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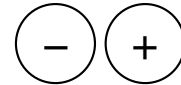
## Zaire: An African Horror Story

Observers search for a suitable analogy—the next Bosnia, another Somalia—to the shaky, predatory despotism of Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku wa za Banga

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In the convoluted history of Central Africa, the southern Zairean province of Shaba has long been a magnet for mercenaries and swindlers, a center of bloodstained intrigue. Belgian colonizers first exploited Shaba's rich deposits of copper at the turn of the century, in what came to be called the Belgian Congo—the richest European colony in Africa, Conrad's "Heart of Darkness." In 1960, when the colony achieved independence, the short-lived secession of the province, then known as Katanga, helped make the Congo a byword for post colonial chaos and savagery—and also black Africa's first Cold War battleground. It was here, in the provincial capital Elisabethville (now Lubumbashi), that the charismatic nationalist Patrice Lumumba was famously martyred in 1961, with the connivance of the Central Intelligence Agency and a thirty-year-old Congolese colonel who would soon become President of the country, Joseph Deséré Mobutu.

Two rebel invasions of Katanga, in 1977 and 1978, brought Belgian, French, and Moroccan troops to President Mobutu's rescue, many of them ferried by U. S. planes. These episodes cemented Mobutu's position as an utterly dependent but indispensable asset to the West. In the 1980s Shaba emerged as a key strategic outpost for the Reagan Doctrine. Reportedly, the CIA used an airstrip in the remote Shaban town of Kamina in order to channel covert

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So it is no surprise that Shaba has emerged as a flash point in one of the great unfolding dramas of the post-Cold War era: Mobutu's struggle to remain in power. He is one of the last five-star despots of the Cold War era: Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku wa za Banga, as he is now called—which translates as "the all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, will go from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake." Buffeted by history's changing winds, bereft of his Western backing, embattled by riotous troops and pro-democracy forces, and squeezed for cash to keep afloat his notoriously greedy regime, Mobutu was being tested as never before when I visited Shaba recently, in search of clues to his survival. Despite mounting anarchy and economic chaos, Mobutu was confounding widespread predictions of his imminent demise. I wanted to know how he did it.

"Ethnic cleansing" was the term that Zaireans, diplomats, and aid workers used to explain the cramming of tens of thousands of hungry and destitute citizens into and around two fly-strewn railway stations in the mining towns of Likasi and Kolwezi. They were refugees in their own country, evidence that the time-honored practice of "divide and rule" had been effectively executed. Thumbs were rubbed against forefingers to explain the officially sanctioned looting of the vital state-owned mining installation in Kolwezi, where soldiers, politicians, and all manner of foreign hustlers were operating a none-too-subtle traffic in stolen copper and cobalt and whatever else might earn a few hundred trillion hyperdeflated cash zaires. Three years after Mobutu first promised to share power, amid a wave of popular euphoria over the news of tumbling regimes in Eastern Europe ("Ceausescu! Mobutu! (Ceausescu! Mobutu!" they chanted in the streets of Kinshasa), he seems bent on dismembering the country before the country dismembers him. Talk of the big man's faltering grip, rife in Kinshasa and abroad, had long since

ceased in Shaba. "It's important to know that Mobutu is a great strategist," I was told. "He has his ways and means."

The train station in downtown Likasi, a two-hour drive northwest of Lubumbashi, is a crumbling edifice built by the Belgians early in this century. It was part of the sprawling network of rails and roads that linked the Central African copper belt to ports in South Africa and the former Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola. In more prosperous days a substantial portion of the world's copper and cobalt was produced in this part of the world.

Today the station is surrounded by a dense warren of shanties, a maze of burlap and plastic slung over rickety frames fashioned from scrap wood and rusty bedsprings. Across the tracks and beyond a foot-wide open sewer, row upon row of green plastic tents, constructed by Belgian workers from the relief agency Médecins Sans Frontières, extend to the distant horizon. Each tent is crammed with as many as fourteen men, women, and children. The air is filled with the smells of rot and excrement, and with the cacophonous din of scrap metal being pounded into makeshift pots and pans. Five hours west an equally grim scene is unfolding in Kolwezi. The sidewalks there are piled high with desks, bureaus, sofas, cabinets, and other household goods, all for sale to whoever will buy them. Before relief groups moved in to provide vaccinations and running water, sixty people a day were dying from measles, dysentery, malaria, and respiratory infections.

