CHAPTER IV

AFRICAN LEADERS' RESPONSE TO
THE SHABA CRISSES
The Francophone African leaders demonstrated deep concern for Mobutu, as they were themselves vulnerable to destabilization. "A peep into the history of decolonization shows that the French decolonization has been a will-o'-the-wisp. France transferred power to its proteges who were 'sons of soil' just in colour, but not in culture, sentiment and aspiration. Their regimes could strike no roots in the hearts and hopes of general masses. They could not stand shorn of the susceptibility to 'subversive machinations' of the indigenous forces which yearned to give vent to the pent up feelings of the masses who were exposed to more exploitation and repression perpetrated by the 'black' sovereign leaders in the aftermath of the emancipation. Besides, these forces were inspired and assisted by external radical elements, flinging the French speaking African leaders in a state of constant jeopardy. These leaders could not survive without the French military dialysis and they had to sign the dotted lines of defence accords with France that could be easily interpreted to render legitimacy to all French interventions in the domestic affairs of the African states."[1]

Actually, the Shaba crises were reduced to the syndrome of East-West rivalry in Africa. Zaki Zaidi writes :"The Western camp would support Zaire, while the Katangans would be manipulated by Moscow, Havana, and Luanda....President Senghor, reviving the geo-political axiom of Lenin following which that who will dominate Africa, will dominate the world, did not

1. International Meridian, May 1, 1984; pp. 28-29.
hesitate in declaring: 'the world war broke out in 1975 in Angola'.[2] Their panic further increased due to Mobutu's hue and cry about the alleged Soviet conspiracy to destabilize him and other moderate African regimes. President Mobutu remarked in the wake of Shaba II that: "the African continent is actually the object of a veritable ideological aggression."[3] China also added to the fears of the moderate African leaders. It accused that the Soviet Union instigated "large numbers of mercenaries for a flagrant violation of Zaire" and encroached upon the Zairian "independence and territorial integrity."[4] The apprehensions haunting these leaders could not be ignored. The rebels' victory in Zaire could expose many of the Francophone states to similar perils.

Galen Hull throws light on the raison-d'etre of their support for Mobutu when he writes: "If there is one issue that galvanized the moderate African states in support of Mobutu and stilled criticism of his detractors, it is the threat to national integrity perceived in the 'invasion' (Shaba). Virtually every African state has its own potential Biafras and Katangas, ethnic and regional cleavages, differences of ideology and class. There is the ever present danger of the government in power succumbing to a coup d'etat or social revoluion. Even the leader of the militant front line states President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, limited his criticism to chiding the French for interference.

in the internal affairs of Zaire."[5]

Jacques Vernant also writes: "The... moderate African regimes, those of Ivory Coast and Senegal in particular, appreciated likewise their own interests: the fall of President Mobutu could have the signal of a sort of chain-crises affecting, according to the 'theory of dominos', all the states of the region. The Soviet-Cuban intervention in Angola had, in effect, constituted for all these States a shock from which they had still not recovered. For them the spectre of such intervention looms behind every menace of internal trouble."[6]

Even the French President, Giscard d'Estaing, said that in the event of the triumph of the Shabans "a score of African leaders contending with centrifugal forces would be confronted with a nasty precedent."[7]

During Shaba I, Morocco evinced great readiness in coming to the aid of Mobutu. Mobutu's foreign minister called on King Hassan II on March 25, 1977 and apprised him of his country's ordeals. Fathoming the gravity of the situation the Moroccan King decided to assist Zaire in its war efforts and provided 15,000 troops from his Forces Armee Royales.[8] These troops were "no ordinary ones, mind you, but crack forces with experience in battling the Polisario Front."[9]

These soldiers, under the command of Colonel Loubaris, were

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airlifted by the French aircraft to Kolwezi. Their advent boosted the morale of President Mobutu. Within days the Moroccan troops and the Zairian army launched a massive combined counter-attack on April 14 against the FLNC forces, and they succeeded in taking back one by one all the major towns previously captured by General Mbumba's forces. Such success inculcated great hope in the desperate Zairian President. "He quickly recovered from the very low point to which his fortunes had sunk while the former Katangan gendarmes were advancing. Even as the fighting continued, the presence of the Moroccan troops enabled the president to sidestep, to some extent, the Zairian army and to keep his remaining paratroops units with him in Kinshasa ready, if need be, to deal with any sudden upsurge of discontent in any of the larger towns or the more crisis-prone provinces like Kivu."[10]

