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Collective Interventions After the Cold War: Reflections on the U.N. Mission to the Congo, 1960-64

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In the aftermath of the Cold War, the world's states may now be prepared to make greater use of collective military forces organized through the United Nations to resolve conflicts having both internal and international dimensions. Such a step would be in keeping with the liberal internationalism generally (if inconsistently) supported by the Western democracies in this century. Since the end of the Cold War, the UN member states have organized military operations through the UN to provide relief to civilian victims of civil strife in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Somalia, as well as rebutting Iraq's aggression in Kuwait. Perhaps as meaningfully, the UN Security Council has imposed sanctions on the military regime in Haiti for its unconstitutional seizure of power despite (a) the apparent absence of an *international* threat to peace and security and (b) the clear control of the Haitian state apparatus by the Raoul Cédras government. This latter case may signal a shift in the balance of principles in the UN in favor of democracy and human rights, and away from the prerogatives of sovereignty.

If such collective interventions are to become common in international relations, careful consideration should go into the planning and execution of future UN missions. Otherwise, they may fail to achieve the ends for which they are designed, and thereby disillusion states about the effectiveness of UN action. Accordingly, the end of the Cold War is an important time to revisit past UN operations, and, hopefully, glean lessons for the present. Among the UN peacekeeping missions undertaken since the first in 1956, the UN mission to the Congo¹ between 1960-64 has perhaps the most relevance for the contemporary world. The UN mission to the Congo, officially known by its French name, the *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo* (ONUC), played an important role in the internal Congolese situation as well as its international role. Moreover, the ultimate decisiveness of

¹The Congo changed its name to "Zaire" in 1971, but I shall employ its older name throughout this paper, which considers only the pre-1971 period.

the ONUC role in Congo contrasts with the indeterminate role of the UN missions to Cyprus and Lebanon. Yet the mixed outcomes that the ONUC mission produced in the Congo, as well as the differing values of its observers, render it highly controversial to the present day. Here, we shall explore the roots of the controversy over the ONUC mission, and offer a post-Cold War assessment of the lessons it offers.

The Genesis of the Mission and the Ambiguity of Its Mandate

The events leading to the ONUC mission burst onto the world stage with little warning. After nearly one hundred years of colonial rule, Congo received its independence from Belgium on 30 June 1960. Elections organized the previous month had resulted in a plurality of seats in the National Assembly for the Mouvement National Congolais (MNC), led by the strongly nationalist Patrice Lumumba. After some maneuvering by the Belgian governor to prevent it, Lumumba became Prime Minister, and Joseph Kasavubu, a more cautious and moderate leader of the Abako party, was elected President by the National Assembly.² At that time, the Congolese people were deeply divided by ethnicity, language, and cultural practice. Moreover, the political movements leading to independence had appeared and matured very suddenly in the mid-1950s, and the Belgians had done precious little to prepare the Congolese for their independence.³ The lack of a politically-prepared elite proved momentous for the fate of the Congo.

On 4 July 1960, Congolese troops of the *Force Publique*, Congo's national army, began to mutiny against their (Belgian) officers, who had remained in their posts after independence.⁴ The following day the

²See Hoskyns, pp.74-77. Abako stands for the "Alliance des BaKongo," which was an ethnically-based party for the Kongo people of lower Congo. It should be made clear that Prime Minister was the more desirable post, one which Kasavubu had sought before Lumumba eventually won it. Under the Congolese *Loi Fondamentale*, the President was envisioned to play a mostly ceremonial role, such as the that played by the President of Germany in that country's contemporary political system.

³The two classic accounts of internal events leading to independence for the Congo are René Lemarchand, *Political Awakening in the Belgian Congo*, (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1964) and Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence*, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965). Notable in the lack of colonial preparation was the virtual absence of any opportunity for the Congolese to attain a university-level education until the very end of the 1950s.

⁴Two chronologies of events in the Congo during this period are very useful in tracing events. See Wynfred Joshua, *United Nations Peacekeeping in the Congo, 1960-1964*, Vol. 4, *A Congo Chronology, 1960-1964*, (Washington: Brookings, 1966) and Howard M. Epstein, *Revolt in the*

Belgian commander, General Émile Janssens, addressed the troops in Leopoldville, and rejected out of hand their demands for reorganization of the army.⁵ Later that day, the mutiny spread to other Congolese cities, and some Europeans were attacked by the Congolese soldiers. With the mutinies and scattered attacks on Europeans continuing, the Belgian government decided to use its troops to restore order in the Congo. On 10 July Belgian troops from within the Congo and flowing in from Belgium began to intervene against the mutinous troops.⁶ This action infuriated Kasavubu and Lumumba, and had the immediate effect of intensifying the mutinies and attacks on Europeans.⁷ They also led various Congolese authorities to begin a series of calls for outside assistance, from the U.S. (July 12th), the UN (July 12th and 13th), Ghana (July 13th) and the Soviet Union (July 14th).

One should also recall another dimension of the Congo crisis with which the UN soon became involved, the secession of Katanga.⁸ Katanga (now Shaba) is the southern-most, mineral-rich, province of the Congo that has served as the country's main source of wealth. In the late 1950s, a political party called Conakat [Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga] was organized in the province to represent the interests of the "authentic Katangans," i.e., those groups which had long inhabited the region.⁹ This party was also closely tied to conservative Belgian commercial interests in Katanga. These foreign interests, and their traditional African partners in Katanga, including Conakat, favored strong local autonomy, if not outright independence for Katanga. In the May 1960 elections in the Congo, Conakat won

Congo, 1960-64, (New York: Facts on File, 1965).

⁵Among the demands of the soldiers were the Africanization of the officer corps and increases in salary for African soldiers. In the course of his speech, Janssens wrote the phrase "Before independence = after independence" on a blackboard. See Catherine Hoskyns, *The Congo Since Independence: January 1960 to December 1961*, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p.88.

⁶Under a Belgo-Congolese Treaty of Friendship which had been negotiated but not yet ratified, the Belgians were allowed to keep their troops stationed at two sites in the Congo, specifically, at Kitona (near Leopoldville, the capital) and Kamina (in northern Katanga province).

⁷See Hoskyns, pp.122-24.

⁸The best single source on the secession specifically is Jules Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession*, trans. Rebecca Young, (1963; trans. Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1966).

