CHAPTER III

SHABA CRISIS

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In this chapter a detailed analysis of the Shaba crises would be undertaken. It will also be attempted to study the genesis of FLNC and its links with foreign powers.

1. SHABA - I

a. FLNC infiltrates Shaba

The Shaba I crisis, which President Mobutu Sese Seko dubbed as "80-Day War" [1] cropped up when on March 8, 1977, the Katangese exiles belonging to the Front de liberation national congolais (FLNC), numbering from 2,000 to 5,000, "mostly on bicycles, rode from Angola" into Zaire’s Shaba region and swept through the south Western Shaba, "across a border guarded by semi-retired, unarmed gendarmes dozing in sentinel chairs."[2] In a unique war, bereft of battles, the rebels seemed "to be conquering sizable swatches of what was called Katanga province without effective opposition from Mobutu’s forces there."[3] However, the attack was not launched by an organized army operating on the basis of well coordinated and chalked out plan, but by a ragtag army,[4] which marched deeper into Shaba "surely unaware of the commotion (it) would stir," and as well of the fact that it was "continuing a most remarkable history."[5]

General Mbumba, the FLNC leader, led the operation and provided most troops and supplies. He received aid from Laurent Kabila’s People’s Revolutionary Party and Antoine Gizenga’s Democratic Force for the Liberation of the Congo.[6]

2. Ibid;
6. Ibid; p.6.
"Representatives of these 'liberation movements' and others hanging around in Paris, an astounding 32 groups, all told, assembled in the Soviet embassy to coordinate their efforts. While they mimeographed pamphlets for international support in the comforts of Europe, their colleagues were trying to arouse local passions in the hardships of the bush. The rebel army was met, not with warm embraces but vacant stares of apathy. Like the Cuban exiles in the Bay of Pigs affair and a host of other invasions designed to spark popular revolts, the rebels found little spontaneous joining of arms. The international community could await the battlefield results before giving any support to the 'liberators'."[7]

Missionaries in the region narrated that the rebels "wore tiger symbols on their uniforms; called each other 'comrade' in French, Swahili or Portuguese; spouted socialistic rhetoric; and roundly condemned Mobutu's tribalism, and the United States."[8] The village folks looked askance at "the new phenomenon in their otherwise routine lives, but their hearts and minds were not to be won. They feared later retaliation by the Zairian Army (FAZ), traditionally superb at terrifying villagers rather than enemy forces."[9] It is said: "The Katangan and Zairian forces dodged around the countryside to avoid each other. Carrying most objects not bolted down, the invaders abandoned villages upon hearing rumours of the FAZ drifting their way. The Army's newly recruited pygmies arrived to sniff out the opposition and pierce them with poisoned arrows; they added exoticism but no military punch. The

7. Adelman, n.l.
8. Ibid;
9. Ibid;
heroic efforts of Zaire's Force Aerienne, determined not to let the Army steal the spotlight, provided the final touches. Their unerring misses mattered little since no viable targets existed to hit in any case."[10]

It is held that the FLNC appeared "to have been well organized and disciplined. They moved in small groups of 10 to 20 men, operating from support bases inside Angola. They used tactics of friendly persuasion by setting up zones of civil administration" [11] in the areas evacuated by the FAZ. The goal of the FLNC was to topple Mobutu by capturing the copper-rich Shaba, which constitutes the bastion for the three-fourths of Zaire's foreign exchange. "How the fall of Mobutu in the capital would lead to the rise of their leaders, off some 750 miles in the bush, was never made clear. Those disliking Mobutu in Kinshasa....seemed to have disliked Mbumba as well."[12]

By early April 1977 the rebels had penetrated deeper, just fifty miles away from Kolwezi which was the vital mining centre of Zaire, and where the Belgian-managed Gecamines C. extracted more than half of its copper.[13] The fall of Kolwezi could be disastrous for Mobutu's government. The crisis surfaced just as Mobutu prepared to battle with the grave economic hazards of the country. Having managed to reconcile with Angola, Mobutu had just initiated his encounter with the country's internal problems.[14] "Beginning in March 1976, under pressure from

10. Adelman, n.l.
foreign creditors, Mobutu took steps to nurse the economy back to health. The zaire was devalued by 42 percent in order to obtain an IMF loan of $150 million. Discussions were held with private foreign creditors, chief among them Citibank, to obtain a moratorium on debts amounting to $700 million. Bankers proceeded in February with an additional $250 million loan tied to strict financial reforms.\[15\]

But the Shaba I crisis upset everything. Conditions became charged with precariousness and rumours of Mobutu's fall from power started floating. Already since 1975 there had been alleged plots by Western powers working in concert with the Zairian dissidents to overthrow Mobutu.\[16\] "Is Zaire's autocratic ruler Mobutu Sese Seko soon to be a President in exile?"\[17\] The intensity of the rumours can be well gauged in view of the fact that the Vice-President and Foreign Minister Nguza Karl I Bond was compelled to refute publicly that he was to supesede Mobutu as chief of state in order to work out a compromise with the rebels.\[18\] Nguza, being a Lunda, would presumably have been able to persuade the Katangans to surrender.

It was also perceived that if Mobutu failed to control insurgency in Shaba, he would have to confront rebellion from disgruntled and recalcitrant elements elsewhere in the country. The French foresaw it and reportedly began "talks with the anti-Mobutu rebels in Paris - presumably in an effort to reach a compromise."\[19\] But this could not dampen the fervour and

15. Hull, n.11; p.6.
16. Ibid;
vigour of the rebels who were easily gaining ground exposing the
impotency of the 'Guide's army'.[20] The movement of government
troops into the province was hampered as the road communication
was in a bad shape, much of the air force was grounded due to
dearth of fuel and spare parts, and perhaps because of reported
mutiny and desertion plaguing the units despatched to Shaba to
cope with the insurgency. The army in fact evinced no penchant to
fight, and Mobutu was reluctant to send his elite parachute unit
to Shaba for fear of his vulnerability to a coup. [21]

In the first half of April 1977, the FLNC was able to
control more than 300 kms area along the Angolan-Zairian border.
At the same time it opened a second front in the Western Kasai
region, which lay just about 650 km. in south-east of Kinshasa.
This directly threatened the diamond region, the Tshikapa
railway line and all the ways of communication between Kinshasa
and the south of the country.[22]

b. Measures to combat the crisis

Mobutu surmised that his survival was only anchored in
relief from abroad, and sought outside help to stem the crisis.
"Mobutu dispatched personal emissaries to key foreign capitals,
arming them with a strong diplomatic posture. The Katangans were
breaching the two cardinal sins of Africa by violating
international borders and comprising a group of refugees invading
the homeland with arms. Most African leaders insist that the
colonial borders though ineptly drawn by Europeans during the

Conference of Berlin, be respected. Most also have little sympathy for armed refugees wishing to return home, since some 20 African states face a similar threat of one sort or another."[23] Mobutu, aware that the West equated his regime with the stability of both Zaire and Africa, played his cards skillfully. His diplomacy during the crisis was chiefly characterized by a conscious attempt to eschew the UN or the OAU but to call upon the Western countries to rescue him, which were most sensitive to "a Cuban-backed invasion".[24]

"Initially, Mobutu's (Western) supporters shied away from getting bogged down in another Congolese war. Belgium, France and the US sent token military supplies last month and hoped the threat would go away. It did not."[25] In the meantime, French ambassador to Kinshasa, A.Ross, airdashed to Kolwezi and stayed there for two days (April 15&16,1977) to make an on-the spot assessment of the situation after having talks with the French community there. Soon the Quai d'Orsay stated: "Our compatriots have asked him to reassure their families and let them know that they are in good physical condition and have an excellent morale."[26] But something more was in the offing. Bokonga Botombele Ekanga, the Zairian Ambassador to Paris, was received at the Elysee on April 7. Two days later, the French President declared that France would not directly interfere in an African conflict, but indicated his willingness to render indirect help in tiding over the Shaba ordeal.

25. Time, n.20.
Mobutu's appeal worked and aid started pouring in. Morocco's King Hassan II, whose army was "fighting leftist guerrillas in the former colony of Spanish Sahara, decided that the time had come to bail out a friend."[27] He got support for his decision from the French President, Giscard d'Estaing. The communique issued by the Elysee Palace categorically stated: "Responding to a demand for aid by the governments of Zaire and Morocco, the French government has accepted to place its means of air transport at their disposal."[28]

Galen Hull says that the Moroccan intervention to help the Mobutu regime occurred "in response to a secret diplomatic mission by Zaire's foreign minister, Nguza Karl I Bond, who visited Rabat on March 25 and briefed King Hassan II on the deteriorating situation in Zaire".[28A] In close coordination with France, King Hassan II despatched 1,500 troops and promised 1,500 more to prop up and reinforce Zaire's "seemingly ineffectual 30,000-man army."[29] France sent ten Transall military cargoes, one DC-8 plane and two big military carriers to airlift ammunition and Moroccan troops, along "with a handful of French instructors" to Zaire, although Paris denied that French military advisers had been sent.

