Chapter - V

The United States, Mobutu and Zaire in the International Arena: (1974-1976)

Mobutu's International Stance

In Chapter IV the evolution of domestic developments in Zaire as well as the progress of political consolidation achieved under President Mobutu has been discussed. In the present chapter an attempt will be made to examine the foreign policy stance of the military leader in the international arena from the inception of his regime till the culmination of the Angolan Wars in 1976. To begin with, it may be mentioned that after assuming power President Mobutu had sought to discard his image in the African circles as a "CIA puppet" and to project himself as an "authentic African nationalist". In fact after a brief period of domestic instability (1966-1968), he had been able to achieve during the years (1969-1974) not only his "greatest diplomatic prominence" but also the "greatest economic prosperity" for his country. This spell of triumph, however, had continued until he became embroiled in the Angolan Wars (1974-1976) by working in close cooperation with the governments of the United States and the Republic of South Africa. The outcome of the Angolan wars had been disastrous both for Mobutu as well as for Zaire because of
the fact that not only the MPLA forces had emerged victorious out of the struggle, but also that it had tarnished his image in African circles because of his associations with the government of South Africa. Further, the Angolan adventures were to cost him dearly because it had resulted in the emergence of a series of crises as prompted from Angola in Shaba Province in 1977 and 1978 described as Shaba I and Shaba II respectively.

The international adventures of Mobutu from 1966 to 1976 can be divided into three phases, namely, 1966-1968, 1969-1974 and 1974-1976. These three periods can be described as "Period of Consolidation", "Period of Authentic Nationalism", and the "Period of International War" respectively. These three periods, however, coincide with the developments in Zaire under Mobutu during the three US Presidencies namely that of Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford respectively. While the present section will deal with the foreign policy stance of Mobutu in the first two periods (1966-1974), other sections in the chapter will deal with the Period of International Wars in Angola (1974-1976).

While formulating the foreign policy of his country in the Period of Consolidation (1966-1968) Mobutu had been influenced by three factors namely, the Congolese domestic realities, the cold war and the external factors as well as the Congolese colonial experience. As regards the domestic realities
it may be stated that the Congo is bedevilled by the persistence of centrifugal tendencies of tribalism as well as the interplay of cliques and personal factions. As for Mobutu, he had perceived that the unity, stability and development of Zaire could not be achieved as long as major powers, political blocs as well as foreign economic interests had been encouraged for intervention by disgruntled tribal leaders, rebels and the Congolese insurrectionists. In this connection Mobutu had felt apprehensive of the attempts made by Tshombe for a come-back with the help of Belgian and other foreign economic interests. Under these circumstances Mobutu had adopted the policy of non-alignment for his country as a means of settling political problems of his country which, however, had been incorporated in his 1967 N'Sele Manifesto.

A second factor prompting Mobutu to adopt a policy of non-alignment had comprised the external factors generated by Congo's wealth, its strategic location and the cold war. It has been mentioned that Congo's geographic position in the heart of Africa as well as its sharing boundary with nine African states had been of particular interest to foreign powers having political, economic interests in its neighbouring states. In this regard besides the US and the USSR, the government of [for details see Festus U. Ohaegbulam, "The Democratic Republic of the Congo and the International Politics of Non-Alignment", *Africa Today*, October 1969, pp.8-9.]

Communist China had also regarded the Congo as the focal point of their attention in Africa. For instance, Mao-Tsetung had reportedly remarked that the control of Congo was "the stepping stone to domination of all Africa". The cold war perspectives, however, had prompted Mobutu to adopt non-alignment, as a means of reducing dependence on economic development from the western sources.

Congo's colonial experience had been the third factor which had influenced Mobutu's acceptance of non-alignment. It has been mentioned earlier that the Belgian colonial rule had created adverse political, economic, educational as well as military repercussions, and thereby affecting Congo's development seriously. As a result of the colonial legacy also the Congolese leaders had always felt suspicious of Belgium and her Western allies. They had become further hesitant to embrace any new offers of friendship from unfamiliar communist bloc countries as well. In the circumstances, the policy of non-alignment had become the best alternative.

In the Period of Consolidation (1966-1968)

Mobutu's policy of non-alignment had tilted somewhat pro-West. His overwhelming dependence on the West and in particular on the United States had been amply demonstrated during the periods of the mercenary revolts (1966-1967). At the same time it may be stated that Mobutu had been oblivious of the criticisms voiced

450. See Ohagebulam, n. 447, p. 9.
against him in the African circles as a "CIA puppet" as well as in the Congolese university circles as "an imperialist agent". He had, however, taken various measures to obliterate such perceptions about his personality. For instance, he had initiated a campaign of economic nationalism by declaring a war on "money powers", as well as on "economic colonialism", which according to him, "insidiously, hypocritically, wish to maintain our people in misery and exploit than to the end of time".451

Mobutu's nationalist campaign, however, had begun with the reorganization of the Union Minière de Haute Katanga (UMHK). In this regard he had responded to the company's resistance by adopting drastic measures on 31 December 1966 by cancelling the mining concessions provided to the UMHK before independence as well as by expropriating the company's assets over eight hundred million dollars. He had further ordered for the creation of a new national corporation namely, Societe Generale des Minerais (GECOMIN) with powers to administer the assets of UMHK.452 Further, he had made efforts to put the resources of the foreign companies under government control by ordering them to move their administrative headquarters to Kinshasa by January 1967 or to pull out of the Congo altogether.453

452. See Ohagebulam, n.447, p.9.
453. Ibid.
Also, Mobutu had made attempts to bring about a gradual reduction of Congolese dependence on Belgium and its NATO allies. For instance, the first Congolese Oil Refinery had been inaugurated on 26 November 1966 on a 50-50 owner basis by the Congolese government and ENI, Italy's state controlled petroleum group. In the process the monopoly of the SOCOPEL, jointly owned by Belgium's Petrofina, and Shell, Caltex and Mobil had been broken. The construction of Inga dam on the Congo river, twenty-five miles upstream from Matadi had been authorized to be carried out by a joint Congolese-Italian efforts namely, Societe Italo-Congolaise Industrial (SICDI).

Also the Nippon Mining Company of Japan had signed an agreement with the Mobutu government on 18 December 1966 for a joint undertaking with the GECOMIN for the exploitation of copper deposits in Katanga.

After coming to power Mobutu had resorted to the adoption of symbols of radical African nationalism. It has been mentioned earlier as to how he had resurrected Lumumba as a national hero. While eulogizing the deceased martyr, Mobutu had stated that Lumumba had fallen "a victim of colonialist machinations because his speech (had) declared the death knell of colonialism." To activate the programme of African nationalism, Mobutu had also created the Corps de Volontiers de la Republique (CVC), a national youth movement as the vanguard of new radicalism.

454. Ibid, p.10.
456. See Ohagebulam, n.447, p.10.
It may be mentioned that all these measures had provided a legitimacy to the regime while dealing with the Tshombe menace. In the articulate Congolese as well as Lumumbaist circles, Tshombe had been regarded as the worst enemy of nationalism and that such a perception had been shared by a large segment of political opinion in Africa. Thus, the focus made on Tshombe as the chief enemy of the regime had provided it with an "invaluable legitimization" in the eyes of millions of Africans who had remained convinced about the close American ties of Mobutu and who had also regarded the Congolese general as a "running dog of imperialism".

It may be mentioned that his nationalist economic measures had caused consternation in Belgian circles. The Belgian-Congolese relationship during the initial period of Mobutu regime had been complicated by the Tshombe affair as well as the anti-Belgian and anti-White propaganda that had emanated from the Congolese press. This had prompted Belgium to lodge a strong protest with the Mobutu government, which had, however, denied any of its complicity with such accusations. The tension in bilateral relationship had been intensified further following the mercenary revolts of 1966 because of Congolese suspicion of Belgian complicity in such activities. With the rebellion being quelled their relationship, however, had once

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457. See Turner and Young, n. 296, p. 57.

again been repaired. Following the mercenary revolts in 1967, there were once again attacks on the Belgian embassy by some radical Congolese youth which, had been brought under control through personal intervention made by Mobutu. This had also prevented an anti-white violence from spreading to other embassies in Kinshasa. The attacks on Belgians, had prompted Brussels to urge the Congolese Government to allow its nationals to carry fire arms to protect their homes, which, however, had not been acceded to by the Mobutu government.

