the best way in the Third World. The new independent Africa states, in particular, provided fertile grounds where Washington and Moscow needed to prove the universal applicability of their ideologies, Capitalism and Communism.

Although Westad relied on a variety of official government documents, but also on unofficial memos, conversations, and interviews with the parties involved to support his argument on the motives of the policymaking elites, his analysis is inadequate. In as far as his view of the ideology’s role in policymaking process was concerned, Westad did not examine the interests of the elites involved in the making of policies and their differences between personal,

22 Kenneth Alan Osgood, Total Cold War: Eisenhower's secret propaganda battle at home and abroad (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2006), 7-9.
ideological, and bureaucratic rivals which ultimately affected policy decisions. In other words, these elites were guided by different factors in the making of policy decisions. The ideologies Westad proposed were hardly simple and they required wider consultation among the concerned parties. Nevertheless, it is within Westad’s argument that the competing interests and opinions between Washington and Moscow should be weighed. Events that led to the proliferation of the Cold War rhetoric of “good” and “evil” represented the ideas and beliefs of each side. Interestingly, beyond these assertions of freedom and totalitarianism what was really at stake at the moment of the Cold War was the importance of both the accessibility of resources and geopolitics analogies. Issues of global security were only whipped to rally nations around the fear of nuclear war.

Indeed Didier Gondola, in *The History of the Congo*, placed the Congo crisis on competing Western economic interests and the fear that Washington and Moscow held for each other over the Congo. Gondola argued that the Congo crisis was not influenced by a lack of political leadership, a rushed process of decolonization, or the Congo’s economic woes, as some have stated. He observed that the situation in the Congo was aggravated by the growing fear among Western countries that the Congo’s woes might compel Lumumba to look for help to the Soviet Union. It became therefore necessary for countries like United States and its allies to intervene to prevent that situation from happening. The Congo crisis, Gondola emphasized, was fueled by an array of outside economic and political forces interested in the Congo mineral business. In that line, Gondola concluded that any Congolese leader who came between the West and its access to Congo's strategic mineral resources was eliminated. Gondola’s views are from a Congolese perspective of the Congo’s past event and how those events are manifested in the current political and economic volatility.25

Similarly, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, in *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People’s History*, associated the Congo crisis with competition for strategic minerals. Ntalaja observed that United Nations intervention in the Congo in 1960 was a response to the threat posed to international peace and security by violent conflict between the superpowers on the one hand and between the Congo and its former colonial master, Belgium, on the other hand. Congo’s strategic location and its abundant natural resources served as a theatre for the playing out of economic and strategic interests. Ntalaja and Gondola’s assertions were based on international economic

competition between the West and the East. This competition, however, is too complex to be explained at the international level. And, even when they talk about minerals, it is as a second factor. The Congo mineral business was run by individuals and corporations who took on the role of representing the interests of their government there. The focus here is the role these individuals and corporations from United States played to drag Washington into the Congo conflict and to convince the Department of State to adopt policies favorable to their interests.  

The Congo’s narrative has attracted new interpretations. John Kent, in *America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War conflict in the Congo*, for instance, argued that attempts to incorporate the role of Western capitalism in the Congo have generally been neglected. Particularly the role of enterprises in the development or exploitation of Congo resources and the generation of wealth has not been treated as significant in the interpretation of Western policy and actions. According to Kent, the Cold War was essentially an American project not reacting to Soviet policies or even to perceptions of a global battle against the forces of Soviet and Chinese communism. However, it was a means of winning support for proactive American policies designed to further specific interests or perpetuate Western values and culture. Those interests contained socio-economic and political elements embodied in democratic capitalism which America was determined to promote irrespective of the Soviet’s actions. American actions in the Congo, therefore, were fundamental for particular capitalist interests in the Congo and for Western governments. Kent recognized the role of enterprises in influencing the state policy but he did not provide details of how those enterprises operated hand in hand with the state and the figures behind who operated in the Congo. His claim that profits and Capitalism alone determined the U.S. policy in the Congo is also not correct. The Congo crisis revolved around multiple issues that saw different actors struggle to influence their ways. Nonetheless, Kent provided new and important insight into looking at the conflict of the Cold War in a more systematic and analytical approach.  

Uzoechi Nwagbara, in *Leading a Postmodern African Organisation: Towards a Model of Prospective Commitment*, talked about this new approach to the Congo’s events. Nwagbara, argued that prior to 1980s Africa suffered a long period of forced Western ideological models which focused on one-dimensional approach as the true interpretation and solution to African

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27 Kent, *America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War conflict in the Congo*, 2-5, 10, 58.
challenges. The failures of these models, Nwagbara noted, led to an emergence of African and international scholars who championed new approaches to African challenges that involved deconstructing Western mythology through opening up multiple interpretations. As a result, these multiplicities have allowed a reinterpretation of African economic, political, cultural, and social history. It is along these lines that attempts to explain the Congo crisis and the war of words between Washington and Moscow on the Congo should be understood. Rather than looking at the crisis as a product of international Communism in Africa, the analysis of the impact that the Congo minerals had on the crisis has become important.\textsuperscript{28}

The Congo was a conflicted territory in the Cold War period. Behind this struggle were mineral resources vital to the Free World economy. These included its large deposits of uranium, a crucial commodity of war that heightened strained relations between Washington and Moscow. This mineral business in the Congo ultimately influenced United States policy in the region. This charge does not necessarily condemn the individuals involved or the Department of State, which is obliged, by the complex nature of its multiple responsibilities, to exercise care and fairness in policy making. A lack of consensus on the part of the Department of State, however, complicated the Congo crisis and made it more difficult to solve. For me, the story includes passion from many years of listening to Rhumba and Ndombolo and sympathy for the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo during their current suffering. Even more importantly, a dispassionate assessment reflects the fact that it derived from deep-rooted economic concerns. As the Congo moved closer to and gained independence on June 30, 1960, American businessmen and investors sought to protect their interests by influencing state policy, and they had an impact on the unfolding of American policy toward the Congo.

Chapter One

The History of the Congo

Figure 1. The map of the Congo showing the Katanga province. This region was the center of conflict in the 1960’s due to its mineral resources. Map adapted from the United States News and World Report, Inc., 1963.
The Congo, currently the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), is a large central Africa country. The DRC has been described as the strategic heart of Africa. It is the second largest country on the continent, after Algeria, and the fourth most populous country in Africa, after Nigeria, Egypt, and Ethiopia. Its wealth of people, plants, and minerals is boundless and has been sought after by competing powers for centuries. Its water resources and its rich mineral resources make it the envy of neighboring states and a strategic location for the industrial world. The DRC is said to be capable of producing 80% of world’s industrial diamonds, and it possesses 80% of the world’s known reserves of coltan – a precious metal used in almost every electronic device, a source of cassiterite, tin, copper and gold. The Congo River, second largest in the world in terms of volume of flow, has a potential generating capacity of more than 600 billion kilowatt hours annually, representing two thirds of the entire global production. This makes DRC one of the most strategic locations in the world, not just in Africa.29

Its relations with the wider world have been shaped by those riches. DRC colonial history can be traced back to the mid-15th century when the first Portuguese slave traders started penetrating the region. Like elsewhere in Africa, the Europeans, who came with the pretext of bringing Christianity, education, and health care to the natives, collaborated with the local chief to kidnap thousands and sell them to slave traders. Then they were put onto ships for transmission to the Atlantic Ocean, where they were shipped to American, Caribbean, and European markets. The Congo was central to this trade. It provided the necessary commodities for trade and even more important, a reliable transport mode, the Congo River.30

From the mid-15th century, therefore, the Congo territory was a popular station for the slave trade. Britain came to the scene in 1807 when it outlawed slavery. Its Royal Navy was determined to suppress the transatlantic slave trade from the center, the Congo. In the process, the British discovered that the Congo offered other paths to riches. In 1814, two of the British Royal Navy frigates sailed up the Congo River and realized its importance in trade. The Congo River has about 320 miles of navigable waters that empty into the Atlantic Ocean in the West.

30 Daily Nation, Kenya, posted November 30, 2011 at 00:00.
thus providing a reliable trade route from inland to the coastline. This river was at the center of conflict between the major powers in the nineteenth and twentieth century over its control.  

By the 1880s, the British trading firms had set themselves up at strategic points in the Congo, dealing in ivory, gold, copper, and, palm oil. The British trade in the Congo had become extensive, worth 2 million pounds per annum but, a political and economic storm was brewing. With the British government and its traders insisting on their commercial rights in the Congo, questions emerged about how the future international trade in the Congo would be managed without generating conflict between the major powers. Nevertheless, the British continued providing humanitarian services, offering decent wages and living conditions for its employees and suppressing slavery. Protestant missionaries from Britain and America provided spiritual and moral support to their colleagues and to the Africans.

However, it was Belgium, and not Britain, that came to dominate the Congo. King Leopold II gained control of the Congo during the Congress of Berlin, in Berlin, Germany, in 1884-85. Leopold convinced the delegates to give him the entire territory, which became the Congo Free State, as his private kingdom. How Leopold convinced the great powers to recognize a colony eighty times the size of Belgium, an area as large as the United States east of the Mississippi and bigger than England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy combined, is still a mystery.

Leopold was ambitious. He immediately began what became a profitable but exceedingly cruel international trade dealing with ivory, rubber and precious commodities using Congolese slave labor. It was so cruel that he never wanted to talk about it. One day in August 1908, shortly before he turned over the colony to Belgium, Leopold said that he would give away his Congo but nobody had the right to know what he did there. What he had done there was terrorize a nation.

It is estimated that about 10 million people died from forced labor, starvation and outright extermination during Leopold’s rule. Nonetheless, the Congo, it is said, was the only European colony to run at a profit almost from its inception for about 15 years. Despite Leopold’s public announcements that he made losses equivalent to $5 million on his Congo enterprises, some claimed that he actually earned $25 million in profits. Leopold gave huge concessions with

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32 Ibid., 23.
34 Ibid, 294.
unlimited rights to his allies and friends’ companies, particularly in the mining sector, something that continued even decades later when he relinquished the colony in 1908.35

Even as Leopold handed over the administration of the Congo in 1908 to the government, nothing much changed. The colonial system, which he built, continued under a small managerial group in Brussels representing an alliance between the government, the Catholic church, and the giant mining and business corporations. In other words, the colony remained organized to serve and promote Belgian colonists’ interests in the Congo. It was this arrangement that provoked a wave of rebellion in the 1950s as the Congolese sought to take charge of their country’s destiny.36

Belgian authorities had dominated the Congo’s economy which was heavily export oriented for a long time. Mostly production activities centered around a few regional poles which forwarded minerals and agricultural goods to world markets, and profits to Brussels and other European capitals. This sort of plan precluded the creation of a large interior market leading to emergence of classes of European profit makers and a certain Congolese group that conducted business with the Belgians. While the Congolese elite aimed at participating in this trade, Belgium was the real beneficiary of this trade and more so as the guardian of free trade policy in the Congo. It had about 100,000 Europeans in the Congo working for government, private sector, independent businessmen and missionaries all who considered themselves as permanent residents of the Congo. And, therefore, when war for independence came, in the late 1950s, Belgian authorities were worried of what would happen if an anti-European government took over power.37

Some Congolese leaders, led by Patrice Lumumba, were angered and frustrated by Belgium’s continued control. Lumumba had established himself as a moderate nationalist but some considered him a radical. Larry Devlin, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief in the Congo, for example, described Lumumba as charismatic but temperamental leader of the Congolese.38 President Dwight D. Eisenhower referred Lumumba as the “mad dog.” During the same period, the (CIA) head Allen Dulles referred Lumumba as Castro, invoking the Cuban

36 Kabemba, The Democratic Republic of Congo, 102.
38 Devlin, Chief of Station, Congo: A Memoir of 1960-67, 38.
Communist leader who was a thorn in the side of the United States. Colin Legum, however, argued that most people did not understand Lumumba. This was as a result of Lumumba’s growth of ideas that changed with time. At times, Legum observed, Lumumba acted with the deliberate intention of engaging the sympathies of the Belgians and its allies, flattering them, identifying himself with their interests, or retreating behind humble prayers of gratitude when he noticed his ideas were not popular. These two sides of Lumumba made him the target of his enemies who considered him a cunning politician and a Soviet puppet. Legum noted that most people formed their impressions about Lumumba from what they read in the Western and Communist press. And, therefore, Legum concluded, Lumumba was largely misunderstood and his detailed plans for social and political reforms in the Congo were valid.