⁹Gérard-Libois, pp.11-12; the major groups that Conakat claimed to represent were the Lunda, Baluba-Katanga, Bayeke, Basanga, Tshokwe, Batabwa, and Babemba. Conakat represented those in these ethnic groups who wished to distinguish themselves from the "outsiders" (the Baluba-Kasai and Lulua), i.e., those who had emigrated into Katanga from neighboring Kasai over the previous decades.

twenty-five (of sixty) seats in the provincial Assembly, and later won the loyalty of thirteen independent representatives, giving it control over the body.¹⁰ On 16 June Moïse Tshombe, the son-in-law of the Lunda paramount chief, was voted President of the provincial Assembly. Tshombe had already hinted in April that Katanga might declare itself independent, and following disputes with Lumumba over the formation of the central Congolese government, he declared Katanga independent on 11 July.¹¹

In retrospect, one cannot help but be struck by the great rapidity with which the ONUC mission was organized and dispatched. This development reflects the great urgency that the major parties, including UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, felt in initiating the mission. The Congolese (and Soviets) were anxious for the Belgian troops to be withdrawn immediately because of the affront to Congolese sovereignty it entailed; meanwhile the Western states supported an immediate dispatch of UN troops both to protect Western lives and property, and to eliminate any excuse for Soviet counter-intervention. In response to Hammarskjöld's call, the Security Council convened on 13 July, and passed a resolution the following day calling on Belgium to withdraw its forces, and authorizing the Secretary-General to organize a military force to be sent to the Congo in support of its government. Due to the controversy it generated, one should be aware of the exact wording of the key (second) activating clause of this resolution:

*[The Security Council] [d]ecides to authorize the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the Government of the Republic of the Congo, to provide the Government with such military assistance as may be necessary until, through the efforts of the Congolese Government with the technical assistance of the United Nations, the national security forces may be able, in the opinion of the Government, to meet fully their tasks;*¹²

Only one day later, 15 July, the first UN-commanded troops, from Tunisia and Ghana, arrived in the Congo. Then, on the following day, Guinean, Moroccan, Ethiopian and more Tunisian troops were flown into the Congo to serve under the UN banner. By 17 July there were

¹⁰Hoskyns, p.71.

¹¹Gérard-Libois, pp.68 and 109. The Katangan Assembly later approved this declaration on 17 July 1960.

¹²U.N. Security Council Resolution S/4387 (14 July 1960). The Resolution was adopted by a vote of eight in favor to none against, with three abstentions (China, France and the U.K.).

some 3,500 UN-commanded troops in the Congo.¹³

The drawback of organizing and dispatching the ONUC with such great haste, however, was a lack of concurrence over the real mandate of the mission, which plagued it throughout its existence. Since there was little time to resolve the issues surrounding the mission's purpose, the Resolution authorizing the mission was worded vaguely, so as to ensure both Western and Soviet support.¹⁴ As Tunisian Security Council representative Mongi Slim observed at the time,

The text [of the Resolution] is intentionally imprecise about certain points in order to avoid arguments in the Council which might prolong the debate and delay the decision which is so vital in the present situation and which has been expressly requested by the Government of the Congo.¹⁵

Secretary-General Hammarskjöld was also aware, of course, that the Resolution was vague,¹⁶ but he intended to use his own diplomatic skill to conduct the ONUC mission in such a way as to restore order in the Congo without further unilateral intervention.

From the Congolese perspective, the real principle at stake was that of Congolese sovereignty, and hence the real issue was the unilateral intervention of Belgian forces in Congolese territory. This was as much the view of Kasavubu and other "moderates" as it was of the fiery Lumumba. In the view of Kasavubu and Lumumba, it was they who had aroused the UN's interest in the Congo, specifically by sending two telegrams to Hammarskjöld on 12 and 13 July, respectively.¹⁷ According to the request made in the first telegram, "The essential purpose of the requested military aid is to protect the national territory of the Congo against the present external aggression which is a threat to international peace." Though this sentence seems to make the nature of the request clear, Kasavubu and Lumumba further

¹³"First Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the July 14, 1960, Security Council Resolution," July 18, 1960, U.N. Document S/4389, *Security Council Official Records [SCOR]*, Supp. for July-September, 1960, p.22.

¹⁴Of the dozens of scholarly studies of the Congo crisis and the ONUC mission, that of Paul-Henry Gendebien *L'intervention des Nations Unies au Congo, 1960-1964*, (Paris: Institut de Recherches Économiques et Sociales Université Lovanium de Kinshasa, 1967), pp.38-41] best recognizes the importance of the ambiguity of the original resolutions authorizing the U.N. mission. Cf. on this point, Hoskyns, p.117.

¹⁵SCOR, 873rd meeting, 13/14 July 1960, ¶211. Cf. Hoskyns, p.117.

¹⁶Brian Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, (New York: Knopf, 1972), p.403.

¹⁷These were circulated at the U.N. as Document S/4382.

stressed the same point in their subsequent telegram, indicating that "the purpose of the aid requested is *not* to restore the internal situation in Congo but rather to protect the national territory against acts of aggression committed by Belgian metropolitan troops."¹⁸ The first telegram had also expressed the Congolese suspicion that Belgium was behind the secession of Katanga. As for the attacks on Europeans, the Congolese stressed the fact that the great majority of these attacks occurred only *after* the Belgian intervention. Needless to say, the Soviets backed the Congolese view of the need for countervailing intervention to restore Congolese sovereign rights.¹⁹

Recounting hair-raising accounts of the rape of European women and other misdeeds of the mutinous Congolese soldiers, a Belgian witness to the first Security Council debate on the Congo crisis stressed the humanitarian nature of Belgian intervention. Henry Cabot Lodge, speaking for the U.S., was more conciliatory, praising the "popularly-elected, duly constituted" Government of the Congo for its efforts "to restore peace, security and tranquility in the country."²⁰ Yet Lodge echoed other Western countries in the contention that the Security Council session had been convened by the Secretary-General, and *not* by the Congolese themselves.²¹ This claim reinforced the Western view that the real purposes of the UN mission were to (1) restore order to the country and (2) prevent any further unilateral intervention in the Congo by other powers. Without being abrasive, Lodge stated the U.S. view that no aggression had taken place, and he emphasized the unacceptable loss of life in the Congo, which he said was in a state of "near-anarchy."²² Lodge certainly sympathized with the view later expressed by the French delegate that the Belgian intervention was in accord with the "principle of international law" that accepted "intervention on humanitarian grounds."²³ Thus, the role of the UN forces was to replace the Belgian troops and restore order.

Meanwhile, Hammarskjöld's position, which was a complex, even

¹⁸Emphasis added.

¹⁹See *SCOR*, 873rd meeting, 13/14 July 1960, ¶99-108.

²⁰*Ibid.*, ¶92-98.