In view of the Congolese attack the Belgian government had also decided to suspend most of its technical assistance committed to Zaire. The stresses and strains in Belgian Congolese, that had been caused in this regard had continued till the private visit by Mobutu to Brussels in June 1968. After the visit, however, there appeared to be signs of a marked detente in their bilateral relations, which had become noticeable with the visit of king Baudouin II to the Congo to attend its ninth anniversary of its independence scheduled for 30 June 1969. Further cementing factor in this regard had been the statement made by Mobutu on his return from Belgium that "one must no longer take into account what is past between the

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Congo and Belgium but look towards the future"463. Finally, their relationship had improved with the final compensation deal with UMHK having been completed in 1969464.

The Mobutu government also had sought to repair its relationship with some radical African states like the UAR, Algeria, Guinea and Mali. Also it had sought to become a significant participant in the OAU and other regional groupings of Africa such as the OCAM and the Union of Central African states.465 Further, it had severed diplomatic relations with Portugal and Rwanda over the issue of the mercenaries. At the same time it had resumed diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union and in the process it had sought to signify its commitment to genuine non-alignment466. However, it may be added that despite the picture presented above, during the first phase of Mobutu rule the strangle hold of western economic forces as well as that of the United States over the Congo had remained substantial. This scenario had probably prompted Conor Cruise O’Brien to remark that the "Congo, although subscribing to the brave principles of Belgrade, showed (itself) incapable of exercising (its) own sovereignty in protection of (its) own independence"467.

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463. See Ohagebulam, n.447, p.11.
465. See Ohagebulam, n.447, p.11.
During the Period of Authentic Nationalism (1969-1974), Mobutu had begun by resorting to symbolic gestures in the form of renaming the principal cities as well as his own country after African names and in the process had changed his own name as well as Mobutu Sese Seko. This period had also witnessed the "greatest diplomatic prominence" as well as the "greatest economic prosperity" achieved by Mobutu as one writer would put it. As regards his diplomatic activities it may be stated that Mobutu had offered his services as a skilled conciliator of diplomatic conflicts among African states. For instance, he had offered his services as an intermediary to repair the situation that had been created between Tanzania and Uganda in 1971 following the overthrow of the government over there as headed by Dr. Milton Obote. Further, he had been instrumental in the establishment of a formal relationship between the new military ruler of Uganda namely, Idi Amin and the Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere. Mobutu had also mediated in the disputes between Burundi and Tanzania concerning border violations by Burundi forces. He had offered his services also in 1970 to bring about a reconciliation between Nigeria and the four states of Africa who had recognized the Biafra regime. In 1971 Mobutu had been made a member of the OAU delegation that had been given the task of ending the Israeli occupation of Egyptian territory. These efforts however, had failed to materialize due to lack of Israeli support.

468. See Kalb, n. 304, p. 379.

469. For details on his diplomatic activities see Turner and Young, n. 296, p. 368.
Apart from diplomatic mediations, Mobutu had embarked upon an ambitious programme of foreign travel. For instance, in 1970 he had visited ten African states and in 1972 he had paid state visits to Togo, Gabon, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Guinea. Out of these visits his trip to Guinea had been marked by triumphal receptions accorded to him by Sekou Toure, one of his most bitter critics could be described as particularly significant. After returning from the Guinean capital Conackry, Mobutu had invited eight Chiefs of State to an MPR Congress. In 1973 he had spent 150 days outside Zaire visiting twenty-six countries including fourteen belonging to Africa. He had further resorted to regional diplomacy by developing intimate personal relationship with other heads of state like Rwanda and Burundi. In the period 1972-1975 also Mobutu had undertaken frequent triangular summits with Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia concerning strategies with regard to Southern Africa. He had further provided strong backing as well support to Idi Amin in his quest for African recognition and in this context had virulently opposed the transfer of the site of the 1971 OAU Summit Conference scheduled for it Kampala in Uganda.

Mobutu's diplomatic activities had also been extended to the Arab world during the period 1973-1975. For instance, he had played an active role in the Afro-Asian Summit

held at Algiers in September 1973. In fact on 4 October 1973, on the Arab-Israel War he had announced the rupture of diplomatic relations of Zaire with Israel. It may be mentioned that Mobutu had secured his paratrooper's wings in Israel in 1963 and had maintained a close relationship with Israel ever since. In return, the Arab States had accorded him the unusual honour to participate as an observer at the 1973 November Arab Summit. Mobutu had, however, followed this action by making a major swing around the Middle East countries which had included Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Iran. 472.

Mobutu's relations with the Congo-Brazzaville had been far from cordial. In the initial period their relationship had been affected by the fact that Mobutu had not forgotten the role of Brazzaville in the training of the Congolese insurgents. The execution of Mulele, had further provoked the Brazzaville regime. A new crisis, however, had been brought by the fact that Zaire had provided arms as well as sanctuary to the insurgents led by Ange Diawara. These incursions, however, had been crushed by the Brazzaville government in 1973. 473

472: Ibid.

It may be mentioned that on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of his military coup in November 1971 Mobutu had announced the goal of making Zaire "a great international power." But while affirming his commitment to non-alignment, he had felt handicapped over Zaire's close Western associations as well as its investment campaigns in the West. However, he had sought to normalize the relationship of his country with the USSR and China.

The relationship with Soviet Union, however, had not been smoothened due to the legacy of the First Republic (1960-65) over the issue of Soviet support for Lumumba as well as because of the Stanleyville insurgents (1963-1965). The USSR had been wary about his intimate American ties as well as CIA links. The Soviet press, for instance, had described his takeover as an instrument of Belgian and American monopolies, borne to power by a "colonial racist armed bubble." Although the Soviet embassy had been established in April 1968, the relationship between Mobutu and the Soviet Union had been far from cordial. For instance, in 1970, four Soviet diplomats had been expelled from Zaire for subversion and that in 1971 some twenty Soviet-bloc officials had been declared persona non grata after being accused of complicity in student disturbances on the University Campus at Kinshasa. Further, Moscow had been the only major capital that had not been visited by Mobutu till the end of the present study.

474: See Turner and Young, n. 296, p. 370.
476: Ibid.
But as far as China was concerned, Mobutu's efforts at normalization of relationship with his country had resulted in spectacular success. Nixon's visit to China in 1972 in this regard had clearly indicated that bridges with China no longer encountered American hostility. Further, Chinese diplomacy had achieved some amount of prominence during the period 1968-1972. In neighbouring Brazzaville, however, the Chinese government had lost favour following its complicity with the Diawara conspiracy occurring in late 1972. Common hostility towards the Brazzaville government had thus worked to cement the relationship that had ensued between China and Mobutu. With this, however, the stage had been set for the visit to China by Mobutu in January 1973. Mobutu had been received with a tumultuous welcome from the Chinese leaders and that massive economic assistance to the tune of $100 million economic aid for agricultural development had been authorized after the visit.\textsuperscript{477} Infact following his visit to China its ambassador to Kinshasa had enjoyed a privileged access to Mobutu and had been regarded by many in the diplomatic circles to be the most trusted diplomatic confident of the military general. Further, the Chinese links had played a valuable part in projecting the image of Mobutu as a promising leader belonging to the Third World.\textsuperscript{478}

\textsuperscript{477} Ibid, p.371.

\textsuperscript{478} Ibid.
While relationship with China had brightened, the ties between Belgium and Zaire had worsened. For instance, Mobutu had terminated his special ties with Belgium by annulling the "Treaty of Friendship" that had been signed earlier in 1970 during the visit of King Badouin. While this action could be attributed to Mobutu's efforts at reducing European economic and cultural penetration over his country, the real reason appeared to be the refusal by the Belgian government in March 1974 to ban the publication of a book written by a Brussels lawyer namely Julius Chrome in which the writer had alleged that Mobutu had been put in power by the CIA 479.

Finally, it may be mentioned that Mobutu's relationship with the US had remained warm during the period from 1969 to 1973. These ties, however, had been strengthened due to exceptional intimacy that had been developed between President Mobutu and the US Ambassador Sheldon Vance. The Ambassador, a career diplomat, had been an energetic supporter of the military general, and that he had been impressed by Mobutu's accomplishments in creating "what seemed to be a unified, stable and prosperous country". Further Vance had encouraged Mobutu's aspirations for regional leadership and that he had also been a persuasive emissary to world financial community the case of Zaire for attractive investment opportunities 480. Thus, during this period American links with Mobutu had been considerably strengthened.