Such promptness and willingness on the part of Morocco to intervene in the Shaba crisis stemmed from its perception of the crisis as a new Soviet threat in Africa. King Hassan II also saw an affinity between his own immediate tribulations with the Polisario rebels in the Sahara and Mobutu's bouts with the erstwhile Katangan gendarmes. "Both were believed to have Cuban support, to be part of a grand Soviet design to weaken Western Europe by controlling its key minerals in Africa."[11] The king repeatedly accused that Cuba had been sending even soldiers to fight side by side with the Polisario Front. "When therefore, Mobutu claimed that the Shaba invasion had been masterminded by

10. Ogunbadejo. n.b.

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Angola and the Cubans were fighting actively with the FLNC, Rabat saw a conspiracy of the Angola-Cuba-Soviet alliance against moderate states in Africa."[12]

King Hassan II attempted to offer rationalizations for his decision to bail out the beleagured Zairian leader. He remarked that he felt as if he were in the same situation as President Eisenhower of the USA, when he sent the Marines to Lebanon in 1958. He claimed that all would have been lost in Zaire if he had not acted within forty-eight hours.[13]

Some militant African states denounced Morocco's entanglement in a conflict which they saw as having nothing to with Rabat. Besides, they were more enraged at the Rabat support for a head of state like Mobutu who was reactionary to them.[14] However, the Moroccan government asserted that it had not deviated from its past policies over conflicts in Arab and African states. It emphasized that it was not supporting the regime of any individual in Zaire, but the state itself just as it had supported Syria as a state against Israel. Moreover, Rabat had never questioned (nor had the UN or OAU charters so directed) the degree of honesty or democracy practised by the regimes ruling the states susceptible to the menaces of invasion. It contended that if the degree of honesty or democracy constituted the criterion for support, very few states would qualify for it. Lastly, Morocco queried why no eyebrows were raised when countries like Morocco extended support to the Nigerian federal government during their civil war at a time when foreigners were

12. Ogunbadejo, n.8; p.228.
14. Ogunbadejo;
also hobnobbing with the secessionists or why such a complaint had not been lodged against the support for the Kasavubu administration in what was then the Congo, when such a regime hardly possessed any democratic traits or could be hardly characterized as even honest.\[15\] Despite such rationalizations it cannot be gainsaid that "in taking the lead among African states in support of Mobutu, Hassan hoped to deflect world-opinion away from his own domestic problems and to enhance his standing among moderates."\[16\]

In addition to Morocco, the African states, greatly supportive of Mobutu, were Egypt and Sudan. In case of Egypt, for instance, once the Sadat regime resolved to intervene, it moved into action swiftly. President Sadat despatched fifty Egyptian pilots and technicians to Zaire, and they manned the French built Mirage jets of the Zairian air force throughout the conflict.

Oye Ogunbadejo says that "Cairo's involvement in the Shaba crisis seemed rather interesting. Why, for instance, should it intervene in such a crisis when it had its own persistent problem with Israel? In a sense, it did so because of the wider politics of the Middle East conflict itself. The Soviets, it must be remembered, had been a major irritant to Anwar Sadat over that conflict. Thus, Sadat seemed intent upon embarrassing the Soviets at every convenient moment. Because he thought they were behind the Shaba problem, he decided to join the conflict. Like the French, he, too, pointed an accusing finger at the USSR's expansionist threat in Africa, citing Moscow's influence in Libya\[15\] Ogunbadejo, n.8; p.228.\[16\] Hull, n.5; p.8.'
and the Soviet inspired Ethiopian attack on the Sudan. The Egyptian leader also gave two further rationalizations for his policy. First, he argued that since an attack on Zaire could be regarded as an attack on the source of the Nile, and thus a threat to Egypt's national security, he could not fold his arms as an interested bystander. Second, the president recalled that Mobutu had originally been a paratrooper trained in Israel and that Zaire had been that country's base and ally in Africa. However, by the summer of 1973 Mobutu had ordered the Israeli Military Mission out of Kinshasa and by October 4, 1973, had broken off diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv, openly embracing the Arab cause in the Middle East conflict. Given such a warm pro-Arab policy by the Zairian government, President Sadat contended, his administration had no other honourable option than to reciprocate Mobutu's gesture, and it did so at this opportunity in joining the conflict."[17]

