END OF THE COLD WAR ON AFRICA: A CASE

(DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO)

BY

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Being a research thesis presented to the Department of Political Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Science (M.Sc) degree in International Relations

September, 1999.

ATTESTATION

I, Ayabam, Andrew Terhemba, do hereby attest that the work presented here is my personal effort.

Apart from the literature reviewed for which I have duly acknowledged, the work is mine and has not been copied from any other research work presented anywhere.

Furthermore, I wish to attest that the data discussed herein has not been presented by me elsewhere for award of any certificate.

Ayabam

.....

Signed

CERTIFICATION

This Thesis Titled The Impact of the end of the Cold war on Africa: A case study of Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) by Ayabam, Andrew Terhemba meets the regulation governing the award of Master of Science (M.Sc) Political Science of Ahmad Bello University, Zara and approved for its contribution to knowledge the literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

To: Terhemba King Anyam

and

Charles Washima Erukaa

God bless you

for all the support.

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In works like this one is bound to have enjoyed some support, encouragement, assistance from others who deserve at least, a mention.

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To God be the Glory.

ABSTRACT

The study affirms the reality of the negative impact *of* Bipolarity or Cold War (1945-1989) and its end (1989-Date) on the African continent.

This is done using Zaire (The Democratic Republic of Congo) as case study.

The research is unique as it looks at the impact of the end of Bipolarity from a political perspective, yet considering economic and social issues as well.

The research also affirms that African issues and problems of polities, economic as well as social problems are likely to take a further back seal at the global level in the years after the Cold War.

In the course of the research, a wide range of literature which cut across geo-political and ideological boundaries are examined. This is done so as to aid the presentation of a detailed study and, to avoid bias as much as possible.

A detailed analysis is carried out, based on which recommendations are made at the end *of t*he work.

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Chapter One

1.01 INTRODUCTION

For over four decades, that is, the period after the second world war and 1989, the two dominant world powers and blocs that emerged after the war – the United States (and her western allies on the one side) and the union of Soviet Socialist Republics USSR (and her allies on the other) were engaged in what was referred to as the Cold War.

The Cold War, was fought on the ideological, political, economic and psychological fronts. From the perspective of the west, the major aim was o check Soviet expansionism and the spread of communist influence around the globe. Similarly, the Soviet pre-occupation was to check America's exportation of liberal market economies. Both blocs got at each other to ensure that none had military superiority over the other. They embarked on an extensive arms race, developing and stockpiling weapons of mass destruction. As the arms race continued unchecked, the two blocs eventually reached a stage of mutually assured Destruction and balance of Terror, hence they started applying restraint. Each bloc was faced with the stark reality that developing its nuclear arsenals for an attack would automatically engender retaliatory response from the other. Consequently, the perspective of the Cold War shifted from the nuclear warfare to psychological warfare.

This influenced or led to the struggle for control of power in certain areas outside the west and east blocs. In Africa it came at a period when most of Africa was on the verge of gaining political autonomy, and lasted through the Cold War years. This led to a situation in which high premium was placed on political power in Africa, resulting in intense struggle for power, consequent upon which other more important issues of development were often ignored by leaders[1].

Oftentimes, the struggle for control of power in certain countries led to political instability. Consequently, the resultant gross injustices within the mostly heterogeneous new states frequently led to civil wars, and in most cases these conflicts provided the opportunity for interference by the superpowers. These conflicts were made more lethal and prolonged by

the involvement or intervention of the powerful blocs on opposite sides to fight the Cold War through surrogates[2]. This resulted in a situation whereby conflict, rather than being eliminated, was concentrated in areas where nuclear weapons could not be effectively used or where the stakes involved could not justify their use.

As these events were taking place some developing nations, particularly those in Africa took to non-alignment. However, it later became evident that they were polarised basically into two groups: The Socialist and Capitalist oriented, a reflection of the wider global structure to which they belonged, and which would for long continue to influence them. This is because under the prevailing order, development and security interests of the Third World to which all Africa belongs were skewed in favour of priorities determined in Moscow, Washington, London and Paris. Also, third world countries, except for their ruling elite, had little autonomous interests to project.

By 1989 it became obvious that the end of the cold war had come. The Soviet Union underwent fundamental economic and political reform. The reunification of Germany *commenced (and has since been concluded) The end of the Cold War has given birth to a* new World Order involving international politico-economic system with influence on regional manifestations. These present new and complex trends and challenges that need careful examination. Chakravarthi Raghavan (1995)[3] captures the situation thus:

> *"the emergence of the new order of market-driven economic prosperity, assured by the triumph of liberalism and democracy over Leninist / Marxist ideologies – is now full of questions without answers and is also proving to be one full of surprises, uncertainties and disorders in both the North and the South"*[4]

From the foregoing, it becomes obvious that these problems affect Africa, being an integral part of the global village. And polities being the basis through which these changes occur, enjoys significant focus here.

In Africa, the tripartite accord of 1988 signed by South Africa, Angola and Cuba signalled the collapse of bipolarity in Africa. This is because the accord was signed just when it became obvious that the USSR was on the brink of collapse. Also the accord was the last of

such engagements of the two blocs in Africa, as the Soviet Union would collapse and end bipolarity the following year.

Since then civil strife, organized resistant movements, wars, etc. have sprung up in unprecedented manner in Africa: Somalia,[5] Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Rwanda, South Africa, Algeria, Zaire, Congo, Zambia, Sudan, Niger, Angola, Togo, Benin, Algeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco,[6] Nigeria etc. have witnessed changes in leadership, political strife or a movement towards democratization on party-basis.[7] These not only show the impact the end of the Cold War has had on political formations in Africa, but also show the direction to which this trend seems to be moving the direction of the aspiration of the west, headed by the USA, and 'Liberal democratization' being the key word.[8]

The implication of the end of bipolarity on political change in Africa could be looked at in a number of ways: First, the Cold War extended ideological conflicts to the less developed Countries, most of which are in Africa. Most of these Countries were still in search of political (and economic) systems that would help them consolidate the gains of independence, when capitalism and socialism were foisted on them by the west and east respectively. For some, even their independence struggles were externally influenced. With the conflict over, most of these nations are still searching.

Next, economic development became one of the early victims of the Cold War. Resources, as meager as they were, were wrongfully channelled to areas which would support ideological efforts rather than the overall development of the particular countries. With the Cold War over, leaders were faced with the issue of how best to tackle a myriad of issues using less resources, considering the fact that the aid, grants and loans which they hitherto enjoyed are now being channelled to eastern Europe and to further strengthen the west's hold on the globe.

Thirdly, the philosophy of aid and assistance to Africa (as in the Third World generally) was driven by ideological considerations more than genuine and legitimate needs. Aid was given in support of clients and more so to prop up unpopular leaders who would have been otherwise thrown out of power in internal struggles. The practice debased the moral ground

for governance by encouraging corrupt and dictatorial leaders who served foreign interests at the expense of the interests of their nations. This was exactly the case on Mobutu's Zaire[9] where

> *"The west was usually waiting in the shadows providing Mobutu with money and military support in exchange for using him as an anti-Communist bulwark during the Cold War"*[10]

The end of the Cold War has now created

> *" renewed emphasis on multiparty democracy as against dictatorial rule which the Cold War did help to nurture and defend. However, dictatorial tendencies seems to have eaten deep into the political life of Africa in a manner that is most disturbing."*[11]

A situation now exists where opposition is increasingly repressed, and made irrelevant to national development. Sit-tight rule still dominates most of Africa's political terrain where bitterness, ethnic rivalry, revenge and elimination seem to have taken over. A look at Rwanda, Malawi, Zambia, Ghana, Liberia, Angola, [12] Zaire (the Democratic Republic of Congo), etc. will instantly point towards the end of the Cold War as reason for these developments.

In the area of security and conflict management, African countries now have a unique opportunity to device an autonomous system to address present and future occurrences without Cold War interferences.[13] This is particularly true when we consider this at the sub-regional level, and most precisely by the role played by the Nigerian-led ECOMOG initiative in Liberia and Sierra-Leone. Also, we realise that Africa which has played host to many civil wars, strife, etc. does not have a standing peace-keeping or monitoring force on ground. In fact this has remained one of OAU's greatest setbacks. It is obvious based on the foregoing that the end of the Cold War has not only put in place a new international order, but this order has impacted on Africa's domestic environment and foreign relations. And just as Gabriel Partos [14] observed:

> *"The end of the Cold War does not imply that somehow international tension and domestic strife have come to an end. It is simply a way of saying that a well defined era in history has passed, and that the various*

problems that states, nations and ethnic groups now have to tackle are of a different kind."[15]

This study examines the impact the end of the Cold War has on the African continent politically. Economic and social issues would also be considered where it becomes inevitable, as politics often affect them. Zaire (The Democratic Republic of Congo) is used as a case study.

The work is divided into five chapters, in which in the introductory chapter, we clarify the problem under investigation, advance some propositions and indicate method of research.

Chapter two will be Literature Review and theoretical framework.

Chapter three considers the background history of Zaire up to the point of independence, political organisations, crisis, east-west intrusion and up to Mobutu's enthronement.

Chapter four examines the end of the Cold War generally vis-à-vis the African political arena. This shall be done looking at certain events that unfolded (still unfolding) in the wake of the East's demise. Zaire (The Democratic Republic of Congo) would also be examined up to the point of Kabila's take over.

Chapter five looks at political developments in Zaire after the Cold War, with some insight into what the future holds.

Chapter six concludes the work with summary, pertinent observations and recommendations for resolutions and solutions.

It should be noted that in this work, the names Zaire and the Democratic Republic of Congo would be used interchangeably.

1.02 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The major problem this work sets out to examine is: the impact that the end of the Cold War has on Africa in general and Zaire (Democratic republic of Congo) in particular.

1.03 RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

This work basically, as stated from the onset, acknowledges that global changes have occurred in the political arena as a result of which power configurations have greatly been affected, and with it have come other changes as well. These changes demand proper examination with particular regards to Africa using Zaire (Democratic republic of Congo) as a case study.

It is based on the foregoing that these propositions need to be made, and examined in the course of the study. In other words these propositions would serve as a guide and/or projection into what we are going to be looking at in the course of this study. These propositions are:

- The end of the Cold War has directly resulted in political change in Africa. That is it has acted, more than any other event before it, as a catalyst for change.

- Changes in leadership and political systems may occur, but dictatorial and autocratic regimes still flood the political terrain of Africa in the post Cold War era .

- Increased American presence in Africa especially on the political scene is inevitable. The United States as the dominant force in the Unipolar world would determine the direction of national issues among African nations, possibly at the expense of erstwhile colonial masters.

1.04 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The demise of the Cold War brought about some changes in the global political equation. And since the international system has become more or less a global village, what happens at the centre affects its component parts. Yet it seems that much systematic effort has not been made by scholars to study the impact which the end of the Cold War has had on Africa.

Thus this work is an attempt to analyse critically how this global event has impacted on Africa, with particular reference to the Democratic Republic of Congo. The study is aimed at breaking new ground. It is also intended to fill a gap (a yawning one for that matter) which seems to exist in the study of African politics following the end of the Cold War.

1.05 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant because it will help us to understand the dynamics of changes that have been taking place in the African political scene since the Cold War ended. It is noteworthy that while the Cold War lasted, some of the political changes that took place in Africa were influenced by the Cold War politics. However, now that the Cold War has ended, there is no doubt that the post-Cold War changes taking place in Africa would have been impelled by some other factors which this study would help us to understand.

Also, issues revolving around the end of bipolarity generally have generated heated debate over the years, which tend to be more emotional than realistic. This study shall clarify issues impartially while enhancing the quality of debate in the chosen direction. It is hoped that the result emanating from the study will help political leaders on the continent to know how to adjust to the new realities, which the end of the Cold War has brought to the fore.

Finally, the study will be a valuable material to students of international relations particularly those interested in African politics. This is because the work is particularly focused on Africa, using as a case study a country that was once enmeshed in Cold War politics.

1.06 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

i SCOPE

The scope of this study shall be from 1989 to the present as we will be concerned specifically with (political) changes that have occurred in Africa as a result of the end of the Cold War, using the Democratic Republic of Congo as a case study. The period marks the end of bipolarity, and within which most changes have occurred politically in Africa.

However, to provide a good contextual background we would, where necessary, make reference to periods before 1989 that were actually the Cold War years, and there is hardly

any way to better understand the post Cold War years than going back to the Cold War years. Similarly, certain issues that started unravelling from 1989, were sown much earlier, thus making it important for us to make reference to the Cold War years

Although the topic reads " The impact of the end of the Cold War on Africa: A case study of Zaire (The Democratic Republic of Congo)", we are not going to look at political change in Africa country by country. We are going to concern ourselves with changes that have taken place in Zaire from 1989 to the present. Reference would be made from time to time in the course of the study to similar issues in other African nations so as to help us better situate the issue and the context in which it is understood.

ii ***LIMITATION***

As earlier stated, issues revolving round the Cold War during and after, tend to be discussed emotionally. This poses some problem of sorts to the researcher as information available is often to a large extent, biased in favour of the side to which the author or reporter shares sympathy. Researchers have to be very careful in the use of material.

Material is also limited, especially on recent developments. The researchers had to make do with sometimes-sketchy newspaper/magazine reports or articles.

There is also the problem of translating certain journals and books particularly on Zaire (The Democratic Republic of Congo) since being a former colony of France, French is used as official language. In this situation, material was translated at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, with some assistance from the French cultural centre, Ikoyi, Lagos.

1.07 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

In this work, we have relied essentially on secondary sources for generating data. This involves the use of books, magazines, newspapers, seminar and conference papers, documentaries etc. This form of data becomes necessary because it is impossible to carry out a survey research using such techniques as questionnaire. Also, historical documentation already exists on a good number of the issues that we would be looking at in the course of this study, thus providing more realistic means of data gathering.

In this research therefore, libraries such as Kashim Ibrahim library, A.B.U. Zaria; British Council, Kaduna; United States Information Service, Kaduna, British Council, Lagos; Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos and other private libraries would be used.