Indeed, Lumumba in his 1956 writings portrayed himself as a rational Congolese leader. He even thanked the Belgians for colonizing the Congo and liberating it from the painful slave trade practiced by the Arabs and their allies. Belgium’s move, Lumumba argued, was driven by a very sincere and humanitarian idealism to help to overthrow the enemy, to eradicate disease, to teach and eliminate certain barbarous practices from the Congolese society. This, Lumumba observed, restored the human dignity and turned the Congo into a land of the free, happy, vigorous and civilized men. Lumumba was however quick to warn the Congolese that they should beware of the “liberators” who thought of the Congolese only at harvest time for all their aim was to pocket their wealth and plunge the Congo into the dark days. Lumumba’s overall goal, he said, was to build a solid foundation for the Belgium-Congolese community in a spirit of harmony, humanity and justice. That firm union was to be cemented by better understanding and mutual affection. Despite Lumumba’s assurances to the Belgians, he was equally blunt about every aspect of the Congo. For instance, he warned the Belgian colonial authority that he would only “excuse what was excusable” and only “defend what could be defended.”

Sometimes, Lumumba’s voice was compassionate and reconciling, but at the same time disturbing. For example, in one of his letters about the Congo, he observed that however great the skills of the Congolese and the natural riches of the Congo were, the Congolese shall always have the need of others. He therefore called on the Congolese to respect the Belgians and vice-

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versa. At the same time he observed that there were troublemakers whom he said liked to lay claim to political hegemony and who opposed the governmental principle of priority of native interests. These troublemakers, Lumumba said, used cunning maneuvers to obstruct government policy and concocted selfish and fallacious reasons for keeping the Africans permanently at the bottom of the social scale. Lumumba’s double talk made him a target of his enemies. To his enemies, he came out as a dangerous person who could not be trusted with leadership.42

Despite Lumumba’s conciliatory attitude toward Belgian authority, which he hoped would soften Belgium into introducing political reforms, Brussels seemed to have settled on continued governing of the Congo indefinitely. In many ways, this angered Lumumba. According to Devlin, in the 1950s, many Belgians believed that the Congo was not ready for independence for at least another hundred years. This was mainly because at independence, the Congo had fewer than twenty university graduates. As a result, there were only few Congolese who could work in any level of the government. To avoid resistance from the indigenous population, Brussels planned to allow piecemeal political reforms but kept the military, economic, and commercial levers of power in their own hands. These signs, sometimes outright, did not go well with the Congolese and especially the elite who wanted freedom to control the political, economic and social affairs of their country.43

And so the Congolese decided to act. In the late 1950s, the nationalist movements in the Congo, again led by Lumumba’s Mouvement National Congolais (MNC), started challenging the Belgian interests in the Congo. Around the same time, the United States began to show serious interest in the country. Belgian, British, and American corporations by now had vast investments in the Congo, which was rich in copper, cobalt, diamonds, gold, tin, manganese, and zinc.44 International politics was slowly changing and a decolonization process in Africa was taking shape. Initially, some authors have claimed, neither Moscow nor Washington was serious about dealing with the newly or potentially independent African states.45 Moscow, however, was eager to appeal to emerging African states as part of establishing a nonaligned bloc and as a way of expressing support for decolonization. This attempt by Moscow to enlist Africans caught Washington’s attention. In 1957, for instance, President Dwight Eisenhower’s Secretary of State,

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42 Ibid., 176.
43 Devlin, Chief of Station, Congo: A Memoir of 1960-67, 7.
44 Hoschild, King Leopold’s Ghost; A story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa, 301.
John Foster Dulles, expressed his country’s fears. Dulles told the visiting British Foreign Secretary, Lord Selwyn Lloyd, that there would be trouble in the West if Africa was lost to the Eastern bloc. At stake, he observed, were a range of strategic facilities, largely in North Africa, but also vast mineral resources that the United States considered essential to the economic health of Europe.46

Those fears were tested in the early 1960s. In January 1960, the Belgians abruptly announced they were granting the Congo independence. This was prompted by increased riots by the Congolese, led by their charismatic leader, Patrice Lumumba. Until then, Belgium had thought independence might come, but decades later. Events of December 5, 1958, were also crucial. On that day, at the All-African People’s Conference in Accra, Ghana, African independence was discussed at length. Patrice Lumumba spoke on behalf of his country. Upon his return to the Congo, Lumumba made a blunt nationalist speech in which he reiterated his commitment to immediate independence. This was followed by a series of rebellions leading to the call for a Round Table Conference in January 1960 that negotiated for the Congo’s independence in June 1960.47

Trouble emerged immediately after independence in the heart of Africa. Part of this was prompted by Lumumba’s hardline political stand. He believed that political independence was not enough to free Africa from Europe. Instead, Africa had to chart its own economic path. Lumumba’s stand, together with his independence speech, set off immediate alarm signals in Western capitals which feared Congo falling apart.48

When it came to the Congo independence, nothing beat the politics of Katanga secession -- the mineral-rich Congolese province. It consumed most of the early days of the Congo independence. Katanga lies at the center of the Congo and of the African continent. In August 3, 1962, Senator Thomas J. Dodd seemed to educate President John F. Kennedy and the Senate about Katanga. In a tellingly letter to President Kennedy, Dodd told Kennedy that “Katanga was the heartland of the vast mineral wealth of the African continent.” He further noted that most of those minerals were contained in what he called “one large oval cluster, about 500 miles in width and 800 miles in depth.” And that within the perimeter of that oval, in addition to Katanga’s


47 Legum, *Congo Disaster*, 55-56.

minerals, there were the diamond mines of South Africa and Rhodesia, the gold mines of South Africa, bauxite, asbestos, manganese, platinum, chromium, iron and many other minerals. In line with this, one would therefore understand why Katanga region was central to the Cold War competition between the West and the East. The access and control of these minerals was undoubtedly important. Belgian supported the separatists’ of Katanga and attempted to rally its allies in supporting an independent Katanga. The Belgian authorities believed that so long as Katanga remained independent under the pro-Western President, Moishe Tshombe, its economic interests invested in Union Minière -- that great mining company -- were secured.

The United States, on the other hand, through the United Nations force for the Congo, did not seem to have a decisive policy on the Congo although there were indications that U.S., under President John F. Kennedy, wanted a united Congo. Indeed, in August 3, 1962, Senator Dodd appealed to Kennedy to unite the Congo. Dodd observed that U.S. ought to unite the Congo for economic stability and warned that the Congo outside Katanga was unsustainable. The challenge, however, was how to unite the Congo without antagonizing the interests of the Congolese, the Western and the Eastern blocs. And it was for this reason that the U.S. was criticized for using the U.N. force to force Katanga into a united Congo against the wishes of some of the Congolese and the Belgian authorities. These divergent views between the U.S. and its allies on the one hand, and between its adversaries and the Congolese, on the other hand, complicated the drive for the Congo independence and further led to confusion after the independence.

Within a week of independence, the political future of the Congo looked in jeopardy. First the Congolese army mutinied. And then, in an attempt to control the situation, Belgium deployed its soldiers in the Congo to the anger of Lumumba. Lumumba turned to Moscow for help and Moscow seemed ready to respond positively to Lumumba’s request to provide support-food and military. But Washington and the United Nations were against Moscow’s willingness to intervene. To arrest Moscow’s intervention attempts, the UN dispatched its troops to restore order and to facilitate the Belgians withdrawal. Washington decided to support the UN mission.

50 See Paul Meskil and Horst, “Dag May Have Had Second Reason for Going to Katanga,” Long Island Press, September 24, 1961, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.
52 C.L. Sulzberger, Miami News, July 30, 1964, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.
This division between Washington, Moscow, the United Nations and the Congolese leadership, marked the beginning of the Congo Crisis.\(^53\)

According to various Western officials, Lumumba had turned out to be a “problem” in this whole crisis. Douglas Dillon, for instance, who was the deputy secretary of state when Lumumba visited Washington, described Lumumba as a “not rational being.” He claimed that Lumumba would never look you in the eye and his words never had anything to do with the matters under discussion. Devlin himself believed that Lumumba was politically naïve and inherently unstable.\(^54\) Dillon and Devlin were part of the many Western observers who considered Lumumba’s leadership qualities inadequate and therefore incapable of holding the Congo together. According to Devlin, less than two months after Lumumba was named the Congo’s first democratically chosen prime minister, a U.S. National Security Council subcommittee on covert operations, which included CIA chief Allen Dulles, authorized his assassination.\(^55\)

According to Sean Kelly, in *America’s Tyrant: The CIA and Mobutu of Zaire*, less than two months after the former Belgian colony gained independence, the Central Intelligence Agency’s representative in Leopoldville, warned Washington of a Communist takeover in the Congo. In a cable to the CIA, the representative noted, that “there was little time left in which to take action to avoid another Cuba.” The leader of Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro, had become a thorn in the flesh to President Dwight D. Eisenhower and several attempts had been made to overthrow Castro. Eisenhower, fearing for another Castro in Africa, decided the United States should also overthrow Patrice Lumumba. It is said, the CIA then took this to mean that it had a direct authorization from Eisenhower to assassinate Lumumba.\(^56\)

Lumumba could not be trusted with Western interests because he was more concerned about his country’s interests. Even before his assassination, the Western powers had spotted a young man named Joseph Desire Mobutu, then the chief of staff of the army as a potential replacement. Interestingly, Mobutu had been appointed by Lumumba to lead the Congolese army soon after independence. The CIA officials feared direct action in assassinating Lumumba and it became

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\(^{54}\) Devlin, *Chief of Station, Congo: A Memoir of 1960-67*, 50, 54.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 94-95. The assassination of Patrice Lumumba has never been conclusively determined. For example, the Church Committee of 1975 that investigated the CIA role in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba asserted that the U.S. was not involved in Lumumba’s death despite earlier plotting. The Committee was also unable to certainly tell whether the plot had the authorization by the U.S. President.

easier to let Lumumba’s enemies do the job. That is how Mobutu came in and with the help of the CIA ended up betraying Lumumba and coordinated his death.\textsuperscript{57}

Mobutu was considered as someone who would look out for the Western interests. And therefore even as Lumumba’s murder was being plotted, Mobutu received cash payments from the local CIA man and Western military attaches to facilitate a military coup.\textsuperscript{58} As part of that mission, in 1963, Mobutu, whose title was simply the Commander in Chief of the Congolese Army, met President John F. Kennedy at White House on a sunny morning in May 1963 where Kennedy lauded Mobutu’s labors against communism. After the meeting, Kennedy gave Mobutu an airplane for his personal use. Two years after that in 1965, with the U.S. encouragement, Mobutu staged a coup that made him the country’s dictator for more than thirty years.\textsuperscript{59}

Having recruited Mobutu, and provided him with funding, the United States proceeded to give Mobutu a military force that guaranteed his position in power in the Congo. For instance, when remnants of Lumumba’s Mouvement National Congolais defeated Mobutu’s army in the Eastern Congo, the United States provided Mobutu with outside help by sending him Cuban, Rhodesian and South African soldiers. Mobutu ended up becoming one of the longest serving, richest, and ruthless, African military leader. It is also during Mobutu’s time that the Congo experienced the worst economic growth. Perhaps this history is what made President George Bush, on June 29, 1989, while meeting Mobutu at White House say that Zaire was among America’s oldest friends – and its President – President Mobutu – one of America’s most valued friends. And so President Bush was honored to invite President Mobutu to be the first African head of state to visit White House in an official capacity during his presidency.\textsuperscript{60} This support to Mobutu left much to be desired on both the moral and practical levels and might have in fact undermined the stability of the Congo that the United States hoped to achieve.