480. See Turner and Young, n.296, p.372.
Thus, Mobutu's international stance during the period 1966-1974, had been non-aligned but pro-West. His close economic and military cooperation with the Western world in general and towards the United States in particular had been an established fact. His overtures to China had been initiated only following the Sino-US detente. His policy of authentic nationalism had not been directed against the West, but had been oriented against the powerful economic interests of Belgium. Zaire's fluctuating bilateral relationship as well as diatribes against Brussels, however, could be attributed to the colonial legacy and especially against the background of sufferings and exploitation which Mobutu's Zaire had been subjected to under the Belgian yoke.
The Colonial Revolution in Angola

In the present section an effort will be made to study the undercurrents of the process of decolonization in the Portuguese colony of Angola, located in Central Africa. The process, which had been initiated with the military coup in Portugal on 25 April 1974 had eventually paved the way towards its independence on 11 November 1975. The political developments in Angola, surrounding the process of decolonization, however, had been marked by an intense struggle for power between its three major domestic factions, namely, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) as well as by external interventions from foreign quarters. These factions, which had been led by Agostinho Neto, Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi respectively, had been supported actively by some foreign powers, namely, the United States, Zaire, China, South Africa, Soviet Union, Cuba and Congo (Brazzaville).

In fact, as the course of events had unfolded, the United States, Zaire, China and South Africa had thrown their support behind a combination of FNLA and the UNITA forces as against the MPLA faction, which had been supported by the Soviet Union, Cuba and Congo (Brazzaville). The principal focus of the study, however, will be to examine the background of the complementary roles that had been played by the United States and Zaire in
the domestic struggle for power and especially on behalf of their constituents in Angola. It may be mentioned that beginning in July 1975 covert operations had been masterminded in Angola by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and that these efforts had been channelized through President Mobutu of Zaire. To analyze the situation, however, a brief background to the colonial setting in Angola will be appropriate.

The Republic of Angola, which is the second largest African country, South of Sahara (after Zaire), lies on the west coast of Southern Africa. It is bounded to the north and north east by Zaire and Congo (Brazzaville), to the south east by Zambia, to the south by South West Africa (Namibia) and the west by the Atlantic Ocean. It has an area of 481,350 square miles and has a population of 6,761,000, according to the 1976 estimate. It has got sixteen provinces, out of which one, namely Cabinda, lies outside its territory some twenty miles up towards the north between the Congo (Brazzaville) and Zaire. Angola is a rich and rather relatively unexploited country. Because of its oil, diamonds and iron ore resources and of its mineral wealth, Angola holds promise of a booming economy as well as one of the richest countries in Africa. Angola is the world's fourth-largest coffee producer, and that its booming petroleum industry as well as further oil prospecting is taking place in the vicinity of the capital city of Luanda and in Cabinda. Further Angola is in a sense unique among former African colonies in the relatively large size of its
white population. For instance, out of the 6.7 million Angolans, over 3.5 million are whites, thus making it the largest white population in Sub-Saharan Africa besides South Africa. The Black population is, however, distributed among five important tribes, namely the Bakongo, the Kimbundu, the Ovimbundu, the Chokwe and the Quishma. As for the Bakongos, they live mostly in the northwest Angola and who comprise more than ten percent of its population. The tribe is also spilled over to Cabinda as well as into the neighbouring Zaire and Congo (Brazzaville). The Kimbundus, who live inland from Luanda are closely related to the Bakongo, are among the more detribalized Africans in Angola. They represent about one-fourth of the population. The Ovimbundu, comprise the largest group of about one-third of its population who live in Central and Southern Angola. The Chokwe are a sort of primitive and aggressive-minded people who make up about eight percent of its population, who live in Eastern Angola. Finally, a tribe of pastoral warriors, namely, the Quishma or Ovambo, number about 50,000, who live in Southern Angola in the neighbourhood of South West Africa. It may be significant to mention that the support base behind the three Angolan factions, namely the MPLA, the FLNA and the UNITA had been provided by the three principal tribes, namely the Kimbundu, the Bakongo and the Ovimbundu respectively.

Angola had been discovered in 1482 by the Portuguese navigator Diego Cao and that it had been colonized by the Lisbon government following a military expedition led by Goncalo de Sousa in 1490. The Portuguese continued to maintain their tight hold over their colony despite political stirrings in Black Africa following the independence of Ghana in 1957. The major symptoms of political protest in the Portuguese territory however, had been voiced with the establishment of an Angolan nationalist party with Marxist orientation in 1956 led by Agostinho Neto, namely the MPLA. A second important party namely, the Uniao das populacoes de Angola (UPA) had been formed in 1958 under the leadership of Holden Roberto, with its principal base among the Bakongo tribes of Northern Angola. From its inception the UPA had less of a Marxist-orientation than the MPLA. In February 1961, the Angolan nationalists had struck for the first time by attacking a police station and jail in Luanda as well as by liberating all the political prisoners. Following this armed struggle in 1961 however, the UPA had sought to develop closer ties with a smaller Bakongo-based movement, namely the Partido Democratico de Angola (PDA). In course of time both these groups had joined their military forces into an alliance described as the FNLA, and which had formed a government in exile under Roberto's leadership known as Governo Revolucionario de Angola no Exilio (GRAE). The headquarters of both the UPA and GRAE had been based at Kinshasa (Zaire) with its leader.
Roberto having a close association with Mobutu. Jonas Savimbi, who had joined the GRAE as the foreign minister, however, had fallen out with Roberto in 1964 and had started a third movement, namely the UNITA under his leadership in the Angola-Namibia border. The UNITA had started functioning since 1966. These three movements thereafter had continued their struggle for independence separately but uninterrupted from their respective support bases both in Angola as well as the neighbouring territories of Zaire, Congo (Brazzaville), Zambia and South Africa. In addition to these three groups there were a few moribund political groups operating in Cabinda, out of which the most important one was the separatist-inspired Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC). The FLEC, however, had posed no military challenge to the continued Portuguese rule in Angola and had remained "unmeshed in leadership quarrels between its Brazzaville and Kinshasa-backed factions".

In the meanwhile domestic developments had moved rather fast upsetting all western political calculations. On 25 April 1974, the dictatorship of Marcelo Caetano had been overthrown with the successful military coup organized under the leadership of General Antonio de Spinola. The Spinola government, after coming to power, however, had made the dramatic announcement to liberate the Portuguese colonies of

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Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau immediately as well as to grant local autonomy to the Angolans under a Lusitanian Federation. While the offer had been rejected by all the Angolan factions, however, it had the effect of bringing together of all the three major political factions towards the formation of a provisional government in Angola. The initiatives in this regard had been taken by the OAU as well as Zaire. For instance, in December 1973 President Mobutu had attempted a move to unite these three groups which, however, did not materialize because Neto had refused to put trust on the sincerity of both Roberto and Mobutu in making good on their commitments. In July 1974, however, on the initiative taken by Mobutu the three groups had met at Bukavu in Zaire, where they had signed an agreement which had stipulated that they would cooperate fully in order to present a united front to the Portuguese authorities. But within a few weeks this accord had been ignored by all parties since its chief architect namely Mobutu had violated it himself by escorting an FNLA official to a secret meeting with General Spinola project the FNLA position independently.

The domestic developments in Angola in the meanwhile had become complicated due a series of clashes that had taken place between the MPLA and UNITA forces (November 1974).

the attempted take over of Cabinda by ELEC as well as the expulsion of Daniel Chipenda, from the MPLA (November-December 1974). In fact Neto's leadership of the party had been threatened with challenges made by Chipenda, the MPLA commander located in Zambia as well as by another splinter faction composed of Brazzaville-based mestico intellectuals led by Father Joachim Pinto de Andrade. These developments, however, had been accompanied by the supply of hundreds of tons of arms as well as military instructors by China to the FNLA forces via Zaire. Chipenda after his expulsion, however, had joined the FNLA along with his 1500 seasoned guerrillas and had received the political backing from Zambia and some arms from Peking as well. Despite these developments, the OAU initiative had brought the UNITA, FNLA and the MPLA together at Mombasa, Kenya, on 4 January 1975, where the three parties had once again agreed to make a common front in their negotiation with the Portuguese. This had led to the signing of the Alvor Agreement on 15 January 1975 between Portugal and the concerned political parties which, however, had stipulated the deadline of 11 November 1975 as the date for granting independence to Angola.