Even Idi Amin flew to Zaire to console Mobutu against the 'Cuban-trained and Soviet-equipped Katangan guerrillas.' "Field Marshall Amin's much heralded 'suicide squad' - never too strong on recruitment appeal - was even promised."[18] Among other African states, the moderate Francophone states, all came out in support for the Mobutu regime. But "such moral support is nice to have but as Stalin asked about His Holiness the Pope, 'How many troops does he command?'. The black African leaders commanded few and real help had to come from afar."[19] In fact, it was these states, which had been panic-stricken about the

17. Ogunbadejo, n.8; p.227.
19. Ibid;
Soviet threat, that persuaded France to grapple with the situation. [20] Key French allies in Africa, Senegal and Ivory Coast vigorously lobbied for the rescue of Mobutu and as a consequence Giscard dispatched 11 planes to ferry the Moroccans and several French officers to supervise the dramatic venture. [21]

As a matter of fact, since early March 1977 when the FLNC attacked the Shaba province, "at the Quai-d'Orsay and more often directly at the Elysee, telephone calls, messages, letters arrive from the 'moderate' and francophone Africa, Senghor and Houphouet-Boigny at the head, with Angola and Cuba in the anthem, and the USSR in the verse: 'I am disturbed; I am pessimistic; the Americans have deserted us; what would we do if they reach us?'" [22]

Alarmed by the Shaba I crisis the moderate states led by President Houphouet-Boigny of Ivory Coast and Senghor of Senegal, decided to coordinate their defence activities with that of France in a bid considered likely to counter the threat of communism. "The two chiefs of Africa, called moderate, that is to say, the friends of the Western powers, President Senghor and President Houphouet Boigny, evoke the spectre of a Sovietization of Africa. Encircling the continent Moscow enjoys the influence in Libya, Guinea, Benin, Congo, Angola, Ethiopia and even Somalia, in addition to its influence in Algeria, Mali, Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania." [23]

20. Ogunbadejo, n.8; p.229.
They, at the fourth Franco-African summit, convened in Dakar in April 1977, at the climax of Shaba I, warmly approved the French airlift of Moroccan troops and French military supplies to Zaire, and even demonstrated support for the proposals of some sort of French military defense for themselves.[24] In Dakar President Giscard gave the slogan of 'Africa for the Africans.' The crux of the slogan, according to the French Foreign Minister, Louis de Guiringaud, was that Africans must be able to sort out their differences among themselves without the "interference of foreign powers lacking ties with Africa, and who try to introduce ideologies alien to the continent."[25]

Le Figaro reported that "the Shaba conflict becomes a burning problem at the summit of Dakar. The Senegalese government mobilizes the opinion. It estimates that the Euro-African cooperation should not exclude the military cooperation. They envisage even the constitution of a common African military force, with the aid of France, capable of facing any aggression. This proposition is not acceptable to all of the francophone countries."[26]

The radical states were not so supportive about the Mobutu regime. One group, comprising Libya and Algeria opposed the interventionist roles of Morocco and Egypt and remained hostilely neutral. \[ "In Algeria, it is considered that the involvement of Paris in a conflict at first, limited to the Zairian frontiers, is susceptible to accentuate the intervention of the Western

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24. Ogunbadejo, n.8; p.223.
powers in the region.\[27\] Some like Zambia and Tanzania openly condemned the Zairian leader's strategy of intentionally internationalizing the conflict. One state, Nigeria, claiming that it was so requested by Angola and Zaire, played a mediatory role. It blamed France of improper interference in Africa's internal affairs.\[28\]

The Organization of African Unity [OAU], as the pan-African political institution, was shackled by its own internal rules of jurisdiction - non-interference in the domestic affairs of member states. But as the conflict intensified, the postures of the organization's chairman and secretary-general varied. In the initial stage, Sir Seewosagur Ramgoolam, the Mauritian prime minister and the 1977 chairman of the OAU decried the invasion of Shaba as "an abusive interference in the internal affairs (of Zaire) and a flagrant violation of the OAU charter," and appealed to African states to "avoid internationalizing an internal problem", and warned more sternly that "any positions contrary to this fundamental principle created extremely dangerous implications for international peace and involved the risk of compromising the internal stability and unity of the OAU."\[29\] But later on he switched his stand and supported, in very strong terms, Mobutu's internationalization of the conflict. Sir Seewosagar's volte-face could be imputed to the fact that he, as a moderate, perceived the Soviet expansionist menace, "considered by other moderate African states in diagnosing

\[27\] Agence Algerie Presse Service, April 10, 1977.
\[29\] Sunday Times, April 10, 1977.
the crisis as real."[30]