But this was refuted by the fact that the personnel of the French air carriers numbering 170 men undoubtedly constituted the military participation.[30] It was revealed that several French

27. Time, n.20.
28A. Hull, n.11; p.7.
29. Time, n.20.
officers had arrived in Zaire prior to the Moroccan intervention.[31] A Belgian journalist, present in Shaba, claimed to have seen the Moroccan troops being received by the Zairian and French officers on their arrival. His report in La Libre Belgique related that: "the atmosphere of Kolwezi had already become rather calm after the arrival of about 20 French officers, paras, and marines on Thursday under the tutelage of Colonel Franceschi, a long, lean and lively Corsican. Having hardly disembarked, flaunting impeccable uniforms carrying all their insignia - manifestly to avoid 'mercenary' disorder and not to create confusion - the French assisted General Singa and Colonel Sassa in reorganizing their somewhat disorganized troops."[32]

This report was further confirmed by the special correspondent of the French daily, Le Figaro, who wrote that the Moroccan soldiers were taken in charge by the French officers. He added: "the French officers, in red beret, attempt to give to this picture a style more in rapport with the rule of the troupes in consort. Dressed in leopard uniforms, with insignia of their ranks, they belong to the military mission of cooperation. They are about 20, coming from Pau, garrison of airforce troops."

And even the pictures of French officers in Shaba were published. One of them, Col. Franceschi, divulged to the Press that "they had been sent to organize the defense of Kolwezi and the reception of the Moroccan troops."[34]

32. La Libre Belgique, April 12, 1977.
33. Le Figaro, April 11, 12, 1977.
34. Claude Wauthier, ACR, 77-78; p.A88.
Le Figaro adds that "Colonel Michel Franceschi assists commandant Leblanc in leading them. The colonel, thin and straight, is all smiles: 'We are there under official order. By the virtue of the accord reached between France and Zaire quite well before the debut of the invasion of Shaba. We are there for organizing the defence system of Kolwezi and to arrange the reception of the Moroccans. There is nothing secret about our activities.'"[35] But he was immediately sent back to Paris. France had sent, in particular, the 20 members of the overseas secret service (SDECE) to supervise the operations.[36]

Later on, President Giscard conceded the participation of the French officers in the Shaba I operation when he stated: "There is no French in Zaire to fight. They have cited, in the press, the case of a French officer who happened to be in Zaire, but I can indicate to you that he has returned to Paris this afternoon. We have now since three years - the accord was signed before my taking over the functions as the president of the Republic - an accord of military cooperation with Zaire, as we have accords with several other African States. Hence, there are, in general, in Zaire, some dozens of French soldiers - I say well some dozens, we have never reached a hundred - among whom are some officers and under-officers who have precise assignments of providing technical assistance or instruction, notably for the airforce equipments which we have supplied to Zaire."[37]

35. Le Figaro, n.33.
While confirming the airlift of the Moroccan troops the French government called Zaire "a victim of armed subversive activities originating from abroad."[38] In a TV speech President Giscard stated that no French troops would fight in Zaire but France did not want its African friends "to feel abandoned when their security is threatened."[39] Galen Hull portrays a different picture of the French intention when he writes: "For France, the decision to underwrite the Moroccan operation was a high-risk/high-gain proposition. For the past several years France has gradually encroached upon Belgium's sphere of economic and political influence in Zaire. Faced with mounting opposition from the Socialist-Communist coalition at home and the desire to assert France's cultural mission in the Francophone world, President Valery Giscard d'Estaing made the decision to commit French cargo planes in support of the Moroccan troops."[40]

However, the claim was floated that the French decision to go to the help of Zaire was necessitated by the "apparent cautious refusal of the United States to do so."[41]

But Zaire could not win its traditional friends, Belgium and the US. Both governments had reservations about Mobutu's policies, and they were as well sensitive to public opposition to intervention. Even during his presidential campaign Jimmy Carter had opposed the Ford Administration's arms sales to Zaire, opining that they were "fueling the East-West arms race in Africa."[42]

38. Time, n.20.
39. Ibid;
40. Hull, n.11; p.8.
41. Wauthier, n.34.
42. Time, n.20.
In the wake of the accession of Carter to the American presidency, Mobutu had to face a new crowd in Washington. Kissinger, once considering Zaire as America's best ally on the continent, had been jettisoned by a team infatuated with Nigeria, Mobutu's traditional rival for prestige. The new administration did not have personal rapports with or stake in, the Mobutu regime and "many of its members preferred another."[43] The new UN Ambassador Andrew Young quipped poignantly that if Mobutu "can't stop a couple of thousand Katangan gendarmes, we should not send the Marines to help him."[44] Senator Dick Clark (D-Iowa) and Congressman Charles Diggs (D-Mich.), chairmen of the Senate and House African Subcommittees, respectively cautioned against succouring Mobutu. "Such skepticism came as little surprise since le Guide elicits little warmth among US Africanists. He is roundly criticized for ostentatiousness and, as one leading House Subcommittee member privately stated, for his 'arrogance, egomaniacal, and indulgent manner.' Mobutu's foreign chalets and luxurious tastes contrast sharply with the widespread poverty of his people. Zaire is not the jewel in the crown of human rights, and its poor record now receives more prominence with Carter in the White House."[45]

The White House kept its role to a minimum and responded lamely. Press Secretary Jody Powell characterized US assistance as consisting of "batteries and britches." Mobutu was assured of American support and received deliveries of existing orders for 'non-lethal' equipment as tents, fuel blades, rations, medical

43. Adelman, n.1; p.7.
44. Ibid;
45. Ibid;
supplies, and collapsible fuel drums worth some $13 million, but they were sent by civilian and not military Charter DC-8s. Above all, Mobutu's request for arms and ammunition was turned down.[46] Washington explicitly shrugged off the episode as regional stirrings, although Mobutu projected the crisis as an 'East-West affair'. Hence he rebuked the Administration in an interview with Newsweek's Arnaud de Borchgrave: "I confess we are bitterly disappointed by America's attitude. Neto is a pawn of the Cubans and Russians, but you won't face up to the threat. It is your weakness versus their will power and strength."[47]

It is believed the State Department calculated that the intervention of the joint French-Moroccan forces would suffice to stem the rebellion.[48] "US military aid to Morocco has helped to build one of the most feared and respected fighting forces on the continent."[49] It is alleged that Washington might have surreptitiously persuaded Morocco and France to aid Mobutu, although it officially remained detached from the involvement. A meeting between the French President, Giscard d'Estaing and the US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, on April 2, 1977, one week before the intervention in Zaire indicated the American support, although the French President denied any collaboration with the US in Zaire.[50]

This collusion is further substantiated by the remarks made by the Zairian Ambassador to the UN, Umba Di Lutete. The Ambassador stated: "Although the UNited States did not send us

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46. Adelman, n.1; p.8.
47. Newsweek, April 18, 1977.
49. Ibid;
50. Ibid;
arms nor troops this time, I believe such troops were unnecessary and that the United States supply of spare parts, medicine, and logistics in general, played a major role which helped us win the war and crush the aggressor. I can therefore state that we were very happy with this aid, even though some people may have thought that we were unhappy because the United States had not sent troops. Morocco did send troops and that was necessary. Such help was enough for us to utterly destroy the enemy and it also represented psychological support because it showed that those who share the same ideals as we do are ready to help us as well. I believe we can say that we are perfectly happy with the help given to us. After all, the United States is an independent country, a powerful country. It is even the major superpower and we cannot expect it to do exactly what we ask any more than it would expect the same attitude from us since we, too, are an independent country."[51]

Belgium, the former colonial power with big stake in Zaire, played rather an ambiguous role in the Shaba conflict. Of course, the Belgian government was among the first to send aid to Mobutu in the forms of light arms, and it urged the 30,000 Belgian citizens in Zaire to remain in the country rendering a measure of moral support. But the Belgium did not play the role as it was expected. Mobutu's "request for a thousand paratroopers was shrugged off; one Stanleyville rescue had been enough, particularly since the Belgian governing party was itself teetering in March 1977."[52] Belgium's cautious indifference was

52. Adelman, n.1; p.8.
due to the fact that the 1973 "Zairianization" and 1974 "radicalization" launched by Mobutu had impaired the Belgian interests, and had contributed immensely in quickening "the downside of the two states' historically intense love-hate relationship."[53] Even during the initial days of the conflict rumours were rife in the European circles that Brussels would not feel any compunction at Mobutu's fall. "The invasion came just as Belgium was preparing for elections. Prime Minister Leo Tindemans was attempting to keep his coalition government in power. His own Socialist Party was concerned not to give the opposition a campaign issue."

Notwithstanding, the French-Moroccan diplomatic coordination, with the US blessings, and the French airlift of the Moroccan troops rendered the Zairian-Katangans shenanigans somewhat powerless. "The elite Moroccan troops stood behind the perked up Zairian Army and together they waltzed forward. The Katangans were soon demoralized, having passed up a golden opportunity to seize Kolwezi, Shaba's economic heartland, when it was theirs for the asking. They straggled on home, in exile, to Angola."[55] This gave a new lease of life to Mobutu, and the battle was reduced "to the kind of low-level guerrilla warfare that has smouldered on, in parts of southern and eastern Zaire, for much of the past 17 years."[56]

54. Ibid;
55. Ibid; p.9.
56. Time, n.20.
2. SHABA - II

The Shaba I crisis of 1977 was not very serious. Hence, not much extra-continental succour was needed to face it. But the Shaba II of 1978 was quite serious. It could not be contained by the Moroccan legions. So, France had to intervene with its Foreign Legion. During the Shaba II crisis, the rebels were able to capture the copper-mining city of Kolwezi by May 15, after routing the Zairian army. This shocked President Mobutu who, in utter desperation, rang up the French President to rescue him from the ordeal. The French President, Giscard d'Estaing, was in dilemma. His predicament aggravated due to the fact that Zaire was not a traditional ally of France. Besides, there was no adequate time to consult his allies on the issue. Nevertheless, President Giscard discerned the critical plight of President Mobutu, and decided to intervene.