In both towns the refugees are Kasaians, primarily Lubas, born and raised in Shaba but descended from ancestors who were recruited to the mines from the neighboring province of Kasai. Over the past year, in the worst wave of ethnic violence in the region since the Katangan secession of 1960, more than 100,000 Kasaians have been chased from their jobs and homes by rampaging mobs of indigenous Shabans—or "Katangese," as they call

themselves. Most Kasaians have congregated at the train stations of Kolwezi and Likasi in the probably futile hope that one of the infrequent trains will have enough space in its sweltering boxcars to take them and their families away to Kasai at a price they can afford. "We cannot stay, because they will cut our throats," I was told.

The plight of the Kasai in Shaba is less the result of age-old hatreds than of the machinations of government leaders bent on preserving their power. To be sure, there is a history of enmity between the Katangese and their generally better-educated, more successful Kasaian brothers. The Lubas of Kasai have sometimes considered themselves the "Jews of Africa." They predominate among the country's intellectuals, professionals, and entrepreneurs. The Belgians cultivated them as laborers and administrators of the colonial order. Their families were housed by the mining companies; their children were educated in company-built schools and made ready to percolate up through even the most oppressive regimes both before and since independence. Resentment on the part of the Katangese has grown accordingly.

"The Kasai are seen as instruments of oppression—on this all Katangese agree," Muyembe wa Banze, a Katangan executive at Gecamines, the state-owned mining giant, told me. "They seemed to be more attached to the white man—that's what we have seen. They have come from far away and have all the advantages. You'll see that the important positions in society are filled by Kasaians. Mobutu has used the Kasai to oppress the Katangese."

Yet in Zaire it has been only at times of great political upheaval and insecurity, such as now, that resentment has turned to terror. What is striking about the current campaign against the Kasai is how President Mobutu, fighting for his political survival, has managed to exploit well-founded bitterness toward his own rapacious regime by deflecting it onto others.

On April 24, 1990, Mobutu declared an end to single-party rule and the beginning of a transition to democracy. The Berlin Wall had recently fallen, and the Cold War was winding down. Mobutu's Western backers—the United States, France, and Belgium—had let him know that the years of reliable support were over. This, together with mounting strikes and protests in Kinshasa and elsewhere, compelled Mobutu to open a "sovereign national conference" to prepare for democratic rule. Opposition leaders returned from exile. Opposition parties proliferated. A raucous public debate enlivened newspapers long subdued by fear.

But problems quickly materialized—not least in Shaba. Barely two weeks after Mobutu's declaration unidentified commandos went on a nighttime rampage on the campus of the University of Lubumbashi, killing a still-unconfirmed number of students. There followed a spate of armed attacks on the homes of prominent opposition figures. Opposition rallies were broken up. Arrests and killings multiplied. Transition governments came and went. More than 200 mutually antagonistic political parties entered the fray, many backed with enough cash from Mobutu himself to compound hyperinflation.

Then came the "*pillage*." In September of 1991 an astonishing week-long spree of looting and destruction by underpaid troops of the national army laid waste to major cities across the country. More than 200 people were killed. Much of the modern productive sector of the economy was destroyed. The sidewalks next to major military bases became thriving markets for looted goods. Most press accounts described these horrendous riots as the work of "mutinous" troops. But whether the *pillage* was aimed at toppling Mobutu remains a mystery; no soldier was ever prosecuted or disciplined.

Meanwhile, the major opposition parties had managed to form a coalition called the Union Sacrée de l'Opposition. Its candidate to lead the transition to democracy was a well-known activist named Étienne Tshisekedi. Tshisekedi

is from Kasai. After the *pillage* Mobutu met with the Union Sacrée and, remarkably, agreed to allow the formation of an opposition government led by Tshisekedi, who was sworn in as Prime Minister on October 16, 1991. He lasted six days. The problem, like almost all problems in Zaire, boiled down to money. Tshisekedi, with the backing of Western governments, sought control over Zaire's Central Bank. This Mobutu could not abide. Control of the printing and distribution of money is a vital tool of Mobutu's; it is not only the means by which he enriches himself but also his means for supporting his friends and co-opting his enemies. When Tshisekedi arrived at his office on October 19, 1991, he found the doors were locked. A replacement moved in three days later. Nevertheless, the Union Sacrée continued to have broad popular support. Something needed to be done to break up the opposition alliance. So Mobutu turned to two men from Shaba: Jean Nguza Karl-i-Bond and Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza.