On the contrary, the OAU secretary-general, Eteki Mboumou, remained firmly committed to the non-interference article of the OAU charter from the very inception of the crisis. "Although he later went to Kinshasa, and after meticulously gathering information from various sources, wrote up a report, his verdict remained very much the same: the Shaba affair was essentially an internal problem of Zaire." [31] This report earned the wrath of President Mobutu who, at the first closed session of the 1977 OAU summit, held in Libreville, Gabon, lambasted the secretary-general for the report and accused him of "intellectual dishonesty " for remarking that it was difficult to view the Shaba crisis as anything other than an internal affair.[32]

The Shaba II was a major crisis. The moderate African leaders stood by Mobutu, and exerted pressure upon President Giscard to send his Force d'intervention to checkmate the FLNC guerrillas. One author is skeptical about the purpose of the "fortuitous presence of President Senghor at the Elysee," at the time of the French intervention in Zaire, and surmises that this coincidence was not accidental, but had deeper ramifications, particularly in view of the Francophone leader's anxiety about the growing Marxist influence in Africa."[33]

President Senghor had arrived in Paris on May 17, 1978 at the time when the preparation to launch military intervention in Shaba was in full swing..."In the parlour of honour at the Orly

30. Ogunbadejo, n.8; p.233.
31. Ibid;
32. Africa, no.72, August 1977; p.25.
Airport, the first words of the African 'sage' are with regard to denouncing the destabilization of the black continent: 'In these crucial years for it, Africa is passing one of the gravest tests of its sad History, under the form of 'aggressions stemming from abroad.' The second war of Shaba, this Wednesday May 17, is its most painful illustration.'[34]

It is also contended that France was itself determined to intervene in Shaba to protect the Mobutu regime, but it needed the moral support of its African allies to cope with the reactions of the 'recalcitrant' progressive regimes of Africa, particularly on the eve of the impending Franco-African summit in Paris. Cherif Rachid says that one of the measures to cushion the French act in Shaba was to "lead President Leopold, who arrived on May 17, on an official visit to France, to support the French intervention in order to influence or neutralize other chiefs of States, who were in Paris for the Franco-African summit of May 22-23."[35]

President Senghor enjoyed respect among the moderate African leaders and as well nurtured strong allegiance to France. Christian Hoche writes: "Spokesman of moderate Africa, unrelenting critic of the Soviet-Cuban aggression the 'breeding ground of intrigues' that had come to characterize Africa, the Senegalese President can only listen favourably to the propositions - or the Elysien suggestions." He further writes:"M. Leopold Sedar Senghor assures the President (Giscard). He is convinced that there would be no denunciation or accusation, in

the conference of Hall of the Avenue Kleber. Only just, he thinks, some harrowing whisperings...."[36] Ironically, the decision to intervene militarily in Shaba on the 'humanitarian ground' crystallized at a 'top secret' meeting of Western powers in London during the 18th May night when President Senghor was engrossed in the comedy "Le Triomphe de l'amour" of Marivaux, being played by the comedians of Theatre-France in Paris in his honour. [37]

President Senghor, later on, expressed his approval of the French action in Zaire. He stated on May 19, 1978 at the Elysee palace in Paris that: "We are assisting in Shaba in the way similar to that of last year..."[38] and declared: "I have always approved the French interventions whenever they took place in order to succour the African friends attacked from outside."[39] Even President Eyadema of Togo declared that "France has the right to intervene if a country, with which it has accords, asks for."[40] The Togolese head of State asserted that in case of aggression against his country he would not hesitate at all in demanding the French military help in conformity with the Franco-Togo defence pact. General Eyadema thought that: "Africa is threatened. What has actually happened in Zaire should not only concern the Zairians alone, but the entire Africa. We should do something to ward off such situation, because yesterday it was Chad, today Zaire, and we do not know which African state would be menaced tomorrow."[41]

37. Ibid; p.132.
39. Ibid;
40. & 41. Ibid;
But the French intervention in Zaire also stirred virulent reactions, mainly from the Algerian President, M. Boumediene who condemned "this new French colonialism, invited by certain African governments." He held that the principal objective of such 'colonialism' was "not humanitarian problems, but rather the battle for the petrol, the primary materials, the rare resources....It is the case in Chad, in Mauritania and especially in Zaire."[42]