a. FLNC Adopts new strategy

A scrutiny of the available information about the Shaba II reveals that FLNC had taken calculated moves. The deteriorating situation in terms of military and polity in Zaire had inculcated confidence in the FLNC activists to attain success this time. The FLNC chief, Nathaniel Mbumba himself pinpointed the above cause as the prime reason for choosing the time for the second assault. He said: "We know that the army of Mobutu has been extremely demoralised. It has been subjected to the worst vexatious repression, going to the extent of the elimination of a part of its superior cadres. Our friends in Kinshasa and in other
principal cities have notified us about the complete decomposition of all the structures of the State and the administration, and about the unbelievable generalisation of corruption."[57]

Their target was to capture the Kolwezi town, the mining nerve centre of Zaire, in order to precipitate economic chaos in the country. The capture of Kolwezi was anticipated to be easy in view of the fact that in May 1978 the defence of Kolwezi was in the hands of not more than 7,00 soldiers, as a good part of the Zairian troops had been dispersed along "the agglomerations of the border inhabitants of Angola (Dilolo, Kasaji, Sandoa and Kapanga)."[58]

The strategy to attack Kolwezi had been chalked out several months beforehand. Confessions by the rebels, captured by the French troops in Kolwezi, show that several hundreds of the FLNC guerrillas had infiltrated the city months back, with the mission to recruit the Lunda youths.[59] The infiltration took place through diverse modes. Some of the rebels, "generally bare-footed and dressed in rags",[60] claimed to have marched for 24 days in the bush. Some affirmed to have left Angola around May 2 with 3,500 other rebels. "Divided in platoons of 50 units, the principal group of assault was sent by trucks in three separate convoys up to a distance of about thirty kilometres from Kolwezi, in the night immediately preceding the attack. Another group of 'Katangans' should have seized Mutshatska in the west of

59. Ibid;
60. Ibid;
According to an "ordre de bataille", procured by the chief of the French military mission, ten "bataillons" of rebels crossed the Zambian border at the beginning of May. Two of them were assigned the task to operate along the Angolan frontier. Two others were to capture Mutshatsha. However, most of the troops were entrusted to seize Kolwezi. In case of success, they were instructed to spread out towards the East in the direction of Lubumbashi. But they had "the formal order not to maltreat the European population of Kolwezi."[62]

It was revealed that the various platoons were led by "commandants" and "commissaires politiques", who had "been assigned to take care of one street, one avenue or one particular crossroad. They should have to fire at the roofs of the houses of the Europeans to scare them, but avoid killing them."[63] About the total number of the rebels, contradictory estimates exist. They oscillate from 8,00 to 4,000, the last figure emanating from the rebel sources and even the Zairian news agency(AZP). But it should be taken into account that this figure actually included other 'volunteers' like Lunda youths who had sided with the hardcore rebels. J.C.Willame states:"In any case, it seems that it is necessary to make a distinction, on the one hand, between a group of assault of 'Tigres', more seriously officered and trained and residing in Angola - it is without doubt about them that some eye-witnesses speak of marching past in the combat dress in Kolwezi - and the rest comprising youths, villagers

61. Willame, n.58.
63. Willame, n.58.
The itinerary of the FLNC rebels had been skillfully chalked out which offered them a lot of political and tactical advantages that eventuated in their easy and swift capture of Kolwezi. It "passed through Zambia which discharged, sans doubt, the Angolan authorities of the direct responsibility for the offensive. But the tactical advantages appear to have been decisive: in effect, the itinerary of the rebels had taken the route of the boundaries, a track passing along the Zambian frontier and which is one of the thresholds of the South Shaba that has been covered by a thick curtain of trees; it avoided the agglomerations where the FAZ was more concentrated; finally, it passed through a deserted region, little accessible and in addition unguarded."[64]

The assault on Kolwezi took place on May 13, between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. Within a few hours the FLNC gained control over the city. Nathaniel Mbumba confirmed this in an interview to Afrique-Asie: "in the night of May 12-13, our combatants encircled the city. At 5 hour, they launched the attack against the barracks of the Zairian armed forces (FAZ)."[65] Around 10 a.m. the Gecamines-Kolwezi communicated about the Kolwezi take over by the rebels to its headquarters in Lubumbashi, the capital town of the Shaba province. According to the London Sunday Times: "the first news of the latest attempt to break up or take over the former Belgian Congo territories which now make up Zaire came at 6.45 a.m. on Friday, May 12, when the radio in the Kinshasa head

63A. Willame, n.58.
64. Ibid;
65. Afrique-Asie, No.162; p.27.
office of an American construction company, Morrison-Kundeen, cracked into life. A thousand miles to the south, a team of the firm's engineers was busy stringing up the world's longest direct-current transmission line, designed to bring power one day to the vast Shaba copper field which represents Zaire's main source of immediate wealth. The project manager, Neville Adams was reported that overnight Kolwezi, the region's mining capital, had been infiltrated by rebels, trained in Angola and crossing the unguarded border from nearby Zambia. Morrison-Kundsen's men alerted the American embassy staff, and they passed the word to the Zairian government."[66]

The FLNC had to engage in sporadic fighting with the FAZ units which led to causalties of both Europeans and Zairians. Finally, the FLNC rebels appeared to strengthen their grip over the town, and the Kinshasa regime found it impossible to cope with them without foreign military assistance. President Mobutu frantically pleaded his Western allies, particularly President Giscard, to come to his rescue. The reports of the death of the Europeans also had repercussions in the Western capitals. Their concern swiftly focussed on the security and rescue of the "expatriate group - 1,250 Belgians, 450-odd French, 21 Britons, 100 Portuguese, 19 Swiss, eight West Germans and two New Zealanders" [67] in Kolwezi. The concern was exacerbated by the rumours, emanating from Lubumbashi that "talked of husbands separated from wives, white men paraded on slow-moving lorries in front of stone-throwing crowds, women and girls exposed to mass

67. Ibid;
rape and assault."[68] By May 18, the Quai-d'Orsay "was expressing its conviction that a large-scale massacre was already taking place."[69]

b. France intervenes

Mobutu's appeal for prompt assistance and the concern for the security of whites in Kolwezi spurred President Giscard to undertake some decisive move. In the morning of May 18 President Giscard held talks with his foreign and defence ministers and as well the army chief, General Mery. Soon the units of 2nd REP (regiment etranger de parachutistes) left "their base of Calvi (Corsica) for an unknown destination."[70] Later in the evening the defense minister told the National Assembly that at the demand of Kinshasa and simultaneously with an intention to save human lives, the French government had decided to send "an appropriate military unit" [71] to Zaire.

It had become clear by May 16 itself that a French offensive was in the offing. The French Ambassador in Kinshasa, M.Bazin, made alarming remarks that the rebels were like "hoards of savages without any self-control and discipline"[72] launching "the witchhunt of the French"[73] in Kolwezi. These remarks unambiguously signalled the motive of "Europe No.1" [74] to intervene in Shaba on behalf of Mobutu.

The French operation during Shaba II was quite unprecedented. In no case, it was "a traditional coup-de-main of

69. Ibid;
71. Ibid;
73. & 74. Ibid;
a commando, called 'go and come' by the experts, destined to regroup the menaced foreign nationals for their evacuation with rapidity towards the bases of departure of this commando."[75]

Rather it also envisaged "the progressive reconquest of a city and its suburbs whose control had slipped from the local regular army, and the re-establishment of the security in the hope that the legal authorities would retake the situation in hand."[76]

The French legionnaires were equipped with very light weapons, and they had to intervene with great rapidity as there prevailed an apprehension, on the French side, that the whole plan might be revealed if there was delay, and this could endanger the life of the Europeans in Kolwezi, and as well result into the liquidation of the European hostages captured by the Katangan rebels. In order to maintain utmost secrecy the 2n REP unit was not flown directly to Zaire. Rather it followed several "itineraries of security which had led it to overfly the Megharab and African states before its arrival in Zaire."[77]

Jacques Isnard says that the French expedition was executed in three phases:

1. an operation of operational transfer of more than six hundred men from Solenzara (Corsica) from where the aerial movements had taken place on Thursday, May 18, with the maximum prudence up to Kinshasa, with the aid of four intercontinental quadri-reactors DC-8 and one intercontinental quadri-reactor Boeing 707 borrowed from the civilian companies;

2. an operation, parallel and simultaneous, of logistic support from France up to Zaire, with the aid of five Transall carrying 10 tons of ammunitions and 30 tons of diverse cargoes (transmission, vehicles and support) which were put in it.

3. an aerial operation of more than four hundred French parachutists with the aid of three French Transall.