The Congo’s independence raised other serious issues. In 1958, Maurice Van Hemelrijck, Belgium’s Minister of Congo Affairs, noted that many officials who worked in that ministry sat on boards of directors for companies that operated in the Congo. Those companies included the giant holding and best-known companies like the Société Générale de Belgique, Union Minière du Haut-Katanga and Forminière, among others. He concluded that the potential for policy

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\item Ibid. See also Stephen R. Weissman, “CIA Covert Action in Zaire and Angola: Patterns and Consequences,” \textit{Political Science Quarterly}, Summer 1979, 273.
\item Hoschild, \textit{King Leopold’s Ghost; A story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa}, 302.
\item Ibid.
\item Kelly, \textit{America’s Tyrant : The CIA and Mobutu of Zaire} preface x, 1.
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influence of the private sector was inevitable. According to Hemelrijck, the attempt by the private sector to influence policy formulation on its own behalf was natural. He observed that through membership in formal institutions and informal channels, the private sector had an easy access to policy-making organs. And, therefore, after the Congo gained independence in 1960, the mining companies operating in the country turned to their mother governments for that support and influence. Some Americans held shares in the Belgium-controlled companies and with the political instability in the Congo threatening the future of the mineral business, these individuals, through their connections, influenced the Department of State policy decisions in the Congo.

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Chapter Two

The Minerals of the Congo

On January 8, 1963, American journalist James Alexander examined the conflict in Katanga in the Congo. Writing in the *Indianapolis News*, his article, “The Katanga ‘Blitz’ and Africa’s Reaction” called the United Nations “military conquest” of Katanga an excuse to invade the Congo to grab minerals. Alexander was responding to local and international suspicion about why the United States – through the United Nations and on its own – continued pouring economic and military aid to the Congo in the early 1960s. Alexander noted that “southward from Katanga lay immense fields for plunder, all the way to Cape Town. To that temptation to seize both a golden treasure trove and a growing industrial complex added the hatred which have-not peoples held for the rich and the blood lust of racialism.”62 The first Congolese premier, Patrice Lumumba, had attracted a degree of political backlash from Belgians for his independence speech. Lumumba had accused the Belgians of exploitation and racism in the Congo.63 And as Alexander observed, at the center of that confrontation was the mineral wealth of the Congo.

Those in the race to control the Congo’s minerals, particularly in Katanga – the huge mineral deposit region of the Congo – came from all over. They included individual businessmen from Belgium, Britain, and United States; Congolese political kingpins and elites; the Soviets; and international companies with political connections with their home governments. The rivalry between these interest groups caused a severe political crisis soon after the Congo gained independence in 1960. The war of words that characterized Washington and Moscow relations over the Congo in early 1960s had to do mostly with who between them had the moral authority to mine, control, and protect Katanga’s minerals. The Western financial interests and European capitalist profits, in particular, required neocolonial African collaborators, not simply to guarantee the profits of individual companies but to preserve the general system which enabled them to be made. This exacerbated the initial Congo conflict as local politicians, led by

Lumumba, took sides and blamed certain elements for the political and economic chaos in the Congo.64

   Lumumba was blunt in his independence speech of June 1960. He openly accused the Belgian king, Belgian authorities, and Belgium allies of exploiting the Congo’s mineral wealth and propagating racial division. The Belgians accused Lumumba of openly humiliating the king of Belgium by using phrases like “atrocious sufferings,” and “humiliating bondage.” They described Lumumba’s speech as “an affront to the King and to Belgium.” Overall, Lumumba’s critics said, his speech was filled with ironies, insults, and blows which were directed to Belgium and her allies.65 Belgian authorities had controlled the Congolese economy since the time of King Leopold II and Lumumba felt that it was time for them to depart. Within a few days of Lumumba’s speech, the Congo fell into chaos. The Congolese demanded full control of their country.

   This began a long journey to control the Congo. Things moved fast. The Congolese troops mutinied against their Belgium officers; President Moise Tshombe of the province of Katanga proclaimed Katanga independent and broke from the Congolese central government. The lives of the Belgian residents and the interest of foreign investors in Union Minière, the largest mining company in the Congo, were threatened. Congolese political leaders and their Belgian counterparts disagreed about how to address the crisis and blamed each other for what had happened.66 That intolerance and suspicion between Belgium and her allies on the one hand and the Congolese on the other caused the Congo crisis in the first half of the 1960s. The stakes to control the mineral wealth in Katanga were high with Tshombe having declared Katanga independent. The “rich” referred to by Alexander competed to access, control and maintain their investments in the mineral business in Katanga. They included Belgians, Americans and businessmen from other Western nations who skillfully fought for the Congo using government power to protect their mineral operations in Katanga.

   Madeline Kalb described that scramble for the Congo as a colorful drama fit for a most dramatic novel set in Africa. According to Kalb, that drama was influenced by weakening imperial dominance, imperial power rivalry, and a wave of nationalist movements across the

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64 Kent, America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War conflict in the Congo, 13.
entire African continent. The 1960s were considered the ‘African Years’ with so many African territories set for independence. This phenomenon had attracted attention for obvious economic and political realignments within and without Africa. The influential characters in this scramble who fought for the hearts, minds and resources of a decolonizing Congo brought their political and economic rivalry to the heart of Africa, the Congo. With all the interested parties, the Congo’s independence became a contested issue with competing personal, corporate and ideological interests, though mostly corporate.

The phenomenon attracted political wrath from Congolese political leaders, led by Lumumba, who regularly accused the West of economic malpractice in the Congo. He was primarily concerned with western profiteers who colluded with Congolese politicians and high civil servants in the illegal exportation of Congolese merchandise. In 1961, for instance, these profiteers got more than 500% profit from the Congo’s mineral and other merchandise. According to Lumumba, this blatant looting and clandestine mineral business threatened the Congo’s political stability. However much Lumumba wanted a solid union between the West and the Congo, these actions were definitely “indefensible.”

Prior to the Congo’s independence in 1960, Congolese mineral wealth was in the hands of a few Belgian and its allied businessmen. Its leaders tended to avoid international controversy and concentrated on running their own affairs efficiently. But Congo post-independent events presented a difficult balancing act for Belgium. With independence and rising international suspicion of Lumumba as anti-West, the Congo’s independence threatened significant political and economic interests forcing Belgium to reconsider her hands-off approach to international conflict. Most importantly, the Congo’s mineral business immediately after independence provided an incentive for economic, political, and social discussions between Western and African elites, discussions which took place throughout the 1960s. The officials from the Department of State, the American embassy in Leopoldville and Brussels, and the Belgian authorities were central to these discussions as it is shown elsewhere in this chapter.

Lewis Gulick of the Washington News reflected specifically about the U.S. intervention in the Congo. Gulick observed that in the 1960s, the U.S. decision to intervene in the Congo reflected a concern over wealth with ideological elements. In his article, “Congo Crisis Marked

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67 Kalb, The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa - From Eisenhower to Kennedy, 18.
68 Weissman, America Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1964, 203.
by Confusion,” Gulick stated that “Washington’s general goal was clear: to stave off anarchy and a possible Red takeover of the huge, potentially rich land which could someday become the continent’s prime power.”

Gulick’s argument fit well into the theory of national interests. He portrayed the Congo crisis as an economic competition involving superpowers, Washington and Moscow. Gulick, however, presumed the crisis to be centrally a power grab among nations and ignored businessmen and corporations from both sides who hid under government crafted policies that aimed to establish and protect personal interests in the Congo.

Alexander was right. The key to understanding the Congo crisis was to recognize the role of corporations and their mineral interests in the Congo. The high value of the Congo mineral wealth was visible inside and outside the Department of State. Discussions and letter exchanges about the Congo occupied most of the Department of State policy agenda for Africa in early 1960s. For example, in March 1962, Thomas C. Denton, an African Specialist in the United States Division of Foreign Activities, asked Robert C. Huffman, the Economic Officer for the Republic of the Congo in the Department of State to furnish the department with information about diamond production in the ex-Belgian Congo. Denton wrote back that the value to the producer of Bakwanga 1961 production was of the order of $47 million, and the value to the producer of total Congo production in 1961 of the order of perhaps $50 million. Such discussions and confirmations about Congo were common in the 1960s among individuals and companies interested in political and economic stability there.