Textbooks, encyclopaedia, newsmagazines, newspapers, seminar papers, class presentations, video and audio documentaries news items are extensively used to source for relevant information.

1.08 A GLOSSARY OF CONCEPTS USED IN THIS RESEARCH

It is important, as well a necessary that there should be working definitions in this research such that a clearer understanding of what is actually intended will be easily arrived at.

The **Cold War** as used here is understood to mean the rivalry between the U.S.-led west and the Soviet-led East which was characterized by arms race and ideological confrontation in a bid to gain superiority globally. This war lasted from 1945 to 1989. In addition to the arms race and ideological confrontation, trade embargoes, direct military involvement in local conflicts, fighting wars by proxy, espionage and propaganda were the weapons used in the Cold War.

Political change as used here refers to change of leadership, or political system, which may be by peaceful or violent means. This may be through military coup, insurgency, civil wars, ethnic strife, and may be total or pseudo. These, in this research must have occurred anytime from 1989 to 1999 in Africa.

Africa here refers to all geographical areas referred to by the name "Africa," which is bounded by the strait of Gibraltar in the North West, the Mediterranean sea in the North, the Red sea and the gulf of Aden in the North East, The Indian ocean in the East, the Indian and Atlantic ocean in the South, and the Atlantic ocean in the West and North West. It is joined to Asia at the Isthmus of Suez, which separates the Mediterranean and Red seas.

Zaire or the Democratic Republic of Congo as used here refers to the nation of Central

Africa which was known as the Belgian Congo until 1960 when it became independent as the Democratic Republic of Congo. Its name was changed to Zaire in 1971, then the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1997.

The Country is situated between longitude 13^0 10' East and longitude 13^0 18' East with a total area of about 905,380 square miles. It is bounded on the North by Central African Republic and Sudan, on the East by Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Lake Tangayika which separates it from Tanzania. On the south is Zambia, on the south west by Angola, and on the west by Angola (Cabinda enclave), and the Republic of Congo

FOOTNOTE

1. Claude Ake (1995) "Socio-Political Approaches and policies for sustainable Development in Africa." (African Development Bank/African Development Institute Annual Meetings symposium, Abuja). 23rd May, 1995.
2. The South Commission (1993) **The challenge to the South,** Enugu, Fourth dimension publishing Co., Ltd.
3. Chakravarthi Raghavan (1995) **Cooperation South,** UNDP, May, 1995 Edition
4. Ibid P. 26
5. See also Terence Lyon and Ahmed I. Samatar (1995) **Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention and strategies for political Reconstruction**. Washington, D.C. The Brooking Institution.
6. This involves the Saharawi Arab Republic.
7. The change /struggle in Ethiopia led to the breaking away of Eritrea to become a sovereign state.
8. It is important to note here that even conflicts that were hitherto suppressed due to the Cold War, assumed new dimensions. Examples include those of Eritrea which led to her independence from Ethiopia in 1993, and that of Somalia in which the U.S. got openly involved in a rather biased manner and humiliated.

9. Under the guise of democratization and liberalism, efforts are now being made to legitimize intervention in the internal affairs of states in Africa through NGO's, new theories and concepts which violate the fundamental principles and Chakravarthi Raghavan 1995 opcit and Jude Owoeye Ed (1993) **Understanding the New World Order**. Ibadan, College press Ltd.

10. **Newsweek International** magazine May 12,1997 p.21

11. New leaders seem to be toeing the lines of their predecessors, as they enact laws and engage in scheming aimed at prolonging their stay and hold on to the all important state power e.g. Chiluba's (Zambia) law on citizenship obviously aimed at disqualifying Kenneth Kaunda's candidature. Similar event in Kenya. In Nigeria also.

12. **BBC Focus on Africa** Magazine July-September, 1997 edition. P17.

13. Bassey Ate (1992) " The collapse of Bipolarity: Implication for Africa and non-Alignment," Being a paper presented at the one day National Seminar on 'Africa and the New World order,' Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, Lagos. 11th July, 1992. P3.

14. Gabriel Partos (1993) **The World that came in from the cold: Perspectives from East and West on the Cold War**. London, Royal Institute of International Affairs.

15. Ibid. P.IX

CHAPTER TWO

2.01 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In a research of this nature, it becomes necessary that we review related literature. This help in telling us what others have said in the area in which we are carrying out an academic exercise, at the end of which we would state what makes our's distinct.

In this research, as mentioned earlier, there is some dearth in availability of material. This is largely attributable to the issue at stake, which is one that is recent and unfolding. However, this makes it more challenging in the sense that, the researchers in a situation of this nature have to employ their senses of intuition to get at relevant information that is needed to make the work worthwhile.

Seminar presentations, newspapers, magazines and journals, constitute a greater percentage of the material used in this section.

Nduka Uzuakpundu writing in the Guardian newspaper;[1] under the caption, "The Pseudo Democrat", traces Mobutu's history on to ascension to power, and how Zaire remained a one-party state under him during the Cold War years up till 1985:

> *"Marshall Mobutu vowed not to brook the idea of a second party. He only stopped short of placing a lid on its discussion"*[2]

Mobutu, in this article, is described as possessing an odd sense of power, "a firm believer in absolute power."[3] However, by April 1990, the author notes that he declared his intention to share power in a multi-party system. The author cites "the on-going global change for multi-party democracy,"[4] as well as "popular demands for social and political reforms."[5]

On OAU, the writer quotes Mobutu as advocating for a "league of Black African States"[6] to replace the OAU, as the body is "paralysed by disputes such as Western Sahara and Chad."[7]

Uzuakpundu fails to notice the direct link global events had on political reforms in Zaire. The writer's narration of events of the 1990's which are mentioned passively as resulting from global change for multi-party democracy, fails to capture the consequences of these

changes on the African political arena properly.

Writing in the Financial times [8] newspaper, Julian Ozanne under the caption "Discontent Flares on the streets of Zaire," the writer seemed to have been most concerned about the immediate reasons for the discontent which is traced to "Zaire's increasingly impoverished urban population." [9] The author is also of the view that the West in the wake of the crisis, abandoned Mobutu, regarding him as an

> *"embarrassing anachronism in the post Cold War world where African rulers no longer win support simply because of their commitment to capitalism and the West"* [10]

The writer points to the speed with which Belgium and France evacuated their nationals in the wake of the crisis as proof of the West's desertion of Mobutu.

In a report culled from the Swiss Review of World Affairs titled "Zaire in chaos" by the Guardian Newspaper; [11] the authors seem to be most concerned about the persons involved in the struggle for leadership in Zaire at that time. The authors seem not to be convinced that the end of the Cold War had any hand to play in the rate of rising opposition witnessed in Zaire at that time, when they state that, "President Bush's 'new world order' is very remote from kinshasha," [12] but blame the West for the wreckage in Zaire, stating that" the Americans have a guilty conscience," [13] though in a manner which does not suggest that the Cold War could have influenced the West's actions. Rather, the West's actions in Zaire were, as in other African nations, but a necessary balancing act resulting in an

> *"Africa liberated from all traces of the world communist movement and the Cold War, but not yet from right wing dictatorships. Western balancing acts sometimes take on bizarre dimensions"* [14]

The authors also are of the view that rather than the Cold War, distractions in Angola "radically clouded the U.S. view of developments in Zaire." [15] The work, while obviously running away from blaming the Cold War and its aftermath for the situation in Zaire, still falls short of convincing reasons outside the Cold War. This is because America's "balancing act" could not have occurred in a vacuum without an opposing power, neither

would "Bush's new world order" have been created without an old one existing prior to it.

In "Understanding the Zairean conflict" by Ben Charles Davies in The National Concord [16] Newspaper, the writer traced the crisis in Zaire then to "a crisis of identity" [17] as a Belgian colony formerly called Congo Brazaville. According to the author, this crisis continued until Mobutu took over power in 1965 to provide the much needed great destabilising factor to the then global communist empire. Thus he attracted the sympathy of the world's core capitalist states such as the United States of America, France and Belgium among others to his government. These countries "prepared a fertile ground for him to operate and with military precision in order to 'underline his authenticity drive." [18]

Realising this, Mobutu is said to have, through the assistance of his backers, founded his own ruling party and positioned himself firmly for an indefinite rule. And, during his obedient and willing years, his Western friends used Mobutu to achieve their desires "mostly in their ideological expansionist policy." [19] The author cites Angola, where Zaire was used to aid UNITA against the socialist government, and Chad where in violation of the OAU charter, Zairean troops assisted in fighting the Libyan-backed anti-west rebels, as examples.

In the post-Cold War years, the writer ponders what would become of Zaire when he observes that

> *"the democratic wind that is blowing across the global village, collapse of ideologies among others has got stuck in the country"* [20]

And, the author believes that France, U.S. and Belgium have the answer. The writer fails to understand that rather than taking advantage of Mobutu after assumption of office, the West actually worked his way to the top. He also writes to suggest as if Mobutu ever stopped being obedient to the West. The issue in Mobutu's case was that of a game plan that ceased to be relevant when the game was up.

Tony Okeregbe writing in the Guardian Newspaper[21] seemed to have been most concerned about the person of Mobutu. The writer portrays him as one who ruled without any form of external assistance. Though the writer acknowledges that the clamour for change heightened by 1990, a situation which led to "a wreckage of commercial life and more clamours for

democratization," [22] forcing Mobutu to withdraw from the political stage, no mention or suggestion is made as to the role the end of the Cold War played. The periods of agitation for change however coincide with that of the end of the Cold War.

Under the caption, "Ailing president, Ailing country" in the Sunday Concord" [23] newspaper, Olusegun Adeniyi and Akeem Soboyede chronicle the events leading to the crisis in Zaire at that time. In their analysis they blame the West for the Zairean situation, particularly when they write that

> *"it is however an irony that the West is now virtually helpless against the frankestein monster it helped to created when the career of a former CIA agent and sergeant in the Congolese army was nurtured till he was installed his country's president"* [24]

With the bipolar international system in the sixties, seventies and early eighties, Mobutu was able to survive as a lackey of the West which "propped up his regime and closed its eyes to all his failings as a leader." [25]

But as the writers observe, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989,

> *"the tide began to turn for the dictator who is no longer relevant to the Cold War calculations of the United States."* [26]

The mention of United States at the later part of their writing only goes to suggest the dominance of the U.S. following the collapse of USSR. The writer's view is that the absence of bipolarity meant less money for Mobutu's Zaire, consequently leading to the collapse of the system. This is said to have been going on simultaneously with international pressure.

In "Zaire: A step away from chaos," The Guardian Newspaper, [27] in this editorial seems to applaud the effort made by the OAU in the Zairean crisis. This happens to be one of the very few writings that ever bothered to examine the role of the OAU in the Zairean crisis.

This editorial also observes that the Kabila-led opposition was composed of nationals of, and backed by Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. [28] This suggests that there could have been spill-over effect from these countries who could also have been waiting for the time to get back at Mobutu. The paper also observed that the issue of political change was not peculiar to Zaire,

noting that, since the end of the Cold War, "the people of other African nations like Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Zambia and Malawi "have had to undergo this process of political rejuvenation" [29]. The paper in acknowledging the role the West played during Mobutu's regime, is advised to work in concert with the OAU towards lasting peace in Zaire. The paper's major concern seems to have been that of immediate solutions, thereby leading it to ignore vital issues of history as well as the future issues likely to come up.

The Guardian Newspaper[30] under the caption "U.S., E.U, African countries intervene in Zaire's crisis," shows how interrelated global events could be. This is because from its heading and analysis, it shows how the problem in Zaire impacted on other nations, organisations etc. outside Zaire and Africa, prompting them to respond. The paper uses the response from the global (UN), International (E.U, U.S., Britain, France, Germany etc.) and the regional (South Africa, African Foreign Ministers etc.) [31] to drive home its point of interrelatedness of global events.

This report like many reviewed here, seems to have been concerned only with the peace initiative made by nations, organisations etc. in Zaire, thus not bothered about the origin of the crisis nor the direction in which they were moving. That is, to say most writings on Zaire are concerned about the immediate issues at stake. However, this writing brings out saliently, relevant issues such as the inter-relatedness of the world, and the helplessness of the OAU in the wake of this crisis.

In "A Leopard losing its spots," Kenneth Ezea in Thisday Newspaper[32], examined the crisis in Zaire at that time of writing his report. He traced the genesis of Mobutu's reign, acknowledging that the West put Mobutu there so as to repel what was feared then to be the East's intentions in Zaire.

During the Cold War years the writer observed that there were instances when a combined force of "foreign paratroopers and mercenaries aided by U.S. and Belgian logistical support" [33] was used to overwhelm opposition. This was the kind of co-operation and assistance Mobutu then enjoyed.

However after the Cold War, and most of his erstwhile protectors turned elsewhere, Mobutu had to concede to pressure from the opposition and

> *"announced a transition to civil rule and appointed Professor Lunda Bolulu as Prime Minister to head the transitional government."* [34]

The writer observed also that the end of the Cold War only provided an opportunity which Zaireans had long waited for "to cut Mobutu short on his weird track." [35]

Nsima Odioh writing in Thisday newspaper [36] under the caption; "Haunted by Lumumba's Ghost," acknowledges the importance of Zaire to the international community. He proceeds to establish his claims by going back in history where he points out that during the Cold War years

> *"using the United Nations as front, they (super powers) waded in to the 1960 crisis in Zaire (Congo) with two main aims: First, to plant their different ideologies in the country. Secondly, to establish their foothold there.."* [37]

The writer further narrates how the U.S., Britain, UN, France and Belgium (West) had established a stronghold on Zaire, and succeeded in shielding her away from the Eastern bloc throughout the Cold War years.

The writer opines that the end of the Cold War signalled the beginning of the end for Mobutu, thus necessitating political change in a country that had been ruled for most of her life by a powerful dictator.