In an editorial the Arabic Algerian journal "An Nas R" bitterly criticized the Mobutu regime. It commented: "What actually unfolds in the province of Shaba is a flare of popular redress against a corrupt regime which has sold the riches of its country to the multinational societies at the moment...Scores of Zairians die of hunger and misery....Whatever it may be in short or long term, the regime of Kinshasa will be, indeed, whatever that is with the military, economic, or financial aid which would be supplied to it by the west."[43]

Besides, this time Morocco was not inclined to send troops to Zaire. It is believed that Morocco was too much involved in the Sahara imbroglio that it could not afford to spare its soldiers, particularly the expeditionary corps. The Le Monde correspondent at Rabat, Louis Gravier, threw light on this issue. He wrote: "Morocco, in opposite to what happened in 1977 when it had sent an expeditionary corps with the aid of the Transall of the French army does not intend this time, to bear alone the weight of the intervention....the Moroccan participation in the

kingdom's budget, while, since last year, the military support in both and materials to Mauritania had increased. The king considers, nevertheless, primordial of not tolerating any assault that can be launched against the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the African states, whichever they may be, because of the consequences that may have for the stability of the continent. Two Moroccan officers took off for Kinshasa for the mission of information."[44]

While the Shaba II conflict was in full flare, the fifth Franco-African summit was held in Paris on May 22-23, 1978. Here also the slogan of 'Africa for the Africans' continued to pervade. Tracing the genesis of the slogan West Africa magazine wrote:“One of the current catchphrases in international relations is 'Africa for the Africans'. It is less ponderous than 'new international economic order' but nevertheless carries an equal amount of global significance. For behind this neat slogan is the sorry spectacle of African countries wrestling with their own internal and neighbourhood problems... Far from being a new entry in the political lexicon, the slogan 'Africa for the Africans' sneaks out of the graveyard of Africa's independence, and inflating itself on the so called 'ideological' battlefield, becomes a talisman, most often for the 'moderate' regimes haunted by the 'red spectre' stalking over Africa. Since colonialism brought Africa into the community of 'free nations', since the United States began to extend its 'aid' to patches of Africa, and since nearly all black African countries institutionalized their 'cultural, historical' and economic links with Europe in the

form of the Lome convention, the only foreign intervention worth talking about for many leaders has been from the communist countries, guilty, needless to say, of trespassing."[45]

President Mobutu also attended this summit. Hence, it was quite natural that the idea of pan-African security should have got priority. The moderate African leaders proposed the idea for creation of a pan-African military force in order to provide for the military security of the Shaba province and to be used for similar assignments in other African countries.

Philippe Decraene wrote: The questions of defence and security will occupy a predominant place in the agenda of the fifth Franco-African conference. These questions had been already largely entered up at the time of the preceding conference, last year in Dakar, during the first French intervention in Shaba... Once more the setting up of finally an African force of intervention could be evoked as well as the preparation of a pact of common defence enabling to cope with foreign aggression... The accords of military cooperation, often accompanied by the accords of defence, bind a certain number of African States to France. But already since several years, the idea of organizing a true system of collective defence has been gradually on the way."[46]

President Omar Bongo of Gabon and Gnassinghe Eyadema of Togo vehemently advocated this idea, claiming to express the fears of the African leaders about "the wave of violence that actually breaks out on the black continent."[47] President Bongo remarked:"It is not too much to state that all the truly

47. Ibid;
civilized countries must fly to our aid to preserve Africa from these ills." He said that nothing could justify assassination, genocide, or massacre, and asserted that the entire African continent was the victim of a "vast subversive exercise intended to overthrow the geo-political balance"... different African countries were "solicited on all sides by ideologies which are strange to them."[48] He also said that the African nations were inevitably turning towards those of their friends who would honour agreements and supply them with the material and human resources of which they are in dearth. He stressed the need for a constant dialogue to be maintained between Africa and Europe on this count.[49] The Togolese President, while addressing the summit, said: "It means to pull Africa out of the chaos which menaces it, just as it implies that we will have to consider with the most unceasing attention the other aspect of the right of the collective security which is disarmament."[50]

Nevertheless, the idea of a pan-African military force did not win the sympathy of many Francophone leaders. They argued that since "this idea was especially supported by France...this was responsible for attaching the stigma of being an instrument of Western policy to the planned pan-African military force. For this reason, it would also have exacerbated intra-African differences if it had been created."[51] Simon Malley of 'Afrique-Asie' news magazine echoed the genuine concerns of several African leaders when he bluntly wrote: "Remains one last