In August 1962, G. Mennen Williams, the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs in the Kennedy administration sent a confidential communique to McGhee in the Department of State on the Congo. Williams described the importance of the Congo in providing copper and cobalt. He even went into detail to explain how valuable cobalt was in the industrial world: “alloys with cobalt content are used in parts of jet engines, in loud-speakers, telephones, television receivers, motors, relays and other articles.” On copper, Williams noted that Katanga’s copper accounted for two-thirds (6.6 million pounds) of U.S. imports in 1961. Of these imports about 73% came

71 See for example a letter with an attached report titled “Report on Fourth African Trip,” from G. Mennen Williams to President John F. Kennedy, the Secretary of State, and other Department of State officials on May 15, 1962, NARA RG 59 Department of State, Records of G. Mennen Williams, Chronological File 1961-66, Box 2.
72 A letter from Robert C. Huffman, the Economic Officer for Republic of the Congo at the Department of State, to Thomas C. Denton, the African Specialist at the Division of Foreign Activities, March 23, 1962, NARA RG 59 Records Relating to the Congo and the Congo Working group, 1960- 64 Box 4 E. A13111E.
directly from Katanga and 27% from refineries from Belgium. In that business, Williams observed that four companies, all subsidiaries or exclusive representatives of the major producers of copper, accounted for about 85% of U.S. imports. The leading company which handled all the Katanga cobalt and copper and therefore two-thirds of U.S. imports, was African Metal Climax (AMAX), a U.S. owned company which was a subsidiary of Société Générale.\(^{73}\)

Others shared their personal opinion about the Congo. C.C. Notebaert, a resident of New York in the 1960s, may not have had any mineral business connection with the Congo, but he was interested in the unfolding political events and his concern was with U.S. ineptitude in handling the crisis. In December 31, 1962, Notebaert telegraphed Ambassador Aldai Stevenson, the U.S. representative to the U.N. and decried the U.S. laxity in handling the Congo. Notebaert reminded Stevenson that the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs which shortened the war with Japan by at least one year if not more were made possibly solely and uniquely by the availability of Katanga uranium. And, due to that contribution, Belgians earned the gratitude of the U.S. Indeed, President Harry S. Truman awarded a medal for merit to Union Minière of the Congo for allowing U.S. access to the nation’s uranium. Notebaert regarded the Congo highly in its contribution of important minerals, like uranium, to the Western world and urged the U.S. to avoid the mistakes of losing Congo Cuba-style. The Congo was not only politically strategic as the heart of Africa but it also mattered for its immense contribution of industrial minerals to the industrial world.\(^{74}\)

The U.S. Bureau of Mines yearbook of mineral data of 1960 confirmed U.S. heavy consumption of diamonds from Congo prior to and in the 1960s. The yearbook indicated that the industrial diamonds of South Kasai accounted for 80% of America’s supply.\(^{75}\) Diamond and other precious minerals were in high demand in the industrial world and the Congo provided the minerals in large quantities. In fact, the Congo was the largest producer of diamonds, copper, and uranium not just in Africa but also in the world. In 1963, for example, *U.S. News and World*  

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\(^{74}\) Telegram sent with compliments from Charles C. Notebaert to Ambassador Aldai E. Stevenson, Permanent U.S. Representative at U.N. Mission in New York, NARA RG 59 Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs, Records Relating to the Congo, Box 6E A1 3111E.

Report showed that Kasai in Central Congo had about 14.9 million carats of diamonds in 1959.\(^76\)

There was a dilemma, however, of who was to control this African mineral jewel without attracting anger from other interested parties. This explained the various discussions which both individuals and institutions held to try and solve the crisis.

Leon Tempelsman was a key American businessman involved in Congo’s diamond trade. Tempelsman had co-founded the Congo American Investment and Development Corporation (CAINVES). But Tempelsman was famous for Leon Tempelsman and Son, a famous New York diamond importing company which was behind the Congo diamond barter proposal to the government of the United States in early 1960s. Tempelsman proposed to purchase diamonds worth 13.5 million dollars each year for four years from Congo suppliers. The total price for the four years was beyond normal commercial sales of the Congo, which made the deal appeal to suppliers. Tempelsman’s diamonds would then be exchanged with the United States government for an equal value of surplus agricultural commodities and manufactured goods. These commodities and goods would finally be sold to Congo and to third world countries at a higher price, thus generating a profit for U.S. government.\(^77\)

Tempelsman’s business empire found legal and political support in Adlai Stevenson. Stevenson was the U.S. Democratic presidential candidate in 1952 and 1956 and then in the 1960s, U.S. ambassador to the U.N. He was the lawyer for Tempelsman and Son and bargained on behalf of Tempelsman with the U.S. government during the Tempelsman diamond trade proposal.\(^78\) Although the proposal took some time to be approved, it finally moved forward after much influence from interested parties in the Department of State. This illustrates how Stevenson, like many lawyers and Department of State officials turned politicians, used their political connections to benefit his clients and himself. That was not the first time Stevenson used his political office to influence the outcome of his clients’ businesses. In 1957, Stevenson travelled to Ghana where he urged the first Ghanaian President, Kwame Nkrumah, to create political conditions in Ghana favorable for foreign investment. Stevenson was concerned with the Volta project in Ghana that was to supply hydroelectric power for the development of bauxite

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\(^{76}\) United States News and World Report, January 14, 1963, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.

\(^{77}\) Congo Diamond Barter Proposal as presented to Under-Secretary of State, George Ball by Tempelsman, August 8, 1961, NARA RG 59 Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs Office of Central African Affairs, Records Relating to the Congo and the Congo Working Group, 1960-64, Box 4, E. A13111E.

\(^{78}\) Martin, Adlai Stevenson and the World, 399, 409.
in which his client Reynolds Metals was interested. He later sent a progress report to Walter L. Rice of Reynolds Metals on his deliberations with Nkrumah.\textsuperscript{79}

In another letter, G. Mennen Williams, pointed to the importance of the Congo in providing minerals for the U.S. economy. In August 1962, Mennen had noted that “annual free-world consumption of cobalt between 1956 and 1961 was estimated at 24 million pounds, of which the U.S. consumed about 9.1 million pounds, 38\% of the totals.”\textsuperscript{80} Cobalt was a substantial metal in the production of electronics and all industrial nations looked to the Congo, which had the largest deposit at the time with a production of 90\% of the world consumption. In fact, some businessmen and government officials with knowledge of immense deposits of cobalt in the Congo went ahead and ridiculed U.S. for not moving fast enough to protect the mineral wealth there for the free world. At one time, a concerned Belgian official wrote to the Department of State and warned its officials that “Kobalt (sic) was not a shaving cream.”\textsuperscript{81} Figures from U.S. Bureau of Mines yearbook mineral data of 1960 indicate that U.S. imported approximately three-quarters of the cobalt and other strategic minerals used in aerospace production from the Congo, and, that in the 1950s, about 10\% of U.S. copper came from the Congo, a figure that regularly increased by the time of independence in 1960.\textsuperscript{82}

Each year, from 1950s onward, U.S. mineral imports from Congo increased significantly and so did U.S. political interest in the Congo. At the center of it were diamonds, cobalt, uranium, and copper, such that by 1959, the Congo had become a strategic and important source of minerals for the western world. 9\% of the world’s copper, 49\% of cobalt, 69\% of industrial diamonds, and 6.5\% of tin came from the Congo. By 1960, about 54\% of total cobalt consumption in the world came from the Congo.\textsuperscript{83}

Newspaper columnist Ira B. Hill noted the Congo’s enormous mineral contribution to the economy of the U.S. On January 4, 1963, Hill wrote an article in \textit{The Washington Star} titled “U. N.’s ‘Peace Juggernaut’ in Katanga,” in which he observed that Katanga “was the largest world producer of uranium […..] and by mid twentieth century the province supplied the U.S. with more than half the uranium produced in the non-communist world. Katanga was also one of the

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 412.
\textsuperscript{80} A letter from G. Mennen Williams to Mr. Mcghee titled, “Some Aspects of a Boycott on Katanga Cobalt,” August 30, 1962, NARA RG 59 Department of State Records of G. Mennen Williams, Chronological File 1962, Box 2.
\textsuperscript{81} A letter sent by a Belgian official to the Department of State titled, “To the accomplices of the Holy Gizenga,” NARA Frank Carlucci File, Central African Branch Files, August, 3, 1962.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, 387.
world’s richest sources of copper.Various sources have since confirmed that the first U.S. atomic bomb that was used in Japan was made with uranium obtained from Katanga Province in the Congo. Indeed, in 1942, the U.S learned of the Staten Island storage of 65% of world’s uranium under the African Metal Corporation, a subsidiary Company of Union Minière, the mineral magnate of the Congo.

Perhaps in the entire Western world, Belgium, a close ally of U.S., was the country most worried about the political developments in the Congo. Control of war related materials, especially uranium, was the center of conflict between Belgium and her allies. Belgian authorities in the Congo were proud of the country’s prosperity. To the Belgians, the Congo had escaped an enemy invasion and they were ready to defend it, but not without the U.S. and Britain’s help. But if this was to happen smoothly, both the U.S. and Britain had to go through Belgian authorities in penetrating the Congo. Other war goods supplies from the Congo that brought Belgium close to her allies were industrial diamonds, copper, tin, cobalt, and manganese, which led to trade negotiations between U.S and Belgium.

Belgium controlled about 70% of Congolese economy through Société Générale de Belgique, the biggest financial house in Belgium. Official calculations from 1960 indicate that if Belgium were to lose the Congo, the Belgian economy would suffer serious damage. Belgium would experience a loss of about 7% of the total receipts in the balance of payments from the loss of the Congo export market. Other expected losses included the loss of about 30% of overseas operations of transport and insurance firms, and the loss of about 77 million dollars in revenue from investment. And about 2% of Belgium working population would lose jobs; Belgium’s budget would decrease by 140-156 million dollars each year due to the loss of various taxes. In light of what was happening in the Congo, Belgium worked to convince the United States to intervene to avoid a situation where the Soviets would take advantage of the crisis to penetrate the Congo.

Société’s success relied on another Belgium company, Union Minière du Haut Katanga. Minière, the great Katanga mining corporation, had influence in copper, cobalt, diamond, and

86 Ibid.
uranium mining. In the years before the Congo’s independence, Minière’s profit margin was in the range of 17 and 32 million pounds, with an estimated market value of 177 million pounds. Société Forestière et Minière du Congo (Forminière) was another Belgium company equivalent to Minière and it had exclusive rights for 99 years from 1906 to Kasai’s diamonds. Some American companies like Lazard Freres, the New York investment house, held stock in Union Minière, with about 10,000 shares valued at nearly 500,000 dollars in 1960. Allan A. Ryan, an American, was director of the Belgium-American Banking Corporation, a Société Générale U.S. financial subsidiary. Ryan, together with a Guggenheim group of companies, held one-quarter of the shares in Minière. Also associated with Minière were the Rockefeller Brothers who held less than 1% of Minière shares as a gesture of good will toward the Congo.

Union Minière dominated Congo’s mineral industry, which allowed it to enjoy large foreign investments and political support but not without competition. Minière’s competitors in the mineral industry planned to oust it from its mineral monopoly in the Congo. International companies and interest groups with mineral interests in Congo waged severe competition in Katanga. Katanga secession politics were about who would control that mineral region. Minière’s competitors hoped Katanga would fall leading to the closure of its mines controlled by Minière. Howard Kershner of the *IP Star* newspaper had noted that mining in Katanga contained about 70% of the world’s cobalt and about 10% of its copper. Rival producers of these metals like U.S., Chile, Russia would profit immensely if the Katanga mines were closed down. They would even profit more if they could get possession of these properties. For most of the Congo crisis, the mineral business in the Congo involved secrecy and intense competition. It therefore becomes important to establish how much influence individual businessmen in the Congo had on the Department of State. But it becomes complicated since most government officials deny any economic motivations whenever they make policy decisions so as to protect their integrity. However, there appears to be a covert connection between the Department of State officials with businessmen in the Congo.

90 See undated Memo of the Congress of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.
91 Howard Kershner L.H.D, “What is behind effort to destroy Katanga?” *IP Star*, January 1, 1963, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.
For example, the mineral competition in Congo led to the formation of a Swedish-American joint company known as the Liberian-American Mineral Company (LAMCO). On the American side, the Bethlehem Steel Corporation from Pittsburg held shares in LAMCO. According to Kershner, LAMCO was one of the companies that hoped that Minière would close. In anticipation, LAMCO deposited about 100 million dollars in Swiss banks in preparation for acquiring mining interests in the Congo. The lead person in that process was Bo Gustav Hammarskjöld, brother of the U.N. Secretary General. Bo Gustav Hammarskjöld was also the director of Grangesburg, another subsidiary company of LAMCO. LAMCO was a typical company that operated in the Congo and enjoyed significant political support from the Department of State and United Nations officials. For instance, Dag Hammarskjöld, the U.N. Secretary General, hired Sture Linner, the managing director of LAMCO, as the chief of civil operations in the Congo for the U.N. Immediately after Linner arrived in the Congo, he requested a study of the mines there. Sven Schwartz, a Swedish industrialist, got the assignment. Another Swede, Borje Nordlund assisted Schwartz. The two men were officers in the mining joint venture involving Hammarskjöld’s brother and Linner.