Whenever Zaireans describe Mobutu's legendary "musical chairs" system of government—the perennial shuffling of his friends and enemies in and out of favor, in and out of money—the first case in point is Nguza Karl-i-Bond. Nguza was Mobutu's Foreign Minister in the early 1970s. He then became the political director of Zaire's sole political party, the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (MPR). In 1977 he was accused of treason and sentenced to death. He is said to have been tortured. But a year later he was freed, and a year after that he became Prime Minister. Two years after that he fled to exile in Belgium, where he wrote a book exposing Mobutu's corruption. He later testified before a congressional subcommittee in Washington about Mobutu's ill-gotten riches. Then, incredibly, he returned to Mobutu's fold, and in 1986 was sent back to Washington as Zaire's ambassador. Two years later he was the Foreign Minister again.

By 1991 Nguza was out of the loop once more and heading the Union des Fédéralistes et des Républicains Indépendants (UFERI), one of the three

main opposition parties in the Union Sacrée. Gabriel Kyungu, one of his principal allies, appeared more credible than Nguza as an oppositionist. Along with Tshisekedi, Kyungu had produced a scathing public critique of Mobutu's regime in 1980. The two were imprisoned and tortured. Kyungu was one of the first public figures to decry the massacre of students at the university, and he drew crowds with populist speeches in which he derided Mobutu as an *hibou*, an owl, traditionally associated with black magic.

But that was before November 25, 1991, when UFERI broke ranks with the Union Sacrée. Mobutu appointed Nguza Prime Minister and Kyungu the governor of Shaba. The violence against the Kasai in Shaba began soon thereafter.

Immediately after Governor Kyungu assumed office, he launched a campaign known as *Debout Katanga!*—"Rise up, Katanga!" Its motto was "Katanga for the Katangese." In a series of public rallies and radio speeches the governor railed against the "enemy within," the Kasai. Bemoaning the misery of the Katangan population, Kyungu repeatedly blamed the Kasaians. He called them *bilulu* (Swahili for "insects"). "The Kasai are foreigners," he declared. "The Katangese no longer accept the Kasai here. Their presence is an insult. They are arrogant and don't hide it. It is not possible for the tribes to live side by side." In crude harangues that would have been familiar to Asians driven from Uganda by Idi Amin, Kyungu derided the Kasai as money-grubbing exploiters who were lucky to be allowed to flee with their lives. "The Kasai must go and then the Katangese can have the nice jobs and nice houses," he said.

Then, employing a tactic long used by Mobutu, Kyungu established the JUFERI, a youth brigade in his party, as a vigilante force. Mostly unemployed, illiterate thugs from rural villages, the JUFERI provided a violent accompaniment to Kyungu's menacing radio broadcasts. Attacks on

Kasaian homes in rural towns and villages began in late 1991. By April of last year the JUFERI, sometimes backed by mobs of other Katangese, were systematically expelling Kasaians from their homes. Witnesses said the JUFERI were sometimes supplied with gasoline to set houses afire and with beer and marijuana to stoke their aggression. Some Kasaians fought back. The proverbial cycle of violence was set in motion.

Meanwhile, on February 16, 1992, hundreds of thousands of people marched through the streets of Kinshasa, a thousand miles away, in support of the national conference on democracy, which Nguza had ordered closed. Mobutu's troops opened fire on the marchers; according to the human rights monitoring group Africa Watch, more than thirty were killed. Mobutu deftly blamed Nguza and soon afterward allowed the national conference to resume. In August the conference nominated Tshisekedi to be Prime Minister again. Kasaians in Shaba celebrated. Reportedly, some marched through the streets of Lubumbashi with leashed dogs that wore ties and signs saying NGUZA. Some threw stones at the governor's residence. The JUFERI, armed with knives and machetes, responded predictably.

Most Kasaians fled to the train station or to the homes of relatives in town. Those I spoke with had no doubt about who was ultimately responsible for their predicament. "It's Mobutu," one of their leaders asserted (few Kasaians were willing to be identified by name). "As President of the Republic, he can't lower himself into the streets to wage war against the Kasai. He needs someone who is malleable. He uses others, like Kyungu—a pawn of Mobutu."