49. Ibid;
50. Le Monde, n.38.
question, crucial, to which Hassan, Senghor, Bongo and their accomplices will have, sooner or later, to answer before the African peoples. In the name of which perverse principles do they wish to send troops to kill the Africans who have committed no other crime than desiring to exercise their right of revolt against a dictatorial, corrupt, unpopular, discredited and bloody regime? This ardour of advocacy for war should rather find its application in the fight against the principal menace for the whole of Africa. Pretoria and Salisbury, whose racist troops massacre Namibians, Zimbabweans, Angolans, Mozambicans, Zambians....Rather than being loaded with shame for going to exterminate their brothers at the insistence of the 'Marseillaise' (French anthem) in order to safeguard the intolerable privileges of the compradore bourgeois class and Western multinationals, could not the African combatants enter the battle field of honour for achieving the liberation of their continent? And for fighting against all the attempts of direct recolonisation or hypocritical destabilization, so numerous in Africa? Is the day, when the African leaders who hide under the covers of the Giscardian banner, should have to give accounts to their peoples, as far as they think it? Do they imagine that the politics of paras and mercenaries, even if it is today supported by a China whose regime seems to have rejoined the camp of counter-revolutionaries, goes to assure their impunity and perennity? This illusion of future has no more future than their illusions." [52]

President M. Seyni Kountche of Niger doubted the very
feasibility of the project and remarked: "my point of view has not changed since the fourth Franco-African conference held last year in Dakar. I consider this project premature because before constituting such a force, it is indispensable that each State of Africa reorganizes and in case of need, reinforces its national army. This constitutes a priority objective. It is necessary to place oneself in a state to riposte effectively before soliciting foreign help. I add that, for the reasons of the will to guard secret certain informations of military character, I do not see how the leaders would consent to place their troops under a common command." [53] Colonel Traore, the head of state of Mali declared that "the problems of security in Africa should and can be treated only within a bilateral framework or exclusively within an African framework." [54]

Even some African leaders did not whole-heartedly approve the French action in Shaba II. Cherif Rachid of Afrique-Asie quotes an African foreign minister, who attended the Franco-African summit of 1978 in Paris, commenting: "It is a childish scenario....they take us as the children of choir...or then as the accomplices. In any case, it is the sad repetition of the operation 'Red Dragon' of Stanleyville of Tuesday, November 24, 1964, when the Belgian paras and the mercenaries had been unfurled over the city to save the life of 1770 Europeans of whom none had been disturbed. Do you remember the number of patriots who were subsequently massacred? ....Yes, 25000!" [55] Under such adverse circumstances, the notion of the pan-African force was

54. Ibid;
55. Afrique-Asie, No.162; p.29.
not pursued any further.

However, the debate did not end but rather assumed forceful magnitude at the OAU summit. The French intervention in Zaire produced pandemonium and precipitated instant polarization among the African regimes. The militant and 'progressive' African regimes raised hue and cry over this point while the moderates remained either ambivalent or raised their voices in favour of the French intervention. The 30 chiefs of African states, congregated at the 15th summit meeting of the OAU in Khartoum in July 1978, were polarized on the approach to be adopted towards the intervention in Zaire, and the "French President's proposals for a pan-African peace-keeping force backed by the West amidst a welter of accusation and counter-accusation."[56]

Fode Amadou writes: "Numerous are the diplomats of these countries (African) who think that the real objective pursued by Mobutu and his allies is to lay the foundations, even with or on the fringe of the OAU, of a strategy, destined to create a sort of pan-African military force, which will be used to defend the Zairian regime and its equals on the continent. In this way, the Western imperialism, particularly the French, would limit itself just to furnishing logistics, staff and military expertise, while the Africans would be obliged to serve their flesh to the canon."[57]

Those who had harboured Cuban troops railed at the West, while those sheltering the French troops lashed at the Cubans, but those having none demanded that all foreign troops on the

56. Hollick, n.33.
African soil should be evacuated. Theophile Obenga, the Congolese foreign minister, described the French proposed security force as a "machine for the destabilization of African regimes and the destruction of the growing number of democratic forces in Africa. This force is a pure product of imperialism and a clear manifestation of the neo-colonialist aims on the ensemble of our continent."[58] But the Gabonese foreign minister remarked that "Gabon is a small country. It is our sovereign right to ask our friends for help, African or not, if we are being threatened. Some countries have called in the Cubans. Why shouldn't we call in the French?"[59]