At the center of the U.N. mineral syndicate in the Congo was the International African American Corporation (IAAC). U.S. foreign aid chief Fowler Hamilton’s law firm represented the (IAAC). Hamilton, through his agency, was supposed to help in preparing U.S. policy toward the U.N. mission in Congo but instead he used money from his agency to support the U.N. action against Katanga. Under-Secretary of State George Ball, who was directly in charge of making U.S. policy in the Congo, had been a member of Hamilton’s law firm before assuming his post at Department of State office. After studying the complexities of the Congo mining industry, Kershner concluded that although there was no concrete evidence to link those individuals with the ills that befell the Congo, it was obvious to note that all those men had financial connections tying them to the mining industry in Africa. According to Kershner, the policy the Department of State officials and their friends made was one aimed to ensure Katanga seceded from the central Congolese government to ease the mining activities there.

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92 See Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
The secretive nature of mineral business in the Congo, the hesitation to volunteer information on the part of those who were involved, and the biased and incomplete information have hindered the study of U.S. mineral business in the Congo in the 1960s. As a result, only a few direct and indirect connections are possible about the ties between U.S. businessmen and the Department of State and the extent to which the former influenced policy decisions for the Congo. The mineral business in the Congo remained a complex trinity of corporations, government departments, and individuals. Most of those deals are still not known and they might forever remain so due to secretive nature of mineral business there.

Another example of a company that was involved in the Congo was the Anglo-American Company. It was a joint venture between American and British businessmen that operated on the rich copper belt that runs from the Congo to the Rhodesian plains. And although Anglo-American was headquartered in the Republic of South Africa, its influence unfolded in the rolling plains of Katanga. In 1961, Anglo-American produced 60% of copper while American Metal Climax (AMAX), Anglo’s ally in the Katanga copper mining, produced 40% of the same. Charles Engelhard Jr., an American businessman in the 1960s, had his business empire extend as far as Katanga as a major investor in and director of the Anglo-American Company. Since both the Anglo-American Company and American Metal Climax were involved in copper processing, the companies always worked together. In 1961, Horst and Paul Meskil, both from Long Island Press, noted that Katanga mines were mainly in the hands of the Anglo-American Mining Company and controlled by American Metal Climax. The companies evidently enjoyed support from their home governments. Horst and Meskil argued that with both Anglo-American and American Metal Climax controlling the copper mining in Katanga, there was almost no chance of an outside firm getting any chance there.

It is important to acknowledge that businessmen and companies from United States had an indirect investment through European companies and/or governments doing business in the

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97 A Memo of the Congress of the United States House of Representatives, Committee on Un-American Activities, 1961, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.
98 Weissman, America Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1964, 33.
99 Horst and Paul Meskil, “What is Behind Effort to Destroy Katanga?” Long Island Press, September 24, 1961, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.
In fact, by 1963, there were about 1,500 Americans working in different sections of the Congo’s economy. In recognition, the United States, through the Department of State, ensured conservation of the economic and administrative infrastructure of Katanga to reassure its current and potential investors. American Metal Climax was a good example of a company that benefitted from similar directives mainly due to its political connection in the State Department.

For instance, the law firm Sullivan and Cromwell was American Metal Climax’s legal advisor. Arthur H. Dean, a renowned corporate lawyer who distinguished himself as a trusted adviser to U.S. presidents, was an executive committee partner of Sullivan and Cromwell. Dean later became the Vice President of American Metal Climax. He held 50% of Rhodesian Selection Trust which had large holdings in American Metal Climax. During his tenure, Dean had a close working relationship with John Foster Dulles, the U.S. Secretary of State. Foster’s brother, Allen Dulles, became the Director of Central Intelligence Agency under President Dwight Eisenhower. Through the CIA, Allen Dulles was a trusted informant of AMAX on the unfolding events in the Congo, especially during the Congo crisis.

Both Dulles and Eisenhower took strong stand against Lumumba’s policies and consistently accused him of being a Communist and a hindrance to the free enterprise of the free world. In May 31, 1962, the Washington DC News reported that three of Eisenhower aides, Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks, Office of Defense Mobilization head Arthur Flemming, and General Services Administrator Franklin Floete were involved in negotiations with the American Metal Climax to supply the government with strategic stockpile of minerals. For most of his administration, Eisenhower remained skeptical of Lumumba and his rumored association with Communism. If those accusations were true, Lumumba-Khrushchev collaboration would have denied the U.S. acquisition of the necessary industrial minerals for its economy. But as long as Belgium, a U.S. trusted ally, monitored and controlled the political events in Congo, Eisenhower

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100 Mennen Williams Memo to Mr. Mcghee, “Some aspects of a boycott on Katanga Cobalt.” NARA RG 59, Chronological File of Mennen Williams, 1962, Box 2. See also The Journal of Commerce and Commercial, “Congo Starts Drive to Attract Capital,” December 14, 1961, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.


102 See the memo of the Congress of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Un-American activities, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.


believed that the U.S. interests and those of its citizens were protected. It is no surprise that Eisenhower was determined to provide political and military support to the partnership between the Belgians and American businessmen during the Congo crisis.

By the late 1940’s, Dillon, Read and Company and the U.S. and Foreign Securities Company were well-established in the Congo. At the Congo’s independence in 1960, Dillon had extensive holdings of Newmont Mining through a business venture Newmont-American Metal Climax both with operations in the Congo and associated with AMAX. In 1961, a letter from Dillon to the president of American Eur-African Development Corporation, John G. van der Meersch, highlighted Dillon’s concerns over the Congo. In the letter, Dillon pushed for the establishment of an office or agency in New York which would give information about the Congo and its advance. In regard to the Congo crisis, the letter noted that as soon as the difficulties in the Congo were over, there would be real interest on the part of American business and American capital in the Congo. Dillon’s projection had truth in it, as several U.S. companies lined up for business activities in the Congo either as full-fledged companies or as partners when the Congo gained independence. The fact that most African countries were slated for independence in the early 1960s created some political and economic excitement around the world. Economically, it was expected that African societies would provide markets for manufactured goods from the developed world and that political stability would provide better conditions for foreign investment and exploitation of resources.

Dillon entered into a partnership with the Rockefellers and invested in two Belgian Congo consumer industries. In 1959, Dillon’s holdings in the two companies were valued at less than 300,000,000 dollars but Dillon’s influence in the Congo increased with the management of a 15,000,000 dollar loan which it extended to Congo. Behind Dillon’s success was C. Douglas Dillon, Under Secretary of State, who had family ties to Dillon. He was also the director of U.S. and Foreign Securities. Although the Congolese government defaulted on all of its foreign debts,

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106 Letter from Dillon, Read and Company Inc. to the President of American Eur-African Development Corporation, December 14, 1961, NARA RG 59 Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs, Records Relating to the Congo, Box 6E. A1. 3111E.
107 Weissman, *America Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1964*, 34.
including that which had been managed by Dillon, however, with his limited government influential capacity during the Kennedy years still managed to get the debt paid.  

Morgan Guaranty Trust was an American bank that collaborated with the Belgian Congo government especially in its participation in two 20,000,000 dollar loans to the Belgian Congo. Morgan was described as the lead agent in the U.S. for the Belgian Congo government with information indicating that Morgan actually acted as banker to the Belgian government. Morgan’s relationship with the Congo became even stronger in 1963 when it took shares in the Banque du Congo, controlled by Société. Morgan also acted as the banker for Newmont Mining, a company which was associated with AMAX. Like many other American companies, Morgan was concerned about Congo’s future political stability for its own mineral operations. So when the Congo crisis broke out in 1960, it worried U.S. and Western businessmen and corporations that operated in the Congo. On that basis, the Department of State, individual businessmen, the United Nations, and corporations hatched a political strategy of working as a team to guard the Congo.  

The U.S. in particular, through the United Nations, used Katanga as a red herring for a claim of philosophical and strategic control against the Soviet Union. Roscoe Drummond of DC Post reporting in June 1963 on the Congolese government request for help from the United States to contain the Congo crisis, argued that that request put Eisenhower in a difficult situation in that if the U.S. had decided to directly send its forces to the Congo, it would have certainly attracted the attention of the Soviets leading to a military clash. Drummond observed that, “sending American forces to the Congo would have meant the dispatch of Soviet forces to the Congo, and the result would have been to carry the Cold War – and the direct confrontation of Soviet and U.S. troops – to the middle of Africa.” Faced with that political challenge, Eisenhower turned to the U.N. and used it to restore peace and order in the Congo. But most of the U.N. major decisions on Congo were influenced by U.S. officials in the Department of State and in the U.N. Secretariat.

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110 See for example, “A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch,” United Nations, August 1, 1961, published by *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, January 8, 1961, NARA RG 59 Bureau of African Affairs, Records Relating to the Congo, Box 6E.A1.3111E.  
111 Roscoe Drummond, “Congo Accord Held Within Reach,” *DC Post*, June 1, 1963, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.
In 1960, for instance, there were 102 senior posts in the U.N. Secretariat and out of those, 23 were held by Americans, 16 by British, 10 by Frenchmen, 8 by Russians, and 5 by Indians.\textsuperscript{112} With the highest number of officials in the Secretariat, the United States easily influenced United Nations decisions in the Congo. It did so through the Department of State but the Department of State was being influenced by the same business interests involved in Congo’s Katanga region. As a result, the Congo’s political crisis was brought closer to Washington’s Department of State offices and to New York’s U.N. headquarters. With so many political and economic interests, there emerged complex and intricate lobbying on the best way to address the Congo crisis.

Michel Struelens, a Belgian, represented Moise Tshombe, the self-styled President of the mineral rich Katanga, in New York. Struelens accounted for the competing political and mineral interests in the Congo. He accused U.S. Ambassador at Leopoldville, Edmund Guillen, G. Mennen Williams and Harlan Cleveland Assistant Secretaries of State, the Department of State and the Kennedy Administration in general of having installed Cyrille Adoula, as the Prime Minister of the central Congolesse government and a political nemesis of Tshombe to protect Western world interests.\textsuperscript{113}

Tshombe and Adoula represented different economic and political interests. Tshombe was said to have been backed by individuals with powerful financial interests and who were pro-communist. On the other hand, Adoula, the man who was said to have been put into office by the U.S., ultimately represented the U.S. interests. Those were the conflicting interests that faced the U.S. and its attempt to legitimize its policy in the Congo for most of the crisis but, there were even deeper suspicions between the U.S. and Britain over the Congo policy. Struelens had observed that the British in particular were hesitant to attack Tshombe who controlled Katanga because of the large investments in Union Minière, the largest mining concern in Katanga.\textsuperscript{114} Therefore, negotiations for a neutral United States policy in the Congo within and without the Department of State centered on political and economic trade-offs amongst the competing parties.