Max amuchie in "History, Mobutu and Kabila," [38] examines the Zairean issue from an entirely different perspective – that of "historical inevitability." [39] He takes a glimpse into Zaire's history in order to prove his thesis. Lumumba who was head at independence is potrayed as "a progressive and people-oriented leader who had socialist inclinations." [40]. From then on, Lumumba became a marked man, and from that period when

> *"the Cold War was at its peak, the West saw his elimination as a sine qua non. Otherwise the Soviets would take over Africa through him."* [41].

Mobutu it was who was used eventually by the West to take over leadership of Zaire. The author observed that for several years, military assistance was extended to rebel movements like UNITA fighting progressive regimes in Africa. Thus, in the era of the Cold War, "Western imperialism conveniently and comfortably used Mobutu to check Soviet influence in Africa" [42]. And with the assistance of the West, Amuchie notes that Mobutu did everything within his power to suppress democratic agitations in the country even when the same West "hypocritically champions the cause of democracy across the world" [43].

But with the demise of bipolarity, Amuchie opines that

> *"the likes of Mobutu are no longer relevant to the geo-strategic interest of the West, thus he has become, in the words of the American government, a 'creature of history'* [44]

Kabila is seen as "an instrument used by history to fight a fundamental wrong" [45]. He does not believe that Kabila might be any better as a ruler when he warns that, "it will be fatally wrong to allow power slip into Kabila's hands just like that" [46]

Amuchie's framework of analysis is rather too simplistic for such a serious discuss as the issue of Zaire. While his chronicling of events in Zaire right from independence points to an obvious direction of interference and direction from outside, it is surprising that he intends his readers to believe that these events were simply historically inevitable.

Tom Masland and Russell Watson writing in Newsweek Magazine (international)[47] comment about the last days of Mobutu in Zaire; stating how his erstwhile supporters turned against him when defeat seemed to stare him in the face. Particular reference is made to a letter written to Mobutu by president Clinton informing him that "the time had come, at last, for him to go." [48] And, according to the writers, the message marked

> *"the formal Conclusion to America's relationship with a dictator it had supported for more than three decades... as a bulwark against their Cold War rivals."* [49]

The writers are also of the opinion that the United States intends, once and for all, to establish itself as the dominant power in the region, noting that since the end of the Cold War, America has established closer ties with former adversaries in Angola. And that South Africa has

become "a far more useful and reliable U.S. friend than the country was under white rule."[50]

The rebel's quick conquest of territory, the writers explain, shows how deeply foreign troops were involved in the Kabila-led offensive.

The writers view greater American influence in Africa as a militating factor against the relevance and control of the OAU in the region.

James Walsh, under the caption; "Ailing States of sleaze" in the Time Magazine,[51] notes that since the end of the Cold War, armed rebellion seems to be spreading in Central Africa and blames the development of "failed French policies."[52]

Walsh also observes that Mobutu was used during the Cold War to support UNITA in fighting the socialist government in Angola among other odd jobs, in return for which he got protection despite his many failings. With the Cold War over, the scenario changed as Walsh observed that; "the end of the Cold War is closing down the West's see-no-evil approach."[53] He proceeds to quote William Twadell, deputy U.S. Assistant secretary of state for Africa as saying the Cold War's end

> *"has enabled us to deal with African governments On their own merits rather than in some kind of geo-political zero-sum game'"*[54]

Power sharing and pluralism rather than just elections which are completely empty of meaning, is what the West wants to pressure governments into implementing, according to Walsh. How this is to be achieved is not stated.

Walsh seems to be obviously biased against the French over Zaire and some other central African countries. All the blame goes the way of the French, while the praise for reform goes the way of the U.S, despite the fact that the U.S. is earlier acknowledged to have been instrumental to Mobutu's ascension to power, and his rulership.

For Bruce W. Nelan in Time Magazine,[55] Africa's modern history "has been written in the blood of tribalism: Wars of secession, violent coups, gruesome vendettas."[56] Nelan however

does not seem to be bothered with tracing the origins of the problem in Africa or Zaire. He seems to be rather most concerned with how America is taking advantage of the post Cold War situation in most countries of Africa to exert her influence. This, he observes, America is doing with the assistance of her trusted allies such as Museveni of Uganda whom the writer describes as "godfather" in a realignment of Africa's old order" which tends to be

> *"Anglophone in its international voice, pro-American in its diplomacy and attuned to Adam Smith in its economics"* [57]

Nelan also quotes a U.S. government official as admitting that "the meddling he's done (Museveni) in Sudan we've helped fund" [58] Nelan's analysis is openly biased in favour of America. He portrays the U.S. as a saviour in a situation which she created. His analysis is also short on relevant history to back up his argument.

Bassey E. Ate in, "The Collapse of Bipolarity: Implications for Africa and Non-Alignment;"[59] traces the international political events from 1945 to 1989, and examines the consequences of the end of bipolarity on Africa, and Non-alignment a term and principle that was in itself born of bipolarity.

Ate re-affirms the role the Yalta conference of 1945 played in the developments that would become of utmost significance for the next four decades thereafter in international relations, these. These highlights as: the rise of the U.S.A. and the USSR from the ashes of world War II as the two most powerful, but rival military actors in the world, and the projection of two competing world ideologies (capitalism and socialism) each aiming to dominate international relations as the basis of their self perpetuation.

This was the driving force behind their moves towards the third world countries of Africa and Asia, [60] *thus linking these less developed nations to the major camps.*

Ate also feels that the Non-aligned movement was only one of the ways through which bipolarity impacted on the third world. And that the Non-aligned movement could not hold on its own. Ate cites an example on the issue of security during the Cold War thus:

> *"Cold-War conceptions of security in Washington and Moscow were*

simply transposed to the continent (Africa) to be implemented in maintaining bipolarity."[61] *(emphasis mine).*

However, with the end of bipolarity, the author is of the view that African nations have a unique opportunity to devise an autonomous security and conflict management system to address present and future occurrences without Cold War interferences. In the area of politics, Ate opines that "the renewed emphasis on multi-party democracy and observation of humans (which were the bases of the anticolonial agenda) owes much to the collapse of bipolarity." [62] He proceeds To state that: "the whole world is now embracing Western democracy and free enterprise." [63] Ate finally, foresaw a situation where the collapse of bipolarity in Africa, would lead to cooperation between the former Eastern and Western blocs towards resolving the outstanding conflicts in Africa.

Ate's positions are contradictory in the sense that while he foresees a situation where Africans would have a greater right to self determination, particularly in the area of peace keeping and security matters, he still expects his readers to assume that the embrace of multi-party democracy just taking place is without behind-the-scene manipulations or an obvious direction towards U.S. aims and values. Also, experience has shown that the U.S, sensing the lack of opposition, rather has exercised its strong hold on security issues in Africa like never before, either directly or through surrogates.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

In the course of literature review, we have observed that most writers seem to link the end of the Cold War with political change in Africa particularly in Zaire. This is despite the fact that none of the writings or works set out purposely to do this. This is the first area in which this research is unique.

While some writers see a direct relationship between the end of the Cold War and political change in Africa, and particularly Zaire, others just browse over the issue quite casually looking instead at other issues as possible principal factors.

On careful observation, one would find out that most of these writings came at a time when Mobutu was experiencing some problems. As such, most writers seemed only concerned about reporting the situation as it then was, and not bothered about the background history nor the actors, their roles and future implications.

There is hardly any attention paid to the issue of the modes of leadership which the political change in Africa has now occasioned. This is because of all the literature examined, only Max Amuchie[64] seems to be wary of the future of Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) under Kabila. Even then, he stops at sounding the warning without any reasons as to why he thinks his position is justifiable.

Going back in history, one discovers that African politics suffered an arrested development of sorts a second time, just as it did at the hands of the colonialist invaders. Although the setting was different from that of the colonialist's time, this researcher observes that the reason for the psychological warfare of the Cold War to have crept successfully into Africa is due to the fact that most of Africa was at the threshold of gaining political independence and as such, a beautiful and vulnerable bride to court.

There is also the issue of neutrality and/or innocence of purpose displayed by both blocs, particularly the two major leaders U.S. and USSR --- both of whom did not participate directly in the colonization process of Africa. As such, the period of agitation, and in some cases like Zaire, shortly after independence, were periods for them to take full advantage of, and support certain candidates or political associations. This was carried out either saliently or overtly. And because the leaders of these associations were in such desperate moods to win, they were not willing to examine the kind of 'assistance' they received nor were they conscious of their future repercussions. Most African leaders only got involved in what was a global event at that time the Cold War, unconsciously. They were infected by it more-or-less.

Some of the literature reviewed take note of America's increased dominance in Africa particularly after the Cold War, leading to many changes in leadership structures and an

increase in the preference for American-style multi-party democracy. However, this research is quick to note that despite these changes, there is every likelihood that the new leaders would most likely adopt the sit-tight posture of their predecessors in a manner that would still attract the see-no-evil stance of America. In this new development, America driven by her desire to protect her markets and businesses would want to close her eyes to the evils of a regime that aids her interests. However, America would most likely have to contend with opposition from the former colonial masters of these African States, who would be slighted at being neglected or sidelined in the new scheme of things in their former colonies. In the case of Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo), as France and Belgium continue to find themselves irrelevant, France particularly is likely to explore ways of regaining her prestige and relevance in her former colony. This is likely to generate some controversy between France and the U.S. The ensuing conflict would provide a conducive atmosphere for the ruling party or government to be protected and kept in power irrespective of its performance. All these developments cannot be divorced from the global trend where the United States, having emerged as the victor in the post Cold-War era, is taking her predominance out on every facet of the international political environment, Africa inclusive.

Most literature reviewed in the course of this research, do not mention the organization of African Unity, OAU, talk less its role and contributions in African politics during and after the Cold War. Apart from Ate,[65] no other literature reviewed sees the OAU re-emerging after the Cold War into a bastion for peace-keeping in Africa. Ate however fails to give as little as an insight into what this said re-organization would look like, particularly considering the fact that the OAU does not have any standing enforcement unit, neither has it ventured into this area in its over thirty years of existence.

None of the works cited looks at the Zairean issue from a truly global perspective, a fraction representing the whole, even at the African continental level.

2.02 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to analyse meaningfully and understand the dynamics of political change which the end of the Cold War has brought about, we have adopted as our theoretical framework the

systems theory – a theory which is associated with scholars such as Talcott Parsons, Marton Kaplan W.J. Buckley, R. Matin etc. A system could be defined as something constituting of a set of entities among which a set of relations to others or from relations among the entities are linked to the behaviour or history of the system. If the nature of the system is indeed embodied in the quality and inter-relations of these connections, then there is hope that knowledge of the whole will emerge from knowledge of the parts.

W.J. Buckley[66] likens systems to a specific form of communication flow. The system according to him comprises of inter-related mechanisms, organisms and subsystems that are linked together "almost entirely by conventionalized information exchange,"[67] and that such information flows could spark off action at different levels --- political, social, economic, cultural etc. This implies that for a relationship to exist, a specific type of information flow which is to be understood by members of the system must exist. This definition further implies a relationship of unequal partnership where one party depends on the other, and not possessing the capability to turn the tide in either direction. Also, different states, peoples, political organizations etc. perceive and react to events and actions quite differently, and may be dependent upon the performance, and present and expected resources, of the contestants or parties involved.

According to the systems theorists, the whole can be viewed as a unit no less than a part can. Hence, the fate of the components of a system may be viewed as determined by the fate of the whole system as legitimately as the other way round.

System is the concept that refers both to a complex of interdependencies between parts, components and processes that involves discernible regularities of relationship, and to a similar type of interdependency between such a complex and its surrounding environment.[68] A political system being a social system is inherently an open system engaged in process of inter-change or input-output relations (stimulus and response) with its environment, as well as consisting of interchanges among its internal units. Regarding it as an open system is, from some view point, regarding it as a part. That is, a subsystem of one or more superordinate systems. In this sense, it is independent with the other parts of the more comprehensive system or systems and hence partly dependent on them for essential input.

This provides the basis for the famous concept of function as it applies to social systems.

From the systems perspective, societies and other social groups tend to be seen as relatively persistent entities functioning within larger environments. These entities qualify as systems because they are considered sets of interdependent elements, which can be identified. This means that systems have distinguishable boundaries settling them apart from their environments, and each having a tendency towards a state of equilibrium. That is, the system tends to maintain itself through various processes whenever it is disturbed, either from within or without its boundaries. In very simple terms, systems theorists hold the position that a system is like a web/net, such that whatever affects a part automatically affects the entire system and vice versa.

With regards to the study we are doing, it is important to state that the international system is a whole made up of component parts which are states. Thus, in line with systems theory, what happens in the global system automatically has consequences on the parts just as what happens in any of the component parts affects the global system.

In very specific terms, an event occurred in the global system which is the end of the Cold War. Consequently, the fallout of this began to impact seriously on political change in the component parts (Africa) of which the Democratic Republic of Congo is just but one. Thus, using the systems theory as our framework of analysis, we would better understand and appreciate how an issue in the global system affects directly or indirectly one of its component parts.

Perhaps of the greatest relevance of this theory that has necessitated its use here, is its ability to capture issues and events that may be transitory in nature; thus making it the

> *"ultimate means of deciding issues and adjusting relationships among the units constituting international society."*[69]

The method of analysis adopted for use here is that of stimulus and response. This is in line with the general systems theory.

In using system theory, we have to note with every caution that the theory often runs into the

temptation of over assuming that reality consists of systems alone. But it has been observed by scholars that the system as a whole, however, functions but does not act in a technical sense, in relation to its environment. Societies consist of far more individual and isolated events than system analysis could handle effectively. Inspite of the drawbacks, we still find it suitable for our study.

2.03 POLITICAL CHANGE IN AFRICA

> *"Africa, probably more than any other continent at any time in world history, is led by pen-wielding intellectuals, rather than by the modern equivalent of saber-rattling men on horseback."*[70]

At the time Van den Berghe wrote this in 1964, a few African countries had gained independence and were still savouring the gains of their new independence. Thus the nationalists who fought for and won independence were at the helm of affairs in most of the countries. Military insurrection and violent political change were still novel in Africa. Little wonder Van den Berghe was influenced by what he saw to make the assertion cited above.