President Samora Machel of Mozambique regretted the African attitude at the Franco-African summit in Paris, and stated that "the colonizers now want to divide us into Francophone, Anglophone and even Lushophone. They do it by resorting to the promises of aid and to the corruption entirely for promoting the expansionism, and the wars of conquest."[60] Several African leaders were ruffled by the "Western manoeuvres in Africa", and asserted that "a new Berlin Conference is not the appropriate response to the problems of Kolwezi."[61]

President Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea affirmed that "the Belgian-French operation in Zaire is not only a disease characterized by the cruelty. It is a disease capable of the worst. We are here to denounce vigorously the machinations of the imperialism, which does not want to comprehend that Africa will

59. Ibid;
61. Ibid;
never accept the return to the politics of the gunboat."[62] The chief of the Congolese delegation contended: "the Cubans operate in Africa in the name of a principle, the proletarian internationalism. In the name of which principles do the Americans and the French intervene in Africa? Only in the name of their selfish interests!"[63]

In the three African capitals, Luanda, Algiers and Tripoli, an unanimity of opinion prevailed: "the false accusations launched by the tyrant of Kinshasa against Angola, Libya and Algeria stem from a campaign of intoxication orchestrated by Zaire, Morocco, Mauritania and France with a view to win over to their sides all the regimes whose unpopular politics risks to lead to national explosions, insurrections."[64]

Besides, several important African leaders, including President Nyerere and the Nigerian leader General Obassanjo attacked the Franco-Belgian action as gunboat diplomacy and neo-colonialism. The Nigerian chief declared: "It is necessary to comprehend that Africa had been colonised by the Western powers and not by the Soviet Union, that in our fight for independence and liberty, the countries of the Eastern bloc have constituted our only source of support. We have invited Soviets in our countries for a precise purpose, that is to eliminate the centuries of degradation, oppression and exploitation."[65] The chief of the 'geant noir' (Nigeria) further stated: "Convening conferences in Europe and America to decide the destiny of

63. Ibid;
Africa raises numerous aspects of an ugly spectre that we will do better to forget. The operation (Western) in Shaba was a shameful attempt, destined to determine what should have been the collective interests of Africa. Dropping of paras in the XXth century is no more acceptable than the gunboats were for our ancestors. It is not proper to forget that, each time Cuba is invited in our countries, the cause lies in the weakness of the Western politics in Africa."[66]

The African leaders were uncomfortable by the awareness about..., in the words of the Zambia Daily Mail, the "almost casual ease with which European powers can fly into an African country and airlift its nationals or occupy whole towns making the very concept of African independence meaningless."[67]

Meanwhile, as the Franco-Belgian troops started packing up to quit the country, Zaire was able to obtain auxiliary forces through bilateral negotiations at the French behest with the other African countries to supervise the aftermath operations. "The fact that Moroccan troops, who had more than demonstrated their merit when the rebels were driven out of Shaba province in 1977, was particularly important for Zaire. After it proved possible to obtain the participation of the Senegalese, the Central Africans, Togolese, Gabonese and a medical corps from the Ivory Coast, although this participation was more of a symbolic nature, Morocco indicated that it was willing to participate.[68]

The Moroccan commandent of the force, Lubaris, reportedly said

68. Schmidt, n.51; p.98.
that the 1500 Moroccan troops would remain in the threatened area as long as President Mobutu wanted.

Even the troops of other countries were to pursue the same line. According to one estimate: "The interafrican force, at the beginning of July, consisted of about 2000 Moroccans commanded by Colonel Benabdehvaked; of 600 men of Colonel Nyang of the battalion of the Senegalese parachute infantry; of 16 Togolese parachutists of Lieutenant-Colonel Kano and of 50 Gabonese parachutists of Captain Essono." [69]

A scrutiny of the numerical participation of the African countries in the interafrican force seems to reveal that Morocco played the pivotal role while others made just a symbolic gesture of support. But it would be wrong to minimise the role of the non-Moroccan units in view of the facts that "the first is that all the national contingents are represented at the level of major-general. The second is that Senegal, Gabon and especially Togo sent their elite units susceptible to be paradropped in case of need." [70]

Even the Moroccan commandent of the interafrican force, Abdelkader Loubaris conceded the significance of all African troops when he spurned the idea that the participation of other African troops was just symbolic or political. He categorically told his interviewer: "Absolutely not. It is an important military participation. It is rather a matter of an interafrican force of security and as major-general that I have honour to lead is interafrican. You will find a Senegalese who assumes an

70. Ibid;
important responsibility, a Togolese colonel another. The logistics, for example, can be looked after by Togo, Morocco or Senegal."[71] Attempts were also made to create a small, but really efficient Zairian elite troop to take over the role of the Moroccans as soon as possible.

