CONCLUSION.
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This thesis wraps up two principal themes: Shaba Crises and French Intervention. Shaba crises did not occur as a result of mere military assaults launched by the adventurous FLNC guerrillas, rather the assaults were the manifestation of the malaise infesting the Zairian state. Indeed, they revealed the actual face of the Mobutu regime.

Shaba has been Zaire's Achilles' heel since independence. Belgian decolonization of Zaire synchronized with the Katangan secession led by Tshombe, who wanted paramount power to be vested in the Lunda people inhabiting the region. But the secession bid petered out. Mobutu's seizure of power in 1965 finally consolidated the Kinshasa government's grip over Shaba.

In 1977-78 the Shaba crises were prompted by a host of factors. Firstly, tribal dissension: Lunda solidarity had been a well-entrenched phenomenon since the 17th century. Though colonialism shattered their political sway, Congo's independence offered them an opportunity to regain their traditional hold over the region. But failure of the Katangan secession forced them to accept the new dispensation of Mobutu's regime as described in Chapter I. Their influence dwindled as all top-ranking government officials in Shaba were appointed from other provinces and were non-Lundas. FAZ contingents deployed in Shaba comprised non-Lunda soldiers who behaved like forces of occupation and perpetrated vicious crimes against the indigenous people. Against such background, it was natural for the Lundas to crave for emancipation. Most of the FLNC guerrillas were Lundas.
They had escaped to Angola to organize themselves against the regime.

Secondly, the policies of Zairianization of Mobutu had apparently infuriated foreign economic interests. The mining interests resisted too much interference from Kinshasa. Their motive to help Mbumba was to do away with these interferences and as well to ensure perpetuation of their interests in case the FLNC won power in the region.

Thirdly, Shaba crises were partially the prolongation of the struggle of the Katangan gendarmerie against Kinshasa. After the collapse of the Katanga secession, Tshombe became the prime minister of Zaire, and the Katangan gendarmerie were incorporated in the Zairian army with the assignment to combat insurgency in Kivu and Haut Zaire. But their roles changed when Mobutu seized power in October 1965. Mobutu began to disperse and decimate the Katangan units which provoked the 1966-67 mutinies. He resorted to large scale repression forcing the gendarmerie survivors to flee to Angola. Their number increased with new additions of Lunda youths from Shaba, which gradually coalesced into an effective force, ready to defy Kinshasa.

Fourthly, it was possible that Angolan connection with FLNC guerrillas triggered off the Shaba crises. It was a fact that Mobutu had attempted to prevent Marxist MPLA from gaining power in Luanda. Later, President Neto of MPLA government in Angola tried rapprochement with Mobutu. But Mobutu continued to back FNLA guerrillas who had taken shelter in Zaire. Hence, Neto might have sided with FLNC in its struggle against Mobutu. This enabled FLNC guerrillas to procure sophisticated weapons through MPLA’s
allies abroad. These four factors may explain the causes of the two Shaba crises. But they were mere contributory factors: the main cause was the Mobutu regime itself. Mobutu himself provided the stimulus for the Shaba crises.

Mobutu's combat against ethnicity was a disguise to promote his own tribesmen from the Equator region. The quota-system, allocation of places for public employment and higher education among all tribes, proved to be a misnomer for more tribalization and regionalization allowing Equatorians to monopolize all the key posts in the administration. Mobutu continued to distrust Lundas, and his emissaries resorted to gruesome repression of the local populace. The birth and consolidation of FLNC could be largely ascribed to the repressive feats of the governor of Shaba, Manzikala.

Mobutu had raised a politico-military structure that turned Zaire into his personal fiefdom. Power emanated from him and entry into high office in Zaire was contingent on unfettered fidelity to Mobutu. Actually, patrimonialism promoted parasitisation of the Zairian elites. Their loyalty to Mobutu fetched enormous opulence, but also they remained under constant apprehension that they could be summarily dismissed and liquidated. Such a prospect forced the elites to try to perpetuate Mobutu in power, thereby resorting to the devices that undermined the very raison d'être of the state.