The Alvor accord had pledged the MPLA, the FNLA and the UNITA to work together with Portugal in a coalition Transitional Government during the tenth-month interim period to independence. The Transitional Government had in fact assumed office on 28 March 1975 headed by a Prime Ministerial Council of three members, one each from the three major factions as mentioned earlier. Each of them had three seats in the Council of Ministers and that Lisbon had appointed a High Commissioner to arbitrate differences within the coalition. It had been stipulated further that all important governmental decision would require a two-third majority for implementation and that efforts would be initiated to integrate the liberation movements' armed forces into a single national army. The accord had further committed the Transitional Government to draft a provisional constitution, under which elections were stipulated to be held before the end of October 1975, inorder to fulfil the formalities of handing over powers into native hands on 11 November 1975. But Portugal's hope that the Alvor Agreement would result in a government of national unity had failed to materialize because of acute fighting between the MPLA and FNLA forces which had resulted in the loss of 20,000 Angolan lives in capital city of Luanda alone. The OAU under the Chairmanship of the Kenyan President, Jamo Kenyatta had sought to revive the Portuguese hopes through the agreement reached between the

contesting parties at Nakuru in Kenya between 16-21 June 1975. All these efforts, however, had proved abortive under the pressures of the intense struggle of power that had been precipitated between MPLA, FNLA and UNITA forces, beginning once again around the capital city of Luanda on 23 June 1975.

The first week of July, witnessed a modest attempt to implement the Nakuru agreement in the form of the publication of the long-awaited provisional constitution in Angola as on 6 July 1975. But on 9 July 1975, a major wave of fighting had once again erupted, pushing the nationalist movements to the verge of total civil war and for the first time beginning to divide the country into military spheres of influence between the MPLA, FNLA and the UNITA units. It may be mentioned that the MPLA had tapped its main base of popular support among the 1.5 million Mbundu tribe concentrated around the Cuanza valley and the shanty-town dwellers of the Luanda sand slums and the UNITA in particular from among the 2 million Ovimbundu belonging to the districts of Bie, Huamba and Benguela in the South, whereas the FNLA had mobilized its traditional supporters among the half million Bakongo in the northwest and another half million or more Angolan Bakongo refugees inhabiting in Southern Zaire.

489. Ibid, pp. 51-52.
Finally, the spirits of the Alvor and Nakuru agreements had been dissipated by July 1985 with the changes and counter-charges as alleged by the major antagonists namely, the MPLA and the FNLA. For instance, Neto had charged FNLA with provisions of the Nakuru Agreement, while the FNLA had reacted by accusing the MPLA of seeking arms from the Soviet Union as well as for recruiting the former Katangese gendarmerie. With Savimbi, throwing his support behind the FNLA offensives against the MPLA, the political situation in Angola had collapsed leaving the country as deeply divided into two armed camps. At the same time it may be stated that this period had also witnessed the beginning of an uneasy alliance that had been forged under severe constraints between Savimbi and Roberto, neither of whom, however, had trusted the other nor shared the other's political attitudes. This had been markedly evident when in July 1975, Holden Roberto had authorized his deputy Daniel Chipendo instead of Savimbi (who already had strong links with South Africa) to proceed to Namibia to discuss with Pretoria's chief of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) with regard to enlisting military support from the white racist regime. From July onwards the three parties had also concentrated on efforts in winning over foreign allies willing to support them with military and popular support and in the process the stage had been set for internationalization of what had begun as a local power struggle.

Before we close this section it may be appropriate to provide a brief background of the leaders of the three Angolan factions, namely Neto, Roberto and Savimbi.

Neto had been born in the year 1922 at the capital city Angola with his father being a pastor of the Methodist Church in Luanda. One of his father's colleagues and neighbour, an American white man named Bishop Ralph E. Doge had taken an immense liking for the child by recommending him for a church scholarship, which had enabled Neto to study medicine in Portugal. After completing his studies Neto had set up his practice in Luanda, but had felt immediately attracted to the MPLA which had been founded in 1956. Shortly afterwards he had become the second President of the party. Neto had launched a protest demonstration in 1960 on the streets of Luanda for which he had been put behind bars immediately by the Portuguese authorities. His supporters led by his associate Mario de Andrade in October 1961, had retreated into Zaire to embark on a path of armed struggle against the colonial rulers of Angola. Neto, however, had escaped himself from Portugal and had visited the United States in 1962 in order to elicit support from the Kennedy Administration behind the process of decolonization in Angola. Accompanied by Bishop Dodge, Neto had sought to impress upon President Kennedy, who however, had coldshouldered such efforts, since the United States had already made overtures towards cultivating elements in the Angolan national movements.
such as Holden Roberto who were ready to adopt an anti-
communist and anti-Soviet posture. Neto had thus returned
to the Zairian capital after his futile quest in the United
States. He had broached the matter with Roberto on the
question of forging unity between the MPLA and the FNLA.
This had failed because of Robert's refusal as well as due
to the fact that the support had been extended to him by the
US and Mobutu. In fact Mobutu had ordered the closure of the
MPLA office in Kinshasa. This, however, had forced Neto to
shift his political activities to Zambia and Congo (Brazzaville)
from where he had directed his operations at the Cabinda enclave
and on eastern Angola. Neto who had been the most leftist
among the liberation leaders had favoured state control over
the means of production and had sought closer ties with the
Soviet Union. Being a doctor and an intellectual, Neto had
been able to attract many educated blacks, white leftists and
Mulattoes to the MPLA ranks and his following had included the
city-dwellers of Luanda, Lobito and Nova Lisboa as well as
those belonging to his own tribe namely the Mbundu which had
constituted slightly over a quarter of the Angolan black
population. It has been mentioned earlier that Neto had to

492. For details see testimony of Bishop E. Dodge in US
Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on African Affairs of
the Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on Angola
January 29, February 3, 4 and 6, 1976 (Washington, D.C.,

493. See Arthur Gavshon, Crisis in Africa: Battleground
contend with incessant conflicts within the party itself which had emanated from the Chipenda and the Andrade quarters. According to the American sources the Soviet Union had begun to provide Neto with military and financial assistance through the Portuguese Communist leaders beginning in 1964. Further it had been stated that though there had been some reduction in Soviet aid between 1972 and 1974 as a result of the factional feuding within the MPLA, after August 1974, the Russians had intensified their arms shipment to Neto's forces, following the struggle for power in Angola.\footnote{See Hearings on Angola, n.492, p.184.}

Holden Roberto was born in 1925 out of peasant stock and had belonged to the Bakongo tribe in Northern Angola which had taken active part in the insurgency activities during 1961. Due to Portuguese suppression, however, about 10,000 members belonging to Roberto's tribe had fled to Zaire where they had based their headquarters along with that of the MPLA. As for the FNLA, with the expulsion of MPLA they had consolidated their base in Zaire by establishing close contacts with successive governments in Kinshasa.\footnote{See Ebinger, n.473, p.673.} Roberto had begun his political career in 1959 by paying a visit to the United States where he had sought to project his personality as a
moderate nationalist and in the process had cultivated many friends over there especially among the American trade Unions. Also he had been able to impress upon the Kennedy Administration as one who had had good chances of heading the future government in Angola. Thus he had been able to attract the attention of the CIA which had kept him on its pay rolls for a period of seven years beginning in 1962 with a personal stipend worth about $10,000 a year mainly for keeping the Americans "informed" about what was going on in the Angolan resistance movements.

For the Secretary of State Rusk, however, Roberto had come to represent the "moderate" alternative to the opposing "de Andrade extremist group tied to Moscow".

The CIA's choice of Roberto had appeared to be sensible as the FNLA leader had good contacts more rather outside than inside Angola. His anti-imperialist stance and fleeting association with Lumumba had earned him acceptable credentials among radical African states such as Nkrumah of Ghana. Always impeccably dressed, articulate as well as aware of his own dignity Roberto had involved himself actively in the domestic affairs of the Congo through the late 1960s and early 1970s. Indeed Roberto had lived mostly all his life in Kinshasa and had spent only the first two years in Angola proper. He had close as well as quasi-kinship relationship with Mobutu through

495. See Gavshon, n. 493, pp. 234-235.

his second wife who had hailed from the same village as Mobutu's first spouse. Mobutu had also permitted the FNLA guerilla camps on Zaire's territory since 1962. Roberto's FNLA, however had followed a "flagrantly tribalist" line by advocating the revival of Kongo kingdom. Because of his soft-centred, highly social life-style, he had appeared to onlooking diplomats as a pleasing personality. The role of Zaire and Mobutu in the Angolan Wars will, be studied, however, in the subsequent sections. Being more pragmatic than ideological Roberto had been able to scrap together of support from every possible quarters, political backing and financial support from the US, medical supplies from the World Council of Church and WHO in the early seventies and finally arms from Rumania and advisers and equipment from China in 1974.