76. Ibid;
77. Ibid;
and four Hercules of the Zairian army protected by the Zairian Mirage III. Departed from Kinshasa, the parachutists swooped down upon Kolwezi in two waves, on Friday May 19 at 15.10 and 17.15 (18h.13 local), according to the informations given by the President of the Republic. The parachutage had become necessary because of the condition of the terrain of Kolwezi. The forces were charged, in spite of the heavy firing from the automatic weapons, to make contact with the captive foreign nationals, to propose an evacuation to those who desired it and to undertake a 'mopping-up' of certian quarters of Kolwezi and its surroundings."[78]

Thus, on May 19 the 2nd REP parachutists descended upon Kolwezi in the afternoon. Soon the Elysee palace spokesman, M.Pierre Hunt announced:"at the debut of the afternoon a French unit had parachuted at the centre of the Kolwezi city." He further declared that "the decision to send a French unit to Zaire was taken at the demand of the Zairian government and after consultation with the concerned governments."[79] The spokesman also added that "the mission of this unit, limited to the Kolwezi city, is to protect the French and the foreigners residing at this centre and to restore the security."[80] In the same evening President Giscard himself announced on television that such step had to be undertaken because "the foreign nationals were in grave danger. We have executed a punctual operation in Kolwezi for restoring security there with the most possible promptness and to provide protection to the foreign nationals living there."[81]

No doubt, several Europeans succumbed to the ordeals that resulted from the FLNC attack on Kolwezi. Even the plea of humanitarianism advanced by President Giscard to justify the

78. Isnard, n.75.
80. Ibid;
French intervention cannot be spurned outright. But it is to be noted that the allegations levelled against the FLNC rebels in regard to their indulging in the orgy of marauding and massacring whites in Kolwezi are also polemical. The Western press orchestrated a vigorous campaign to malign the FLNC by levelling all sorts of charges. But the eye-witnesses later on made such revelations as tended to contradict the charges and claims of both the Western leaders and press against the FLNC.

c. Controversy over killings in Kolwezi

The most precise testimony about the rebels is that of Dr. Hinner, a medical doctor on the payrolls of the Gecamines, who had worked in Shaba for the last 21 years, and happened to operate about 400 rebels at the hospital of Kolwezi during the terrible week. His testimony appeared in the Belgian newspaper, Le Soir (May 25 & 27, 1978). He claimed that he "saw among them persons, enduring and trained 'a la vietnamienne', determined and calm, often known to the population of Kolwezi. He did not find drugs with them."[82]

J.C. Willame also writes that all the witnesses affirmed that during "all the first days, the Katangans appeared 'disciplined and correct.' Instructions had been given before the attack 'not to touch the Europeans' and not to plunder."[83]

According to the witnesses living in the "vieille ville", the rebel "commandants" strove to ensure order in the city to a certain extent; they often fired in the air to prevent pillage. But sometimes it became impossible to "contain the population of

83. Willame, n.58.
the city, who attacked the shops at the centre, then unfurled in
groups upon the European quarters. In certain cases, these
pillages would be accompanied by violence. In other cases the
rebels in uniforms would authorize the Africans to enter the
shops only after letting them pass through "the verification of
identity." [83A]

In an interview carried by Afrique Asie, General Mbumba
stated that "the only doors forced open were those of the rations
shops, notably of the bursary of the city, from where were
distributed the commodities of primary necessity to every one." He
further added that the employers of the Gecamines were
"authorised to get in supplies in their shops, but in order to
avoid any waste and any hoarding, the responsibilities of our armed
forces assisted in the sales."[83B]

Besides, all the European residences were not subjected to
depredations and violence. "Certain Europeans never saw the
rebels, and were never disturbed."[84] In certain cases, the
rebels came "to check identity", asked for food and then went
back never to come again; but in certain cases, they came
"unceasingly and got hold of all that they could carry."[85] Most
often the rebels "appeared to be pushed by the local population
who accompanied them."[86]

Surprisingly, the rebels did not touch the mining
infrastructure of Gecamines even in the wake of the French
intervention, although the FLNC had categorically warned of

83A. Willame, n.58.
83B. Afrique-Asie, No.167; p.27.
84. Willame, n.58.
85. Ibid;
86. Ibid;
severe damage to the mining installations of Kolwezi in such eventuality. General Mbumba told Afrique Asie:"We have published a communique making known our decision to endanger the mining installations in case of foreign intervention." But he revealed that the threat was just to trammel the foreign intervention, and actually not to be translated into action:"We think that this was the only argument susceptible to block this intervention."[87]

Even the strong-box that contained the money to pay the workers of the Gecamines, was found intact "with the key hanging on the wall of the premises where it had been stored."[88] General Mbumba remarked refuting the charge of looting and theft against the FLNC rebels:"the proof that they cannot impute pillage nor thefts to the FLNC, is that we had ourselves taken the pain to look after the banks as well as other key economic points of the city. You can well acknowledge that the means to force open the safes were not lacking with us. If we had wished........."[88A]

Some damages did take place, but they were not enough to destabilize the economic life of the city. According to J.C.Willame:"the only damages were the fact of the lack of maintenance occasioned by the stoppage of all activity during the period of occupation, and in the case of the installations of the electric terminal of Inga-Shaba because of the combats which took place between the French legionnaires and a rebel packet that remained in the rear-guard."[89]

87. Afrique-Asie, No.162.
88. Willame, n. 58.
88A.Afrique-Asie, No.163; p.25.
89. Willame, n.58.
But the fact is that a lot of people including whites were killed and much plundering took place during Shaba II. Nevertheless, none is certain as who actually is responsible for the tragedy. Of course, "the victims have not perished due to an anonymous pest which would been the 'tribal savagery'."[90] Rather, four shades of opinions crystallize about the forces which were involved in the killing and plunder. They are as follows:

Firstly, the Western press and leaders asserted that the FLNC rebels indulged in a systematic liquidation of the whites. Undoubtedly, some whites fell victims to the wrath of the FLNC, but the available evidences repudiate the charge of a systematic liquidation and torture of the whites. J.P. Chretien writes that the evidences of most of the Europeans in Kolwezi "barricaded in their villas, and informed only by the radio and by the accounts of the houseboys, are very fragmentary and marked retrospectively by the besieged environment, and by the fantasms which accompanied them. The allusion to the massive rapes seems to us significant from the point of this view (see the nuances of le Monde between 21/22 and 23 May) and it would be necessary to recollect here the way in which the Zairian agency of press developed this sensitive subject from the outset."[91]

Nathaniel Mbumba told Afrique Asie: "the units of the FLNC which operated in Kolwezi had the strict order not to attack the civilian white community which lived there, but on the contrary, to establish, within the limits of the possibilities, a climate

90. Esprit, 7-8, 1978; p.114.
91. Ibid;
of cooperation."[92] Even the European representative of the FLNC, Jean-Baptiste Mpondo announced in Brussels that: "a revolutionary council comes to be created in Kolwezi, whose essential task is to study all the measures concerning the security of the civilian populations." He also assured "all the states whose nationals live in the regions which are today under its control, more especially the Belgians, the British and the Americans, that in no way and under no pretext the life of the civil Europeans and Americans will be in danger."[93]

There is not much information about the manner the FLNC tried to organize the political management of Kolwezi. But its communiques speak of creating "conseil revolutionnaire" in which figured two "Francais". J.C. Willame contends that the director of personnel of Gecamines and some other Europeans were indeed having contacts with the "commissaires politiques responsables de l'attaque de Kolwezi" and even a meeting of the "commissaires politiques" of FLNC and the directors of the Gecamines had taken place on May 15. [94] General Mbumba even revealed the name of one Frenchman: "A meeting has been held between two of our political commissaires and the delegate general of the foreign personnel of the Gecamines, Mr. Renard, in the presence of other foreign nationals. We want them to understand that our struggle of liberation was not led against them personally, and they could collaborate in the management of the city. They have agreed and promised to extend in this domain an active support to the committee of the city which had been created to work between our

92. Afrique-Asie, No.162. 
94. Willame, n.58.
combatants and the population."[95] The General further disclosed that "M. Renard has even signed a document establishing this accord and recognizing that the conduct of the freedom fighters of the FLNC was praiseworthy, and had nothing to do with that of the FAZ."[96]

The statements of Mbumba are partially substantiated by the testimony of the Gecamines' doctor, Dr. Himmer who declared on May 14 that "the director of the society notified the doctor that a vehicle driven by an European came with aboard a commissaire of the people and two comrades, to look for him to lead them to the hospital."[96A] J. C. Willame writes: "the collaboration between the leading personnel of the Gecamines and the political commissaires was, however, only episodic, and had no effect, in any case, on the ambient disorder. M. Renard succeeded in escaping from Kolwezi before the recapture of the city; he did not have the chance to explain the role that he had played in Kolwezi during the occupation."[96B]

However, the FLNC rebels did kill some Europeans, but their civilian identity remained in doubt. General Mbumba also conceded such killings: "the only whites killed in Kolwezi in our case are those who opposed with arms the movement of our forces of liberation."[96C] Evidences do exist that lower ranking FLNC recruits sometimes terrorized 'whites' threatening to kill them. But high-rung men did not evince any antagonism towards the white civilians. Fred Belghain, a Belgian school teacher.