²¹The first U.N. debate on the Congo opened with a protracted discussion of whether the Congo's appeals to Hammarskjöld should be included on the provisional agenda. The Congolese, it seems, had made an error of protocol in addressing their telegrams to Hammarskjöld rather than to the President of the Security Council. Consequently, it was technically Hammarskjöld himself, rather than the Congolese, who called for the first Security Council meeting.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 95. One should perhaps note that the initial Resolution on the Congo situation does not condemn Belgium for aggression, but it does call on Belgium to withdraw. However, it does not call for an "immediate" withdrawal as the Soviets and Congolese requested.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 144.

tortured vision of the UN's mandate in the Congo, represented a middle ground between these two views. In his statement in the Security Council's first debate, Hammarskjöld declared that the UN should base its response to the Congo crisis on the successful UNEF mission to the Middle East after the Suez war in 1956, which was described in a report that he himself had written.²⁴ The Secretary-General argued that the mission would have to respect certain principles, including these requirements for the UN force: (1) that the mission would be composed of personnel from neutral countries only; (2) that the mission would only be allowed to use force in self-defense; and (3) that the mission would not take actions that made it party to any internal disputes. Hammarskjöld's hope was that the ONUC could restore order to the Congo, which would allow Belgian forces to withdraw, and for Katanga to be re-incorporated. This, in turn, would prevent further unilateral interventions.

Regarding the political disposition of UN forces in the Congo, Hammarskjöld acknowledged in his first report on the ONUC mission, dated 14 July, that the ONUC mission was "dispatched to the Congo at the request of the Government and will be present in the Congo with its consent . . ." He further stated that its authority "cannot be exercised within the Congo either in competition with representatives of the host Government or in co-operation with them in any joint operation."²⁵

Legally, Hammarskjöld was treading a narrow path as well. As Kasavubu and Lumumba's original complaints were made to Hammarskjöld rather than directly to the Council, they were not included as an agenda item at the initial debate. Moreover, the Council "did not endorse the accusation of aggression against Belgium and did not call for the setting up of an emergency force to protect the Congo against the Belgian forces."²⁶ Accordingly, Hammarskjöld regarded the UN action as being taken under Article 40 of the Charter, which simply allowed the Security Council to "call upon the parties concerned [in a dispute] to comply with such provisional measures as it deems necessary or desirable."²⁷ The implication of this interpretation is that the UN was not taking a legally enforceable decision against a declared Belgian aggression. At the same time, Hammarskjöld made it clear that

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 28. (Hammarskjöld's full comments are contained in p. 18-29.) The report is called "Summary Study on the Experience derived from the Establishment and Operation of the [U.N. Emergency] Force: Report of the Secretary-General," General Assembly Official Record Document A/3943. For analysis of Hammarskjöld's position see especially Arthur Lee Burns and Nina Heathcote, *Peace-Keeping by U.N. Forces: From Suez to the Congo*, (New York: Praeger, 1963), pp.24-28.

²⁵SCOR S/4389 (see note 13, *supra*), p. 7 and 12, respectively.

²⁶Hoskyns, p.120; Cf., Burns and Heathcote, p.26.

²⁷On this point compare the two sources cited immediately above.

Article 2(7) of the Charter, which prohibited the UN from intervening "in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state . . ." still applied to the Congo.

Critical reflection on the position of Hammarskjöld reveals a great many contradictions in the internal logic of his view of the ONUC's mandate, not to mention its contradictions with the Soviet and Western views. First, Hammarskjöld explicitly based the mandate on the precedents of the UN missions to Egypt and Lebanon, which "from a legal point of view [were] concerned only with questions of foreign intervention and international boundaries."²⁸ Yet there were already two *internal* dimensions to the Congo crisis, namely the military mutinies and the Katanga secession. It should be quite obvious to even the weakest reasoning that the UN force could not at once provide the Congolese Government "with such military assistance as may be necessary until . . .the national security forces [can] . . . meet fully their tasks" and stay neutral in internal Congolese disputes. Hammarskjöld's view of the UN mission called for neutrality, while UNSC Resolution S/4387 instructed him to organize a UN force to help the *Congolese Government* perform the tasks which, "*in the opinion of the Government*," were necessary. Clearly, the first tasks of any government is to protect itself from foreign invasion and to maintain the territorial integrity of the state, so it is perfectly reasonable that the Congolese considered the withdrawal of Belgium and the restoration of its sovereignty over Katanga as its first priorities.

In the face of Hammarskjöld's failure to reconcile these contradictions, the various parties to the dispute continued to press for their own views of the ONUC's mandate throughout its existence. One has to acknowledge, however, that operative clause 2 of S/4387 is much closer to the Congolese-Soviet interpretations than to the Western one.

Outline of Subsequent Outcomes in the Congo in View of the ONUC

Here we shall summarize the course of the ONUC mission with reference to its mandates. A number of important developments in the Congo with relevance to the performance of the ONUC are also sketched, without judgment to their cause or meaning. A full evaluation of the ONUC mission is made in the following section.

Let us begin with the question of the withdrawal of the Belgian forces. Belgian forces were withdrawn from all parts of the Congo except Katanga with reasonable speed, as UN forces arrived to replace them and protect civilians. By 23 July, the Belgian forces had been

²⁸Hoskyns, p.121.

withdrawn to their Treaty bases or to Belgium, except in Katanga.²⁹ In Katanga, though, some 500 Belgian combat soldiers remained until the first week in September. Significantly, the Belgian troops there took firm steps to suppress forces of the Armée Nationale Congolaise (ANC)³⁰ which had remained loyal to the central government during this period, enabling Tshombe to consolidate military control. As Hoskyns noted, "These [loyal ANC] troops were not disorderly; they had merely refused to surrender."³¹ In addition, some 250 Belgian officers stayed on in Katanga after September, and some thirty to forty remained after the beginning of 1961.³² Finally, some 300 foreign mercenaries were recruited by the Katangan government for service in 1960-61, many of whom were Belgian.³³ Most observers agree that Tshombe's regime would never have maintained its independence for so long with this outside support.³⁴

In regard to the restoration of order to the Congo, one should distinguish between the immediate outcome of the UN's entry and the longer term. In the short term, relative order returned to the Congo, especially defined as the provision of safety to European and African civilians. This is not to say, of course, that lives were not lost in the ensuring political tumult, but only that civil order was generally reestablished.

In the larger context the Congo continued to be plagued by grave political unrest during the whole 1960-64 period. First, there was a breakdown -- or bifurcation -- of the central Congolese government itself. On 5 September, following growing disputes over the UN operation and other issues, Kasavubu announced the dismissal of Lumumba. Lumumba rejected this measure, however, and declared Kasavubu dismissed. Though Lumumba certainly lacked authority to take this step, Congo's *Loi Fondamentale* was unclear on Kasavubu's rights, and a vote of Assembly showed that most of the Congolese political class still supported Lumumba.³⁵ Subsequently, most of the government came to support one side or the other. It was at this early stage that Joseph Mobutu first entered the Congolese political scene, by "neutralizing" both Kasavubu and Lumumba, and putting in place an

²⁹Epstein, pp.14-15 and 19.