Kasaians were quick to remind me that not all Katangese approve of what is happening: "It's a false problem," I was told repeatedly; "it's a manipulation by the politicians." Nevertheless, Nguza and Kyungu have plainly tapped a real vein of resentment. "Monsieur Kyungu expresses the profound aspirations, the soul of the people," Tshibang Kadjat, a Katangan executive at



the mining company Gecamines, told me. "From colonization to Mobutu, all the advantages go to the Kasai."

In fact the majority of Kasaians in Shaba have suffered as much as most Katangese under a regime that has plundered the province's resources for the benefit of a few. But Katangan leaders have made a pact with the devil, calculating that, as one put it, "we have to ally ourselves with the finishing dictatorship in order to resist the permanent dictatorship of the Kasai."

"You know," a Kasaian prosecutor in Kolwezi told me over dinner, "Mobutu is the kind of politician who can profit from any situation to maintain his power. Before, he attacked the Katangese using the Kasai, who were among his closest collaborators. Now he realizes that there were radical political oppositionists among the Kasai. He uses old enmities to destabilize his new enemies. Now he uses Katangese to destabilize the Kasai."

A judge interrupted to clarify: "It was not exactly his goal to dominate the Katangese. Mobutu put Kasaians at the head of many enterprises. But this was so that he could enjoy the riches of the province with the help of the Kasai. Now he says it wasn't he who was the cause of the Katangese's unhappiness—it was the Kasai. If you look at the situation more closely, both Kasaians and Katangese are in indescribable misery. Those who benefited are Mobutu and his acolytes. It's just that most of his acolytes were Kasaians, especially here in Katanga. This is a region that he has pillaged a lot."

Soldiers and the police, who might be expected to intervene if Mobutu ordered them to do so, appear in accounts of the violence only intermittently, most often as criminals engaged in thefts and assaults that provoke reprisals, which merely reinforce the cycle of violence. Lawlessness in general, and lawless soldiers in particular, have been a chronic problem in Zaire ever since independence, when the entire army dissolved in mutiny within a week. Armed shakedowns are commonplace. On a single night in Kolwezi, while

driving to and from a restaurant in town, my companions and I were held up at gunpoint five times by soldiers who emerged like apparitions in our headlights, pointed their rifles menacingly at the windshield, and then gruffly accepted yet another proffer of five or ten million zaires—just under a dollar at that week's rate.

The UFERI mayor of Kolwozi, P. Anschaire Moji A Kapasu, told me that the authorities had done "everything possible" to stop the violence. I asked if anyone had been arrested and prosecuted. He looked at me with a blank expression, as if the idea had never occurred to him. "It's difficult in the mass of people to know who struck who," he said. "You would have to arrest the whole population. *C'est difficile.*"

On the edge of downtown Kolwozi, past the teeming train station, lies the Gecamines mining installation, a vast, rocky landscape of open pits and coppery waste dumps. In better days this facility produced up to 80 percent of Zaire's copper and cobalt. Belgians built the mines early in the century, and Belgian spies, financiers, and mercenaries known as *les Affreux*—"the Dreadful Ones"—backed Moise Tshombe's ill-fated secession movement in 1960, hoping to maintain de facto Belgian control over the lucrative mining industry. Mobutu nationalized the mines in 1967. At its high point, in the mid-1980s, Gecamines produced 480,000 tons of copper a year with 35,000 employees, earned three quarters of Zaire's foreign exchange, and educated 100,000 children in company run schools.

Today Gecamines is eerily subdued. A half dozen tense young JUFERI members in jeans and sport shirts guard the entrance against Kasaians. In the two weeks before my visit roughly 7,000 Kasaiian workers—half the work force and most of the skilled employees—had been chased from their jobs at these mines. In all, 40,000 to 50,000 Kasaiians in Kolwezi have been rendered homeless. The mines still function, I was told, but expatriate

company officials doubt that this will last. The production of copper had already declined to 150,000 tons or less in the previous year, because of rampant corruption and mismanagement. A mine collapsed a few years ago owing to negligence. Most of the skilled expatriates fled after the 1991 pillage. The company is bankrupt.