However as years rolled by, the kind of political change never contemplated began to take place in Africa, such that the statement credited to Van den Berghe could no longer stand the test of time. The rapidity with which this statement lost its validity following political events that have unfolded in Africa is an indication of the pace of political change in Africa today.

The wave of military coups, insurgency and wars of national liberation that have swept through Africa have reached such a crescendo that some scholars are prompted to insinuate that the only thing permanent in African politics is change. Ironically most of these changes that have been taking place poses a fundamental question as to whether these events could rightly be called political change or better still barbarism. However for the fact that they always centre around the struggle or acquisition of state power, they qualify to be called political change. Africa is replete with such cases of change. A good number of these changes have been taking place since the end of the Cold War. Whether we are talking of Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire etc., the story seems to be the same. The obvious lesson from these recent events is that African states have precarious political institutions, to

the extent that "even those, which seemed to have developed monolithic one-party systems like Zaire"[71] have not been spared.

In the military establishment which accounts for most of the political change witnessed in Africa, African officers learned the necessary skills to grab power before civilian governments had the time to become formally established.[72] What is more, lowly urbanised societies with a low level of technological development can be controlled (at least in the minimal sense of suppressing disorder and policing the capital city) with a relatively small military establishment. This was exactly the case in Eyademas's Togo. General Eyadema took over power in Togo with a company-sized army. The size of the armies used also portrays the kind of external influence and backing they enjoy.

Owing to the great diversity between African States, coupled with the fact the they seem to be in a constant state of flux, it is very difficult to make predictions and projections about Africa. They become invalid almost as soon as they are made. Predictions about Africa are much more risky than average.[73] A point to underline, given these circumstances, is the key element that accounts for the social and or political change that is witnessed on the continent of Africa at particular periods.

2.04 THE HISTORY OF THE COLD WAR

Whenever the term Cold War is mentioned, what quickly comes to mind is America-Soviet relations. Therefore to discuss the history of the Cold War, it will perhaps be worthwhile to start by examining the history of America-Soviet relations. This would help us to gain an insight in to how the foundation of Cold War politics was laid.

The term Cold War was first used in public by Benard Bauch in 1947.[74] Prior to 1917, old Russia and the United States were very different from each other in terms of social and political organisations. On the one side, there was the feudal czarist Russia and on the other side, there was the young American republic, born out of one of the first bourgeois democratic revolutions in the world. Russia at the time maintained very cordial relations with the United States. These relations were based on properly understood mutual interests. Later, during the civil war in the U.S, the Czar sent the navy to demonstrate Russian support for

Abraham Lincoln. Russian warships showed up in New York and San Francisco. Obviously, the Czar was not motivated by any sympathy for the plight of the American slaves. He had his own foreign policy objectives in mind, which led him to support the U.S.

When the great October Socialist revolution took place in Russia, the attitude of the U.S government, the broader American political elite, including the media was one of hostility. In the words of Georgi Arbatov,

> *"the new Russian Society was looked upon as a child born out of wed lock, bound to be treated as a bastard of history forever."*[75]

Thus the basis was laid for a long-term American attitude towards socialism and Soviet Russia.

It was the American declaration of independence that gave an early and very definite formulation to the thesis that every nation had an inherent right to revolution, a right to rise up in arms and carry out the necessary changes in its social and political system.

America followed up its hostility to the Russian revolution with concrete action. It took part in coalition of nations that tried to frustrate the revolution. Its troops participated in invading the Northern and Eastern parts of the country. Several overtures which Russia made in 1918 to the U.S. aimed at having strong trade and commercial relations were rebuffed. The Russian trade representative to the United States at the time, Mr. L. Martens established several contacts with American firms on Economic relations and contracts were signed. However the U.S. government intervened and expelled Martens from America as an 'undesirable alien'[76]. Although some American businessmen went to Russia on their own initiative to establish economic relations with Russia, the overall attitude of the U.S. government towards Russia was that of hostility. The U.S. took part in all coalitions that tried to follow Winston Churchill's advice at the time: 'strangle the baby in its crib'[77]. When the military interventions failed to accomplish that aim, the West adopted a policy of economic boycott and diplomatic non-recognition. That was perhaps another passive form of the same non-acceptance stance taken by the U.S. against the Soviet State. The basic presumption remained the same. Arbatov summed it up this way

> *"There can be no common ground between the West and the Soviet*

Union whose very existence, as U.S. secretary of State Bambridge Colby alleged in 1920, was dependent on the over throw of the governments in all other great civilized nations... there were no coinciding interests that could justify an establishment of normal relations with such an antagonist."[78]

In 1933, during the tenure of president Franklin Roosevelt, diplomatic ties were established between the two countries. That marked a turning point in their relations in at least two ways. First, it laid the groundwork for normal relations in the future. Second, it meant a new departure in the attitude of the White House, which after sixteen years of non-recognition finally ceased to behave as if Soviet Union did not exist. There was an exchange of letters between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and commissar for Foreign Affairs, Maxim Maximovich Litinov. At the insistence of Washington, both sides gave a solemn pledge not to interfere in each other's internal affairs. Moreover both sides pledged to restrain any organisation controlled by or dependent on either of the two governments from any direct or covert actions damaging to the other nation's internal peace, welfare or security. Among such forbidden practises were agitation and propaganda aimed at a forceful change of either country's political and social order. But these agreements were often violated, thus creating tensions and suspicion in both camps.

The formal declaration of the Cold War was contained in the famous speech delivered at Fulton, Missouri in March 1946 by Winston Churchill. He used the term "iron curtain" to describe the boundary between Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe which was soon to come under communist rule, and the Western world. Then in February 1947 came the Truman Doctrine, pledging American support for countries facing communist pressure from inside or outside. Washington pledged to provide assistance to all countries facing subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures. In practical terms, that meant support for regimes threatened by attempts at staging communist takeovers. The explicit formulation of the Truman Doctrine had been prompted by the civil war in Greece between the communists and the royalists. Britain's financial difficulties compelled it to give up its support for the Royalists, and that left the door open for the Americans to step in.

Coming closely on the heels of the Truman Doctrine was the Marshall plan, announced in June 1947, which was "to set the seal on the economic division of Europe, splitting the continent into a prosperous West and an East that was lagging behind."[79] Maurice Couve De Murville had this to say about the Marshall plan:

> *"The Marshal plan confirmed the formation of the two blocs, East and West, which was going on at the time. The Americans were not angels and they were convinced that the help they offered would help to develop their influence and power.. The Marshal plan was the beginning of Western bloc and the predominance of the U.S. in all the Western countries"*[80]

After World War II, the United States emerged as the most powerful country in the world. Her economy had been much strengthened by wartime demand for weapons and munitions. She was ready to flood five continents with manufactured goods while her competitors' plants lay in ruins. France and Britain, the pre-war colonial powers had been devastated by the war, the former had suffered the further ignominy of defeat while the latter was weighed down by debts caused by the huge cost of the war. America's only likely post war rival, the Soviet Union had suffered devastation on an even larger scale. Much of its economy in the European part of the country lay in ruins, although Stalin's industrialization drive in the 1930's and the war time evacuation of plants had created a large production capacity beyond the Urals. Still the Russian economy was in no way comparable with America's. In 1945 for instance, U.S produced 75 million tonnes of steel, six times as much as the Soviet Union. This kind of huge disparity, no doubt prompted Stalin to observe that his country's military security could be assured only when its output of steel reached 60 million tonnes.

Americans were prepared to offer Russia a continuation of what was known as UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Aid). Stalin was not interested. He did not want to be part of the American scheme of things; he would rather make the Russians suffer more and do it themselves without the Americans getting involved. The Soviet Union was afraid that the aid would increase Western influence in Eastern Europe.

The Cold War gained momentum when Soviet Union rejected the Marshal plan. It also

prevented its allies from accepting the plan and tightened its grip on Eastern Europe by establishing the Communist Information Bureau (COMINFORM) in October, 1947. Its task was to coordinate communist party activities and bolster ideological conformity among its members. The Kremlin embarked on a policy of "Sovietization," with each East European country transformed into a Soviet-like State.

By the end of 1945, there was perceived threat of an imminent nuclear attack by U.S. on Soviet Union by selecting some large cities as targets for the dropping of 196 A-bombs in a first strike. The war preparations climaxed in 1945 with "Drop Shot" which was a plan for an all-out war against the Soviet Union by means of all NATO forces supported by some Middle-Eastern and Asian countries. Actually, it was a blue print for World War III. Not only was "Drop Shot" a scheme for destruction – "atomizing" (as it was routinely called) of Soviet Union by some 300 bomb strikes, the plan also provided for the occupation of Soviet Union by American troops and the subsequent eradication of the Soviet system.

Realising that a nuclear war would lead to self annihilation and that military preponderance is of limited value in a nuclear age, Washington chose to modify the methods of Cold War policy, though the goals were unchanged. Putting aside a preventive war, for the time being, they adopted a doctrine of "containment" as the foundation of U.S. policy towards Soviet Union in the Cold War. In essence, there was a strategy aimed at the destruction of Soviet Union political system by means of applying constant pressure at all points. Among other pressures, the arms race was regarded as a way to wear the Soviets down. The major instrument of the policy was overwhelming military superiority. The importance which America attached to this military preponderance was captured by Thomas Etzol and John Gaddis. They stated that

> *"without superior aggregate military strength, in being and readily mobilizable, a policy of calculated and gradual coercion is no more than a policy bluff."*[81] *They went on to state that "until such a superiority was achieved, any negotiations with the Soviet Union could only be a tactic desirable to gain public support for the programme of military build up"*[82]

Among the means proposed then and which were actively used were,

> *"overt psychological warfare, calculated to encourage mass defections from Soviet allegiance, intensification of affirmative and timely measures and operations by covert means in the fields of economic warfare with a view to fomenting and supporting unrest and revolt in selected strategic satellite countries"*[83].

With the Korean War of 1950 (North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950), "the Cold War went hot."[84]. However, the limits imposed by Washington and Moscow ensured that the conflict would not escalate beyond the regional context. After three years of fighting, an armistice was signed in July 1953, which put an end to the biggest bloodletting (along with the Vietnam War) of the Cold War.

By the beginning of the Cold War in 1950, the main pattern of the war had come into being. Two hostile blocs, one led by America and the other under Soviet control were facing each other. The West had NATO; the East European countries apart from being bound together in the COMIFORM were tied to Moscow by a series of bilateral treaties (which would be complemented by the Warsaw pact of 1955). The West had the Marshal plan; the East had the COMECON trading organization. The propaganda war was well underway; America was setting up Radio Free Europe joined a few years by later Radio Liberation, specifically for the purpose of broadcasting to the communist countries.

The Cold War dominated the centre stage of international politics for about four and-a-half decades, that virtually every corner of the world felt its impact in one way or the other. Yet one remarkable thing which Gabriel Partos observed is

> *"there was no declaration war when it began and no victory parades when it ended.*[85]"

From the break-up of their war-time alliance to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Western powers and the Soviet Union waged a relentless struggle against each other. East and West employed a huge arsenal in this global confrontation. The arms race and trade embargoes, direct military involvement in local conflicts and fighting wars by proxy, espionage and

propaganda were the weapons used in the Cold War.

Three key characteristics defined the age. First, the scale of the confrontation between the U.S and Soviet Union each supported by its allies – was unprecedented in its global proportions. Second, the ideological divide between the two sides made their mutual enmity more bitter; both sides sought to demonstrate the superiority of their system and envisaged most of the time explicitly, sometimes more vaguely, the collapse of the adversary. Third, the menacing presence of nuclear weapons made Washington and Moscow determined to avoid any direct military conflict for fear of precipitating a nuclear war that could conceivably end human civilization on earth.

The peoples of the former Soviet bloc have been affected in many ways by the demise of the Cold War. The new world order that has emerged has meant more than just an end to the two generations long era of East-West hostility; it has also seen the adoption of Eastern style capitalist democracy, the end of foreign domination (in the shape of the Soviet Union or Russia) and the break up of several states, and the wars that heralded them.

The disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the principal factor that brought an end to the Cold War started with the deterioration in the political and economic conditions in Eastern Europe. Industries were performing below capacity, and Soviet Union was lagging behind in civil technology. It became obvious to some of the leaders that the collapse of the system was only a matter of time. This prompted the government to introduce some reforms – Perestroika meaning 'restructuring', and Glasnost meaning 'openness.'

The twin policy of Perestroika and Glasnost swept through all Soviet Republics. The openness occasioned by Glasnost brought about agitations for autonomy by Soviet Republics. However, they agreed to cooperate on issues of common interest and under the auspices of Commonwealth of Independent States. These developments also had psychological and political implications for the third world countries, particularly those that were used or played host to the cold-war politics and maneuvers. Precisely, it gave impetus to other subjugated people particularly in Africa to fight for their autonomy, and for change in political leadership or structures; hence its impact on political change in Africa.

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CHAPTER THREE

CONGO-ZAIRE: AN OVERVIEW

3.01 ZAIRE: GEOGRAPHY, ECONOMIY AND SOCIO – CULTURAL COMPOSITION

Republic of Zaire a nation of Central Africa was known as the Belgian Congo until 1960 when it became independent as the Democratic Republic of Congo. Its name was changed to Zaire in 1967, then to The Democratic Republic of Congo again, in 1997.

GEOGRAPHY

The Country is bounded in the North by the Central African Republic and Sudan, in the East by Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Lake Tangayika which separates it from Tanzania. In the south is Zambia; in the Southwest by Angola, and in the west by Angola (Cabinda enclave), and the Republic of Congo. Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) is situated between longitude 13^0 10^1 East and longitude 31^0 18^1 East. The extreme western portion is a narrow wedge terminating in a 25-mile strip along the Atlantic Ocean. The greatest width of the country 905,380 square miles.[1]

The dominant physiographic feature is the basin of the Congo River, which was renamed Zaire River in 1971. The Mitumba Range, with elevations above 16,000feet is the largest of mountain ranges in Zaire. It is located on the eastern border of Zaire. The SouthEast basin is fringed by rugged mountain country often referred to as the Katanga Plateau. This region which is about 4000feet above sea level, contains rich copper fields, uranium, and other mineral deposits. The East and North East portions of Zaire are mostly covered with dense vegetation of virtually impenetrable equatorial forests.