95. Afrique-Asie, No.162.
96. Ibid;
96B. Willame, n.58.
96C. Afrique-Asie, No.163.
testified: "We were forced to kneel and the rebels raised their rifles. Just then, a higher-ranking rebel came round the corner and told the soldiers to stop. He told us: 'It has been a mistake. You can go.' "[96D]

J.C. Willame also spurns the charge of 'systematic massacre' of whites against FLNC. He emphatically opines: "It is, however, wrong to speak of 'systematic massacres' of Europeans, like the discovery of 'ossuaries' could lead to believe it. According to the informations most recently provided by the 'mission for the identification' of the corpses, the gross majority of the deceased persons befell the acts of war: the intensity and the span of the combats speak notably for the numerous recovered corpses. The victims were mostly caught up in the fire of the combats. Some executions took place in the beginning, notably at the time of the requisition of the vehicles. Some others were the cases of the mercenaries disguised as non-combatants or those of the Lebanese mistaken for the Moroccans. No trace of brutalities preceding the death could be ascertained by the mission."[97]

Secondly, much of the looting and killing of 'whites' in Kolwezi is imputed to the local populace. The local Africans appeared to welcome the FLNC rebels "more as liberators than as invaders."[97A] Rather, the Kolwezi attack offered blacks an opportunity to vindicate their supremacy over the 'whites' who, otherwise, enjoyed excruciating dominance over the former. They tried to extract maximum mileage out of such chance, and this

97. Willame, n.58.
did culminate in sporadic looting and killing of the whites. Mr. Roger Poels, a Belgian, said: "crowds of juvenile hangers-on" with both the rebels and the Zairian troops had been responsible for some of the looting and killing. "They were children, 12-14 years old, who got hold of weapons from corpses, then went robbing and stealing," he added.[97B]

There existed a wide gap between Europeans and Africans in terms of economy and social interaction. "Before the invasion, Kolwezi had a white population of 2,500, most of them Belgian workers in the copper mines. Many were technicians, short on education but long on experience. Their entrenched presence and their disrespect for the Africans were acutely resented. They were what is known in Africa as 'the old boys' - the vestige of an era in which even an uneducated European lived better, made more money and enjoyed higher rank and privilege than an educated African. 'This wasn't a neo-colonial town,' said a Zairian mine executive. 'It was a colonial town. Nothing had changed. It was a town for whites, not blacks. The old boys treated their Zairian assistants in the mines like their houseboys!'"[98]

When the crisis cropped up, the Africans gave vent to their subdued acrimony against the Europeans. J.C. Willame acknowledges this syndrome of socio-cultural gulf between the whites and blacks in Kolwezi, and apparently ascribes the cause of violence to the same when he writes:"One should first of all take into consideration here the exemplary unwedging between the standard of life of the Europeans and that of the African

population, huddled up in the city and under-nourished. In the milieu of the surrounding misery, the whites of Kolwezi, whose insularity had exacerbated the racism, lived in 'palaces, grilled, fenced and guarded by wild dogs'. It was perfectly logical that in such a context, those, who happened to be the victims, were at first taken by the Africans as 'super-privileged' and that the popular violence be turned against them."[99]

The escalating deprivation and demoralization of the blacks in the region by the 'mercenary' activities of the Europeans had spawned a sort of lumpen culture among the poor blacks. Violent eruptions featuring marauding and massacre of the 'old boys' could occur at any convenient juncture. Such a gloomy prognosis loomed large in the 'Lettre de Careme' of the Archbishop of Lubumbashi, Mgr Kabanga, written in March 1976. The Letter prophetically denounced the explosive character of the socio-economic paraphernalia in Shaba: "they no more react to the misery, the corruption at all levels, the shameless exploitation of the poor, the cupidity of the rich and the degradation of every human being in every respect.....The thirst of money then transforms the men in assassins. How many of the poor unemployed are condemned to the misery with their hearth, because they do not have the means to pay off those who hire. How many of the children or the adults die without care because they do not have the means to pay off the nurse who should care for them...Whoever obtains a portion of authority or some means of pressure, benefits from it by pressurizing the people and exploiting

99. Willame, n.58.
them, more particularly in rural milieu. If we do not fear God, let us at least fear the revolt of the poor."[100] No doubt, the death of the whites in Kolwezi was the outcome of the "explosion of this latent violence."[102]

The FLNC rebels themselves did not intend to harm white civilians. Their commanders maintained authority over them and persuaded their men to shun harming whites. But they neither time, nor the means to contain the popular frustrations."[103] In fact, the FLNC rebels were overwhelmed by the popular sympathy which the local blacks flaunted for them. They could not resort to strong measures to prevent blacks from committing the atrocities upon the Europeans. Perhaps, they did not have an intention to do so. General Mbumba somewhat conceded this when he remarked: "Whatever has happened, it is because the massive support extended by the population submerged us so much that it became difficult to officer or contain it. It is possible that certain elements, or even the organized bands of the civilians, making to appear to belong to the FLNC committed some exactions, in addition to the thefts.... that I can believe."[104]

The thesis that FLNC did not nurture any intention to stop the local blacks from marauding and killing the whites is further substantiated by a remark of General Mbumba: "It is very easy to comprehend that a community, so long repressed, excluded, the Congolese of Kolwezi, and which daily merely dreams for the comfort of a white community, privileged in all domains and

100. Esprit, 7-8, 1978; p.115.
102. Ibid;
103. Willame, n.58.
104. Afrique-Asie, No.163.
which, moreover, has racist rapport with the blacks in the work, can have some resentment. That could bring about some spontaneous and individual reactions..."[105]

Thirdly, some writings denote that much of the pillage and killing were the handiwork of the Zairian army which "like the public army of the former Belgian Congo has already a long history of mutinies, pillages and unpopularity."[106] Confronted with the rebels, some Zairian soldiers tended to resist, but others fled. While fleeing they took Europeans as hostages to use them as "guise de protection"[107], looted their belongings and later shot them to obliterate the proofs of their misdeeds. They rather turned into "deserteurs-pillards"[108] taking benefit of the general anarchy that prevailed at the time.

The massacre of P2, an acronym for the European settlement in the Kolwezi mining sector, was the act of the Zairian soldiers. According to a Belgian citizen, M. Raymond Korczak, who worked as a foreman in an enterprise at Kolwezi, affirmed on his arrival in Brussels that the Zairian soldiers had "killed in cold blood about thirty persons in a house of the quarters of the mine, the P2". He narrated: "The soldiers of Mobutu came to look for these people to evacuate them towards the airport, then conducted them into a house and killed them. Only two of them could escape. They spoke of ossuary.... It is the act of the Zairian army. We had more fear of this army than that of the rebels, who, in my quarter, had behaved quite correctly and in a

105. Afrique-Asie, No. 163.
107. Ibid;
108. Ibid;
disciplined way."[109]

J.C. Willame has also imputed the P2 killings to the Zairian army on the basis of certain witnesses. He writes: "In the case of the 'massacre' of the P2, it seems evident after hearing more and more number of witnesses, that the responsibility of the killings rests in great part on the soldiers of the FAZ who utilized the Europeans as 'ring of protection', not without having them robbed at first. The account of the massacre by an European, who resided at 100 metres away from P2 and which is confirmed by other survivors and escapees during the preceding days, is particularly enlightening in this light....(Saturday), the Zairian soldiers came. They made us come out in order to lead us towards the general quarters (situated at about 50 metres from the P2). They said that it was for the sake of verification. We obeyed. At the Q.G. they searched us as if we were thieves....they emptied the purses, they took away our money, our watches, all....On the next day morning, we demanded to go to the mess which is at 50 metres from the houses. We decided to sneak out, because it seemed to us that we were taken hostages....We remained in the mess for four days. The Zairians did not know that they(rebels) were there. (At the time of our escape, there was a rebel attack). However, as they came, they suspected that they(FAZ) were there. Hence, they fired through the windows...they believed us armed. The rebels held them (however occupied). On Wednesday afternoon, we saw the rebels going up. It was an orderly troop...It is on Wednesday at 18h.30 that the attack against the Zairian Q.G. took place. And then we

know no more except that two persons could survive: a small boy and a lady. And it is the rebels who took these persons to the hospital."[110]

Several other witnesses also charged that the Zairian soldiers were actually involved in the depredations against Europeans. Mrs. Nelly van Heyel, the wife of a Belgian school teacher in Kolwezi, said: "We did not get any support from the Zaire army soldiers. We feared them more than we feared the rebels."[111] Many of the refugees from Kolwezi asserted that the Mobutu troops, high on hashish, rather than rebels were responsible for the worst massacre.

General Mbumba also alleged that "moreover, the first hours of panic passed away and having wandered in the bush for some days, some elements of the Zairian army, mostly as civilians, reinfiltrated the city and perpetrated all sorts of criminal acts, in particular against the rich white community."[112]

David Lamb of International Herald Tribune, graphically described the role of the Zairian troops in Kolwezi, saying that the whites' "homes are empty, stripped bare by the looting Zairian Army soldiers who ransacked Kolwezi after the invasion, loading stolen property into trucks, then transporting it in US made C-130s to Kinshasa - where everything from European cars to stereos now is available on the black market. The only contribution the soldiers made during or after the invasion, residents said, was to shoot the dogs (feeding on corpses).[113]

110. Willame, n.58.
112. Afrique-Asie, No.163.
Besides, an indiscriminate bombardment over Kolwezi by the Zairian air force caused several casualties among both African and European civilians. Within a few days of the FLNC takeover of Kolwezi, the Mobutu soldiers were virtually ousted from the city. But the Zairian air fighters continued to have sway in the Kolwezi sky. Even an FLNC spokesman commented: "The only military presence of the Mobutuist forces is the military aviation, which continues to resort to a terrorism by the way of bombardments."[114] Putting the blame of the death of Europeans on the Zairian soldiers, he said: "The responsibility for these deaths entirely devolves upon the Mobutuist forces whose military aviation carried on, since last Sunday, intensive bombardments upon the city of Kolwezi."[115]

A controversy about the fallout of the disclosure of the imminent French intervention in Kolwezi continues to persist. Reports emanating from Kolwezi said that "more than half the European victims found so far were shot early on Friday, a few hours before the French paratroops landed, but after the announcement of the impending drop had been prematurely leaked in Brussels." [116] The bone of contention is as to who, the rebels or the local populace or the Zairian soldiers, perpetrated this massacre. Some assert that the rebels indulged in the orgy of mass looting and killing of Europeans out of their desperate resentment against the European intervention. "The repatriates thought that the change in the conduct of the rebels could be provoked by the informations disseminated by the radios,

115. Ibid;
announcing the arrival of the French and Belgian parachutists. The former residents of Kolwezi regret that the day and the hour chosen for the parachutage was revealed by the Zairian radio, as if to give a signal to the rebels for a revengeful slaughter."[117] This charge is substantiated by the fact that the FLNC had already warned that foreign intervention would seriously jeopardize the lives of the Europeans.