A week before my visit ten trucks lined up along the wall surrounding the plant. Three hundred thieves pushed a hundred tons of copper up to the wall and loaded it into the trucks, and off they drove to the Zambian border and down to South Africa. There is an ongoing traffic in stolen copper, cobalt, electrical wires and pylons, tires, water pumps, and gasoline. Gecamines is being looted down to the ground. Soldiers, the police, workers, company guards, expatriate Greeks, Lebanese, and South Africans—all are collaborating to ransack Zaire's biggest economic asset.

According to company officials, legal authorities, diplomats, and townspeople alike, at the center of the racket is Governor Kyungu. He is said to be getting a \$10,000 kickback for each export license granted to truck goods across the border. It is an old story in Zaire. "Who's using who?" a clergyman asked. "Is Mobutu using Kyungu, or is Kyungu using Mobutu? We ask ourselves this question. If you compare Kyungu when he was in opposition, he was a poor man. Now he is very rich."

The corruption in Zaire is legendary. The "kleptocracy" has its roots in the nineteenth century Congo Free State: Belgium's King Leopold II used profits from the export of the country's extensive natural resources to build a personal fortune—profits extracted under conditions of forced labor that included killing workers and chopping off hands if quotas were not met. Mobutu's ill-gotten wealth is usually estimated at around \$5 billion. Stories about his bank accounts in Switzerland and his villas, ranches palaces, and yachts throughout Europe are legion, as are wide-eyed descriptions of his

home at Gbadolite, in northern Zaire, his birthplace; "Versailles in the jungle," it is called.

Born in poverty, the son of a domestic cook and a hotel maid, Mobutu is reported to have obtained his first few million dollars in the early 1960s from the CIA and the U.S.-dominated UN peacekeeping force that put down the Katangan secession. He was the army chief of staff at the time. Mobutu has steadily augmented his wealth ever since by blurring the distinction between public and private funds, dipping often into the national treasury. Not least among his many lucrative sources of "leakage," as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund call illegal diversions of money, has been Gecamines. By 1980 it was estimated that officials were skimming off at least \$240 million a year from the nationalized resource. More recently a World Bank investigation estimated that up to \$400 million—a fourth of Zaire's export revenues, most of it earned from Gecamines inexplicably vanished from the country's foreign-exchange accounts in 1988.

Sometimes overlooked in accounts of Mobutu's wealth is the critical role that money plays as a political tool. Even as Mobutu has accumulated great riches, he has had to spend huge sums to reward his allies and buy off his opponents. The word on the street in Kinshasa, impossible to confirm but relayed to me by a diplomatic source who found it credible, is that Mobutu paid Nguza \$10 million to break with the Union Sacrée and become Prime Minister. "It's like the Mafia," a Zairean lawyer said. "All Zairean politicians are poor. For survival they have to engage in politics. To earn a living, they have to be on the side of the man in power."

Herman Cohen, who was the assistant secretary of state for African affairs in the Bush Administration, and who first met Mobutu almost thirty years ago, agreed when we spoke that Zaire's central government is "basically a clan a family of cousins acting like the Mafia in Sicily, making these illegal deals,

siphoning the money off cobalt and copper revenues." Cohen added, "Mobutu requires a huge cash flow. He has to keep the family afloat. In effect he has about three thousand to four thousand dependents, including women and children. It's essentially his own tribe. The attitude is, 'We've got to all hang together. If we don't, we're dead.'"

Among the most important of these dependents are, of course, soldiers. A certain amount of cash has to be on hand for them. When money is tight, as it often is now that the economy is in ruins, Mobutu's tendency has been simply to print more. Hyperinflation generally follows. This was the result last January, when Mobutu tried to meet his military payroll by introducing new five-million-zaire notes into circulation, worth about \$2 each at the time. The opposition, led by Tshisekedi, feared yet another round of hyperinflation, and urged shopkeepers to refuse to accept them. The strategy worked. The soldiers found they were unable to spend their money. So they went on another *pillage*, looting Kinshasa even more viciously and destructively than they had in 1991. This time Mobutu's elite troops intervened, grabbing their share and then summarily executing hundreds of rank-and-file looters. Nevertheless, the newly printed notes were effectively barred from use—everywhere, that is, except in Mobutu's home province of Equateur and in Shaba, where Governor Kyungu successfully coerced businesses into accepting them. Prices took off. The black-market value of zaires, 2.5 million to the dollar in Kinshasa in April, went from 12 million to 24 million to the dollar in Lubumbashi during the first two weeks of that month.