The climate of the country is very hot and humid. The mean annual temperature is approximately 80^0 F in the low central areas, with extreme considerably higher in February, the hottest month. However, the mean annual temperature is about 66^0 F North of the equator and from October to May south of the equator.

Zaire is blessed with vast mineral resources, chief among which are copper, uranium, gold,

and diamond. The wide range of climatic areas encourages diversified agricultural production. Rubber, oil palms, coffee and cotton, banana, coconut and plantain are indigenous to the region and are produced in commercial quantities. Timber trees of a variety of species including teak, ebony, African cedar, mahogany, legume vitae and redwood also occur abundantly[2]. The Congo River and its affluence provide a magnificent network of navigable waterways of about 8,500miles[3]. Animal life is also abundant and varied. These animals include the elephant, lion, leopard, chimpanzee gorilla, giraffe, hippopotamus, okapi, zebra, wolf and buffalo. The Mamba, python, and crocodile are among the numerous reptiles that can be found there. The parrots, pelicans, flamingos, cuckoos, sunbirds, herons, and the spur-winged glover are some of the birds that can be found in the country. Insects of various types particularly ants, termites and mosquitoes abound in Zaire. The tse-tse fly, which disseminates sleeping sickness, is prevalent in the lowlands.

Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) has vast hydroelectric potential. The hydroelectric project opened in 1972 with an annual capacity of 30,000,000 kilowatts on the Congo River. Most generating plants have been built near the mines so as to serve mining operations[4].

The land is 42% forest, 1% permanent pasture, and the rest (about 36%) savannah.[5] The population is largely agricultural, and comprises a majority of Negroid peoples, a sizeable minority of Sudanese and small numbers of Nilotic, Pygmy, and Hamitic peoples. The population of the country is about 35 million people.[6] This puts the overall population density at about 30 per square mile. The population is concentrated in the Eastern Highlands and along the lower Congo River. Over 25% of the total population live in towns, an attestation to urbanisation. The Capital and largest city is Kinshasa (formerly Leopoldville), with a population of 1,323,039 in 1970 (last recognised census). Other major cities and their population figures are Lubumbashi (formerly elisabethville), 318,000; and Kisangani (formerly stanleyville), 229,596. Smaller cities include Bukavu (formerly costermarville), Matadi, which is the main port; Mbandaka (formerly Coquilhatville); and Boma, formerly the capital of both the Congo free state and the Belgian Congo, and now a commercial center.[7]

The Christian religion has well over 5 million adherents most of who are Catholics. The Muslim population is over 105 thousand. However, majority of the population still holds on firm to traditional animist beliefs.[8]

Four languages basically of the Bantu family are widely spoken: Swahili in the East and South, Lingala along most of the Congo River, Tsiluba in Kasai, and Kikongo in the lower regions. French however is the official language as well as the principal business and social language.

ECONOMY

The economy of Zaire had suffered some severe blows due to the general disruption that occurred following independence. Agricultural output fell below the levels achieved prior to independence. The mining industry, after a sharp decline, reached record level in the early 1970's. Mining constitutes the principal source of wealth of the republic. The republic is the largest producer of cobalt and industrial diamonds in the world, but copper is the most valuable exported mineral. Uranium, tin, gold, zinc concentrates, manganese ores, and cadmium are the other minerals produced in significant commercial quantities.

The manufacturing industry is fairly well developed. In the early 1970's when Zaire was at its peak in manufacturing, she produced about 641,000 tons of petroleum products, 1,350,000 tons of tin, 455,000 tons of cement, 279,000 tons of refined copper, 63,000 tons of zinc, 50,000 tons of refined sugar, 141,000 tons of sulfuric acid and 104,000.000 gallons of beer.[9] However, economic deterioration, marked by hyper-inflation, crumbling infrastructure, negative economic growth, ... "an unserviceable debt of Nine billion to Ten billion Dollars, rapid devaluation of the Zaire - the currency - and critical shortages of the foreign exchange earning ..." [10] meant difficult times for Zaire's industries, most of which had to close shop.

The unit of currency is the Zaire, consisting of 100 Machete. The Bank of Zaire is the national bank. Some domestic banks and branches of foreign banks are also in operation. In 1974, 2.06 Zaire was equal to 1.0 United States Dollar. However, corruption during Mobutu's era changed all that by about 3000%, or 20-30,000 Zaire to a dollar.

Copper is the principal export, representing 50 percent of total export revenues. Diamonds and coffee are other products exported in large volumes. Exports in the early 1970s totaled about $702,000,000 annually and imports, about $657,000.000.[11] This indicates a balance of trade surplus. This changed with time due to corruption, nine collapses, fall in the demand of copper and a production decline of about 33 percent in the 1990s [12].

In the early years after following independence, the country suffered a catastrophic decline in export earnings. This was due largely to the secession of Katanga and South Kasai, the mineral production of which represented about 50 percent of export earnings. At this time also, there was a sharp decline in the export of agricultural crops such as a cotton and palm-kernel oil because of the exodus of Europeans and the length of the rebellion. The reintegration of South Kasai towards the end of 1962 and Katanga in January, 1963, helped restore much of the lost earning power of Zaire then.

The 1970s could be said to have been the best era for Zaire's economy. However, corruption and financial indiscipline over the years crippled the Zairian economy, leading to the collapse of purchasing power. The collapse of purchasing power has hit a very fruitful land which, with its rich deposits of copper, cobalt, tin, gold, and diamonds, is potentially one of Africa's richest.

> *"Moreover, with only 35 million people spread over an area nearly three quarters the size of India, overpopulation is not a problem"*[13]

The World Bank and IMF turned their backs on Mobutu's government after fruitless efforts to teach minimal budgetary discipline. However, the timing of the nonchalant attitude of the IMF and World Bank towards Mobutu also coincided with that of the collapse of the Cold War.

The new government of Kabila is faced on the economic front with the task of getting back the mines to work, curtailing illegal smuggling of minerals, servicing of external debt put at about $10 billion, improving the purchasing power of the people and improving on agricultural production.

3.02 PRE - COLONIAL CONGO

A retrospection into Zaire's political and cultural history dating back to precolonial times is essential for a better understanding of present political developments in the country, and of the forces which influenced these developments. As Louis Le Marchand observed,

> *"In few other parts of Africa are the links between modern political and pre colonial societies more apparent than in the Belgian Congo. Evidence shows that their leaders were fully aware of the advantages that might accrue from the exploitation of precolonial circumstances."*[14]

This, written at the height of political activity immediately after independence, is by and large a practical illustration of how historical circumstances got exploited and manipulated by the emerging leaders to achieve their political aims and objectives.

Not very much is known about early Congolese history, although by the time of initial contact with European explorers, to wit, the Portuguese in the 15th century, it was known to exist as a collection of several independent kingdoms divided along cultural and ethnic lines. These multi-ethnic entities included the Bakongo who constituted the dominant group among other minorities like the Bayaka, Bambala, Bangongo, etc. who spoke Kikongo, with Kiluba-Lunda speaking areas, also including within their linguistic boundaries, many culturally and politically heterogeneous entities. These divisions were less linguistic than cultural, and as Le Marchand puts it,

> *"traditional and political systems of these groupings seem more useful for understanding their cultural differences"*[15].

In this regard, about seven out of the numerous groupings were identified as the most influential, namely the Bakongo, Baluba, Mongo, Kuba, Mangbetu - Azande, Warega and Lunda.

When the Portuguese explorer, Diego Cao discovered the estuary of the Congo River in 1484, it was with the Bakongo Kingdom that he made the first contact. The Bakongo Kingdom was bounded by River Congo in the North, the Dande (South), Atlantic Ocean (West) and Kwango (East). It is on record that he captured some of the natives and sailed with them to Lisbon where they were apparently received and benevolently treated by the

Portuguese King John II. Upon return they acted as the King's messengers of goodwill, paving way for the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two kingdoms. This s as the catalyst for increased Portuguese political, economic and cultural influence i region.

The Bakongo King was at first treated as an equal by the Portuguese ruler, and in 1491 converted to Christianity. However, his attempts at Christianising his kingdom seriously resisted by his subjects who preferred their ancestral religious practices. Afte death in 1506, his successor, King Alfonso accepted and ardently supported Christianity. learned to read and write Portuguese and established formal diplomatic relations Portugal and Rome. Members of the royal family were also sent to Portugal to study.

The relationship between Portugal and Bakongo kingdom was essentially religious commercial, with slaves constituting the major item of trade, with the approval of the chu but this aspect of commerce eventually became a source of mutual distrust between Alfo and the Portuguese, while profoundly affecting the social and political institutions of Bakongo society. [16] Its accelerated growth became a source of personal concern to Alfo who tried to ascertain whether the exported slaves were really captives of war or his c subjects, and appealed to the Portuguese King to impose some restraint on the trad companies.

Other notable Kingdoms at this period were the Lunda of Katanga in the South, the Kuba the South central, the Baluba (East) and Azande (North) all characterized by differ political systems and organizations which more or less flourished in the Congo region till late Nineteenth century when they came firmly under Belgian rule.

Meanwhile, after King Alfonso's death in 1540, tribal wars, slave trade and inter migrations by lesser groups undermined the Bakongo influence. By 1580, Portugue interests began to recede, and colonial authorities only concerned themselves exclusive with neighboring regions in Angola. But Le Marchand also observes that despite t centrifugal and fragmentary tendencies, "the Bakongo have retained a sense of stro cultural unity." [17]

With diminishing Portuguese influence came the Arabs. They were neither interested in religious matters nor establishing formal political ties with the local chiefs. Their interests were strictly commercial, slaves and ivory constituting major commodities, which they exported to Zanzibar on the East African coast. With time though, Arab influence also increased politically. Arabs like Mohammed Ben Junna (a.k.a Tippo -Tip) became so powerful that he was a de facto ruler "whose domain stretched over a vast territory to the West of the Lualaba, between Kasongo in the South and Isangi in the North." [18]

Other European powers like the French and Belgians also became attracted to the Congo region as a source of wealth, considering the deposits of copper, diamonds and gold, along with sources of rubber and rich animal life. Their interests often led to open conflict with each other as well as with the Portuguese and Arabs. Belgium would eventually emerge as the controlling power.

3.03 THE CONGO FREE STATE AND THE EMERGENCE OF BELGIAN INFLUENCE

Belgian interest in the Congo was stimulated by the journeys of the British explorer, Henry Morton Stanley who visited the interior in 1877. Prior to then, the King of Belgium, Leopold II had developed a strong interest in the Congo region. He explained the purpose of his interest as an effort to civilize that part of the globe where civilization had not penetrated. This led to his setting up of the African International Association

> *"to build up hospitable and scientific stations in the Congo, to discountenance slave-trade, to survey, inquire, analyse the land, people and recources."* [19]

To enhance his imperial ambitions, he commissioned Stanley in 1876 to explore the region. Stanley's successful expedition down the River Congo, from Nyangwe to the Atlantic in 1877, encouraged King Leopold to form the Association Internationale Du Congo with Stanley as his agent in the area. Stanley's activities in the Congo Basin between 1879 and 1884, which included blazing the trail from lower Congo to Stanleypool, launching steamers on the upper river and building a chain of mission and trading stations, and securing rights to extensive areas bordering. The Congo River served to strengthen King Leopold's influence

in the area.

> *"Leopold's ultimate objective was to organise a republican confederation of free Negroes... to be independent, except that the King... reserved the right to appoint the president who should reside in Europe."* [20]

This geographical entity which was later renamed the Congo Free State however, was eventually converted into the personal property of King Leopold.

Conflicts between Belgians, Portuguese and French over territorial rights in the Congo region (and elsewhere in Africa) led to the convening of the Berlin West African Conference in 1884, to partition the African continent. It recognised the Congo Free State under the sovereignty of King Leopold. Thus did most of the geographical area known in present day Africa as Zaire or Democratic Republic of Congo begin to come under absolute Belgian control.

Initially, the Congo Free State was administered purely as a personal estate of King Leopold, who encouraged private enterprise and missionary societies in the task of civilizing the Free State. This led to further explorations by Catholic and Protestant missionaries between 1884 and 1886, especially George Grenfell, a Baptist. Other explorers like Captain Van Grelle in the Ubangui, Van Wissman in the Kasai and Roget in the Uele, led expeditions into the area and beyond, eventually resulting in open conflict with the Arabs, especially in the areas of Ivory trade (slave trade had since been abolished). However, the superior firepower of the European troops ensured the subduing of Arab influence and now paved way for Belgium's later colonial domination of the Congo.

Administering such a vast piece of real estate in the long run exacted a heavy toll on King Leopold's personal finances. The state had hitherto been open to free trade but in order to remedy the financial difficulties, Leopold decided to create a state monopoly on rubber and Ivory. To increase rubber production, the authorities introduced forced conscription of African labour to work on the rubber plantations. They were forced to work under tyrannical supervisors and under extremely inhuman conditions. This precipitated widespread resentment among the African populace and essentially one of the foundations upon which

the free state was founded.

Reports of the bestiality and cruelty African (Congolese) labourers on the rubber plantations were being subjected to, were first made by Protestant missionaries to the international community in 1895. But it was the formation of the Congo Reform Society by Edmund Morel in 1904, which formally moved against these cruelties that finally called the attention of the international community to the situation.