³⁰The new name for the Congolese national army, adopted shortly after independence.

³¹*op. cit.*, p.142.

³²Hoskyns, p.384. According to Connor Cruise O'Brien, *To Katanga and Back: A UN Case History*, (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1962), p.197, these Belgian officers remained in Katanga with the approval of the Belgian government.

³³O'Brien, pp.197 and 199.

³⁴We shall return to the Katanga question momentarily.

³⁵See Hoskyns, pp.206 and 208-210.

interim "collegial" regime.³⁶

After Lumumba's murder in Katanga in January 1961,³⁷ his supporters, including especially Antoine Gizenga and Christophe Gbenye, carried on a struggle in the Orientale province in Lumumba's name until 1964. Another, Maoist, revolutionary, Pierre Mulélé, conducted a parallel insurgency in the Kwilu district of the Bandundu province at the same time.³⁸ Political order was not really re-established in the Congo until after Mobutu's November 1965 coup.

As noted above, the ONUC was charged with maintaining neutrality and cooperating with the Congolese government while accomplishing its tasks. In regard to the UN's cooperation, Congolese authorities rarely felt that the ONUC was cooperating with it. For instance, soon after the ONUC's arrival, a detachment of Ghanaians, commanded by a British general, began to disarm Congolese troops in Leopoldville. In Lumumba's eyes, this was not only lack of cooperation, but an outright violation of Congolese rights, and he protested to the President of the Security Council in an official letter.³⁹ By far the most irritating failure of the UN mission from Lumumba's perspective, though, was its dealings with the secessionist Tshombe regime.⁴⁰ In keeping with his reading of the original S/4387 Resolution, Lumumba had expected the UN to help his government expel the Belgians and re-establish control in Katanga. Instead, Hammarskjöld began patient negotiations with Tshombe. When Hammarskjöld passed through Leopoldville on his way to Katanga without stopping to consult Lumumba in mid-August, the Congolese Prime Minister lost all faith in the UN mission, and communications between Hammarskjöld and Lumumba completely broke down.⁴¹

Yet, Congolese dissatisfaction with the UN mission was hardly

³⁶See *Ibid.*, pp.210-17.

³⁷See below for more details.

³⁸On these revolts see R. C. Fox, W de Cramer and J. M. Ribeaucourt, "The Second Independence: A Case Study of the Kwilu Rebellion in the Congo," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 8 (1965), Crawford Young, "Significance of the 1964 Rebellion," in Helen Kitchen (ed.), *Footnotes to the Congo Story*, (New York: Walker and Co., 1967), and Stephen R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964*, (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1974), pp.190-216.

³⁹UNSC Document S/4414, "Letter Dated 31 July from the Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo to the President of the Security Council."

⁴⁰See Hoskyns, pp.162-78 and Madeleine Kalb, *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa from Eisenhower to Kennedy*. (New York: Macmillan, 1982), pp.47-50.

⁴¹See Urquhart, pp.428-29. In turn, Hammarskjöld was "clearly angry" and "felt personally insulted" by Lumumba's tone in the meeting that took place after Hammarskjöld's return. See Hoskyns, p.174.

Lumumba's alone; Kasavubu, Mobutu and others were equally disapproving of UN activities in the Congo, concerning Katanga as well as many other issues. For instance, Hammarskjöld's third Special Representative in the Congo, Rajeshwar Dayal, had to be replaced because of the UN's policies during his tenure in 1960-61.⁴²

As for maintaining neutrality, this charge became much more difficult to perform after the split between Kasavubu and Lumumba in September 1960. It was difficult enough to maintain neutrality between a central government and wayward province, but quite impossible to maintain it between competitors for control at the center. In the event, Andrew Cordier had just arrived at the end of August to replace Hammarskjöld's original lieutenant in the Congo, Ralph Bunche, when this crisis broke. In the aftermath of Kasavubu's announcement dismissing Lumumba, Cordier took two decisions that he putatively thought to be "neutral" ones, in the best interest of the situation as a whole: he closed Congo's major airports and he closed the Leopoldville radio station. In fact, both of these decisions worked against Lumumba. Since Kasavubu had an ethnic base of supporters in Leopoldville, he did not require outside support, but Lumumba could have gained from flying in supporters from outside. Secondly, Lumumba's prowess as an orator was legendary, and there is a real chance that he could have prevailed on the masses for support, given access to the radio.⁴³ Moreover, Kasavubu's forces could make use of the radio station across the Congo River in Brazzaville, where the conservative regime of Fulbert Youlou was in power.⁴⁴ Cordier's brief tenure of a few days as the UN's chief representative in the Congo proved crucial because of the close collaboration between Cordier and conservative Congolese politicians.⁴⁵ Later, when Lumumba was put

⁴²See particularly p.210ff and Chapter 13 of Dayal's memoir, *Mission for Hammarskjöld: The Congo Crisis*, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976). Also see Kasavubu's letters to Hammarskjöld dated 22 February 1961 (U.N. Document S/4743) and 6 March 1961 (U.N. Document S/4752), which expresses the former's dismay over certain provisions of the Security Council's Resolution of 21 February 1961 (S/4691) and speculation that the U.N. would take over the A.N.C.

⁴³Later, while under arrest at the Thysville military base, Lumumba persuaded his jailers to release him.

⁴⁴On both these points, see Hoskyns, p.204.

⁴⁵See Carole Collins, "Fatally Flawed Mediation: Cordier and the Congo Crisis of 1960," *Africa Today*, 39, 3 (1992), pp.5-22; the appearance of this article is illustrative of the continuing fascination and controversy surrounding the ONUC mission. As Thomas Kanza, Lumumba's capable U.N. ambassador noted, "Cordier's presence in Leopoldville presaged a whole new turn of events in the Congo, and certainly not one that would be to the advantage of Lumumba . . ." [From *The Rise and Fall of Patrice Lumumba: Conflict in the Congo*, 3rd. ed. Cambridge, Mass.:

under house arrest by Kasavubu, UN troops had to surround his house to prevent him from being arrested or killed. These events are illustrative of the impossibility of UN neutrality in Congo's internal politics.

Another implied charge of the ONUC mission was to prevent further outside intervention, especially by the superpowers, and to thus to avert another Cold War crisis. This responsibility was best reflected in the second operative clause of the Security Council's second resolution on the Congo (S/4405), passed on 22 July 1960. This clause requested all states

to refrain from any action which might tend to impede the restoration of law and order [in the Congo] . . . and also to refrain from any action which might undermine the territorial integrity and the political independence . . . of the Congo.

The debate on this Resolution made it clear that the two Cold War antagonists were calling for mutual restraint from unilateral intervention, as well as indirectly condemning the continuing Belgian presence in Katanga. The same principle was tacitly part of the superpower support of the previous Resolution on the Congo.