There remains the question of why Mobutu tolerates the gutting of Gecamines, a pillar of the economy and an indispensable source of foreign exchange. The answer is diamonds. By all accounts, Mobutu has managed to work out an alternative racket involving the export of diamonds from Kasai. Zaire is one of the world's largest producers of diamonds. Last year recorded diamond exports came to \$230 million. Unrecorded exports? "Anybody's

guess," a diplomat told me, "but certainly larger, by a substantial margin." Reportedly, an array of mostly Lebanese diamond buyers, working with silent partners in the Central Bank and in the military, are reaping hefty profits in a complex foreign-exchange scam involving a parallel market in checks worth as much as forty times the official exchange rate. They bring in their foreign currency, exchange it for zaires with their silent partners, and then head for the diamond mines. The proceeds leaving the back door of the Central Bank are keeping afloat Mobutu's extended "family" of relatives, elite troops, ethnic kinsmen, and followers. So Gecamines may be expendable.

The losers in all this, needless to say, are the long-suffering Zairean people. Last year inflation soared to more than 6,000 percent. Unemployment is at 80 percent. Gross domestic product has by some estimates been contracting by as much as 30 percent a year since the *pillage*. Hospitals and schools have repeatedly shut down. Teachers in Likasi had been on strike for more than a month when I was there; their average monthly salary of 30 million zaires was worth four bottles of beer. Many Zaireans eat just one meal a day, some only one every other day. The public-service sector has largely stopped functioning. Tax collection has ceased—except for the "direct taxation" of army shakedowns. The country's banking system has all but collapsed. The nation of nearly 40 million, four times the geographic size of France, is heading deeper into anarchy by the day.

Yet it is precisely these conditions that have made Mobutu's tactics effective. Most Zaireans see a method in his seeming madness, a deliberate strategy of destabilization as a means of discrediting the movement toward democracy and undermining the capacity of the people to mobilize against him.

"Mobutu tries to keep the population in fear," a lawyer in Kolwezi told me.

"The population is traumatized. Mobutu wants to keep them in this position for a long time. That's how he maintains his position."

Foreigners living in Zaire often marvel at the "passivity" of the Zairean people; one I spoke to speculated about a version of the "battered-woman syndrome." But Zaireans point out that Mobutu and his allies still have all the guns and all the money. Hundreds of thousands of people marched in Kinshasa, they reminded me, and more than thirty of them were shot dead. In any event, a clergyman said, "when the population is hungry and tired, it doesn't have the energy to go into the streets."

A U.S. State department paper of earlier this year raised the specter of Zaire's becoming "Somalia and Liberia rolled into one, with vast potential for immense refugee flows, regional destabilization, and humanitarian disaster." Whether Zaire is headed down that path is far from certain. The country is not armed to the teeth as Somalia was, and it is blessed with a lush tropical climate that makes widespread famine less likely. Moreover, the country is so huge and diffuse—Shaba alone is nearly the size of France—that it lacks the implosive potential of Liberia, where the importation of large quantities of arms touched off a conflagration that consumed the entire country in less than a year. What does seem clear is that the longer Mobutu's strategy of progressive disintegration lasts, the more widespread and irreversible will be the forces of anarchy. Already reports of "ethnic cleansing" much like those from Shaba are emerging from the northeastern region of Kivu.

That is why many Zaireans are in favor of foreign intervention. A Katangan executive at Gecamines put it this way: "The West and the United States have a moral obligation vis-a-vis Africa. At the time of the Cold War, the West and the United States produced dictators. They armed them. They organized coups. Now that the Cold War is finished, the West has a moral obligation to get rid of the dictators of Africa. When they created these dictators, they didn't ask for the advice of the African people."

The American policy-makers I have spoken with are clearly at a loss about

what should be done. "The solution is not obvious," I was told. Armed United Nations intervention to support an election process—the solution favored by Tshisekedi and many other Zaireans—would be unsalable in the United States even if it were feasible. The strategy of nudging the transition process from the sidelines has withered under Mobutu's endlessly subversive machinations. All along there has been concern that if Mobutu could somehow be extracted from the scene, his departure would create a vacuum into which the soldiers left behind would rush, with frightful results. By this line of argument, Mobutu has stoked the forces of anarchy to such a degree that he has made himself indispensable as a means of controlling them. *Après moi, le déluge*, he has implied for thirty years. At this late date he may be right.