But some affirm that the disclosure of the French assault disconcerted the rebels, and they promptly began to withdraw from the Shaba region into their Angolan sanctuary, precipitating a military void in Kolwezi for some hours till the advent of the French paratroopers. Taking benefit of the military void the lumpen elements, mainly the bands of Mobutu's soldiers went on a rampage spree in the European residences that involved a lot of killings. After two years of the Shaba episode, M. Claude Bourdet, a French expert of international affairs, wrote in Le Monde, basing his remarks on reliable Belgian sources (bonnes sources belges) that "the Giscardian operation of Kolwezi...did not save the Europeans of this city, but, on the contrary, consecrated a certain number of them to death by rendering impossible the negotiations demanded by the FLNC and by creating for long hours a military void when the uncontrollable elements, including those of the bands of soldiers of our ally, Mobutu, gave a free vent to their taste for pillage and murder."[118]

But M. Bourdet's arguments were vehemently refuted, and dubbed as fantasy by General Gras, who, along with Colonel

Philippe Erulin, had led the French operation during the Shaba II. General Gras wrote a strong letter to Le Monde saying derisively:

"It is necessary to admire the forcefulness that M. Bourdet has realized in accumulating so many falsehoods in only one phrase. We recognize without difficulty the themes of propaganda launched by the so-called FLNC at Brussels — and complacently taken by the 'reliable Belgian sources' in question, be it so by foolishness, be it so by malice. The chronology of the events is unfortunately not in accord with these judicious explanations.... The decision to intervene in Kolwezi was taken by the President of the Republic on Thursday, May 18 around 0h.30. The movement of 2nd REP of Corsica towards Kinshasa began the same day only around mid-day. But the executions and the massacres of not only Europeans, but also Africaners, had begun on Sunday, 14 May and continued till Thursday. Doctor Rupol, the chief of the Belgian medical mission in Zaire, who examined the corpses of the 120 Europeans killed in Kolwezi, ascertained that, excepting one of them, the death had taken place earlier than Friday 19, the day of the operation. The principal massacre, in which 39 persons were huddled up in a villa of the quarter P2, had been perpetrated on Wednesday 17, at 10 hours. We do not understand, under these conditions how an operation that was still not decided, would have provoked the death of certain number of Europeans. It is certain, on the other hand, that the tergiversations entertained by certain fallacious hopes for negotiations retarded the decision to intervene and hence contributed to augment the number of deaths...... Holding the French operation responsible for a military void which would have allowed the Zairian army to indulge in the extortions and the massacres, which were, in reality, committed by the Katangans, is simply absurd. The Katangans, coming from Angola through the Zambian territory — six regular battalions perfectly identified — took possession of Kolwezi during the daytime of May 13 after eliminating all the Zairian resistances, with the exception of one point of support which held on till May 17. When the 2nd REP jumped down on May 19 at 15h.30, it found the city occupied by about two thousand Katangese army. At 18 hours, it recaptured the 'old city' and a part of the 'new city' where it should have to patrol all the night. Where is the military void? It is rather superfluous that it would have been necessary to speak. Where and at what moment the 'soldiers of Mobutu' would have the leisure to satisfy their taste for the pillage and the murder? All that M. Bourdet writes, are amenable to the imagination and to the observed reality...... This reality has been ascertained by the numerous journalists who visited Kolwezi in the wake of the operation: a city sacked, a population, as many Europeans as Africans, coming out of a nightmare, one hundred and twenty Europeans and more than four hundred African civilians massacred. Who have committed these crimes? The 'soldiers of Mobutu' who were all dead or in flight since Saturday? Or the Katangans who were the masters of the city..."
since about a week?"[119]

Apparently, General Gras' explanation is cogent. But a meticulous scrutiny of facts and information, culled from the statements of numerous eye-witnesses, shows loopholes in the explanation.

1) General Gras talks about the monopoly of FLNC over the city for a week after the flight of the Zairian troops. But evidences exist that the Zairian soldiers merely took shelter in the nearby bushes, and off and on infiltrated the city in civil dresses, and indulged in depredations. It cannot be gainsaid that the moment the rebels began to withdraw, the Zairian soldiers returned to the city and unleashed terror. Besides, in the wake of the Kolwezi attack: "the major part of the elements of the Kamanyola battalion, considered as the elite troops, had dispersed in isolated groups in the peripheries of Kolwezi. Small groups of soldiers had poured out in the European city where they took refuge in the 'pockets of the Europeans': this reflex was at the origin of the massacre of P2."[120]

2) The remark that four hundred civil Africans were killed in the crisis and implicitly charging that the FLNC was involved in this, does not stand reason. Why the rebels should kill the local Africans who supported them? The London Times wrote: "One clear thing to emerge from the invasion of Shaba province is that most of the native population is opposed to the present regime and is therefore ready to join in any revolution which seems likely to overthrow it."[121] How General Gras would explain

120. Willame, n. 58.
the fact that "the estimated death toll in Kolwezi now stands at more than 120 white expatriates and some 500 blacks of whom about 200 are believed to be rebels?"[122]

3) The General contends, citing the chronology of events, that the French operation could not have provoked the massacre of the Europeans. But his contention is perfunctory. Even prior to the take off of the French paratroopers from Corsica, the entire world had become sure of the French intervention. This had also created a sort of deep fear and consternation in Kolwezi, and in this situation the pillage and massacre ensued.[123] Even General Gras had himself remarked in Kolwezi during the crisis that the Belgians had created a "psychosis of flight" that resulted in mass destruction.[124] Does his this remark not contradict his new contention?

4) General Gras has stated that on the arrival of the French paras in Kolwezi, they found about 2,000 rebels still occupying the city and there was no question of existing a military void offering the bonanza to Mobutu's men to wallow in massacre and marauding. But the fact appears to be that on their arrival in Kolwezi, "the French legionnaires met only a feeble resistance during the recapture of the city."[125] So there is no truth in the statement that the French paras had to confront about 2000 rebels. It is also argued that five French paras were killed during the encounter with the rebels. But the truth is that the "five European soldiers were killed: one by accident, two at the

125. Willame, n.58.
time of the parachutage and two in the wake of armed actions."[126]

Evidences show that the rebels left Kolwezi on Thursday evening on hearing the news of about the French intervention. This strengthens Mr. Bourdet's belief of military void. J.C. Willame writes that the FLNC chief, General Mbumba, arrived in Kolwezi only in Thursday morning. "We can suppose that it was he who gave the order for retreat. This retreat, well ordered according to all the witnesses, began to take place on Thursday evening, that is to say, on the eve of the French intervention."[127] Even a medical doctor of Gecamines testified that the rebels departed in the Thursday evening. He told the Belgian newspaper, Le Soir, that "after the announcement by the European radios about the despatch of the parachutists, on Thursday evening, they took away all their wounded comrades from the hospital, supporting some, carrying some on the back, in silence. All except three wounded ones who coolly declared that they would remain back."[128] Willame says that "the date of this retreat is confirmed by two Belgians who lived near Musokatanda, the locality situated at 32 km. in the south of Kolwezi. Hidden in the surrounding bushes, they heard, throughout the night of Thursday and Friday, the trucks passing on the carriageable track that leads into Zambia."[129]

Fourthly, the French collusion in killing is not ruled out in view of the circumstantial evidences, culled from different

126. Willame, n.58.
127. Ibid.
129. Willame, n.58.
sources. It is even held that many of the Europeans killed during the Shaba conflict were mercenaries and French soldiers, surreptitiously participating in the battle on behalf of Mobutu, prior to the formal declaration of French intervention on May 19.

General Mbumba told Afrique-Asie that during the Kolwezi assault on May 13, his men had confronted white mercenaries and Western military "conseillers" in Hotel "Impala". He also alleged that actually "It is only on Tuesday morning towards 3 hours that the first batch of the French parachutists swooped down in the proximity of the airport (Kolwezi) and bombardments by the Mirages greatly intensified. And it is then, without doubts, that there were most of the victims in the population."[131]

Willame also confirms that when the rebels were attempting to capture Kolwezi, they had to hold against "the members of a French military mission that had arrived in Kolwezi for the maintenance of the armoured vehicles."[132] He adds that it is important to underscore on fact, which has been ignored by the media and that is that "the bombardments began from Monday, more particularly on the rebel Q.G. by the French Mirages. An eyewitness living not far from that and himself a pilot, could observe that the firings were effected with precision. According to a missionary from Holland, living in the African area of Kolwezi, the recapture of the airport of Kolwezi on Wednesday was principally effected by a pounding on the rebel positions. For these last days, the French planes could have been pilotted only

130. Afrique-Asie, No.162; p.27.
131. Ibid;
132. Willame, n.58.
by the French."[133]

The P2 massacre is also blamed upon French 'paras'. According to a witness:"certain inhabitants of the P2, the young bachelors, would have received arms from the Zairian soldiers, and would have fired upon the rebels to defend the quarter."[134] Willame opines that this participation of Europeans "perhaps went to reinforce the belief among the rebels about the presence of white mercenaries in Kolwezi."[134A]

General Mbumba expressed such belief when he stated that about thirty French paratroopers of the first group battled with FLNC men on May 16 and in "the surroundings of the city on May 17 attempted to mount another attack from the West, bringing back some groups of FAZ which had dispersed in the bush. But they were pushed back again and dispersed by the afternoon. Thus, again there were some civil victims because they had taken shelter in the villas where the Europeans were locked up."[134B]

Against the backdrop of deteriorating military environment in the wake of the Kolwezi takeover by rebels, the reality of a French air intervention on May 16 or 17 should not be shrugged off. General Mbumba had echoed this point in his interview to Afrique-Asie:"while the radio of Kinshasa and the Agency of Zairian Press(Azap) announced the 'heroic' intervention of its corps of elite paras, what we saw falling from the sky, were the special troops - 'whites' in majority."[135]

There exists three other witnesses regarding the French

134. Willame;
134A. Ibid;
134B. Afrique-Asie, No.162; p.27.
135. Ibid;
paratroops drop just in the aftermath of the Kolwezi capture.