As regards Savimbi, he had been born in 1943 and had belonged to the Ovimbundu tribe which had been located most numerously in Southern Angola. Savimbi who had studied at the University of Lausanne in Europe, had been persuaded by Roberto to join him in 1961. He had, however, developed strong differences with Roberto, prompting him to form the UNITA in 1966. Savimbi, who had visited Peking in 1964 had sought to follow Mao's teaching on guerilla warfare.


He had made the accusation against the MPLA and the ENLA both of whom, according to him, had remained outside and content in launching forays into Angola. The UNITA had maintained an establishment in Zambia. But when in 1967 UNITA guerillas had attacked the Benguela railroad in Angola, which had been the life line of Zambia's copper exports, Savimbi had been denied permission by Zambia's copper exports, Savimbi had been denied permission by Zambia to maintain its headquarters in the country. After being expelled he had risked his political doom by turning to the Republic of South Africa for help. Some US officials were of the view that the CIA had rather miscalculated while throwing its support behind Roberto. They had maintained that the UNITA leadership had more powerful base, more efficient support from the South hinterland and from among the guerrillas. Savimbi had greater charisma as a fighting man's fighter than the elegant Roberto. In conclusion it may be stated that the UNITA, which had arrived last in the evolution of movement, had been in fact the weakest among the lot and also that its leader had proved himself to be perhaps the most interesting of the three main contenders in the domestic struggle for power in Angola.


Zaire and The Angolan War

An attempt will be made in the present section to deal with the background to Mobutu's association with the process of decolonization in Angola. The study, which commences with the independence of Zaire in 1960, culminates with the intense struggle for power that had taken place between the three domestic factions, namely, the MPLA, FNLA and the UNITA. Since its independence Zaire had kept a close watch on the evolution of domestic developments in Angola and that it had supported the FNLA and the UNITA combination along with the governments of the United States, South Africa and China, as against the MPLA forces which had been supported by the governments of Soviet Union, China and Congo (Brazzaville). The Angolan Wars, had brought about a crushing defeat for the Zairian army, which, however had shattered the grandiose plans of President Mobutu to play an effective and determined role and to achieve the recognition of "a future regional power" in the moulds of Iran, Brazil and Indonesia.

As regards the FNLA-Zairian links, its roots could be traced to the first phase of the Zairian crisis in 1960. In this context the background of Roberto as well as his close association with Zaire have been stated earlier. It has been mentioned that in 1961, a large number of Roberto's followers operating in Northern Angola had retreated following
massive Portuguese retaliation into Zaire, where they had regrouped themselves among their Bakongo brethren. The successive governments in Zaire, however, had provided staunch support to the FNLA forces except briefly during the period of the heyday of President Kasavubu (1960-1961) as well as during that of Prime Minister Tshombe (1964-1965). The FNLA had received strong endorsement in particular from the regimes of Prime Minister Cyrille Adoula (1961-1964) as well as from that of President Mobutu since 1965. As regards the Kasavubu period, it may be stated that the activities of the FNLA had been tolerated and kept under control because of the President’s Kinshasa-based ABAKO party whose pan-Bakongo schemes had conflicted directly with the unified-Angolan position of FNLA. During the Tshombe period, however, the FNLA had found its operational activities severely restricted by the factors such as the Katangan leader’s pro-white settler sympathies, his fierce, ethnically motivated hatred of the Bakongo (Tshombe was a Luanda, which was an implacable foe of the Bakongo tribe) as well as the exigencies of the Zairian situation in 1964-1965 which had prohibited Tshombe’s active support in favour of FNLA guerillas who had been attempting the overthrow of the Portuguese regime in Angola which had been one of his staunchest supporters during the Katanga days.

It has been mentioned earlier that following the expulsion of MPLA from Kinshasa, Neto had shifted his headquarters as well as the base of operation to neighbouring

503. Ibid, pp.673-674.
Congo (Brazzaville), ruled by President Fulbert Youlou. But following the overthrow of Youlou in August 1963 as well as the establishment of the radical regime headed by M. Massamba-Debat, the Adoula government had been placed in a critical situation. The radical government, for instance had welcomed the establishment of the CNL in Brazzaville whose central objectives had been the overthrow of the central government in Zaire. The Massamba-Debat government had provided sanctuary, operational facilities, as well as active political support to the MPLA forces and that since 1963 the MPLA's main external headquarters had been located in Congo (Brazzaville). At the same time it may be mentioned that the geographic zone of Zaire in which the FNLA had operated, had made Roberto's guerillas, a valuable fighting force against both the CNL and MPLA incursions from Brazzaville into Zaire and Angola. Thus, by sustaining the FNLA at a minimum level, Tshombe had not only reduced the threat of CNL to his regime but had won valuable support from the Portuguese authorities in Angola for reducing the military potential of the MPLA.

As far as Mobutu was concerned, after coming to power he had sought to use the FNLA as an effective instrument in relation to Zaire's growing ideological disputes with the Brazzaville regimes of Massamba-Debat (1963-1968), with Colonel Marien Ngouabi since 1968.

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504. Ibid, p.674.
505. See Turner and Young, n.296, p.376.
506. See Ebinger, n.473, p.674.
relations have often been marked by perennial flare-ups resulting from competing ideological national and foreign interests. Out of the foreign policy issues that had divided both the governments the most important one had been the fact that while Zaire had backed the FNLA, the Congo (Brazzaville) had supported the MPLA. As for Mobutu, he had two major stakes in a FNLA victory; namely that it would guarantee Zaire an assured access to the Benguela railroad and possibly some preferential tariff treatment, as well as that it would allow Zaire to play "a big brother" role, by enhancing the hopes of Mobutu's leadership in Central equatorial Africa.\(^507\)

Further, Mobutu had been influenced in his Angolan strategy by the fact of the Zaire's own traumatic experience of the chaotic aftermath of its independence had been characterized by both foreign intervention as well as internal rebellion. Even after coming to power following the defeat of the secessionist leader Moise Tshombe, Mobutu had found to his dismay that his rival's strong gendarmerie forces had eluded his capture by going into exile in Angola and in the process had become a constant threat to Zaire's eastern flank. Mobutu had also been greatly concerned over the vulnerability of his mineral exports from Shaba (Katanga) to any disruption of the Benguela railway.\(^508\) There also had been two other strong compelling factors namely, a strong ambition to play the dominant role in Central and West African regions and a wish to possess or at least to control the oil-rich Cabinda enclave.

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lodged between Zaire and Congo (Brazzaville). In consonance with this strategy he had wished that an independent Angola should march as close as possible in step with Zaire, so that it should not become a threat to the kind of system which Mobutu had wished to see established in Central Africa. Secondly, Mobutu had encouraged the Cabinda separation just as Tshombe had encouraged the Katangan separatism. 509.

While analyzing Mobutu's strategy, it is worthwhile to study the dynamics of Kinshasa and Brazzaville quarrel over Cabinda or with regard to the latter's support for MPLA. As regards Cabinda, it may be mentioned that the politics of the enclave is quite complex. The enclave is situated to the north of the Congo river and is bordered by Zaire and Congo-Brazzaville. Cabinda has population of 30,000 out of which some 8000 are Europeans. Although inhabited largely by the Bakongo, Cabinda is linked demographically to Zaire, Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon. The nationalist activities in Cabinda, however, had been launched by an overtly political movement called the Mouvement de Liberation de L'Enclave de Cabinda (MLEC) as well as three ethno-associations, the Uniao Social dos Maiombes de Lualí (a local branch of Kasavubu's Abako party), the Alliance du Mayombe (Alliance, an association hostile to Kasavubu's ethnic sub-group of Mayombe), the Comunidade Cabidenes (Comcabi) as well as the Comite de Accao da Uniao Nacional de Cabinda (CAUNC) (a group of Mayombe who had split

509. Ibid.
off from MLEC in December 1961 being encouraged by Kasavubu). Until 1963 the political milieu of Cabinda had been divided among three major groups namely, the MLEC led by Luis Ranque Franque (who had been rebuffed earlier in 1958–1959 by Kasavubu for his demand of a top position in the future Zairian government and who secretly supports Mobutu) openly supported by Brazzaville, and secondly, the CAUNC led by Hernique Tiango Nzita and supported alternately by Kinshasa, Brazzaville and Gabon and thirdly, the Alliance led by Antonio Eduardo Sozinho which had alternated among its demands for annexation into Zaire, an independent Angola-Cabinda and an independent Angola-Cabinda free of all foreign domination.