In the event, both superpowers became involved in the Congo situation outside the ONUC context, and the crisis became the source of a major confrontation between them. To begin with the Soviets, their growing disillusionment with the ONUC mission paralleled that of their would-be client, Lumumba. The Soviets, in keeping with their view of the ONUC mandate, were enraged by what they perceived as the slow pace of Belgian withdrawal, the lack of cooperation of UN authorities with Lumumba, and the ONUC's tardiness in dealing with Tshombe. The Soviets were aware of how dependent the UN mission was on American support, despite the fact that the troops came from neutral countries, and one month after the ONUC inception, they were complaining that "the prestige of the UN is being trampled in the mud."⁴⁶ At the Fourth Security Council session dealing with the Congo situation and the ONUC, the Soviets expressed total consternation with Hammarskjöld's conduct in the Congo, particularly his negotiations with the rebellious Katangans, echoing the speeches of

Schenkman, 1979), p.276.] Kanza argues (p.283) that Cordier's influence was important in encouraging Kasavubu to act against Lumumba on 5 September.

⁴⁶*Current Digest of the Soviet Press, [CDSP]*, vol. XII, no.31, "Masks Are Off: Warfare of North Atlantic 'Democrats' for Black Slavery," [3 August 1960 *Pravda* article].

Gizenga, representing the Congo, and a delegate representing Guinea.⁴⁷ From this point on, the Soviets withdrew all support from the ONUC and increasingly saw the UN mission as an extension of American policy in the Congo. In fact, the Soviets soon began a long, tough campaign against the UN, including their now-famous "troika proposal," under which the Secretary-General was to be replaced by a committee of three persons, representing Western, East bloc and non-aligned interests, respectively.⁴⁸

This disillusionment led the Soviets to respond to a request made by Lumumba for unilateral Soviet aid. In late August Khrushchev ordered approximately ten Soviet IL-14 transport planes with their crews, technicians, translators, and equipment to the Congo.⁴⁹ On 24 August Lumumba demanded control of the airport at Stanleyville, his base of support, from UN forces. Having stopped in a number of locations along the way (including Cairo, where the planes may have taken on their arms and ammunition after being inspected in Greece), the planes landed in Stanleyville on the night of 30 August. Lumumba's immediate end in requesting the Soviet aircraft, pilots and arms was to use them to put down the secessionist rebellion in Katanga, and another that later erupted in Kasai province. Lumumba had hoped that such successes would in turn establish his legitimacy throughout the Congo, hasten the Belgian withdrawal and thereby render the UN presence irrelevant. Unfortunately for him, though, the march he ordered on Katanga disintegrated into ethnic warfare, in which some 200 BaLuba were murdered.⁵⁰ Moreover, the desperate move turned Kasavubu against Lumumba and goaded the U.S. into more vigorous action to eliminate the fiery Congolese Prime Minister from the scene. Later, in December 1960 when Lumumba was under arrest, Gizenga set up a parallel government for Congo in Stanleyville in Lumumba's name, to which the Soviets also sent limited aid.⁵¹

⁴⁷Hoskyns, pp.175-78; all of the other Security Council members declared (except Poland) themselves supportive of Hammarskjöld, but, according to Hoskyns, (p.178) Ceylon and Tunisia, the two neutral powers present "had serious doubts about his policies," despite their public support.

⁴⁸See especially Kalb, pp.109-27 on these events.

⁴⁹Kalb, p.58. (The U.S. learned of this Soviet move soon afterwards when the Soviets asked Greece for permission for their cargo planes to land and refuel in Greece, or to overfly Greek territory, while carrying food to the Congo.) The actual number of Soviet planes sent to the Congo is a matter of some question. The confusion arises from the fact that two sets of Soviet aircraft are in question: those already in the Congo in support of the U.N. mission, and those sent surreptitiously at the end of August. For some of the various numbers given by different sources, see Kalb, fn.6, p.406.

⁵⁰Hoskyns, p.194; Kalb, pp.68-70.

⁵¹See Kalb, pp.169, 217-18 and 223.

The U.S. began interfering in Congolese politics in a low-level fashion virtually from the moment that Lumumba took power.⁵² The American ambassador in the Congo, Clare Timberlake, was a confirmed anti-communist who viewed Lumumba as a potential dupe of the Soviet Union in Africa. Timberlake encouraged Lumumba's opponents, including Kasavubu, in their campaigns against him, especially after the Hammarskjöld-Lumumba split. It was also confirmed in 1975, after many years of speculation, that the American Central Intelligence Agency had specific plans to assassinate Lumumba.⁵³ The plans had initially called for activities to undermine Lumumba politically (such as bribing Congolese politicians to withdraw support from Lumumba), but when these failed, a firm assassination plot was devised. According to the Church Committee report, "The chain of events revealed by the documents and testimony is strong enough to permit a reasonable inference that the plot to assassinate Lumumba was authorized by President Eisenhower [himself]."⁵⁴ Though the exact circumstances of Lumumba's murder after being flown to Elizabethville (Katanga) in January 1961 remain controversial, it appears that he was killed by Katangan gendarmes not under C.I.A. direction.⁵⁵

In a more general way, the Soviets and many Congolese believed that the ONUC operated in a fashion that served U.S. interests, rather than according to its mandate. This was more true at some times (as during Cordier's brief tenure in the Congo) than it was at others (as when Dayal served as the UN's Special Representative). After John Kennedy became President in the U.S., American interference with UN

⁵²The works most critical of U.S. policy in the Congo, and most specific about U.S. misdeeds in the country in the early periods are those of Weissman, Kalb and Collins, all cited above.

⁵³See U.S. Senate, Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (Church Committee), *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 94th Congress, 1st Sess., 1975.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p.51.

⁵⁵The American role in Lumumba's murder also remains controversial. Lumumba was sent to Elizabethville by Kasavubu's government after he had once escaped from detention at the Thysville base, and headed off towards his base in Stanleyville, rallying Congolese to his cause along the way. The U.S. Embassy in Leopoldville was urging Lumumba's re-arrest and confinement in a safer location at that time. On the other hand, the CIA station chief in Elizabethville was genuinely surprised when Lumumba was brought to Katanga as a prisoner. It is unclear whether the Leopoldville authorities who affected Lumumba's second arrest intended for him to be killed or not. It was apparently Tshombe's forces who actually murdered Lumumba. See Kalb, pp.128-96, Hoskyns, pp.301-337, Lefever, p.51, and O'Brien, pp.96-97.

activities diminished, but then increased again after Lyndon Johnson assumed office in December 1963.⁵⁶

In Congolese politics itself, the U.S. became increasingly influential during the years of the UN presence. Kennedy's administration labored to restore parliamentary government in the Congo, helping to win support for the regimes of Joseph Ileo, and then Cyrille Adoula, who succeeded Lumumba as Prime Minister in the First Republic. As one observer put it, "The American government not only supported Adoula; it was, in many ways, part of his government."⁵⁷ During these years the U.S. gave substantial economic and military aid to the succeeding Congolese governments, with which they fought the Lumumbist rebels and bought political support for themselves.⁵⁸ Later, when the forces of Gbenye seized Stanleyville and took some 300 Western hostages, American planes flew in Belgian troops to save them and crush the last serious attempt to establish a Lumumbist regime in the Congo.⁵⁹

In sum, then, the ONUC did not serve to prevent a superpower confrontation over the Congo crisis. Rather, it became intertwined in a superpower struggle for influence in the Congo lasting over several years. We shall further evaluate the meaning of these events below.