\textsuperscript{113} “A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dispatch,” United Nations, August 1, 1961, published by St. Louis Post Dispatch, January 8, 1961, NARA RG 59 Bureau of African Affairs, Records Relating to the Congo, Box 6E.A1.3111E.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
Chapter Three

U.S. Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964

The U.S. policy in the Congo was ambiguous, inconsistent, and complex. In other words, as this chapter shows the U.S.-Congo policy was flawed. This is in obvious ways understandable considering the many individuals, nations, and international organizations that sought to influence that policy. Many of these, undoubtedly, eyed the Congo for its mineral resources but, unfortunately, they could not agree on a subtle strategy without attracting the kind of division that emerged in the Congo soon after independence in June of 1960.

Perhaps the earliest and the best broad lines of U.S. policy for Africa, and for the Congo in this case, were contained in the 1958 U.S. National Security Report presented in a meeting under the guidance of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.¹¹⁵ The report, which was titled, *The U.S. Policy toward Africa South of The Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960*, was clear about what the U.S. wanted its future policy toward Africa to look. The decisions made in the meeting and the statements that were voiced after the meeting assured American businessmen in Africa, and more so in the Congo, of economic protection as a means to counter the Soviets economic offensive in Africa.

Among other things, such as politics, strategic, and racialism considerations, the National Security Council acknowledged that the U.S. policy for Africa was designed to encourage an orderly development of the whole of Africa. And it was to be a policy based on a mutually advantageous accommodation between the forces of nationalism and the metropolitan powers which would privilege the United States among the Africans and the Europeans. Most importantly, the Council observed that the U.S. had a very great interest both in Africa and in Europe. Thus, the U.S. was committed to promoting, wherever possible, the development and maintenance of the closest possible mutually beneficial political and economic relationships, between the post-independent African societies and those of Western Europe. The overall objective of the U.S policy for Africa, assumedly, was aimed at helping Africans achieve their economic, political, and cultural goals without insisting to them to align themselves in the West-

East power struggle.\textsuperscript{116} This, however, seemed to be a formidable task not only for the U.S., but also for all the other parties interested in Africa. The many political and economic factions that operated in Africa, Asia, U.S., and Europe, could not comfortably agree on the best policy for Africa.

However, there seemed to be a consensus between Europe and U.S. on the threat posed by Communism in Africa. In the light of this, on April 16, 1959, U.S., British, and French officials held the first Tripartite talks on Africa.\textsuperscript{117} During the talks, the U.S. participants, in particular, noted that although Africa south of the Sahara was of less immediate strategic importance, its vast resources could make a major contribution to the Free World. Even more importantly, its political realignment would have a definite bearing on the global balance of power. And then the French participants dropped what seemed to worry the West. They noted that, the value of Africa as a prize was clear. If the Communists occupied or infiltrated into too many countries, the West would lose the Battle of the Atlantic, Europe would be in danger and Western communications in the Far East would be cut but the worst was that, the West would lose the tremendous source of raw materials.\textsuperscript{118} All these were considered real threats of Communism to the interests of the Free World particularly in Africa. However, nobody could confidently confirm that this was true.

Despite this confusion of U.S. lacking a clear policy direction on Africa, the U.S. seemed to have resulted to rehearsing and renaming its strategies and approaches to Africa. These strategies and approaches did not lay a foundation for creative and development engagement and instead was more of a campaign document to respond to Communist propaganda. Specifically, the U.S. policy in the Congo focused on three things. It was about fighting Communism, protecting economic interests, and promoting freedom and democracy in the African continent, but some of these concerns, as it turned out, were primarily malicious. As Sergey Mazov observed, Moscow’s decision to take on Washington in Africa was not based on policy but on perception. Mazov further argued that Moscow had no global strategy to take over Africa; it had no established Soviet African blueprint per se, only some drafts of it, based on flawed knowledge of the continent and its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{119} To a large extent, therefore, Moscow’s as well as

\textsuperscript{116} National Security Council Report, “Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council on U.S. Policy toward Africa South of The Sahara Prior to Calendar Year 1960,” FRUS 1958-60, Volume XIV, August 26, 1958, 23.
\textsuperscript{117} First Tripartite talks on Africa, FRUS 1958-60 Volume XIV, April 16, 1959, 45.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 46.
\textsuperscript{119} Mazov, A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964, 6.
Washington’s actions in Africa were based on suspicion that each side was trying to intoxicate Africa with its ideology. U.S., for example, blamed the Soviets for feeding Africans communist propaganda. The Soviets, on the other hand, blamed the U.S for continued exploitation and support for colonialism in Africa. This blame game consumed African politics.\textsuperscript{120}

Nevertheless, Moscow and Washington’s actions served as a means to achieving something bigger, though covertly. There is nothing that guided the U.S. policy for Africa, and especially in the Congo, more than its economic interest. This should be seen within the wider concept of U.S. self-interest and especially issues of security that could impact on the U.S. The fight to access and control the mineral resources of the Congo by the U.S., therefore, should be seen as directly related to U.S. own interest of enhancing energy security and assisting its firms compete effectively in a continent that proved important during the Cold War. Arne Odd Westad has argued that from its inception, U.S. was an interventionist power that based its foreign policy on territorial expansion. Although the U.S. was not hoping to extend its political mandate in the Congo, these revolutionary ideas together with those of free men and free enterprise formed an ideology that motivated U.S. elites in their relations with the outside world during the Cold War.\textsuperscript{121} Eric Foner also emphasized on the importance of the American idea of free enterprise during the Cold War. Foner observed that free enterprise took its place as a fundamental freedom and as part of the official definition of the American way of life.\textsuperscript{122} Clearly, promotion of economic interests during the Cold War was critical to the interests of America with all of its other concerns, communism and freedom and democracy, only serving to reinforce that endeavor. And, this was basically what Eisenhower and Kennedy’s administration maintained in preparing the U.S.-Congo policy.

For the most part of the U.S. policy in the Congo, therefore, it was about acquiring and protecting mineral resources, markets, and winning the souls and hearts of the Africans. John Kent explained this latter mission. Kent argued that America was first determined to gain the support of the Africans before anything else. In the light of that, Kent concluded that the Cold War was essentially an American project not reacting to the forces of Soviet and Chinese communism but was a means of winning more general support for proactive American policies.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Arne Westad, \textit{The Global Cold War, Third World interventions and the making of our times}, 10.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Eric Foner, \textit{The Story of American Freedom}, 263.
\end{itemize}
These policies were designed to further American specific interests or to perpetuate Western values and culture and even more importantly, to secure the support of the African leaders at the international forums.\textsuperscript{123}

Although the 1958 U.S. policy objectives for Africa were somewhat disjointed, they provided a more precise understanding of U.S. pertinent issues for Africa. The main issues addressed in the policy proposal were U.S. and European economic interests in Africa, African independence, and threats of Communism in Africa. The report noted that the U.S. hoped to see a smooth African independence transition that would preserve the essential ties that bound Europe and Africa. Further, it was noted that Africa relied on European imports and investments, both private and public but, that Europe needed the African markets as well as Africa’s minerals and agricultural products. The U.S., therefore, believed that a close and mutual economic relationship between Europe and Africa must be continued even after the colonial period had passed.\textsuperscript{124}

In regard to the political stability for Africa, participants observed that they wished to avoid a situation where nationalist and self-determinist aspirations were thwarted. For this would turn an advantage to extremist elements, particularly communists. They also wished to avoid the deprivations of African markets and sources of supply to Western Europe.\textsuperscript{125} In view of this, it is clear that U.S. policy for Africa and especially in the Congo was heavily economic oriented as part of safeguarding U.S. security interests. However, the economic and security interests of the U.S. in the Congo were intertwined. If the United States would put all the Congo resources, and especially the industrial diamonds, gold, uranium, and coltan, under its control, it would sustain its economy. Most importantly, it would give it an advantage to deal decisively with the Soviets attempt to infiltrate the African continent.

What was started in the late 1950s as U.S. policy for Africa by Eisenhower administration, applied in the 1960s. At the 432d Meeting of the National Security Council held on January 14, 1960, and chaired by Eisenhower, the three main U.S. policy objectives for Africa proposed in 1958 were reiterated. First, there was the need for maintenance of the Free World orientation of Africa, denial of the area to Communist domination, and the minimization of Communist

\textsuperscript{123} Kent, America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War conflict in the Congo, 4.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
influence therein. Secondly, the U.S. expected an orderly economic development and political progress towards self-determination by the African countries in cooperation with the metropoles and other Free World Countries. Thirdly, and perhaps the most important in as far as the U.S. policy for Africa was concerned, was access to military rights and facilities and strategic resources as may be required in the U.S. national interests. Although there was no outright mention of U.S. economic interests in this policy, it became clear that the three U.S. policy objectives for Africa were part of the bigger American project of securing the strategic resources in a rapidly decolonizing continent.126

These policy objectives may sound consistent but, unfortunately, and for the part of U.S., there was no unanimity on how to grab the opportunities. Often the contest pitted officials from the Department of State and U.N, a situation which made it impossible for Washington to adopt a reasonable policy on the Congo. As one of the officials in Eisenhower administration conceded, the picture in the Congo was confusing, fragmented, and difficult to understand.127

Similar sentiments came from J.C. Satterthwaite, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, on March 30th, 1960. Satterthwaite observed that the Congo solution was obscured by the compromises and objections from the National Security Council machinery. She also noted that there was deep divergence within the government and that until such matters were resolved, there was no possibility that a positive, constructive, or imaginative policy toward Africa and the Congo would be found.128 Satterthwaite was confirming what all along endangered the U.S. policy for the Congo: well entrenched and conflicting economic interests both within and without the Department of State and the U.N. According to Michael Schatzberg in, *Mobutu or Chaos: The United States and Zaire, 1960-1990*, with only some few exceptions, the United States President and the national security staff usually delegated policy making process and especially on Africa to the Department of State bureaucracy under the assistant secretary of state for African affairs. Over time, the decisions made on this level added up to policy, and formed the basis under which sometimes crises played themselves out.129

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126 Memorandum of Discussion at the 432d Meeting of the National Security Council, FRUS 1958-60 Volume XIV, January 14, 1960, 73.
127 Ibid.
As a result, and for the most part of Eisenhower’s and Kennedy’s administrations, policy makers and influential business figures tried to influence each other. And they ended up differing significantly. These differences were deep than the ordinary people could imagine. Of course, some were a manifestation of party ideological differences between the Republicans and the Democrats led by Eisenhower and Kennedy, respectively. However, the differences also indicated the confusion and personal conflict of interest within the Department of State and the U.N in regard to the Congo.