"Two belong to the French legionnaires who spoke about it to some journalists; the third is a declaration made in private by an officer of the French military mission to a Zairian, a declaration in which the former had affirmed that 'the French parachutists would have been all killed following an error of parachutage.' It is therefore possible, if not probable, that the Zairian parachutists who swooped down on Tuesday morning were accompanied by the French instructors. The 'witchhunt of the French' to which they made allusion in the last messages of the Europeans of Kolwezi, began, moreover, immediately after the announcement of the aerial operation of Tuesday 16."[136] According to E. Ugeux, a French personnel, it was, however, at the last minute that "the French instructors received the order from Paris not to jump with their pupils."[137]

In Chapter VI we find that France did not have much economic stakes in Zaire but even then it demonstrated inexplicable elan and promptness to launch military intervention to rescue Mobutu. It is presumed that the French anxiety to reach Kolwezi before all other foreign troops, was whetted by the intention to obliterate the traces of its prior involvement in the Shaba II crisis, although it persistently denied any such involvement. J.C. Willame says that "the question merits to be elucidated by more definitive proofs, because, in case that a French parachutage would have taken place at the beginning of week, the anxiety of France to precede everyone on the terrain

136. Willame, n.58.
137. Le Soir, June 20, 1978.
might be explained both by this 'military smear' and a desire to efface the traces of a former intervention."[138] A report in Le Soir, which gives credence to this view, alleged that "French commandant of the region would not have striven in vain to prevent the Belgian parachutists from penetrating into the whole of the European city " [139] in Kolwezi.

Besides, the other point to be considered is that initially the Western countries had envisaged a rescue operation "essentially Belgian with a certain French and American aid."[140] But instead, France despatched its Legionnaires on its own, and even without any collaboration with Belgium. Most surprisingly, "the Hercule planes of the Belgian Air Force were refused permission to fly over the French territory."[141] Why did France resort to such measure? Was it aimed at delaying the arrival of the Belgian troops in Kolwezi so that France could be able to efface the evidences of its earlier surreptitious participation in the Kolwezi episode?

138. Willame, n.58.
140. Willame, n.58.
141. Le Soir, June 23.
Both in 1977 and 1978, the arrival of rebels, often dubbed as "ex-gendarmes katangais" in Shaba whipped up global concern having "the effect of a bomb".[142] Such concern is attributed to the history of the rebels, which had been "already long and marked by eventful episodes."[143]

As referred to in the first Chapter, the repressive measures of Mobutu in the wake of the 1966-67 mutinies forced numerous Katangans, mostly young ones and the erstwhile Katanga gendarmes to flee to Angola. Braeckman writes that in a war ravaged Portuguese Angola "these Zairians did not find themselves unwelcome...the civilians were often employed in the diamond mines in the province of Lunda or in the coffee plantations. Others took up agriculture in the region which had practically become empty, in the wake of the terrible repression launched by the Portuguese army after the massacres of the settlers and farmers in 1961, perpetrated by the men of the FNLA of Roberto Holden....Well-trained and experienced combatants of the Katangese gendarmerie were the target for recruitment by the PIDE, Portuguese political police, which was quite active in Angola."[144]

The Portuguese mobilized the Katangan military elements into units, called "fleches noires" (Black Arrows) [145] which "relayaient sur le terrain une armee portugaise souvent peu

143. Willame, n.58.
144. Braeckman, n.142.
145. Ibid;
combative,"[148] and "were used as diplomatic leverage against Zaire and on occasion in anti-guerrilla operations, mainly against FNLA strongholds."[147] Some of the Katangans were recruited "comme mercenaires par la compagnie Diamang qui exploite les diamants au nord del'Angola." Braeckman confirms: "The Katangese gendarmes thus formed two edges of a stone: in first place, they found employment, and secondly some got the chance to shove themselves into the battle against the FNLA troops... against a liberation movement directly supported by Kinshasa. Some of the gendarmes or ex-gendarmes were hired as private militias by the Societe Diamang (their work especially comprised hunting out diamond traffickers), which exploits the mines situated in the north-east of Angola, in the vicinity of the Zairian frontier. At Dundo, the ex-Portuguese, the Societe Diamang constitutes nearly a state within the state, possessing a lease of 18,000 sq.kms. of area, its own adequate means of transportation: some airplanes which daily fly to Luanda, one of the most important automobile parks of the region, its own autonomous sources of supplies etc."[148]

As the Angolan freedom struggle intensified, "the privileges of Katangese soldiers increased" and on the eve of the independence "they practically controlled the entire region bordering Zaire, only with Diamang."[149] Meanwhile "in June 1968 the Black Arrows took on the political label of Front pour la liberation national du Congo" [150] under the leadership of

146. Braeckman, n.142
148. Braeckman,
149. & 150. Ibid;
Nathaniel Mbumba. During the course of years of their collaboration with the Portuguese army "their situation, military as well material, had improved."[151] Their chiefs had actually enriched themselves, "in their turn, by indulging in diamond traffic or by exploiting certain mines themselves. And it is said that today the 'war treasure' of FLNC contains some of the best diamonds found in the world."[152] Militarily, FLNC has embraced "fortunes diverses."[153] As an auxillary of the PIDE and the Portuguese army in their fight against the FNLA, the FLNC had gradually emerged as "well armed, well organized, representing a force, non-negligible."[154]

But "when Portuguese rule collapsed, the FLNC....had found itself in a cruel dilemma. The overtures from Mobutu for repatriation were distrusted as the FLNC believed it would be likely to meet the same apparently fatal end as the Katanga gendarmes of 1967. An FNLA triumph in Angola also posed grave dangers, both because of its intimate links with Mobutu, and because of the FLNC's past complicity in repressive action at the side of the Portuguese. The solution was an alliance of circumstance with the MPLA."[155] Even Adelman says that "the sleepy pace of Angola's anti-colonial conflict quickened into a civil war and the Katangans found their comfortable berth shaken. They made an alliance of convenience with the MPLA. Never hung up on ideology nor adverse to fighting along with someone just fought against - replicating, in their own way, the turnabout of

151. Braeckman, n.142.
152. Ibid;
153. Ibid;
154. Ibid;
155. Young & Turner, n.147.
Tshombe from secession leader to state leader - they chose the MPLA, as it was the most fervently opposed to their real foe, Mobutu."[156]

But Braeckman gives a different version of the cause cajoling the FLNC to join hands with the MPLA. He writes: "On the eve of the independence of Angola, the future of General Mbumba and his men became an acute problem. It is then that Admiral Rosa Continko, who is the governor of Angola, intervenes. He, nicknamed as Admiral Rouge{Red} and one of the heroes of the Portuguese revolution, harbours personal hatred for President Mobutu. Mobutu had once imprisoned and inflicted a humiliating detention on him in Kinshasa because he had drifted into the Zairian territory of River Zaire. In addition to his personal sentiments, Admiral Rosa Continko wishes to support MPLA as much as possible since he considers it as the most coherent, most efficacious and certainly most progressive of all the Angolan liberation movements. Consequently, he convinces General Mbumba and his men, though ideologically quite remote from MPLA, to support the movement of President Neto, and pursue the fight against the enemy of all, the FNLA, and as well the Zairian Army, the forces of President Mobutu. Subsequently the Katangans fight once more, and certain witnesses affirm (even if today the MPLA would like to minimise this action) that it is the Katangese gendarmes who won back the locality of Caxito, at the gateway to Luanda, besieged by the FNLA, at the time when the South African troops, supporting the UNITA had rather reached in the vicinity of the capital, and the Cubans had not arrived yet. In any case,

156. Adelman, n.1.
it is true that the military support extended to the MPLA by the Katangans was, at certain moments, decisive, because the MPLA was militarily less equipped, less trained than its adversaries: FNLA and UNITA which had the benefit of the grand patronage of US and South Africa. Besides, the best trained troops of MPLA had gone away with Daniel Chipenda, who, in the wake of discord with Agostino Neto, had joined UNITA."[157]

Ultimately, MPLA won the race and got entrenched at Luanda providing great hope and encouragement to the FLNC leaders. Even President Neto "had authorized the 'Katangese gendarmes' to occupy the territory granted to them by the Portuguese colonial power in the region of Tshikapa and Texeira de Sonza."[158] Henceforth, FLNC began to gear itself up to oust Mobutu, and offer an alternative to the people of Zaire. The objective of the FLNC was "no more the reconquest of the former Katanga, but the overthrow of President Mobutu."[159] In August 1976, the FLNC adopted its statute which "refers to a National Congress, the Supreme organ of control, a central committee, the leading organ of the Front comprising a minimum 25 members, and maximum 50....The political control is entrusted to the commanders of the battalion, company and group, seconded by a political commissaire at every hierarchical rung...The FLNC has representatives abroad, in France and Belgium, but the liaison between these representatives and the Angolan bases is not clearly established."[160]

158. Willame, n.58.
159. Braeckman;
160. Willame;
Ideologically, the Front did not have any "programme structure" in 1976, but it did advocate "an African socialism, sometimes strongly tinted with Marxism, sometimes inspired by traditional ideas. The general emphasis of FLNC is specially laid on the anti-Mobutuist struggle. Although anti-capitalist, the Front has often insisted on the fact that it wants to collaborate with all the foreigners in their country, having sincere willingness for the genuine redressal of the national economy."