Mobutu's strategy served two simultaneous purposes: (1) it reminded the office-bearers of their imminent vulnerability, and (2) it whetted the hopes of the prospective clients "anxiously
awaiting just outside the portals of power."
The outcome of such game was the cyclic parasitisation of
the intelligentsia which explained the proliferation of
corruption and self-aggrandizement. Mobutu himself diagnosed the
Zairian state as "one vast marketplace, ruled by the basest laws
of traffic and exploitation." But he could not prescribe any
remedy.

The most potent instrument of Mobutu's patrimonial state was
his political party, the MPR. In reality, MPR had nothing to do
with trumpeted objectives of Mobutu and his associates. Rather,
it was a huge political intelligence network. It worked for the
regimentation of people within the MPR to serve the mercenary
whims of Mobutu.

Army remained the last sanctuary of security for the Mobutu
regime. Ironically, its indiscipline and impotency was well
known. Nevertheless, a regime such as that of Mobutu needed
soldiers to perpetuate itself. Hence, the FAZ was not needed to
be unified, professionalized, disciplined and well maintained.
Rather it was bound to be synonymous with extortion, marauding,
murder, rape and utter apathy towards the lives and property of
the people. Such character of the army was in harmony with the
imperatives of the Mobutu regime.

In a nutshell, the Mobutu regime has been a patron-client
network woven around two main prerequisites: (1) the
ethnoregional bias, and (2) corruption. Despite its pretensions
of paring ethnicity it is an axiom that the Mobutu regime could
not wean away the perceptive observers from discerning the venal
ethnic prejudices underlying the exercise of power in Zaire. It
was widely believed that all contours and contents of the Zairian national ideology merely constituted the ornamental sheath underneath which there flourished the inner core of the reigning ethnic fraternity from the Equator region. This inner core, also called the "presidential family", monopolized command posts in the security apparatus, steered major financial projects, and dominated all top political and administrative offices. Of course, these positions were not guaranteed as Mobutu resorted to periodic rotations, but these were ceremonial aimed at concealing open Equatorian chauvinism. Such underpinnings of the Mobutu regime were bound to debar other tribes from access to state offices. They accepted the system because of effective repression. Any breakdown in the machine could cause grave explosions as demonstrated by the Shaba crises.

Secondly, corruption was the natural corollary of the patronage system Mobutu had reared. His regime derived sustenance from the loyalty of the mercenary politico-military elites. Once coopted in the "presidential fraternity" they got the license for massive embezzlement of state funds. Such diversion of state resources accounted for the retardation of economic progress, and pauperization of the masses.

Even the policies of Zairianization, radicalization and retrocession delineated the mercenary character of the regime. The Zairian elites employed the ideology of state autonomy and economic nationalism for self-aggrandizement and Mobutu actively collaborated with this. He sought to seek two goals through this: (1) these policies helped him flaunt his commitment to economic nationalism, and (2) they fetched enormous booty that he could
The elements of competency, credibility and probity are the major ingredients to provide legitimacy to a regime. As these elements were absent Mobutu's regime showed its moral bankruptcy in the eyes of the people. Mobutu regime can be unequivocally said to have been afflicted with the **Legitimacy Deficiency Syndrome (LDS)** as we have seen in the preceding chapters. Its competency had withered; its credibility had waned; and its probity had been irreparably warped. The Shaba crises were symptomatic of this ailment.

The impotency of the regime to handle the crises culminating in the invocation of the French military to checkmate them highlighted the chronic ailment plaguing the regime, which was a client of the larger neo-colonial set-up erected by the Euro-American complex. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Western metropolis were prone to manoeuvre such crises probably to remind Mobutu that his survival was tied to the supply of Zaire's minerals for their industries. Such crises rather replicated Mobutu's own strategy of recruiting and retrenching elites, and purported to facilitate his utter parasitization upon the Western powers.