In 1963 Caunc, MLEC and Alliance had merged themselves to form a single political organization called the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC). It may be stated that President Youlou had supported the FLEC as part of his design to annex Cabinda on to Congo-Brazzaville. Politics in Cabinda had also taken a new turn in December 1964 when the MPLA had begun to make military forays into Cabinda from Congo-Brazzaville. In the process it had resulted in frequent skirmishes between the MPLA and FLEC for control of the Cabindan hinterland. In 1968, a new international factor, namely, the Gulf Oil Corporation, had entered the region by pumping oil from the giant Malango deposits of Cabinda. By 1972 the new oil production had

accounted for seven eighth of Cabinda's total production. It had heralded the fact that the Gulf Oil Corporation of the United States had entered the political scene to become a major protagonist, apart from Zaire and Congo-Brazzaville in any future struggle over Cabinda. As for Mobutu's stand on Cabinda, it had been spelled out officially in a speech on 20 May 1975 in which he had stated that "Cabinda is not Angola. It is separated by Zaire." The speech, however, did not denote that Cabinda must be independent. It had merely stressed that the Cabindan people should be allowed to decide freely through a referendum as what future they would seek for themselves.

With regard to MPLA's connections with Congo (Brazzaville) and Zaire, the post-1960 period can be divided into four distinct phases namely (1) 1960-1963, (2) 1963-1966, (3) 1966-1971, (4) Since 1971. During the period from 1960 to 1963, the MPLA had been prevented from penetrating into the Angola by the conservative regimes in Brazzaville and Kinshasa, and that Neto's forces had sought to combine with the FNLA in a common strategy to gain an access into Angola. This strategy had consisted in the strengthening of its diplomatic relationship with the Communist states of Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the socialist states of Scandinavia. This move, however, had resulted in a split that had been brought about in the MPLA ranks as mentioned earlier.

512. His statement as cited in Legum and Hodges, n. 483, p. 33.
513. See Ebinger, n. 473, pp. 677-678.
The second phase had opened rather disastrously for MPLA as Prime Minister Acbulan had decided in November 1963 to close down the MPLA liaison office in Kinshasa. It had been followed by the OAU's recognition of the FNLA as the sole Angolan liberation movement in July 1964. It has been mentioned earlier that political developments in Brazzaville had undergone transformation with the ouster of Youlou government and its replacement by the radical Massamba-Debat regime. The new regime, however, had launched a major diplomatic offensive by its association with Cuba and the communist countries of Europe and East Asia. The Chinese, for instance, had started the training in subversive activities as well as for military action in Zaire, Gabon, Cameroon and Angola-Cabinda. Peking had apparently believed that the Congo-Brazzaville had provided a unique strategic base for Chinese revolutionary activities in Central Africa. Being alarmed at the Chinese efforts as well as to avoid any involvements in Sino-Soviet dispute, Massamba-Debat had begun wooing smaller communist countries, particularly Cuba. In the process by the end of 1965 the Cubans had taken over the training of the Brazzaville paramilitary units as well as most of foreign guerilla groups including the MPLA. During this period the MPLA had also suffered reverses in Cabinda owing to active hostility that had emanated from both FLEC and a splinter pro-FNLA Mayomba group which had advocated for independence within a unified Angola-Cabinda matrix under the FNLA.  

During the third phase, the dynamics of the Angolan conflict had become more complex with the pro-Chinese radical leader of MPLA, Viriato da Cruz, having joined the FNLA, and thereby had formed a curious alliance between the Chinese and the Western-backed Angolan nationalists. It may be mentioned that the United States had always tacitly supported the FNLA leader Roberto because of his links with pro-Western regimes of Adoula, Tshombe, and Mobutu in Zaire. During this period, however, the MPLA had moved its headquarters to Lusaka in Zambia, as the new government in Brazzaville under Captain Ngouabi had sought to curtail the influence of all revolutionary groups and particularly of the MPLA. The fourth phase had witnessed an attempted coup made by André Diawara in February 1972, which, however, had failed to succeed. Diawara, a hero of the Brazzaville revolution, had conducted a Mao-Tse-tung style guerrilla campaign in the forest areas of the Zaire-Congo frontier had been supported by Zaire until his death in 1973 because of Diawara's opposition to Brazzaville government as well as due to the background of his Bakongo ethnicity. Further, following the Sino-US rapprochment, a major reassessment of China's Southern Africa policy had been undertaken following the visit of Mobutu, formerly an implacable enemy of communists, to China in January 1973. It had resulted in a rapprochment between Zaire and China. But his visit had preceded an attempt made by Mobutu, Ngouabi, Julius Nyerere (Tanzania) and Kenneth

Kaunda (Zambia) in December 1972 to bring about a reconciliation between the MPLA and the FLN. This had resulted, for instance, in an accord to set up a theoretical union of the two movements under a Conseil Supreme de Liberation de Angola. This agreement, however, had collapsed in May 1974, when the FNLA had wiped out a large contingent of MPLA's forces which had made attempts to infiltrate into Angola. In the meanwhile following the Zairian-Chinese intimate links, substantial Chinese military weapons had been committed to FNLA in 1973. In June 1974, on the eve of the eruption of domestic struggle in Angola, however, an advance unit of a 112-man contingent from China led by a Major General had arrived in Zaire to train the FNLA guerrillas at the Kinkuzu military base.

Thus, on the eve of its full-length plunge into the international war in Angola, Zaire had kept a close watch and had involved itself intimately in the course of domestic developments of the Central African country from 1960 to 1974. In the process it had violated the OAU's policy which had insisted that none of the Angolan factions should be given separate recognition by the African states and that all the African and foreign powers must not interfere in Angola's internal affairs. To highlight Mobutu's complicity in the Angolan episode it may be mentioned that not only had the Zairian armed forces been used to support one of the constituents in the domestic struggle namely the FNLA, but that he had worked sincerely to persuade others in Africa as well as abroad (especially China and the US) to arm the FNLA. The story of these developments, be studied however, will in the next section.

516. For details see Ibid, pp. 680-682.

In the previous sections a detailed background to the process of decolonization in Angola have been given. It has been stated as to how the domestic struggle among the Angolan factions had escalated into an international conflagration following the Portuguese revolution in 1974. An attempt will be made in the present section to study the evolution of developments concerning the war over Angola which had continued from 1974 to 1976, involving many international actors including the United States and Zaire. It has been mentioned that apart from them, other countries namely, South Africa, China and Zambia had favoured the FNLA–UNITA combination whereas the Soviet Union, Cuba, Mozambique and Congo (Brazzaville) had supported the MPLA. The principal focus of the study, however, will be to analyze the roles played by the governments of the United States and Zaire and particularly the CIA and President Mobutu.

It may be stated by way of background to the US objectives in Angola that during the Presidency of Richard Nixon, towards the end of 1969, the National Security Council (NSC) had decided to undertake a study of the “full range of options” available to the country in respect of its policy towards Southern Africa and that in response to the NSC directive, the Inter-Department Group for Africa had suggested six options for the US government ranging from a very
substantial "tilt" towards the White regimes of Southern Africa to a similar "tilt" towards the Black liberation movements. From the subsequent course of action as adopted by President Nixon it appears that his Administration had accepted the option involving a further "tilt" towards the Portuguese colonial regimes while rejecting the option of an open identification with it. At the same time the Nixon Administration had favoured a policy that would "reduce a major irritant in the U.S. relations with Portugal and afford the Caetano government opportunity for liberalization." It may be mentioned that the tilt of the Nixon-Kissinger policy towards Portugal could be traced to the strategic military significance of the Azores base in the context of American cold war defence planning. For instance, because of their pivotal location of the Portuguese colonies, they had become economically and strategically important in certain conflict situations as military patrol aircrafts operating from these areas could effectively survey the eastern south Atlantic, the Western Indian Ocean and the seas South of the cape. These recommendations are contained in a document described as NSM 39. For details see Mohammed A. Elkhwas and Barry Cohen, eds., *The Kissinger Study of Southern Africa: National Security Memorandum* (NSM 39) (Westport, Connecticut, 1976), pp. 21-23.