The interafrican troops were airlifted by American as well as some French and Belgian military planes. According to the Jeune Afrique: "On June 4, the American Airforce chooses Dakar as the central base for the operation of transporting the interafrican force and the repatriation of the Franco-Belgian contingents. It stores there motor-fuel, and spare parts, and harbours its equipments. From Dakar C-141 and Galaxy of the US Air Force flash towards Agadir, Lome, Corsica, Lubumbashi etc. They will assure 80 to 90 percent of the transport, the rest having been taken charge by France (the DC 8 of UTA), Morocco and Belgium (which transported the Senegalese troops). By June 15, there are 50 rotations of the planes that take off from Dakar."[72] It is to be noted that the operation could not be swift and smooth without the American participation. Their C141 planes have double capacity of transport and range of action compared to C130 planes. France supplied the standardized equipment and together with the USA and Saudi Arabia financed the force.[72A]

Raphael Mergui, a French journalist, who minutely followed the Shaba developments write: "The supply of materials was coordinated by France. Standardized, this material was taken from the stocks of NATO and centralized in a French depot from where

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71. Jeune Afrique, No.918; 1978; p.35.
72. Ibid; p.38.
72A.Ibid;
it was transported by C141 and Galaxy to Zaire. It was essentially the light material: jeeps, combat cars, bayookas, mortars and armed personnel. Only Moroccans dispose VTT (vehicle for all terrains); American M113s were taken from their own stocks, but they had to present an invoice for them."[73]

About bankrolling the operation Mergui writes cryptically: "Who has financed this armament? Who pays for its maintenance and that of the troops? The NATO, then, despite their reserves, the UK, Germany, and once more, Saudi Arabia."[74]

"The result was an innovation in regional peace-keeping force which stood outside the framework of any existing formal alliance or international organization."[75] This probably reflected "the general consensus in Western capitals that wherever possible, Africans should find solutions to African problems."[76] The Western leaders, chiefly President Giscard, thought that: "It was essential that the countries like Senegal, Gabon, Chad, Mauritania take the initiative not only for the negotiation for a solidarity pact between Europe and Africa, but also for a treaty of mutual defence among all the African countries who feel menaced by an internal or external subversion."[77]

The motive of such arrangement was to engage Africans themselves to protect the Western interests in Zaire to the possible extent. This was to shun the stigma of neo-colonialism, fiercely levelled against direct Western intervention during the

73. Jeune Afrique, No.918; p.38.
74. Ibid;
75. Mangold, n.67; p.112.
76. Ibid;

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Shaba crises. Besides, once the evacuation of the 'whites' was consummated, there existed no raison d'être to justify the continuation of the Franco-Belgian troops in Shaba. Consequently, some device had to be contrived to fulfil the purpose (that is to safeguard the economic interests of West) for which the Franco-Belgian forces had been despatched to Zaire, although under the ruse of humanitarianism. Thus, African leaders were cajoled to take up the responsibility, although it was contended that the purpose of the interafrican force was to maintain peace in the Shaba province. Mr. Loubaris, the commander of the force, asserted: "The objective of the interafrican force is to provide peace and tranquillity to the population, white or black, so that it can resume work with a sense of security. We also allow the Zairian army to be in a position to face any menace without worrying about the immediate behind, because we are constantly at their side."[78]

Notwithstanding such rationalization, it cannot be gainsaid that the primordial mission of the interafrican force was to facilitate the functioning of the mining installations in the Shaba region, the cradle of the Western interests. Raphael Mergui lucidly pinpoints this fact when he comments: "The mission of the interafrican force is essentially to restore peace and assure the black and white populations in Shaba that they could resume their normal economic activity. It explains why it had been posted for long at the vital axis (the axis of copper) - Lubumbashi-Kolwezi via Likasi. The rest of Shaba (and in particular the region of Dilolo and the Angolan frontier) is under the charge of Zairian Armed Forces (FAZ). Installed in Lubumbashi, Likasi and Kolwezi, they could also guard the airports."[79]

78. Jeune Afrique, No.918; p.35.
79. Ibid; p.38.