But once saddled in power, President Neto was gripped with the principal task of "the reorganization of a vast country, deserted by the Portuguese, the reviving of agriculture and industry...the administrative control of the regions which were practically cut off from the central power for months, if not years, mainly along the Zairian border." And this region was under the virtual sway of FLNC and its fate posed the disturbing problem for the Neto regime. Neto tried to reconcile with Mobutu which explicitly implied that Angola would attempt to restrain the FLNC, and in return, Zaire would cease aiding FNLA and FLEC. But the reconciliation proved to be an eyewash, and distrust and disdain continued between the two countries. On March 8, 1977 President Neto would not have "unleashed" the 'Katangans', but they did bask in his goodwill and 'go-ahead' instruction. Adelman thinks that Neto "may have delighted in ridding his weak state of the refugees who had developed into

161. Willame, n.58.
162. Ibid;
164. Ibid;
a military force themselves during their 16 year stay. Neto would rejoice in a friendly group seizing power next door."

The Angolan Foreign Minister, Paulo Gorge denied any Angolan collusion with the FLNC, and rather depicted the attack as an independent act of the rebels, who had undoubtedly benefitted from various historical circumstances. He remarked on April 13, 1977: "the men, who entered Shaba, whom some press call 'the former Katangan gendarmes', but who are the militants of the FLNC, certainly came from Angola. They had benefitted here due to their status as refugees. Regarding arms, they had received some from the Portuguese to fight previously against us; they had, without doubt, stored them. Furthermore, they have no difficulty in procuring arms in their own country since the Zairian soldiers run away after sighting them leaving behind all their arms and materials. But I can assure that it is, in reality, a matter of internal rebellion, provoked by the dissatisfaction of the population, and actually there is no Angolan, no Cuban or no Soviet in the Shaba region. You ask as to why we cannot prevent these men from crossing our frontier: can the French government prevent those who cross the Pyrenees?"

But Zaire's Ambassador to the UN, Umba Di Lutete explained: "Although most of the participants were from Zaire, the invasion in fact did not stem from Zaire. As long as the invasion was conducted from a foreign country - in spite of the involvement of some Zairians (some of whom had long left Zaire) who are real mercenaries because they so often changed sides - I

166. Le Novel Observateur, April 18, 1977.
do not think that the events could be referred to as being internal. They are an international matter since the attack came out of Zaire. This is the first point. The second point is that these aggressors, these mercenaries, were both trained and equipped by foreign forces. Once we are faced with this evidence, we cannot deny — and I am absolutely certain of this — that we had here an international matter, a real aggression perpetrated upon the instigation of foreign powers and, therefore, we cannot — we absolutely cannot — speak of internal events. We all know that those who defend the aggression were precisely those who were involved in these events as we now know and we can prove it, just as we always declared it from the outset. They denied their responsibility and claimed that these events were an internal matter. In short, it was certainly an international matter and a real aggression against Zaire. "[167]"

The allegation of the foreign or communist collusion in the Shaba crises is a controversy, both in Africa and Europe. It is held that such scepticism "seems to owe more to a general concern over Soviet and Cuban penetration elsewhere in Africa than to any hard evidences of involvement in the Shaba incidents."[168] Of course, there was no dearth of Marxist elements within the FLNC. Cuba and Angola would have liked them to overthrow the Mobutu regime. But there are certain reasons that dissuaded them from actively pressing this objective at that time. Even after the victory of MPLA in Angola, the Neto government was confronted with formidable security problems, and was prone, which could be

vindicated by the 1976 Brazzaville agreement with Kinshasa, "to trade control over the FLNC for the termination of Mobutu's support for the FNLA and FLEC, the Cabinda separatist movement."[189] Besides, relations between the FLNC and Angolan government seemed to deteriorate, as the latter is reported to have felt hardship "in asserting its authority in the border areas where the FLNC had established bases."[170]

Of course, it is not established that Angola actively instigated the invasion of Shaba. But it is difficult to comprehend how the FLNC forces, numbering two to five thousand "could have used Angola as their rallying and launching point without first intimating Luanda. Such tacit approval must have been necessary, if, as it was widely thought, President Neto wanted the invasion to serve as a serious warning to Zaire to desist from giving further support to the FNLA."[171]

The Cuban and East German roles are even more uncertain in instigating the Shaba invasions. It is said the the Cubans equipped, reorganized and fought alongside the FLNC, which had been in Angola since the mid-60s, during the later stages of the civil war. But nothing concrete is available about their collusion in the Shaba crises. CIA reports tried to assert that the Cubans continued to provide training and other support right up until Shaba II, but Cuba vehemently denies such charges.[172]

J.C. Willame says: "It has been greatly emphasized in the press that the Katangese rebels and specially their 'commandants'

170. Ibid;
172. Mangold;
were militarily well trained and disciplined. Many have concluded about the presence of Cuban instructors among them to assist them in the preparation of the offensive. Such conclusion appears to be immature, and is not exempted from the tinges of racism. They presume, in effect, that these rebels could no more themselves achieve a degree of sophistication, sufficient for launching and leading a serious guerrilla offensive or for handling the rocket-missiles. But the military valour of these Katangans had not been contested by the colonial societies, some of whom, to cite one the Diamang, had recruited these rebels for the protection of their installations. The fact which they cannot deny is that there was no important Cuban military presence in Angola (before 1975) does not authorize to conclude that the Katangans should have Cuban instructors among them.\[173\] 

It is possible that the thesis of Cuban collusion was sustained by the fact that several FLNC volunteers wore the Fidel Castro type of caps and sported beards like the Cuban "barbudos." But Braeckman shatters this by asserting that: "As for the myth of Cuban 'barbus', it has definitely evaporated, firstly because the distrust manifested both by the Angolans and the Cubans towards the FLNC is evident, but also, more simply because no Cuban, found in Angola or elsewhere, bears the beard, as it was exclusively reserved for the former companions of Sierra Maestra, these 'barbudos' belonging to another generation and to either phantosmes."\[174\] 

According to Fidel Castro, Cuba's collaboration with the

173. Willame, n.58.  
FLNC ended with the triumph of MPLA. He told American correspondents in June 1978: "We have tried to avoid relations with the Katangese," and attempts have been made to prevent Shaba II. He further said that "before the Carter administration charged that Cuban troops were involved in the Shaba incident, he had supplied the US government with information about rumours that Katangan rebels were preparing to invade Shaba." He added that this was "the first time in my career" that he had given Washington such information.[175]

According to a report by Colin Legum in the Observer (London) of May 21, 1978, East Germany had been assigned the task of sabotaging the Mobutu regime on behalf of the Warsaw Pact in 1976. This operation, which included training, planning and the supply of some equipment, was independent of Cuban and Soviet support for the FLNC. Dwelling upon the preparation of the Shaba II offensive, "Colin Legum... has affirmed that it had coincided with the visit of an East German military mission to Luanda, Luso, Teixeira de Sonza and Henrique de Carvalko. According to Legum, the German participation in the operation of Kolwezi would have been envisaged long since (1976) and aimed to counter the West Germany's company OTRAG, which, installed in the North-East of Shaba, carried on the missile and rocket tests at cheaper costs."[176] But it is based on speculation and no conclusive evidence exists in this regard. About this, the former US Defense Secretary, Harold Brown, was quoted as remarking that it was less clear than that of the Cuban complicity.[177]

176. Willame, n. 58.
177. Mangold, n. 168.
Willame refutes this contention of Mr. Legum and asserts: "the arguments advanced by Legum do not imply to conclude that the 'East Germany prepared the rebel attack.' The presence of a German military mission in Angola at the time of invasion is not necessarily linked to the rebel invasion. The arms might have been supplied by East Germany and other socialist countries, but they might have been supplied by other sources also. According to a correspondent of Newsweek, the British security services had arrested at the beginning of this year (1978) a Katangan, called Pierre Mpoyo who had bought 250 anti-tank guns in the black market. Other informations denote about a traffic of arms even at Luanda. It can be recalled at last, that most of the rifles seized in Shaba last year had the Belgian mark (FN)." [178]

This argument of other sources of succour for the FLNC is also strengthened by the fact that the Shaba II offensive was quite known at Dundo, the capital of the Diamang, and in Angola the FLNC banked upon the "local complicities: it is the Diamang which supplied it the vehicles and 40,000 litres of fuel necessary for the voyage." [179] The Belgian connivance is also supported by Braeckman. He says that "It is more and more certain today (even if some, the operation having failed, affirm the contrary) that certain responsible persons of the Gecamines (in Kolwezi) had contacts with the FLNC and it is certain also that this movement alias the Katangan gendarmes of yesterday and their chiefs, was not unknown to the Diamang. In this regard, it is necessary to remember that even if the Portuguese capital had

178. Willame, n.58.
179. Braeckman, n.142.
been nationalized, and the Angolan State holds today 60.85 p.c. of the shares, the Societe General of Belgium, with 17.4 p.c of the capital, remains not only the most important foreign share holder, but also furnishes the men and material, after the departure of the Portuguese technicians."

180. Braeckman, n.142.