See Venkataramani, n. 500, p. 136.


most mineral rich copper belts of Central Africa and also that both Angola and Mozambique had served as the strategic flanks of South Africa, the wealthiest and most powerful region in Africa and most sensitive from the point of view of US and UK policies. The strategic significance of Angola had also been highlighted in course of the Congressional hearings on Angola. Making a statement in this regard Robert Ellsworth, a spokesman of the US Defence department had pointed out that Angola "occupies a key position on the large South African peninsula astride the major South Atlantic shipping lanes, has good ports and airfields, and a relatively advanced inland transportation system". Ellsworth also had highlighted the significance of the port facilities at Luanda and Mocamedes in Angola to the US naval ships. Angolan ports and railroads are also considered important to Zaire and Zambia, as most of their foreign exchange earnings have been generated by exports of minerals which are transshipped through the Central African territory. Finally, as one US State Department had stated: "The value of Azores lay in the resupply of Israel by air in an emergency situation and has proved to be extremely important". The Arab-Israeli War in the Middle East during in 1967 and 1973 had testified to such a scenario.

524. See Venkataramni, n. 500, p. 137.
The NSSM document had possibly prompted the US policy-makers to harden their attitude in respect of Southern Africa which, however, had been marked by a change from the Kennedy and Johnson periods. The change had become evident as in January 1971 the US government had given its notice to withdraw from the UN General Assembly's Special Committee on Decolonization. This had been followed by the executive agreement signed in December 1971 by the Nixon Administration with Portugal in respect of the use of facilities in the Azores. The agreement also had been followed by a sizable aid package as well as Export-Import bank credit to Portugal to the tune of $400 millions. Hailing the agreement, the Portuguese Prime Minister Marcello Caetano had stated that the treaty had displayed "solidarity of interest between two countries" and had effectively "put an instrument of action into the hands of our American allies." These had been evident during the 1973 war in West Asia and on 18 December 1973 while visiting Lisbon Secretary of State Kissinger had expressed his warm appreciation of the role played during the war by Portugal. Kissinger had stated that Portugal had "stood by its allies during the recent difficulties and the United States is extremely grateful for that." Sensing the new mood of the US government, however, several

525. Ibid.
526. Caetano as cited in Ibid.
major American corporations had sought to enter into the field of oil exploration in Angola and that in March 1974 the Portuguese government had announced its decision to grant concessions to Exxon as well as to a consortium consisting of Cities Service, Sun Oil, Amerada Hess Corporation in this regard.

Such warm appreciation from the US government, however, had come to an abrupt end with the military coup in Portugal held on 25 April 1974. The military government headed by General Spinola had taken the decision to liberate the Portuguese colonies in Africa including Angola. With this decision American policy-makers had started keeping a close watch on the evolution of domestic developments in Angola and especially with regard to the domestic struggle for power that had ensued between the FNLA, MPLA and the UNITA. In the scenario of uncertainty that prevailed the US government had possibly requisitioned the services of the CIA to keep a close watch over the situation. The CIA, on its own part, had decided to act through its faithful ally of the United States in Central Africa namely Mobutu who had been extremely keen for intervention in Angola.

It may be worthwhile to mention that Mobutu had been greatly concerned over the sudden revival of Soviet interest in Angola following the Portuguese revolution in 1974.

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528. Ibid, p.137.
well as the powerful backing it had received from the Portuguese Communist party had contributed to a new dimension in the Angolan situation. For instance, in 1973 following the split in the MPLA ranks, the Soviet Union had appeared to be supporting Daniel Chipenda as against Neto. But with Chipenda switching over to the FNLA ranks along with his loyalist forces, the situation had transformed dramatically with the USSR rallying once again behind Neto and his MPLA. With this sudden turn of events Mobutu's objectives thereafter had been to prevent the extension of Soviet influence on his borders because of his own experience of Soviet interventions in Zaire during 1960-1961 and 1964-1965. In the prevailing situation also Mobutu had sought to convince the western powers (principally the United States) as well as the anti-communist states in Africa (principally South Africa) that they all had a common interest in keeping the Soviet Union out of Africa. During his visit to Peking in 1973 he seemed to have impressed upon the Chinese leaders with this line of argument.

In the period following the Portuguese revolution in 1974, US policy towards the Angolan crisis seems to have been influenced by four major determinants namely, to avoid any new major foreign involvement reflecting the post-Vietnam mood of the country as well as the Congress, to deny any significant political or military gains to the Russians in Africa, to support American friends in Africa, and especially President Mobutu of Zaire and to defend an important American

economic interest in Angola, namely, the Gulf Oil in Cabinda.\footnote{531} In consonance with these objectives, the US government and the CIA had launched its covert operations in Angola through the agency of Mobutu beginning in July 1974. The CIA operative John Stockwell testifies to this effect in his book "In Search of Enemies".\footnote{532}

It has been stated earlier that ever since 1962 Mobutu had provided sanctuary as well as training facilities to the FNLA forces of Roberto and had been backed by the United States. In fact, the Zairian government's own concern with Angolan events seemed to have blossomed in the early 1960s when it had served as the instrument and willing adjunct of US-Angolan policy. It has been mentioned in this connection that Roberto had received from the CIA $10,000 per year from 1962 onwards until 1969 and also that during this period the CIA had provided to Roberto some arms which, however, had been transferred and made a purchase by Zaire.\footnote{533} Further, it is mentioned that when CIA support for Roberto had declined after 1969, Mobutu had himself taken up the burden of assistance by supplying weapons, recruitment and training. In April 1972, the Zairian army had put down a revolt against Roberto at the main military base in Kinkuzu and also following this development, at Mobutu's apparent initiative, more than 1000 Zairian regulars had entered the war in northern Angola alongside FNLA. Mobutu had further...

\footnote{531} Ibid, p.576.  
\footnote{532} See Stockwell, n.140, pp.66-67.  
provided both financial and diplomatic support to ELEC, a cabin dan faction seeking self-determination. At the same time Zaire had continued to be a funnel for the CIA operation in Angola. In the words of the New York Times analyst Leslie Gelb, "A major reason for American involvement in Angola was to maintain good relations with President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, the man on whom Secretary of State Kissinger is banking to oppose Moscow's interest in Africa and to further Washington's interests in various international forums." It may be mentioned that according to former CIA Director William Colby, Zaire would become "a future regional big power" like Iran, Brazil and Indonesia and according to a highly-placed State Department official, there was a "thrust" to bolster Mobutu's Zaire "in the hope that it could extend its hegemony throughout the continent." According to the New York Times the Secretary of State was reportedly banking on Mobutu "to oppose Moscow's interests" in Africa generally and "to further Washington's interests in various international forums", particularly in those where the United States had been assailed by the Third World forces.

It may be mentioned that the CIA's covert support to Roberto via Mobutu had begun in July 1974 in the background of a US-Zairian deteriorating relationship which,

534. For details see statement of Stephen R. Weissman to the Congressional Hearings on Angola, n. 492, p. 109.
however, had witnessed a high watermark in their bilateral relationship from 1969 to 1973 largely due to the personal efforts made by the incumbent US Ambassador namely, Sheldon Vance. His replacement Deane Hinton, who had arrived in early July, could not establish cordial rapport with Mobutu. It is reported that the new ambassador's bluntness in expressing apprehensions about the direction of the radicalization program of the regime had angered Mobutu bitterly. As for Mobutu, against the in course of a speech made in January 1975 he had stigmatized the American policy in Africa as "a policy of status quo" and had stated that the US "had done nothing for the liberation of Africa", and in certain cases "had even worked against African interests". He had further deplored the nomination of Nathaniel Davis, a former ambassador to Chile as Assistant Secretary for Africa. A virtual rupture in Zaire's diplomatic relationship with the United States had been signalled in June 1975 when Mobutu had accused the CIA of plotting for his overthrow and even for his "physical elimination". This allegation had been accompanied by arrest of eleven Zairian officers and some civilians, which according to the diplomatic circles, had not been established convincingly. As for the US Ambassador, Mobutu had decided for his expulsion.

538. See Turner and Young, n. 296, p. 372.
539. For details see Davis, n. 501, pp. 102-214.
It is reported that Secretary of State Kissinger had felt greatly irritated by Mobutu's rupturing relationship with Israel and his attacks on American policy and its ambassador as well as the appointment of Davis as Assistant Secretary. But in view of the situation that the US had been moving along the path to a major covert intervention in the Angolan situation it had probably felt constrained to improve its relationship with Mobutu. With this perspective in mind probably the US government had not made any loud protest over the removal of Ambassador Hinton. Instead it had designated a new Ambassador to Zaire namely, Walter Cutler probably with Mobutu's approval. It is worthwhile to mention that former Ambassador Sheldon Vance had visited Zaire during this period in his new capacity as the Under Secretary of State. In fact, Vance had helped to repair the relationship, and as a result of which the charge of a CIA plot had dissolved.