As one of the American business weeklies, Barron’s, also reported on January 7, 1963, “The wisdom of U.S. policy in the Congo was obscure.” And “its total lack of principle was all too plain.”\footnote{National Business and Financial Weekly, Barron’s, January 7, 1963, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.} In other words, the U.S. policy in the Congo was incredibly confusing. This was due to competition for global balance of power between Washington and Moscow but also the influencing characters both from the U.S. and U.N. side. On that basis, the morality of U.S. intervention in the Congo was heavily questioned. For instance, what remained an open question, at least for the U.S. and U.N. critics, was why the U.S. and U.N. officials differed on Katanga. This was explained by Paul Meskil and Horst in an article titled “Dag May Had Second Reason for Going to Katanga.” According to Meskil and Horst, in the battle for Katanga, some U.N. and U.S. officials supported the U.N in its mission to force Katanga, the mineral rich region of the Congo, to form a coalition with the Congo central government. Others advocated for secession of Katanga, of course, for their own interests. And then there were claims of external influences toward manipulating the Congolese political leaders. All these issues complicated any efforts by the Department of State to reach a consensus on the Congo policy.\footnote{Paul Meskil and Horst, \textit{Long Island Press}, September, 24, 1961, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.}

Even more important was the dilemma that faced the U.S. on African independence. Clarence B. Randall, an official in the Eisenhower administration, noted this challenge in 1958 when making his report to President Eisenhower at the 365\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the National Security Council. He noted that the Metropoles did not want the U.S. to provide any assistance to their African colonies. On the other hand the newly independent African states insisted on knowing where the U.S. stood on matters of colonialism.\footnote{Memorandum of Discussion at the 365\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the National Security Council, FRUS 1958-60 Volume XIV, May 8, 1958, 14-15.} These issues posed a dilemma to U.S. of
satisfying the Metropoles on the one hand, and fighting for a free, non-Communist Africa, on the other.

The independence of Katanga, however, was the most contentious and emotive issue in the Congo crisis. It risked tearing the Congo right in the middle between the pro-secessionists and those opposed to secession. And officials in the Department of State and U.N. knew it but, they were not willing to compromise their interests, those of their friends, and those of the U.S. In view of this, Eisenhower’s and Kennedy’s administrations took different but cautious positions on the Congo. The positions were at least convenient considering the challenges that faced the U.S. - Congo policy. Although Kennedy came into power with a wave of anti-colonialism in Africa, nothing much changed in terms of his U.S. foreign policy for Africa. Kennedy’s administration like that of his predecessor, Dwight D. Eisenhower, unquestionably wished to be friends with Africans mainly to get their support in the UN and to protect American interests on the continent. He also favored self-determination but as part of an orderly transition to avoid political instability that would have allowed the Soviets to move in there.\(^\text{133}\)

Eisenhower was the U.S. president when the Katanga question began in 1960, and, immediately, the Congolese government sought help from the United States. Instead, President Eisenhower turned to the U.N. He considered this as the best means of restoring order and unity to the Congo and shielding it from the Cold War by keeping both American and Soviet forces out.\(^\text{134}\) Eisenhower’s actions, however, should be carefully analyzed. Eisenhower’s administration believed that Lumumba’s request for U.S. intervention in the Congo was not genuine and that he was playing both sides, Washington and Moscow. According to Devlin, to avoid dealing with Lumumba, who was already suspected of having communist ties, Washington decided to align with the safest bet at the time, the U.N.\(^\text{135}\) This explains how Hammarskjöld, the U.N. Secretary General, albeit his economic interests in the Congo, became a confidant of the Department of State but it also confirms the surreptitious nature under which the U.S. - Congo policy was made.

The move by Eisenhower to turn to U.N. for help on the Congo was criticized, simply because the U.N. mission in the Congo was considered partisan. Indeed Hammarskjöld’s

\(^{134}\) Roscoe Drummond, “Congo Accord Held Within Reach,” *DC Post*, June 1, 1963, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.
\(^{135}\) Devlin, *Chief of Station*, 38.
economic interests in the Congo were clear.\textsuperscript{136} He was not expected to be neutral. From the beginning, therefore, the conflict of economic interests that dogged Eisenhower’s administration also made it impossible for a fair and a clear policy on the Congo.

The Department of State and the United Nations carried the blame for the Congo crisis. The blame was premised on the failure of the United Nations, led by its Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, to follow the international law in solving the Congo crisis. On the other hand, the U.S. through the Department of State was blamed for compromising its traditions of freedom and democracy by supporting the U.N assault on Katanga but, some still considered Eisenhower’s decision to use the U.N. mission to solve the Congo crisis as legitimate. Jack Kruger of \textit{The Dallas Morning News}, for instance, wrote about Eisenhower’s decision. In an editorial of December 17, 1962, entitled, “Embargo on Congo,” sent to G. Mennen Williams, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Kruger was undiplomatic. He observed that U.S. policy in the Congo was to support the U.N. in its effort to promote stability and preclude communist intervention in the Congo. That way, the Soviets would be locked out of the Congo.\textsuperscript{137} And many people, especially in the Department of State, agreed with Kruger.

Williams, for example, was jubilant of U.S. development in the Congo. In his letter to a Mr. Bill of the Department of State, Williams noted that U.S. had been successful in keeping the communists out of Africa.\textsuperscript{138} Williams was a die-hard proponent of preservation of the Congo minerals for the American market and for the industrial world, in general.\textsuperscript{139} It is toward that end, that Williams and other Department of State officials during the Kennedy administration adopted a political strategy for the Congo. Arguably, the strategy was aimed at promoting U.S. national interest and safeguarding freedom and democracy. Its success was only possible if Communism was blocked from the heart of Africa, the Congo but, in essence, this strategy was specifically aimed at a larger goal, safeguarding the U.S. economic interests in the Congo.

Kennedy’s administration, through the Department of State, wanted the American public and the world to believe that its policy in the Congo was directed toward fighting the disease of Communism and spreading freedom and democracy in Africa. Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State

\begin{footnotes}
\item[136] Howard Kershner, L.H.D, “What was Behind Effort to Destroy Katanga?” \textit{IP Star}, January, 27, 1963, Donald Bruce Papers, Katanga Box, Indiana State Library.
\item[137] Letter from G. Mennen Williams to Bill, NARA RG 59 Department of State, Records of G. Mennen Williams 1961-66, Chronological File of G. Mennen Williams, Box 3.
\item[138] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
in the Kennedy administration, was behind this strategy. He encouraged Kennedy to cultivate a close relationship with Kwame Nkrumah, the self-claimed Pan-Africanist, Prime Ministers of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Nigeria, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, so as to win their support as the principal segments of Asia and Africa, respectively. Rusk further observed that the U.S. objective in the Congo was the establishment and maintenance of a stable unified Congo with reasonable safeguards against a Communist takeover.\(^{140}\)

Those who supported the U.S. policy in the Congo always raised communist threats, but as John Kent has argued, the Cold War conflict contained a mixture of socio-economic and political elements, embodied in democratic capitalism. These elements required ideological support irrespective of Soviet actions. The Communist rhetoric in Africa, therefore, became one of the arsenals of creating fear between the allies and building African support around American interests. The American actions in the Congo hoped to promote those interests, particularly the capitalists’ interests. Over time these actions became strong indications of intentional complicity on the side of those who were involved in the mining business. Equally important is that Eisenhower’s and Kennedy’s administration hoped to regain the U.S. economic position in Asia and Africa, and placing itself behind a more decisive United Nations program.\(^{141}\)

Officials working for the Bureau of African Affairs and United Nations, however, mostly denied these accounts. For instance, in response to critics who argued that the U.S. allowed the U.N. to make its policy in the Congo, the officials argued to the contrary. What the U.N. did in the Congo was what the U.S. had agreed it should do – prevent chaos that would lead to Soviet penetration. The officials further made it clear that the responsibility of making U.S. foreign policy lay with the President. And they also believed that the President only worked through the U.N. where that would serve the U.S. national interests.\(^{142}\)

Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut was concerned about this arrangement. He specifically criticized the Department of State for the Congo crisis. In a statement released by the Senate, on August 3, 1962, Dodd accused the Department of failing to offer direction on the U.S.-Congo policy. He noted that a comprehensive and genuine U.S.-Congo policy was delayed by contending interests within the Department of State and by the United Nations officials. He

\(^{140}\) Suggested New United States Policy on the Congo, enclosure to Memorandum From Secretary of State Dean Rusk to President Kennedy, NARA RG 59 Department of State Central Files, 611.70G/2–161.

\(^{141}\) Kent, America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War conflict in the Congo, 5.

further accused the Department of State of hiring Michael Struelens, the director of the Katanga Information Service, based in Washington DC, to persuade President Tshombe and Antoine Gizenga -- the rebellious Prime Minister of the Congo -- to form a coalition government.\footnote{Senator Dodd urges fresh approach to Congo conciliation,” NARA RG 59 Bureau of African Affairs, Records Relating to the Congo, Box 6E A1 3111E, 1-2.} This latter observation by Dodd was part of the larger strategy by Department of State officials to have a more liberal and perhaps anti-Communist Congolese leader who would guarantee the safety of the Free World interests in the Congo.

Of course, those behind this strategy also hoped that it would guarantee political stability in the Congo and thereby offer a favorable business environment for the American businessmen.\footnote{“The Congo Crisis and the need for reconciliation,” NARA RG 59 Central African Branch, Frank Carlucci Files, August 3, 1962.} This strategy, however, did not last long. The political factions experienced between the Prime Minister Adoula, President Tshombe and the most aggressive government critic, Gizenga, were a reflection of competing interests and a lack of ideological coherence within the Department of State, United Nations and the Congo government.

In line with this, Dodd in his address to the Senate, and specifically to the President, cautioned that unless the Department of State faced up the competing interests among its officials, the U.S. was courting disaster in the Congo. Dodd also seemed to articulate the overall U.S. policy in the Congo. For instance, he observed that U.S. sought unity in the Congo. It sought economic stability for the Congo. And there was no third alternative for U.S. if it wanted to succeed in the Congo. He called on those in charge of U.S. - Congo policy to work toward making a policy that recognized the U.S. national interest. Dodd also advised the U.S. to desist from using the U.N. to force a coalition between Katanga and the central government as this would only bring chaos and divert the goals and objectives of the U.S. in the Congo, “control of wealth.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Dodd further noted that the Free World and the Communist world were playing for enormously high economic stakes in the Congo. “If the Soviets controlled Katanga, that would place them in a position to completely dominate the world’s greatest complex of mineral resources.” In his conclusion, Dodd reminded the U.S. President that “the Congo’s great mineral wealth, so long as it remained at the disposal of the Free World, could be an incalculable boon to mankind but if it were to fall into the hand of the communists, the Congo wealth would become a
potent weapon for the deconstruction of freedom.” The Congo, according to Dodd, was “the key to the control of the African continent, economically, politically and militarily.”

Dodd’s remarks were taken seriously. By end of 1963, the Kennedy administration managed to bring together most of the groups that disagreed over the Congo. In the discussion, the British, French, American representatives persuaded Moise Tshombe, President of Katanga, that his interests were secure only if he agreed to discuss the future of the Congo with the Congolese Premier, Adoula. Union Minière, the copper mining company whose operations provided Katanga with about half of its revenue, was prevailed upon to send experts to the Congo to discuss how that revenue would be shared between Katanga and the Central government. The U.N. maintained order. If there is anything that Eisenhower and Kennedy agreed on, it was the decision to let the U.N. implement the U.S. foreign policy in the Congo. That way the Soviets would not accuse the U.S. of intervening in the Congo crisis.

This decision had consequences. By supporting the U.N. war to the fullest, and especially during Kennedy’s administration, the U.S. seemed to have committed itself to the side of black Africa. This alienated many of its friends, British, Belgium, France and large numbers of white men who had a stake in Africa. Kennedy was of the opinion that the western businessmen should only go through the Congolese government and not Belgium. Hence the famous phrase during his tenure, “Africa for Africans.” Kennedy supported a united Congo and a full mandate of U.N. mission in the Congo. This was clear in a report which was presented to him by the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, on February 1, 1961, which he endorsed. Kennedy sought to give the U.N. the authority to bring under control all principal military elements in the Congo and thereby neutralize the role of Congolese forces in the politics of the country. This was in line with the idea of the U.S. seeking to establish a democracy in the Congo to safeguard its economic interests and those of the Free World.