Another of the ONUC's mandates, to restore Congolese sovereignty in Katanga, was, as noted above, in dispute. While Lumumba was in power, the Western powers, including the U.S., took the view that this task should only be carried out by negotiation (in keeping with Hammarskjöld's determinations not to use force, except in self-defense, or to become party to "internal disputes"). In any case, this task was not a priority for the UN. In the course of 1961, however, as a relatively stable and pro-Western government was established in Leopoldville, neutralist and moderate Western pressures for the UN to take action in Katanga grew. In February 1961, following Lumumba's death, and in the face of the continuing presence of the Belgian military personnel in Katanga, the Security Council passed another resolution on Congo explicitly and forcefully requiring a complete withdrawal of "all Belgian and other foreign military and para-military personnel and political advisers" from Katanga.⁶⁰ Hammarskjöld then appointed Connor Cruise O'Brien, who was committed to Congolese unity, to become the UN's representative in Elizabethville and carry out this task.

While O'Brien thought that it would be possible for the UN to

⁵⁶On the changes occasioned by Kennedy's accession to office, see Weissman, pp.116-19 and 138-39.

⁵⁷Weissman, p.205.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, pp.201-20, 215-16 and 229.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, pp.244-47.

⁶⁰Taken from Operative Paragraph 2 of Resolution S/4741, passed on 21 February 1961.

expel the Belgian officers and mercenaries from Katanga without resort to force, he felt that he had authority under the various UN resolutions to do so if necessary.⁶¹ O'Brien undertook two military operations to expel the mercenaries and impose the authority of the UN in preparation for a return of central government authority. The first of these operations (code-named "Rumpunch") was bloodless, but succeeded only in expelling some of the foreign mercenaries. The second operation ("Morthor"), in September 1961, led to heavy fighting between UN forces and the Katangan "gendarmarie."⁶² It was in the aftermath of this episode that Hammarskjöld decided to fly to Elizabethville to negotiate again with Tshombe, and on the night of 17 September, his plane mysteriously crashed some ten miles from the airport, killing all of those aboard. Subsequently, O'Brien was fiercely attacked in the Western media for provoking the use of force in Katanga, and he ultimately resigned in protest so that he could speak out against the UN's lack of resolve.

"Morthor" and Hammarskjöld's death led the Security Council to pass still another Resolution (S/5002) on 24 November, which, for the first time, condemned the rebellious Katangan government by name. It also made explicit the authority that had so long been in dispute. Article 4 stated that

[The Security Council] [a]uthorizes the Secretary-General to take vigorous action, *including the requisite use of force, if necessary*, for the immediate apprehension, detention pending legal action and/or deportation of all foreign military and para-military personnel and political advisers [in Katanga] . . .⁶³

It took Hammarskjöld's replacement, U. Thant, some time to get settled into his new position, and in the interim, the UN sponsored an interminable round of negotiations between Adoula and Tshombe. When these made no headway, Thant announced a plan in August 1962 to re-incorporate Katanga, which threatened Tshombe's government with a total boycott of Katangan minerals if it did not accept the central government's authority.⁶⁴ When these sanctions were imposed as promised, the situation in Katanga began to deteriorate, and fighting in December broke out between the UN forces stationed there and Tshombe's gendarmerie. The UN forces there took advantage of these

⁶¹O'Brien, pp.102 and 212.

⁶²Also on these events, see Gérard-Libois, Chap.6, "The Trials of Strength in the Second Half of 1961."

⁶³Emphasis added.

⁶⁴See Gérard-Libois, Chap. 8, "The Thant Plan for National Reconciliation."

skirmishes to occupy the key centers in Katanga, and drive out the remnants of the mercenary corps.⁶⁵ In this way, the long secession finally ended at the end of 1962.

Further Evaluation of the ONUC Mission

The description of any set of events, and certainly a set of events as complex as those encompassing the ONUC's mission between 1960-64, necessarily entails subtle or not-so-subtle evaluations of those events. The description offered above is intended to be as neutral as possible, though those familiar with the events in the Congo between 1960-64 and afterwards, harboring a range of political and ideological predispositions, will inevitably find some aspects unsatisfying. Yet the description of events, i.e., getting the facts right and culling the highly-relevant from the less-relevant, is only the beginning of the difficulty of making an evaluation of the ONUC mission (or of any foreign policy initiative). Additionally, one must consider at least three other questions: (1) Against what set of goals should the ONUC mission be judged? (2) What would have happened in the Congo had the ONUC mission not been organized? and (3) What alternatives to the mission were there for the UN or for various states at the time of the Congo crisis?

Bearing these considerations in mind allows one to appreciate the great range of judgements that have been made of the ONUC mission. At one end of the spectrum was the conservative opinion that the UN mission went far beyond its mandate in suppressing the establishment of Katanga as a separate state.⁶⁶ This certainly was the view of the Belgian industrialists who controlled the mineral resources of Katanga. Towards the same end of the spectrum, many American policy-makers in Washington, and Timberlake in Leopoldville, believed that the Soviet Union had well-defined, aggressive designs to establish a close relationship with Lumumba, and possibly to transform his vague anti-imperialism into a rigorously-Marxist mode of thought.⁶⁷ They also thought Lumumba was quite susceptible to such a result, regarding him as unstable, radical by nature and firmly anti-Western. This group approved of the ONUC in general, but frequently regretted specific decisions that it took, especially after September when Dayal attempted

⁶⁵See Gérard-Libois, Chap.9, "The Final Trial of Force."

⁶⁶This view was expressed, for instance, by Arthur Krock in the *New York Times*, 4 December 1964, cited in LeFever, p.171.