Evidence abounds that Mobutu did not emerge as a spontaneous leader of Zaire in the hour of its ordeal. Rather he was groomed and foisted upon the country by the Western powers to tighten their grip on the Zairian resources. Earlier, they had goaded Tshombe to carve out an independent state of Katanga. But Tshombe's inherited Lunda legacy could not make him subservient to the Western dictates as Lundas wanted to revive their past.
grandeur. Lumumba, on the other hand, could not be accommodated in the neo-colonial context because of his socialistic nationalism. In such situation, Western intelligence found Mobutu the most appropriate choice. Mobutu stemmed from the Ngbandi tribe living in the Equator region, which could aspire for a Lunda-type past.

Mobutu promoted Western interests turning his regime into a sanctuary for mercenaries. The Zairian economy was opened for the influx of Western consumer goods. Western manufacturers decimated the indigenous industries by ousting local artisans and entrepreneurs from the consumer market. In this way, Mobutu helped consolidate the Western grip over Zaire.

In early 70s the regime received offers from the Western leaders of massive credits. This helped the Zairian elites to corner commissions accruing from the technological transactions and, on the other hand, Western capital and finance entangled Zaire in their "technological imperialism". As a result Zaire incurred an external debt to the tune of US$3 billion by the second half of 1970s. Certainly, the investment boom was a blessing for both the Zairian elite and Western capital-finance.

The paradox is that the Mobutu regime survived even with a moribund military set-up. Actually, a strong, disciplined and professional army would have implied massive recruitment of soldiers with non-Equatorian linkages who could not remain silent of the tutelage of Mobutu. Hence, Mobutu propped up a deprofessionalized army. Even a US Senate staff report conceded this: "...Mobutu's power rests in part on the appearance of having powerful friends; thus he may prefer to have French,
Belgian military advisers and commanders to well-qualified Zairian commanders. Conspicuous evidence of Western support has a symbolic value which far exceeds the actual number of foreign personnel involved. The "tripwire" presence of these personnel represents the assurance of foreign intervention during a crisis."[1]

Lastly, the complex cobweb of Western interests engendered Western dependency upon the Mobutu regime. Mobutu's astute propagation of the "Mobutu or chaos" thesis enabled him to transform his weakness into strong buttresses for survival. No doubt, Western nations tried to distance themselves from Mobutu, but only in a limited way. Mobutu played his cards with different Western partners so that as Young and Turner stated: "Over the years Mobutu has...played with impressive skill upon the somewhat different objectives and orientations of its major external partners. France, for example, is influenced by cultural policies and the incorporation of Zaire into a set of francophonic states with close European (and French) ties. Belgium is preoccupied with its economic involvement in Zaire and accords less priority to global perspectives. For United States policy makers economic factors have played their part (especially access to minerals), but more important are Zaire's regional influence and significance and the overall strategic value of the country from a global perspective."[2] Undoubtedly, Western leaders were unable to find an alternative to Mobutu. Hence, they could not risk their stakes in Zaire inspite of concern for the brazen

1. Crawford Young & Thomas Turner: Rise and Decline of the Zairian state, (Wisconsin University) p.268.
2. Ibid;
corruption of the Mobutu regime.

During Shaba I the Western powers used the services of Morocco to cope with the FLNCs infiltration. But during Shaba II, aware of the magnitude of the crisis, they directly intervened to protect Mobutu. In this France played the vanguard role. As seen in the preceding chapters USA could not extend its involvement for fear of Super Power competition. Belgium was gripped by an internal political vacillation. Britain and West Germany were militarily and politically handicapped to perform the job. Only France, with its effective and large Intervention Forces could act as West's gendarmerie in Zaire. The repercussions of French intervention in Zaire during Shaba II, as analysed in Chapter VII, showed the limits of Mobutu's skill for manoeuvrability.