The impact of these reports of cruelty was first felt by the Belgian public in 1906 when Felicien Cattier published a comprehensive report on the situation in the Congo Free State. There arose agitation in many quarters that Belgium was morally obligated to annex the Congo. The most compelling argument was offered in 1908 that Congo, as a Belgian Colony would be a source of inexhaustible wealth, considering its rubber, ivory, and mineral deposits. In the same year the Belgian parliament voted overwhelmingly to annex the Congo Free State, "making it a colony that became known as the Belgian Congo." [21]

This period in the history of the Congo is significant because it had a profound psychological effect on the later political developments in the colony. As Le Marchand summed it up:

> *"Indeed, the impact of the Free State was so devastating and its after effects were so disruptive because the initial shock of European intrusion was followed almost immediately by a systematic exploitation of human and natural resources... In terms of its psychological impact (it) left a legacy of latent hostility which subsequent generations of nationalist leaders could capitalise to gain popular support for their cause."* [22]

The Belgians proceeded to institute a system of indirect rule akin to that of the British in their own colonies. Traditional chiefs were allowed a limited degree of autonomy in the sphere of native administration, which did not mean they were entrusted with the direction of the administrative and judicial organisation established by the colonial powers, but merely autonomy within the framework of native institutions. According to Georges Brausch,

> *"the political and administrative organization which Belgian rule established in the Congo... comprised a system of local government based on traditional African political units i.e. small kingdoms and*

tribes, and a central government created by the Belgians." [23]

However, this system of administration proved problematic to the colonial masters and was largely unsuccessful. Its organization was at variance with the political units which originally had the numerous tribes, large and small organized into hamlets, villages, confederations, tribes and even Kingdoms. These previously autonomous units had to be amalgamated into Chefferies (rural units) for more convenient administering in the Congo Free State. Inconsistencies inherited from the Free State, including the arbitrary appointment of chiefs, often at variance with traditions, who lacked the competence, contributed to undermining indirect rule in Belgian Congo. The chefferies later had to evolve into 'secteurs', and with increased urbanization and European orientation, into communes.

At the center was a Governor General, next to him were Vice-Governors in charge of provinces; then District Commissioners who were in turn the direct overlords of the local chiefs. Even here, were pockets of chaos. Between 1910 and 1933 native policies were regulated on the basis of directives issued by Vice-Governors with little co-ordination, and in the most empirical fashion. This is an illustration of the lack of coordination in the administration of the provinces.

Also District Commissioners tended to resist the supervision by provincial authorities of native policy. Vice Governors also arrogated to themselves the broadest scope of authority, but adamantly refused to surrender any part of it to their subordinates. Katanga province for instance had been initially administered as a separate entity but by 1910 was entrusted to a Vice-Governor, who was to exercise power under the authority of the Governor-General. Consequently

> *"the separate administrative status enjoyed by the Katanga from 1910 to 1914 is one of the factors that stimulated the emergence of separatist sentiment in that part of the Congo."* [24]

This separatist sentiment continued to grow even among the local populace resulting to the declaration of self-rule shortly after independence.

3.04 THE GROWTH OF NATIONALISM TO INDEPENDENCE

During World War 1, Congolese troops effectively aided the Allied cause in Africa, conquering the German territory of Ruanda-Urundi (present day Rwanda and Burundi) which was mandated by the league of Nations to Belgium in 1919.[25]

It was during World War II that the true extent of Congo's economic potentials was realised. The expansion of industrial facilities occurred especially in the Uranium, copper, rubber and palm-oil industries. The post war years witnessed increases in the industrial productivity of the colony and resultant economic prosperity, so that by 1953,

> *"Congo was the leading African producer of Cobalt (86 percent of the total African production), diamonds (64%); tin (60%) tungsten and Zinc mineral (53%), silver (51%) after Northern Rhodesia."* [26]

Economic growth inevitably coincided with the growth of nationalism. The opportunities created for industrial development and infrastructural improvement saw the emergence of Africans who had received Western education and employed in various sectors of government and the economy, and those involved in business enterprise. Ultimately, they would insist on increased African participation in the political and administrative affairs of the colony. As Le Marchand observed,

> *"along with economic opportunities offered by the introduction of money and the development of industry, a host of racial, social and economic grievances were created which found outlet in nationalist activities."* [27]

It thus adds up that with education and wealth, emerged a sense of socio-political awareness among the Congolese and increased interest in civil administration and the consequent desire for self-actualisation.

Perhaps it was the economic recession witnessed in the late 1950s that further ignited the incipient nationalist spirit in the Congo. It had become evident that the urban centres offered better opportunities for self-improvement in this dispensation. The period thus witnessed a massive rural-to-urban drift as more Congolese saw the acquisition of Western education as

a passport to material prosperity and increased social privileges.

However, the social and economic structures on the ground could no longer accommodate the sudden explosion of African presence. It should be understood that whatever industrial and infrastructrual development witnessed then was really not meant to benefit the African populace, but rather to enhance the means of production for the benefit of the colonizing power.

The pressures occasioned by the sudden increase in Congolese presence in the face of (now) scarce resources and the attendant frustrations now precipitated instances of civil unrest, which in turn paved way for the emergence of a new African political order. The wave of nationalist activity also saw the emergence of prominent African political figures like Joseph Kasavubu and Patrice Lumumba leading the two principal Congolese parties Abako (Association of the Lower Congo) and Movement National Congolais (MNC) respectively, among about forty others.

Gradually the Belgian colonial administration was forced to make a number of significant political concessions to the Congolese. One of the most important was on the 8th December, 1957 when the Congolese took part for the first time in voting for elective places on the township councils, and won overwhelming majorities. This then encouraged them to move a step further and demand for independence. The reluctance of the Belgian authorities to give up this resource-rich colony and their conviction that Africans were not yet ripe for self - government, sparked off the Leopoldville riots of January 1959. The position of the Belgian authorities reflected the attitude of most colonial powers that

> *"colonial territories would not be ready for self-government until the next century. Consequently they (Colonial governments) were not in a hurry to prepare their dependent territories for eventual self-government."* [28]

Thus a shaky foundation was laid for the independence of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire). Aside from the common quest for self-government, all the Congolese parties had deep-rooted differences. The foremost two, the Abako and the MNC led by Kasavubu and

Lumumba respectively were also divided severely along ideological lines, and this later culminated in serious repercussions on both their relationship in the government, and the independent Congo Republic's body polity. These differences had not been resolved but in the feverish agitation for self-government, were rather relegated to a position of insignificance. The most pervading of these differences was the ethnic factor,

> *"where nationality was the most obvious reference group, ethnic boundaries set important limitations on the scope of political party activities, the latter tending to reflect the ties of culture, history, and language in existence before Belgian rule.'* [29]

Ethnic or tribal politics have therefore contributed to a large extent, the bane of stability in the history of pre-independence, down to Lumumba and Kasavubu's conflicts, Tshombe's Katanga revolts and the recent Mobutu and Kabila's crisis. Right from the start, Joseph Kasavubu's Abako was "constructed around a Bakongo cultural association," [30] and others like Luka of the Kwango district, Unimo (Union Mongo), Balubakat in the Katanga, MSM in Kasai, among others. As earlier been observed, "pre-colonial circumstances," prominent among which was the tribal factor, were exploited by the leaders in the furtherance of their political causes.

> *"These men were so situated that they could relate their peoples hopes to the past and thus magnify the appeal of their parties among the masses."* [31]

After nationalists demanding independence rioted in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) in 1959, the Belgian government announced a schedule for Congolese elections which were to inaugurate self-rule. However, the Abako and MNC insisted upon immediate full independence, to which Belgium agreed. To highlight the political differences existing among Congolese interests, candidates in the elections held prior to independence were presented by about forty parties. Patrice Lumumba's MNC topped the polls, closely followed by Kasavubu's Abako. And by agreement between the two leading parties, Lumumba was chosen as Prime Minister and Kasavubu, President. The independent Republic of the Congo was proclaimed in Kinshasa on June 30, 1960 by King Baudouin I of Belgium.

The precipitate manner in which Belgium was railroaded into granting independence to the colony has been cited as a major factor accounting for internecine crisis ravaging the Congo republic till date. As Olusanya put it, Belgium

> *"had to depart in a hurry... leaving behind disorganized societies which for that reason have known no peace until now."* [32]

The Cold War was also at its peak during this time of agitation for independence in Congo and contributed to the hasty exit of the Belgians. During the Cold War years Belgium allied with the West (as most other colonial powers), so it was only wise for her to practicalize the liberty orchestrated by the West as against authoritarianism which the West tried to portray the East as practising. Thus it was only morally right and advantageous for the West during the Cold War to ensure political power shift to her candidates in various countries in Africa, or risk being taken over by the Soviet-led East.

3.05 THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF CONGO (ZAIRE) SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Between 1960 when Congo gained independence from Belgium and 1965, Congo-Kinshasa was shaken by military unrest and or rebellion four times. In the first event, the mutiny of the 'Force Publique' less than a week after independence, helped plunge the country into a prolonged period of anarchy and uncertainty. All Belgian officers were dismissed, sergeant - majors rapidly rose to fill command positions.

Congolese soldiers in the army under the inspiration of prime minister Patrice Lumumba had agitated for the replacement of Belgian officers by Congolese in the army of the newly independent nation. In response the Belgian officers initiated a general crackdown not only in the army but also on the civil population. Acting on the encouragement and military assistance from Belgium and its allies America and Britain, internal forces opposed to Lumumba's radical orientation anti-imperialism stance seized the opportunity of the military crackdown to initiate acts of political rebellion and treason.

Moise Tshombe, a politician took the furthest step when on July 11, 1960 he declared the

independence of the mineral-rich Katanga province. In response to these aggressive acts - military and political - Lumumba appealed to the United Nations Security Council to send troops to help him restore political stability as well as the territorial integrity of Congo. The U.N did not respond to Lumumba's request immediately due to the various external interests in the crisis.

The Belgian government preferred a separate state of Katanga with Tshombe as Premier. France and Britain were sympathetic to the Belgian interest but the U.N was hedging. While the Belgian soldiers were still in Congo, the UN would not send troops. Lumumba was becoming impatient. He applied extreme pressure on the Secretary-General Dag Hammerskjold to order UN troops to fly in and take over Katanga province. The Secretary-General ignored the request, bringing the conflicting views between him and Lumumba to the fore. At last, the UN sent troops to Katanga, but they were not used to suppress the secession there as the UN forces, according to the Secretary-General could not be used on behalf of the central government to subdue or to force the provincial government to a specific line of action.

Lumumba was disappointed. He attacked the Secretary-General's good faith and demanded among other things that African troops should be despatched to Katanga province, and that all non-African troops should be withdrawn from the area.

In this situation, the premier turned to the Soviet Union for assistance. The response represented foot-in-the-door that worried Washington. The Soviet Union was particularly keen on establishing a firm foothold in Zaire (Congo) which could serve as a basis for operation for the expansion of communist activities in the country as well as other African states.

Seeing the inherent danger in the situation, the United States sought to persuade Lumumba to change his pro-Soviet course. When it failed, it looked about in the country for a moderate regime that might serve to hold the reign of Lumumba. Kasavubu and Mobutu, already rivals to Lumumba, became more closely associated with the United States points of view as Lumumba moved further towards the Soviet Union.

The second major event which came closely on the heels of the Katanga crisis, installed the first caretaker regime in tropical Africa. On September 14th, 1960, exactly eleven weeks after independence, Colonel Joseph Mobutu assumed power to settle a dispute between President Joseph Kasavubu and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. The President relied upon his constitutional powers to dismiss the Prime Minister, and members of his cabinet, in turn, accused the President of high treason and dismissed him as Head of State. Confronted with rival governments, with lack of progress in ending Katangese secession, and with growing politicization of the army, Mobutu decided "to take action." This was not without external influence and support, particularly from the U.S.

The third Congolese crisis erupted in 1964. In simplest terms, accumulated rural grievances and loss of control by the central government helped bring about major outbreaks of violence.[33] The national Congolese army, still in the throes of major retraining, found itself ill prepared to halt the rebellion. Although the government of Prime Minister Moise Tshombe eventually reduced the area of rebel control, parliamentary deadlock between supporters of Tshombe and Kasavubu threatened stability.

In November 1965 (25th) Mobutu intervened once again

> *"to put on end to the mess created by politicians and to prevent President Kasavubu from aligning the young Republic of Congo with the progressive states of Africa."*[34]

He deposed the president and assumed full military control. From 1965 until he was chased out by Lauren Kabila in 1997, Mobutu dominated Zaire's politics so much so that, "the history of Zaire in the last 32 years has been the biography of Mobutu."[35]

In the beginning, General Mobutu as he later became seemed to be and to act as the direct and personal emanation of a military junta. After a few months however, General Mobutu appeared to stand apart from the army, particularly the high command of the National Congolese army. The principle of military non-involvement in civil and political matters was re-emphasised. Moreover, once the regime was firmly established, references to the high command as a "revolution instrument" disappeared. In October 1966, Mobutu

explicitly defined the role of the army as

> *"an organism of execution operating in a strictly military context, not a pressure group or a political assembly."*[36]

In the provinces, the military commissioners were replaced by the former civil authorities. The special military scouts of justice lost their meaning once the campaign against corruption was over. Finally, after a brief period of enthusiasm, the symbolic mobilization of the people by the army ended and probably tired, the soldiers returned to their garrisons. Mobutu himself began to wear civilian dresses. The coup had occurred; the first ardor for change had passed. Mobutu sought to supplant the ineffectual patrimonial system by more efficient patterns of government.

One of the first public acts of President Mobutu was to limit the relative autonomy within which the parliamentary institutions traditionally operated. Although the President kept parliament functioning and continued to formally recognise its prerogatives, he simultaneously decreed a five-year state of emergency applicable to the parliament and other institutions. It could be called upon to collaborate but could not decide any more. One of its most important privileges - the nomination and removal of cabinet members, a privilege which previously produced innumerable abuses was appropriated by the president. Public debate was discouraged and political associations prohibited.

Born Joseph Desire Mobutu, but as a Lieutenant General in 1972 he rechristened himself Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Waza Banga - meaning "the all powerful warrior who because of his endurance and inflexible will shall go from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake."