⁶⁷Besides Kalb, Chaps. 1 and 2, see on this matter Michael Schatzberg's *Mobutu or Chaos? The United States and Zaire, 1960-1990*, (Lanham, Md.: Univ. Press of America, 1991). Though derivative of many other earlier works on U.S.-Zairian relations, this work provides a useful "short-take" on official Washington attitudes towards the Congo crisis and Lumumba.

to put the ONUC on a more genuinely neutral tack between Lumumba and his rivals. Had Lumumba remained in power, this group would certainly have judged the ONUC mission a failure.

At the other end of the spectrum was the Soviet view that the ONUC was an instrument of American foreign policy, i.e., of imperialism from the moment that it entered the Congo. The extraordinary scorn heaped on Hammarskjöld and the UN in the Soviet press during this time is still striking.⁶⁸ Some American observers have argued similarly, if less rhetorically, that American policy was the slave of capital interests, and that the ONUC mission *became* little more than an instrument of American policy.⁶⁹ The attitude of many strong African nationalists has also been quite similar.⁷⁰ The focus of these writers' disgust was the ONUC's apparent paternalism towards Africans, its failure to take Lumumba seriously as the Congolese leader, despite his widespread popularity, and its domination by Western diplomats in the highest posts. Not as shrill, and more effectively critical is the commentary of Thomas Kanza, who served as Lumumba's ambassador to the UN in 1960.⁷¹ Kanza demonstrated great equanimity in his discussion of the roots of the Congo crisis, arguing, for instance that "the tragedy unfolding in the Congo could be traced to the total absence of any mental decolonization among the Belgians *and* the total lack of any leadership among the Congolese capable of securing power effectively."⁷² Unlike those who lionized Hammarskjöld, Kanza recognized the flaws of the Secretary-General, as well as his virtues.⁷³ In keeping with these personal evaluations, and his negative view of Cordier's role, Kanza certainly felt that the ONUC mission had failed to respect its mandate, which was to aid the Congolese government (then led by Lumumba).

⁶⁸See, e.g., the articles reprinted in *CDSF*, XII, nos. 28-32, covering the period from mid-July through August 1960, including those cited above.

⁶⁹Besides Weissman, the first to argue the theory that U.S. policy was secretly controlled by corporate interests, this view was recently echoed by David N. Gibbs in his book, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crisis*, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁷⁰E.g., Washington Okumu, *Lumumba's Congo: Roots of Conflict*, (New York: Ivan Obolensky, 1963) and D. Katete Orwa, *The Congo Betrayal: The UN-US and Lumumba*, (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1985).

⁷¹See note 43, *supra*. Kanza proved himself extremely diplomatic, articulate and capable at his U.N. appearances in 1960, far more so, in fact, than the Belgian representative.

⁷²*Op. cit.*, p.221. Emphasis added.

⁷³For some of Kanza's important observations on Lumumba and Hammarskjöld, see *op. cit.*, pp.238-263. Kanza had a similarly balanced view of Lumumba's greatness and short-comings.

Collective Interventions After the Cold War

The strongest supporters of the ONUC mission have been certain "moderates" in the establishment foreign policy circles of several Western states, including many with some role in the mission itself. For instance, King Gordon, who served as the ONUC's Chief Information Officer until August 1962 offered this interim appraisal in late 1962:

The amazing thing about ONUC has been that in the face of incredible difficulties and frustrations it has discharged its central purposes so well. ONUC was called into being because the Congo was thought to constitute a threat to international peace and security. In spite of the constant maneuverings of the great powers and reflections of the cold war in internal and external politics, ONUC's filling the vacuum headed off major conflict.⁷⁴

Ernest Lefever, who worked as a researcher for the Brookings Institute and as a government consultant, later expressed a similar view after the ONUC mission was over:

[The ONUC] sometimes fumbled. It made many small mistakes. It was assailed on all sides. It precipitated a financial crisis for the United Nations. But in the final analysis, the UN Force must be judged by its contribution to international stability, regardless of what other interest it might have served. So judged, the mission succeeded. It contributed to peace and security in Central Africa and in the wider world.⁷⁵

Lefever's conclusion rests explicitly on his contentions that (1) all the

⁷⁴*The United Nations in the Congo: A Quest for Peace*, (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1962), pp.182-83. One should note that not all of the mission's participants ended their service to the U.N. with such feelings, however. O'Brien's book, cited above, contains a sharp and well-argued critique of the ONUC.

⁷⁵*Crisis in the Congo: A United Nations Force in Action*, (Washington: Brookings, 1965), p.181. Cf. the (similar) conclusions of Ernest Lefever and Wynfred Joshua, *United Nations Peacekeeping in the Congo: 1960-1964: An Analysis of Political, Executive and Military Control*, vol. 2 (Full Text), (Washington: Brookings, 1966), pp.394-434. Lefever forthrightly acknowledges in his 1965 book, however, that the course of events in the Congo served the interests of the U.S. in its cold war contest with the Soviet Union.

other options for dealing with the crisis--which he limits to unilateral interventions by specific states: Belgium, an African group of states, the Soviet Union or the U.S.--were less desirable; (2) the operation was true to its mandate and (3) the operation was reasonably successful. Much of the liberal, Western establishment doubtless continues to view the ONUC mission in such a light.

Perhaps, though, we can now "banish both the eulogistic glorifications as well as the summary critiques" of the ONUC's record, as one wise observer suggested in 1967.⁷⁶ In regard, to the ONUC's mandate to speed the withdrawal of the Belgian troops, for instance, its record is decidedly mixed. Though the Belgians did withdraw from most of the Congo rapidly, their continued presence in Katanga after 1960 contributed greatly to the prolongation of the province's secession. One might be tempted to argue that, had the UN not intervened, then the Belgians would have taken longer to withdraw, but this assumes the same actions by the U.S., and no intervention by the Soviet Union. Yet more vigorous Soviet unilateral intervention would have been likely if the ONUC mission had not been organized. Or, if the United States had joined the Soviet Union in demanding such a withdrawal, Belgium might have ordered all her nationals home more quickly. In reference to Katanga, those who favored the re-integration of the province may either praise the ONUC for its ultimate decisiveness, or regret the long interval between its entry into the Congo and its action against the Tshombe regime.

Likewise, in regard to the restoration of order, one must judge the UN's success mixed. In the short term, some relative order was restored to the Congo. Yet the Western view has over-estimated the amount of "disorder" that the Congo was suffering in July 1960, which was in fact minimal, before the arrival of the Belgians. This suggests that order might have been restored in Congo without the UN if Belgium had shown more patience. And accordingly, perhaps the relative return to order had more to do with the withdrawal of the Belgian troops than with the UN's presence. In turn, the withdrawal of the Belgians might have been accomplished in other ways besides the dispatch of the ONUC, as suggested above. In the long term, order, repressive though it has been, was only restored in the Congo by Joseph Mobutu and the ANC.