During this period the US government had made inquiries into the CIA activities by an Executive Commission headed by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller as well as through a Congressional Committee headed by Senator Frank Church (Democrat, Idaho). In view of the allegations made in African circles linking Mobutu with the CIA assassination plots against Patrice Lumumba it is possible to surmise that the Zarian general might have felt particularly concerned about exposure that might arise concerning his association with the plots.

541. See Turner and Young, n. 296, p. 373.
It may be mentioned that clandestine aid to the FNLA had been resumed as early as July 1974 within months of the coup in Lisbon in response to strong pressures from Mobutu. The CIA station chiefs in Zaire namely, Lawrence Devlin (who had been involved in the military coup of 1965) and later on James Kim had continued to furnish Mobutu with "intelligence" regarding both African and internal political developments, and both of whom had always exercised considerable influence on him. It is further reported that in August 1974, alarmed by a sharp increase in Soviet and Cuban military support for Neto, Mobutu had sent his own Foreign Minister to Washington to warn the Americans about it and to ask for help. In fact, the Congolese Minister had arrived just as President Nixon had been resigning and that Gerald Ford was being sworn in as the next President. But despite the confusion it had been reported that Secretary of State Kissinger had assured the Zairian Minister that the US would build up the anti-Soviet forces in Angola.

Stockwell claimed that in July 1974, the CIA had begun funding Roberto without approval from the "40 Committee" a Committee of the NSC which had been charged with overseeing the covert activities, which, however, had increased substantially later. It may be stated further that this

542. See Weissman, CIA Covert Action, n. 497, pp. 273-274.
543. See Kalb, n. 304, p. 382.
funding had continued until in January 1975 when the "40 committee" had authorized stipend to Roberto nominally for political action to buy bicycles and paper clips, etc. In addition to the CIA payments from mid 1974, Roberto had also been receiving arms from the Zairian stocks, which Mobutu had been promised to be replaced by the Americans in due course. It was further reported by Stockwell that out of the huge CIA transfer of money earmarked for Roberto and Savimbi, Mobutu had only pocketed a huge amount to the tune of $1,376,000 and that the same had been utilized to settle debts incurred during the course of the Angolan war. It had been maintained by Stockwell, however, that there was little that the CIA could do about this because of the fear that Mobutu might make his original arrangements with the US public and thereby embarrass the agency. While Mobutu's commitments had the US blessings, the Kissinger, however, in course of his 'testimony' before the Senate Sub Committee on Africa had denied American involvement and had stated that the US had received such a request for support from Angolan elements in autumn 1974 but had turned them down. Kissinger, however, had admitted the authorization of a secret payment of $300,000 by the "40 Committee to Roberto in January 1975. With the increase in Soviet military supplies to the MPLA, the CIA covert fundings had also soared upwards. This programme modestly valued by the CIA at $31 million had begun with an air and sea-lift of arms from US depots routed via Zaire and then transferred.

546. See Stockwell, n. 140, p. 57.  
to Roberto as well as Savimbi. The Congressional Select Committee on Intelligence headed by Senator Church in its report on CIA activities submitted on 19 January 1976 had admitted the same by stating that "for reasons not altogether clear and despite opposition of senior government officials, the US has been heavily involved in the current civil war in Angola." In mid July 1975 Kissinger had requested the Congress to vote a $79 million emergency and programme for Zaire, mainly intended to provide arms for FNLA. The Ford Administration had funnelled a total of fifty sixty million dollars worth of arms and support funds to the anti-MPLA faction in Angola, which had been channelized through Zaire. It may be mentioned further that the CIA Director had proposed a much larger covert military aid for Roberto and for Savimbi who had been receiving assistance also from South Africa. But this had touched off a major debate within the Administration. By mid-summer 1975, however the hardliners had prevailed and that Nathaniel Davis, who joined recently as Assistant Secretary for Africa, had submitted his resignation after Kissinger had overruled his recommendation that the US should seek a peaceful solution to the crisis through diplomatic measures. But the Administration had to face virulent criticism from the Congressional quarters with regard to the CIA's covert operation.

To continue the sequence of developments it may be mentioned that the CIA had sought to brief key members of the Congress belonging to the Senate Foreign Relation Committee, Special Sub Committee on Intelligence of the House Armed Services Committee, Defence Sub Committee of the House Appropriation Committee, Sub Committee of the oversight of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Intelligence Operations Sub Committee of the Senate Appropriation Committee, Sub Committee on Africa of Senate Foreign Relations Committee and that Secretary of State Kissinger as well as important members of the State Department had also participated in such briefings. At a close door session of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, CIA Director William Colby and Under Secretary of State Joseph Sisco had also defended the US position firmly. The Administration had also sought cooperation from friendly members of Congress such as Senator Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman of the Sub Committee on Foreign Operations for its efforts towards an increased assistance to Zaire.

On 24 October 1975 the Sub Committee on of the Senate Committee on Africa of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations had held a hearings for security and supporting assistance to Zaire. Despite questioning by Senators Hubert

551. For details see Congressional Hearings on Angola, n. 492, pp. 21-22.
552. See Venkataramni, n. 500, pp. 159-160.
Humphrey and Dick Clark, prominent members of the Sub Committee the three officials of State Department (who had testified) had mentioned nothing about the channeling of covert assistance to FNLA and UNITA.

The members of the Congress had voiced their strong concern with regard to the CIA operation in Angola. They had included, Senators Edward Kennedy (Democrat, Massachusetts), Strom Thurmond (Republican, South Carolina) Robert Griffin (Democrat, Michigan), Robert Sikes (Republican, Florida) Hubert Humphrey (Democrat, Minnesota), Robert S. Byrd (Democrat, West Virginia), Dick Clark (Democrat, Iowa) and Representatives Don Bonker (Democrat, Washington), Shirley Chisholm (New York), Andrew Young (Democrat, Georgia), Edward J. Derwinsky (Republican, Illinois), Alphonzo Bell (California) and that the Administration's defense of its position had been spelled out through statements made by Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Nathaniel Davis and by his successor William E. Schuylfer, Jr, in August 1975 by Edward W. McAlary, Acting Assistant Secretary for Africa on 1 December 1975, and by the Secretary of State Kissinger on 1 December 1975, 6 November 1975, 24 November 1975, and 15 December 1975. Later at a news conference on 23 December 1975 he had stoutly defended the Administration's stand on Angola. Despite these briefings as well as strong lobbying in

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554. See Congressional Hearings on Angola, n. 492, pp. 159-160.
the Congress by the Administration, the US Senate had refused to appropriate more funds to aid the pro-Western faction in Angola. Also, on 27 January 1976 despite a last minute appeal by President Ford himself, the House of Representatives had voted by 323 to 99 to ban covert military aid to Angola.557

To end the story it may be mentioned that on the day scheduled for independence in Angola (11 November 1975) there was proclamation of two rival governments, one in the capital city of Luanda by Neto described as the People's Republic of Angola (PRA) and by Roberto in Ambizu called the Democratic Popular Republic of Angola (DPRA). Further, the UNITA under Savimbi had announced that he would merge himself under UNITA-ENLA government to be established soon in Huambo (Nova Lisboa). It may be mentioned that while the MPLA government had been recognised by a large number of Afro-Asian states apart from the Soviet Union and Cuba, no foreign government and not even the United States and Zaire had come forward to recognise the Huambo government.558

As the year 1976 opened, the Zairian soldiers had returned home from Angola defeated, despirited and disgraced also. Towards the far end of the course of the war (November-December 1975) it had been discovered that Mobutu's troops were absolutely no match to the highly disciplined Cuban troops supporting the MPLA forces. Further, the Cuban-MPLA combination

557. See Legum and Hodges, After Angola, n. 488, pp. 56-57.
558. Ibid. p. 557.
had been provided with the latest as well as the most sophisticated Soviet weapons. Thus, in January 1976, the Zairian soldiers had returned home after battling on Roberto's side unsuccessfully and by suffering a series of crushing as well as ignominious defeats. By this time also further resistance to the MPLA in Angola had collapsed following a series of defeats suffered by the UNITA and the FNLA troops. As for Mobutu, the Angolan adventures had cost him too dearly, because not only had the intervention dashed all his grandiose ambitions to become a great "regional power" in Central Africa, but also that the consequences of the operation had driven him towards a new situation namely, the Crisis in Shaba. The origins of the crisis, however, will be studied in the next chapter.