In 1983 when Mobutu marked the 17th anniversary of his ruling Popular Movement of the Revolution (MPR) he announced amnesty for Zaireans convicted of threatening state security, and those banned from holding public office for failing to respect party discipline. However, those involved showed no enthusiasm to return home under the circumstances. He refused to change the political structure of Zaire from that of a one-party state. The thirteen members of parliament had been jailed for fifteen years for advocating an opposition party.

In the amnesty he declared in 1978, former opponents who returned to the country were first obliged to acknowledge the authority of President Mobutu and join the MPR. The amnesty was a ploy to stem the growing opposition to his rule but it did nothing in swaying the opposition.

The umbrella body for the opposition was the front for the Restoration of Democracy in Zaire (FCD). It comprised Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) of the thirteen members of parliament jailed by the security court; the Union Progressive Forces of Congo-Kinshasa (UFPC) led by Medad Minampala; the Popular Revolutionary Party (PRP) of Laurent Kabila who started an armed struggle in South-Eastern Zaire; The Congolese National Movement (MNC) led by Onawello, and the Democratic and Socialist Party (PDSC) led by Kapita Mulopo.

With the bi-polar international system in the sixties, seventies and early eighties, Mobutu was able to survive the opposition. This is because he served as a lackey of the West which propped up his regime and closed its eyes to all his failings as a leader. In the words of Kabwit

> *"The trouble is that the Mobutu regime has created a rapacious class of bureaucrats, army officers, and others who enjoyed a modicum of power, and who participated with foreign businessmen through massive corruption in the spoils and exploitation of ordinary city dwellers and rural people..."* [37]

All these took place under a grand design to keep the Eastern bloc away from Mobutu and Zaire. This was the consequence of the Cold War which had shifted base from the major actors to surrogates like Zaire. Tom Masland and Russell Watson capture this succinctly when they write that

> *"In the 1960s and 70s, it was mainly the United States, France and Belgium that put Mobutu in power and helped to keep him there as a bulwark against their Cold-War rivals. He was a "useful tyrant", and as the West protected him at home and abroad, it tolerated his corruption and autocracy. Mobutu earned his keep. In his last great*

service to Washington, he allowed his territory to be used for the CIA's paramilitary operations in support of anti-Marxist rebel Jonas Savimbi in Angola." [38]

When the Soviet Union crumbled, the tide began to turn for the dictator who was no longer relevant to the Cold War calculations of the United State. The absence of the Cold War also meant less money for Mobutu's Zaire, and things began to fall apart. Following riots at home and international pressure abroad, Mobutu convened a sovereign National Conference in 1991, but mid-way into its session, he suspended it claiming he had the support of the United States.

Mobutu put all imaginable impediments in the way of the national conference convened to put an end to his totalitarian rule. The confab eventually gave way under his draconian weight, stalling the march towards political pluralism. He was still living in the world of the Cold War when Americans and Europeans were ready to prop up his regime to insulate it from Soviet influence and to keep Kinshasa open as a channel for Western arms to Angolan rebels. But with the thaw in the Cold War and the resolution of the Angolan conflict, Zaire no longer held any attraction for Western nations, except as an economic enclave to be exploited.

Following United States intervention in the suspension of the national conference, Mobutu allowed the process to continue and it led to the appointment of Etienne Tshisekedi as Prime Minister. In February 1993, for the second time in 16 months, rather than heed international pressure to hand over real power to Tshisekedi, Mobutu sacked him. In a televised speech, Mobutu blamed Tshisekedi for the riots that engulfed the country during which several people lost their lives. He asked the country's transitional parliament, the High Council of the Republic to present him with a personality to be charged with forming a government of "public salvation," insisting that they should not re-submit Tshisekedi's name.

The power struggle between the two came to a head after underpaid Zairean soldiers went on rampage to protest non-payment of four months salaries. As a way out of the problem Mobutu had ordered the issuance of five million Zaire bank notes by the central bank thus

fuelling inflation. But Tshisekedi went on air to denounce the notes which market women refused to accept, hence the crisis as soldiers went on rampage looting stores and killing people. In the ensuring melee, the French Ambassador to Zaire was killed by a "stray bullet."

While discussing the Zairean issue on the floor of the American Senate in February 1992, Senator Nancy Kassembaum had said:

> *"I think it reaches a point, whether it's Zaire or any other country, when you have such a turmoil in the country - really raging civil disturbance - that you become the focus of controversy and without removing that, there's not going to be any solution. President Mobutu should know that there are times when one, as a leader of a country, has to decide when in the interest of the country to step down. It seems to me that's an important message and it would be one that would really make President Mobutu then the saviour of his people in the long run."* [39]

However, Mobutu did not seem to heed this call. The sequence of events since 1991 shows that Zaireans whose rights to self determination had been stolen had been on the edge waiting for an opportunity to cut Mobutu short on his weird track. Rebel leader (now head of state) Laurent Kabila finally filled the role when he courageously launched the Democratic Alliance for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire using mainly Tutsi rebels from neighboring Rwanda.

Kabila acted as the coordinator between Zairean Banyamulenge Tutsis, the first to rebel, and other groups who later joined. Zaire's ethnic Tutsis took up arms against local authorities who tried to expel them to their ancestral homeland in Rwanda. Fighting erupted in Eastern Zaire against Mobutu in October 1996, although preparations for the conflict had been going on since 1995. The last spark that ignited the fighting was Mobutu government's maltreatment of the Banyamulenge tribe. He systematically denied the ethnic group, with a population of about 300,000 the right to citizenship through an edict he enacted in 1981.

The Banyamulenge first settled in the Congo as far back as 1800, long before any systematic

European colonization took place. But Mobutu denied them the right to living and work. This policy of annihilation was what prompted Kabila and his rebel forces to rise against the Mobutu government. Kabila claimed he floated the idea of using force to dislodge Mobutu from power in order to restore the rights and dignity of the then stateless Banyamulenge Tutsis of Eastern Zaire and indeed all oppressed Zaireans. This took place in a world of unipolarity, dominated by America which was done with Mobutu as bipolarity was buried.

Mobutu, without his erstwhile backers, became vulnerable and subsequently overcome by the advancing Kabila troops. He fled to Morocco when it became obvious that there was no stopping Kabila. He would eventually die and be burried there in 1997. Kabila having chased Mobutu out assumed the mantle of leadership, changed the name of Zaire to the Democratic Republic of Congo thus beginning a new era in the nation.

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CHAPTER FOUR

AFRICA AT THE END OF THE COLD WAR POLITICS

4.01 Africa in the Era of the Cold War Politics:

The Cold War which lasted for almost forty-five years was a global phenomenon which involved two of the world's most powerful nations – the United States of America and the USSR. It was a global power struggle which saw the two (and their allies) building up their nuclear capabilities in a bid for military superiority. Since an all-out war was not feasible, the "war" extended to psychological dimensions. Efforts were made to exert influence on other areas of the world through export of ideologies and economic systems. In their quest for global dominance they foisted their ideals on the rest of the world resulting to its polarisation into liberal Western Capitalist on one hand and Marxist Communist on the other. Gabriel Partos summed up the situation thus:

> *"East and West employed a huge arsenal in this global confrontation: the arms race and trade embargoes, direct military involvement in local conflicts and fighting wars by proxy, espionage and propaganda were the weapons used in the Cold War."*[1]

Africa being part of the global village, was inevitably drawn into the conflict with significant effects. This was evident in the civil strifes, economic stagnation, power tussles and often counter productive policies as long as they served the interests of the super-powers. African nations were wooed when they were at the point of self-actualisation. The ideological postures were insinuated into their national psyches. As a result policy in African nations was dictated from either Washington, London, Paris or Moscow. The West and East went out of their way to remove leaders and install others who would promote their political and economic ideals notwithstanding that these leaders were often despotic, repressive and inept. Dissensions and uprisings in reaction were also exploited by either of the two to undermine the other's interests in the power game. They provided arms, logistics and even personnel. Meanwhile, African resources were diverted to support ideological causes.

The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of the Cold War and bipolarity. Just as

Africa had felt the impact of the war, so did its end profoundly affect the state affairs on the continent. While the West emerged victors after the conflict, neither side in the African sphere of the conflict can be said to have benefited from this victory.

It was in view of the relative success of the Western liberal market economies and increasing woes of the world's communist economies that the Soviet Union was compelled to adopt drastic reforms. Infact,

> *"in Soviet bloc countries, Marxism – Leninism had become an empty dogma expounded on festive occasions as part of a quasi-religious ritual."*[2]

It was thus clear that the days of communism had been numbered. It eventually died a natural death. Pointers to this emerged with the introduction of liberal reforms to the Russian communist economy. However, 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost' were rather tailored along Western capitalist ideals. The Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev

> *"had come to understand that it was impossible to improve a broken and false system. Better relations were a precondition for success of the reforms Gorbachev was planning to introduce."*[3]

In the long run, it become clear that the communist economic model had to be discarded because initially Perestroika and Glasnost were to be reforms within the socialist framework, but their fundamentals were opposed to the communist ideals. A new era thus emerged, with the cessation of hostilities between the two world powers and cooperation for the mutual benefit of both.

Since Africa had been caught in the earlier web of the East-West global power politics, two basic questions emerge; where does the end of the Cold War leave Africa? How does the New World Order affect the African politico-economic situation?

As has been explained earlier in this work, the Cold War was fundamentally a conflict of ideology between the world's two most powerful nations the United States of America (and her allies in Western Europe) and the Soviet Union led by Russian (and her communist allies in the East, along with Cuba). Africa by virtue of diplomatic and economic links, as well as

the influence of former colonial masters, was inevitably drawn into the conflict. Various African nations openly aligned themselves with either side, depending on political and/or ideological inclinations. In Africa, the polarisation often resulted in armed confrontations between ideologically differing nations, or within certain countries where ideologically polarised groups took up arms against governments in form of insurgency or guerrilla warfare. In other instances repressive regimes were established, supported and funded by the principal belligerents to suppress any incipient suggestions of capitalist or communist ideals (as the case might be).

The most active theatres of conflict in Africa were the southern and central parts of the continent where apartheid South Africa supported by the capitalist West was often engaged in open confrontation with her Marxist neighbours including Mozambique and Angola, as well as Namibia which she had 'colonised'. These countries usually provided bases for anti-government forces like the ANC and SWAPO guerrillas while South Africa in turn supported the Angolan rebel group, UNITA and the Mozambican RENAMO guerrillas, and also directed clandestine subversive operations into these countries. South Africa also instituted an iron fisted repressive regime in Namibia and once launched an armed invasion of Angola.[4]

Despotic regimes sponsored by either Cold War prosecutors (with internal opposition groups backed by its antagonist) flourished on the continent. Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) was beleaguered by Marxist ZANU and ZAPU rebels; the socialist regime in Angola had Jonas Savimbi's UNITA on its neck with U.S. support, the Soviet backed Mozambique government was opposed by RENAMO rebels, the communist regime in Ethiopia was challenged by various rebel groups including Eritrean secessionist forces; Mobutu Sese Seko's regime in Zaire was successfully used to suppress any socialist sentiments or armed uprisings in that country, while the apartheid regime of South Africa was used by Western powers to harass Marxist sympathetic regimes in the southern regions of the continent. As Olusanya observed, both sides took advantage of volatile situations in the region and beyond, successfully exploiting

> *"the tendency on the part of African states to resort to war rather than settling their differences through peaceful means."*[5]

It was thus very clear that the involvement of Africa in the Cold War was less in African interest than in the furtherance of the broader objectives of the Cold War protagonists. These included unhampered access to natural resources to provide raw materials for their economies, and to expand the frontiers of a global political empire tailored along either the capitalist or communist models. Africa also proved a profitable market for the sale of arms by both sides of the ideological divide. The attention Africa received from the super powers was largely

> *"to prevent the exploitation of the conflicts on the continent by one of the super powers against the interest of the other power block."*[6]

This observation by M.A. Vogt is the reflection of a vicious circle, and the dilemma into which Africa was drawn by the Cold War. For instance some of the conflicts on the continent erupted as a result of the parties involved favouring ideologies expounded by either of the super powers. In other words, these conflicts were in the first place either influenced or initiated by either the U.S. or USSR, and this is the legacy of violence the Cold War has bequeathed on Africa.

If the Cold War had created a dilemma for Africa, its end by 1989 put her in a real quandary. The resultant effect of the radical change of status quo is now evident in the African body polity. In many areas where the internecine conflicts had maintained an even keel, the situation spiralled out of control. Violent reversals have been experienced which were hitherto unthinkable, and only very few of the beleaguered nations have managed to retain or exhibit an uneasy semblance of normalcy. On the overall level however, changes following the end of the Cold War and the dismantling of communism all over the world have had a profound impact on the African political terrain. The changes are often violent or have created a volatile atmosphere of ethnic rivalry, suspicion and discord.

According to Partos

> *"by the time Soviet and American officials were discussing how to put an end to hostile propaganda campaigns, the Soviet ideological drive had largely exhausted itself."*[7]

It now appeared that the ideological posture earlier adhered to by some African nations was

no longer feasible in the era of unipolarity. Without their erstwhile godfathers to lend any support, it was simply a matter of time before they would be overtaken by latent crisis. The world order had changed and a New World had emerged where the African arena would be of very little political, and perhaps economic consequence in this new scheme of affairs.