The United Nations was expected to step up its efforts to prevent all outside assistance from coming into the Congo. Here, the goal was to ensure Kremlin’s agents did not infiltrate the Congo and Africa as a continent. Rusk was categorical to Kennedy that the U.S. would be

146 Ibid.
149 Suggested New United States Policy on the Congo, enclosure to Memorandum from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to President Kennedy, NARA RG 59 Department of State Central Files, 611.70G/2–161.
leaving no doubt, particularly with the USSR, that it was determined that the Congo would not fall into Communist hands and that the U.S. would look to other means, if necessary. Hammarskjöld was directed to achieve military neutralization of the Congo by peaceful means in the first instance. However, if it became necessary, the United Nations was to use force if certain groups were recalcitrant. On the Congolese constitution, Rusk proposed a revision to provide for a federal structure with options left open for the future, but with secession banned. He also emphasized the need for full assurances regarding the provincial status of areas that were pending agreement on a central Congolese government. And after neutralization of all principal Congolese military elements was accomplished, or at least well under way, and a new broadly based Congolese Government was agreed upon, all Congolese political prisoners would be freed and their protection guaranteed by the United Nations.\textsuperscript{150}

Such a mechanism and timeline was suggested to provide a safeguard against Patrice Lumumba assuming the position of prime minister. He could not be trusted with the interests of the Free World. Lumumba who had managed to galvanize a coalition movement, Mouvement National Congolais-Lumumba (MNC-L) was rumored to be a leftist although some of his lieutenants were not hiding their association with some foreign leftists, mainly African leftist nationalists like Kwame Nkurumah. However, nothing confirmed Lumumba’s politics. In fact, Larry Devlin, the CIA chief in the Congo during the crisis, was categorical that he never believed that Lumumba was a communist and that Lumumba was only misunderstood leading to the conclusion by the Western embassies that he was not the right man to run the Congo.\textsuperscript{151}

Amid the U.S. policy confusion was the voice of Lumumba. Not only had he proven to be a passionate orator, sharp-witted, and a critic of a hurried U.S. - Congo policy, but he was also regarded a mortal enemy by those who considered him a threat to their economic interests in the Congo. Lumumba’s discontent was mainly directed toward U.S. - Belgium collaboration in the running of the Congo affairs, particularly in the mines of Katanga. Addressing a Round Table Conference in February in 1960, Lumumba surely sounded like a Communist. And he might have confirmed the fears of his political rivals. He observed that what was happening in the Congo was that a few colonists were proposing for an independent state of Katanga. And that was the danger. He noted that that was a confirmation that large-scale capitalism would dominate

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} Devlin, Chief of Station, 54.
Nevertheless, Lumumba maintained the call for a united Congo and minimal external influence especially from Belgium, the Congo colonial master.

Lumumba also wanted the U.S. and Belgium to declare their interests in the Congo, and to stop meddling in the Congo political affairs but, this he did cautiously. He tried to sound gentle to avoid being labeled a Communist, but in some occasions he was plain and caustic. A case in point was on June 13, 1960, when he gave a speech during the Proclamation of the Congo independence. He was quickly criticized. Lumumba had told the crowd that if the behavior of the foreigners left something to be desired, the Congolese justice system would be swift and they would be expelled from the republic. He soon realized the anger that his speech caused among the foreigners. A few hours later, he sought to minimize that damage. He quickly issued a “compensatory” speech in which he heaped praise on the King of Belgium.

These diametrically opposed conceptions coexisted within Lumumba and are evidence of profound contradiction existing within him and the Congolese society. But he was not alone. The U.S., courtesy of the Department of State, was also confused. It had only two options: to either support Africans in their quest for freedom and win their hearts or collaborate with European allies or to risk being accused of double standards. One would therefore understand the manipulation and standoffs experienced within the Department of State and United Nations for the better part of U.S.-Congo policy making process.

Besides, it is clear that threats of Communism were central to U.S.-Congo policy. Eisenhower’s and Kennedy’s policy in the Congo during the Cold War was shaped by the fears of Communism. Both Washington and Moscow knew what exactly they were up to in Africa. If one of them managed to control the Congo, it would have had a powerful base in Africa. In addition to gaining control or influence over the minerals, raw materials, and oil in Africa, it would have greatly increased influence in Africa and more importantly at the UN. Kennedy, torn between supporting the hardline Europeanists and soft-line Africanists, had to weigh all

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153 Ibid., 224-225.
154 See “Senator Dodd urges fresh approach to Congo conciliation,” NARA RG 59 Bureau of African Affairs, Records Relating to the Congo, Box 6E A1 3111E, 1, on the controversial recall of U.S. Ambassador to Stanleyville due to policy disagreements. See also “A Staff Correspondent of the Post-Dipatch” published by St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 8, 1961, NARA RG 59 Bureau of African Affairs, Records Relating to the Congo, Box 6 E.A1.3111E on the disagreements between the U.S. members of Congress and Acting UN Secretary General U Thant over commercial interests.
155 Devlin, Chief of Station, 48.
these options. There were all these American entrepreneurs controlling the Congo’s economy. These profiteers knew how to obtain the collusion of politicians and high civil servants in such mutually rewarding schemes as the illegal exportation of Congolese merchandise paid for in foreign exchange which gave profits of more than 500 per cent and concerned almost half of Congolese export in 1961.156

In light of these issues, the U.S., through its power brokers, mostly the Belgians, wanted a Congolese moderate government run by sincere nationalists. And according to U.S. and its allies, Lumumba did not qualify for that. Liberal Africanists, on the other hand, looked at it differently. The real objective of America policy was to “oppose revolutions from the right or the left,” to achieve “a strengthened Congo fully able to defeat subversion from within or attempts at outside domination” and to get a “government impervious to outside infiltration.” This objective, however, was only emphasized when there was the need to stop the Soviet Union’s attempts to infiltrate the Congo politics. The United States, through the United Nations and friendly Congolese politicians, continued influencing the Congo events. And it was for these reasons that Cyrille Adoula became the best bet for U.S. interests in the Congo. He was considered “an able and dynamic leader of a trade union organization that was affiliated with free trade union movement, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).”157 This explains the speed at which the United States moved to the Congo. From July 1961 to July 1964, at the height of political instability in the Congo, the U.S. pumped $178.6 million of economic aid into the Congo, through voluntary contributions to the United Nations and then bilaterally. This made the Congo into the first African country to receive this huge amount of money.158

This strategy too had been initiated by the Department of State back in 1958. On January 8 1958, Douglas Dillon, the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, spoke about foreign investment and economic development as a means to counter the Soviet economic offensive. The following day, President Eisenhower strongly endorsed the program and stressed his belief that the economic assistance program was one of the most vital tools of the U.S. security program.159

The idea behind the strategy to pacify the Congo was that free nations shall attain a more rapid

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rate of economic growth, so that their independence would be more secure and vigorous and there would be greater opportunities for cultural and spiritual development in which the West was willing to take part.

In the same breath, the U.S. rejected any Western-Soviet aid program in less-developed countries. U.S. government officials led by Dillon argued that it would be contrary to the Western interests if the West would allow the Soviets to jointly participate in the program. They argued that this would contribute to the successful pursuit of the Soviet economic offensive which was viewed as a Soviet strategy for undermining the West. It was also considered that Soviet participation in economic development of the less developed countries would immediately grant the Soviet Union an opportunity for propaganda. It would be used to demonstrate that the West regarded the Soviets as a worthy and important contributor to the future of underdeveloped countries. Instead, any economic assistance from the Soviets had to go through the multi-lateral organizations and then be distributed to the deserving countries. 160

This was aimed at locking out the Soviets from competing with the West in the economic sector of Africa. And, it was not easy for both sides. But Eisenhower and Kennedy’s administration worked entirely to ensure that U.S. economic interests in Africa were safe. And the two administrations were right: using the U.N. was the subtlest strategy. This involved working with the U.N. intervention force for the Congo to implement U.S. fragmented policy for the Congo and also for keeping the Soviets out of Africa. It also entailed aligning specific Congolese political leaders with the U.S. interests so as to build enough influence and tame the perceived extremists. All these tactics helped to induce the Soviets defeat in the control of the Congo mineral resources. But besides that, this nasty competition between U.S. and the Soviets on the one hand, and the internal political and economic divergence both in the Department of State and U.N. on the other hand, culminated in one of the most extensive and confused policies for Africa in the Congo.

Conclusion

The parallels between the situation in the Congo in the months and years leading up to 1960 and recent developments there cannot be denied. The conflict over minerals in the Congo – which has unfolded over the past century – remains contentious even today. There is no other African country that has attracted as much attention than the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Competition for its minerals remains high and costly. According to United Nations reports, the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains one of the most dangerous places on earth. Illegal mining causes conflict, leads to child slavery, and creates all manner of gross human rights violations there. As a result, the Congo faces a severe humanitarian crisis. The United Nations operates the largest and most costly peacekeeping mission in the world in the Congo. Critics have questioned the UN’s passive role in the conflict.161

The Congo story is complex. It has multiple interpretations depending on its narrator. Most important, while the Congo mineral wealth is a vital component of the Congo history, the role of individuals and enterprises in this business has remained obscure. There is very little written about individuals and corporations and Congo minerals and the impact they had on the politics of the Cold War in the 1960s leading to the Congo crisis.

The war of words between Washington and Moscow in the 1960s about the Congo was a classic example of high competition for resources in a fast decolonizing African continent. Although few Americans invested in the Congo’s mining industry, an interest in access rather than an investment was the most important stake for United States engagement in the Congo. That engagement was led by individuals and corporations with interest in the mining business who used the Department of State to penetrate the Congo. They took the advantage of the political divide between the two sides to define the American policy to their own needs. Ultimately, these individuals influenced the United States foreign policy on the Congo to secure the resources of the Congo and to keep the Soviets away from accessing those resources.

Economically, the Congo was a strategic area for American interests. With such materials like cobalt, industrial diamond, tantalum ore, and uranium, the United States and its allies maintained a close watch over the Congo. Strategically, the Congo’s geographic location was important in

case the West lost the access to the sea and air routes through the Middle East. Politically, America was interested in the stability of the Congo as any instability would have adversely affected its economic and strategic importance. In general, the U.S. had every reason to promote, develop, and maintain a close mutually-beneficial relationship between the Congo and the Western world.

For a long time, the United States intervention in the Congo has been described as a political measure to stem Communist influence during the Cold War period. That line of thought, however, is incomplete. Although the politics of the superpowers were central to the Congo crisis, the preservation of western economic system was crucial. First, the U.S. established a sort of economic pact with Belgium, the Congo former colonial master, to exploit its economic interests in the Congo. That relationship was based on a mutual belief of “free trade” a strong rhetorical device used during the Cold War to mark the division between Communists and Noncommunists. Second, the U.S. strongly supported its citizens in the Congo against an increased business competition that involved the Soviets such that its foreign policy toward the Congo in the 1960s was largely characterized by private and/or corporate interests in the mining sector. These groups then used their political power to influence the Department of State and ensured Washington’s policy for the Congo was consistent and consonant with their economic interests in the region.

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