As for Gordon's observation that the ONUC "headed off major conflict," one can only find it rather ironic. If the West did not consider the Congo crisis a major superpower crisis, the Soviets certainly did. Their vituperation could scarcely have been stronger, and they came close to ceasing all cooperation with the UN after the failure of their "troika proposal." Each superpower intervened--the U.S. covertly and

⁷⁶Gendebien, p.259. Author's translation.

the Soviets quietly--in the Congo on behalf of factions that it favored. Nor does it appear that it was the ONUC which prevented the Soviets from intervening more forcefully. Though world opinion may have been a minor consideration for the Soviets, the deterrent power of the American military was far more important. Given their level of frustration with the ONUC's activities, the Soviets would not likely have refrained from intervention in the face of world public opinion alone. Thus, while one may speculate that the Soviet-American confrontation over Congo might have been worse had the ONUC mission not been organized, such speculation depends on the judgment that the Soviets would have acted irrationally in the face of the then-existing American military superiority.

As to Hammarskjöld's pledge that the ONUC would be neutral in the Congo's internal affairs, later incorporated in several resolutions on the Congo crisis, at least two observations should be made. First, the principle contradicts the main activating clause in the first resolution on the Congo crisis, the resolution which organized the ONUC. That resolution indicates that the purpose of the ONUC is to help the Congolese government, not to mediate between warring factions. As a result of the ONUC's subsequent practice in the Congo in the name of this principle, Lumumba, many other Congolese, and the Soviets felt that the UN came to the Congo under false pretenses. The second observation about this pledge is that it proved, predictably, impossible to keep. In the course of disarming soldiers or closing airports towards the end of "restoring order," the ONUC inevitably effected the military fortunes of the factions struggling for control in the Congo.

It is because of this mixed record of the ONUC, judged by its many mandates, that the mission's supporters can find so much to praise in it, and its detractors so much to blame. The nature of these judgments points again to the overriding lesson that the contemporary world should take from the ONUC experience: Since the mandate of the ONUC was so unclear, and even contradictory, virtually no one was satisfied with its actions in the Congo. A number of corollary lessons accompany this general point. First, where the mandate of the UN is unclear, a great deal of responsibility will rest with the Secretary-General, which was certainly the case in the Congo. Second, there are likely to be contests among the senior UN staff to have their own reading of the mandate become the accepted one. Third, one cannot expect the UN to act with particular swiftness or certitude in a local setting. Fourth, where outside powers have parochial interests in, or emotional ties to, events in the local setting, they are likely to undertake unilateral interventions if their understanding of the mandate is not followed. Fifth, if the permanent members of the Security Council read an unclear mandate in different ways, and the UN follows one interpretation over another, then the apparent, but unreal, consensus

of the Council may break down. A number of other, related corollaries could be drawn from the ONUC experience using this reasoning.

Lessons for Contemporary UN Missions

Since there is frequently disagreement among members of the Council, even after the end of the Cold War, it may not, of course, always be possible to get a strong mandate from the UN for specific actions. In these situations, the real choice may be a UN mission with a weak mandate, or none at all. For instance, in the Bosnian crisis, it is apparent that Russia sympathizes more with the Serbians than the other permanent members, which is one reason that the UN has a weak mandate there. As in the Congo case, the UN is trying to remain neutral among the warring sides, and is attempting to negotiate a settlement among them. The heroic work of individual UN units in Bosnia notwithstanding, however, there is a real danger that the UN has or may become an "enabler." Like the person who mitigates the terrible consequences of his spouse's alcoholism, and thereby inadvertently perpetuates the problem, the UN in Bosnia has modestly relieved the suffering of many civilians, while failing to address the underlying problem. The enabler also delays or deters other outside intervention in the situation.

The ONUC experience and this analysis suggests that it is time, perhaps, for the UN to choose sides in Bosnia, and the "side" that it should choose is obvious: the Bosnian government. This government not only has considerable international recognition, but also is open to people of all religious backgrounds, Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox. Logistically, the UN could certainly organize and dispatch to Bosnia a military force capable of successfully aiding the Bosnian government to establish its control over its territory. The problems with this approach, though, are not primarily logistical, but political, specifically, lack of courage in Western Europe and the U.S., and sympathy for the Serbs in Russia. Perhaps these political problems cannot be overcome, but if this is the case, then perhaps the UN should simply withdraw. Then unilateral aid could flow in to the Bosnia government from sympathetic Middle Eastern states and elsewhere. As things stand, the UN justifies a ban on aid to all parties on the ground of its presence in Bosnia.

As in Bosnia, the work of the UN in Somalia has been extraordinary in its humanitarian accomplishments. Despite the virtual absence of press coverage of its achievements in Somalia, the UN mission there saved uncountable thousands of Somalis from starvation during 1993. Yet the UN's more recent difficulties in Somalia reflect the same weakness of mandate that troubled the ONUC and now troubles the UN mission to Bosnia. The obvious solution is for the

UN to organize a plebiscite for a new Somali constitution, and a series of elections for the people to choose new leaders. With a new government in place, the UN would have a tangible and reasonably legitimate entity to support in Somalia. Unless the UN can accomplish this task--and it is not suggested here that it will be straight-forward or simple--then the future of the UN's role in Somalia is unclear. To remain in perpetuity in interposition between a variety of Somali opponents is an outcome that can satisfy few. Nor, as in Cyprus, where the UN has established itself as an unending buffer between the ethnically Turkish and Greek communities, does it appear feasible that the UN can permanently keep the Somali factions apart.

In the case of Haiti, the UN seems to have recognized better that it cannot at once intervene in the country's internal affairs, and remain neutral between General Cédras and the Reverend Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Now, with the international aspects of the Haiti crisis being few, the UN appears to have limited its actions to an embargo. While this decision no doubt grieves Mr. Aristide and his supporters, at least it was a relatively decisive one.

One should be careful not to take the point made here too far. Sometimes the UN humanitarian actions in the midst of political crises, like facilitating the relief of the Somali famine, or the dismantling of concentration camps in Bosnia, are extremely valuable. If the UN is to be taken more seriously as a *political* instrument, however, as the post-Cold War situation promises, then perhaps it is time for its missions to become more precise and more definitive. This would certainly raise the UN's credibility with would-be international aggressors and tyrants. Collective security has never been the weak-kneed alternative to unilateral intervention that its critics have portrayed it to be. When employed decisively, as in the Persian Gulf, it can be an effective instrument of the international community against aggression. One of the great questions of the post-Cold War world is whether the international community is now prepared to use collective intervention decisively in cases that are primarily internal. If not, then the world community must become more alert to the possibility that the UN will become an enabler to violence where it intervenes half-heartedly. Though the determination to support decisive uses of UN force in conflicts that are essentially domestic is difficult, it is on such determinations that the future of the UN rests.