The Cold War had dictated the pace and scope of socio-political and economic affairs in and among African states. Consequently, its end ushered in a state of unprecedented chaos and strife that would invariably follow such radical changes of universal magnitude. There was a palpable shift in the balance of power all over the globe, even as the erstwhile Eastern bloc nations of communist persuasions had to toe the line of the West. It transpired that

> *"Developments in the Soviet union and Eastern Europe were received with surprise and confusion in Africa. This was particularly so in Marxist African states where they were received with a mixture of surprise and confusion."*[8]

For many African nations and regimes, it portended disaster of terrifying proportions. The aid and support previously enjoyed from either of the super powers was no longer forthcoming and would therefore render them vulnerable to the ravages of dissidents and anti-government forces. African Marxist regimes and political groups were no longer to receive any more support from their Soviet godfathers. Repressive regimes, like in Zaire, hitherto supported by the West were rapidly disowned and abandoned. According to Vogt, the super powers

> *"are no longer interested in expending their resources to support unpopular and undemocratic regimes in Africa – these have outlived their usefulness."*[9]

Between 1989 and 1997, the consequences of the Cold War's end have left either scars or festering wounds on the African political arena. For some states, there have been changes in government, often violent. Shifts in ideological allegiance have been witnessed; several nations are engaged in bitter and protracted civil strifes, having been abandoned to their own designs by their former backers. And in the midst of all these, the drift towards Western style democracy has become the order of the day as military dictatorships, authoritarian and Unitarian regimes are being beleaguered by multi-party democracy - inclined opposition.

More African states are aspiring towards democratically elected leaders, even in erstwhile communist strongholds. Many prosecutors of civil wars claim to be fighting for the entrenchment of democracy in their countries. Africa has thus been compelled to flow with the tide of a new world order emerging from the ashes of the Cold War. These developments appear to have thrown the African political cosmos out of orbit and still searching for a resolution.

4.02 AFRICA IN THE POST-COLD WAR POLITICS

The African political scene has apparently experienced significant transformations in the aftermath of the Cold War's end. Considering that the attendant changes in the world order have affected the state of affairs in almost all African states, those countries whose dealings with the super powers had direct bearing on the conduct of the Cold War have been more profoundly affected.

Evidently, the most active theatres of the war had been the southern and central regions of the continent, and perhaps the Northeast tip also referred to as "the Horn of Africa." In South Africa, the racist apartheid system has been dismantled. Namibia gained independence. Marxist regimes in Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia have either been toppled or opted for democratic change. Repressive dictators in Zaire and Somalia have been over thrown. Military rule in most West African states has given way to democratically elected governments like in Liberia, Togo, Benin, Ghana and Sierra-Leone. Even in North Africa, Algeria is engaged in civil strife, a consequence of an aborted attempt to entrench multi-party democracy. Elsewhere, authoritarian regimes are under pressure from the international community and within to give way to democracy, like in Nigeria.

The political situation in southern and central Africa in the post Cold War era captures the mood of the wind most effectively, considering the sequence of event leading up to the present dispensations. By 1988, the government in South Africa was compelled to make a number of significant adjustments in its social and political structures. It became apparent that

> *"with the rapprochement between the USSR and the USA, the strategic importance of South Africa to the Western world has diminished*

considerably."[10]

It was no longer necessary to use the apartheid enclave as a base of operations against forces of communism in the sub-region.

It should be recalled that the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa which reached its climax in the 1980s, as well as her obnoxious policy of racial segregation which had practically isolated her from the rest of the world, exacted a heavy toll on her economy. The struggle for independence by Namibia also constituted another thorn in her flesh. Faced with problems both at home and in Namibia, South African commandos launched a military offensive into Angola in 1985 ostensibly to get at the mineral-rich areas. This could also be seen in practical terms as an attack by a capitalist agent against a Marxist stronghold. The significance is clearer when viewed from the perspective that she was supported by US backed RENAMO fighters from Mozambique and Angolan UNITA rebels. This major incident followed similar incursions in the past which were relatively successful. However, that particular offensive was repulsed by Cuban internationalist forces and columns of Namibian SWAPO freedom fighters in alliance with the Angolan armed forces.[11]. Thereafter, the communist Cuban forces remained stationed in Angola to discourage similar attempts in future.

The end of the U.S. – Soviet conflicts by 1989 ushered in another dimension in this agreement.

> *"The overthrow of the East Europe communist-led governments in a jiffy, coupled with the apparent demise of communism made it no longer possible for the South African government to continue capitalizing on the communist bogey which was a strong arsenal in its propaganda warfare against African freedom fighers."*[12]

It meant that there would be no more interference in Angolan or Mozambican internal affairs. In one move, four African nations were compelled to review their relations. In the light of the tacit agreement by both leaders of the Soviet Union and U.S. to ensure that all regional conflicts were settled though negotiations, it "proved to be an incentive and catalyst

to force South Africa to the conference table"[13]. A previous series of negotiations led to South Africa, Angola and Cuba signing the Tripartite Agreement in December, 1988. Provisions were made for withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola while South Africa would grant Namibia independence. On the 10th of January, 1989, Cuban troops began to withdraw from Angola, while Namibia gained independence on the 21st March, 1990.

The South African domestic political scene also underwent remarkable changes, following a change of leadership in the ruling white National Party. The new South African leader, F.W. Deklerk decided to make a radical break with the policies of his stubborn and hardly innovative predecessor P.W. Botha.[14] It resulted in negotiations between the government and erstwhile outlawed anti-apartheid groups, brokered by the U.S. and other leading UN Countries. Dividends yielded included the consent to release all political detainees and prisoners, unban all anti-apartheid associations hitherto proscribed, abrogate all obnoxious legislations which hindered free political activities, as well as suspend all political trials and executions, and remove all repressive troops from townships. These were systematically implemented, beginning with the lifting of the ban on the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and others, climaxing in the release of the jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela and some of his associates on 11th February, 1990.

As the structures of apartheid were being dismantled and racially diverse peoples of South Africa getting racially integrated, the final step was the institution of a government of national unity with radical administrative restructuring. An arrangement was worked out to integrate black elements into the South African parliament. A consensus government was then formed that involved a joint leadership between the ANC and the ruling white minority National party. In this arrangement which was concluded in 1992, Nelson Mandela became the president of the new South African Republic with Deklerk as a deputy president (along with another ANC activist Thabo Mbeki). Thus did a new political dawn emerge.

Meanwhile, as part of the 1988 Tripartite agreement package, South African had given an undertaking to stop providing financial, material and diplomatic assistance to it proxies UNITA and RENAMO in Angola and Mozambique respectively. These groups, without financial and logistic support would lose momentum as they were no longer useful in the

continued prosecution of conflict in their respective countries.[14] The volte-face signified that they had the option open to lay down arms and be integrated into the new dispensation of their home governments. Thus it could be said that the fall of communist led governments in Eastern Europe as a result of popular uprisings propelled the leaders of Angola and Mozambique to suddenly become advocates of multi-party systems in their respective countries.[15]

It now became evident that the end of bipolarity in Africa had altered the political inclinations of even erstwhile socialist and authoritarian regimes. Governments in these countries, in order to establish their credibility with the international community quickly abandoned their communist ideals and suddenly tried to identify with Western-style (multi-party) democracy, and to express their willingness to dialogue with the guerrillas, often extending the invitation to be either integrated into the mainstream government or constitute rival political parties towards democratic elections. However, some dictators became more intolerant of opposition. Even when they accepted multi-party democracy, like in Zaire, Kenya and Malawi, it was only at face value.

The Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, a former Western lackey found himself increasingly isolated, most especially by his erstwhile American backers. During his visit to the United States in 1995, he was told unequivocally by the Clinton administration to tread the path to dialogue. This was more or less tacitly informing him and perhaps other like him that the U.S. had no more intention of lending further support towards their causes, except in the direction of negotiations towards the direction of democracy. Thereafter, UNITA lost a lot of ground to government troops, compelling Savimbi to heed calls for a cease-fire and proceed to the negotiating table.

The situation is not too different in Mozambique. The position of the RENAMO has considerably weakened, while the government in power has rapidly shed its Marxist toga and adopted the ideals of western democracy. As Adekunle Ajala explained,

> *"Developments in Eastern Europe have at least brought about a drastic change in Mozambique. A new constitution endorsing political pluralism, an independent judiciary and the right to strike came into*

force in November, 1990."[16]

Such changes have become evident, not only in the Southern African sub-region alone, but most of Africa in the post-Cold War era. Insurgent groups are being urged to the negotiating table, they have the choice of cooperating or facing international isolation. Since they are no longer crucial to the affairs of their former U.S. or Soviet patrons, the very sources which sustained them in the past might choose to work against their interests or simply ignore them.

The predicament of Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire is a typical instance of a despot's dwindling political fortunes following his desertion by former powerful allies. It was the Americans who paved way for Mobutu's ascension to power. They financed and supported his repressive regime since it served the singular purpose of suppressing or opposing any communist element in that region. His country served as a base for the American CIA's operations in Central and Southern Africa. With the end of the Cold War, America unceremoniously dumped him and subtly labelled him a tyrant. Dissident interests, both within and outside his government, were encouraged to now challenge him openly, exemplified in the activities of the likes of opposition leader, Etienne Tshisekedi. Mobutu was later compelled to appoint him as Prime Minister. Laurent Kabilla who had a history of armed opposition eventually threw Mobutu out of power.

While America at least subtly participated in efforts towards removing their former draconian clients, and even playing a moderating role with opposition forces, protégés of the former Soviet and Eastern bloc fared even worse. Their mentors simply disappeared, leaving them to their own designs. They were forced to recant all communist doctrine and adopt the very ideals they had earlier opposed. Those who persisted were swept aside, albeit violently by opposition forces. This was the fate shared by despotic regimes in the Horn of Africa, especially Ethiopia and Somalia. In tracing the background of the crisis these two nations faced, most especially from within, Olusanya pointed out that

> *"the horn of Africa, was turned into an ideological battleground with disastrous consequences for the states in the area. Between 1976 and 1980, Ethiopia and Somalia expended much of their total export earnings on arms importation."*[17]

Not particularly noted for their wealth, these nations expended their meagre resources towards arms importation to prosecute internal conflicts along ideological and ethnic lines. In Ethiopia, the communist regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, after overthrowing the monarchy of King Haile Selassie in 1975, instituted an iron-fisted administration along Marxist ideals. His rule witnessed a turbulent period in Ethiopia's history, as political instability and ethnic strife decimated the nation's material and human resources. Backed by the Soviet Union, he was able to suppress anti-communist sentiment in the country's body polity and contain secessionist forces in Eritrea. However, they remained a persistent thorn in the flesh of his regime.

The cessation of hostilities between the East and West sounded the death-knell of a dictatorship which refused to bend even to the prevailing wind of change which had brought even the world's exponents of its ideological foundations to their knees. Mengistu's regime consequently experienced an upsurge of armed opposition, but was short of the means and logistics to counter it. The situation was compounded by the Eritrean rebels who had in turn enjoyed the patronage of the West. Under the weight of internecine crisis, and with the nation's economy collapsing, revolts erupted randomly while strikes crippled essential services. Mengistu was overthrown eventually by the same army that brought him into power, and with the situation still shaky, the strengthened Eritrean rebels successfully seceded.

Other nations like Nigeria in West Africa and Algeria in North Africa have experienced widespread indignation at having interfered with efforts towards democratisation. Nigeria is still counting its losses, both political and economic following the annulment of presidential elections, the last lap of the nation's transition to democracy on June 12, 1993, and the subsequent dismantling of political structures. The incarceration of the purported winner of the elections, Chief M.K.O. Abiola drew the ire of a section of Nigerians, culminating in strikes and civil disorder. When these were suppressed by the military regime, an outraged international community, most especially the 'champions' of democracy, USA and Britain moved in with crippling sanctions and efforts to isolate Nigeria from the international community.

Algeria on the other hand, fared even worse. It is on the brink of civil war as Islamic fundamentalists have left a bloody trail, mostly of civilian victims. This murderous adventure was precipitated by the military government's cancellation of the 1993 general elections in the country which the Islamic fundamentalists looked set to win. In retaliation the fundamentalists unleashed such mayhem on the civilian population that the international community had to intervene in order to broker a peace agreement between government and the fundamentalists.

African politics in the post-Cold War era, the era of the New World Order, the era of unipolarity, is still in a state of transformation. With the dismantling of communist structures on the continent, former dictatorships and socialist states have had to make readjustments in their political structures, and live with the attendant problems of having to cope with political and economic systems hitherto opposed to their original ideals. J.J. Ochejele aptly captured this necessity thus:

> *"the changing political systems and economic structures in countries where democratic forces have been long suppressed require that Africa must undergo some fundamental changes."*[18]

A good number of such nations where democratic forces have gained ascendancy, have been saddled with the responsibility of proving that they can cope with the demands of democracy at variance with the African autocratic and sit-tight approach to governance. African political changes in the aftermath of the Cold War and the era of unipolarity still continue, with mixed fortunes for the individual nations faced with the triumph of "liberalism and *democracy over Leninist/Marxist ideologies.*"[19]

African politics invariably have been affected by the new phenomenon of unipolarity as the rest of the world veers towards liberal democracy. With this new dispensation, the face of African politics has experienced significant changes. Some of these changes have been already entrenched in the body polity of some nations and, and others are still in the process of transformation. African nations have been left to resolve their individual conflicts by the very forces which had drawn them into ideological conflicts while they were still searching for political-economic systems of development to consolidate the gains of independence.

It was believed that with the end of the Cold War, ideologically differing interest groups would reconcile. The introduction of pluralism would ensure cessation of hostilities, and the advent of social, economic and political stability. Proponents of this idea failed to reckon with the impact which attempts to institute the alien American democratic model would have upon the African states. These range from inter-party stratification leading to civil strife in South Africa, Liberia, Kenya and Algeria or the attempts to remove sit-tight rulers becoming full-fledged fratricidal wars like in Liberia, Rwanda, Zaire and Somalia. Even where communism has been overthrown, ethnic rivalry has erupted, with mutual distrust and bitterness – a legacy of past acts of tyranny, oppression and victimisation. The ethnic stratification accounts for violence in Somalia, Ethiopia, Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi. As M.A, Vogt summed it up:

> *"the wave of democratisation and the upsurge of Nationalism and civil conflicts in many African countries derive largely from the detachment of world powers from the African scene."*[20]

In the Cold War era, the conflicts were orchestrated and invariably themselves moderated by the super powers on either side. After they divorced themselves from African politics, the conflicts have assumed a different and probably more ominous dimension. Initially, it meant that the intensity of the clashes rose or fell depending on the mood or nature of relations between USA and Russia. With their withdrawal from the scene, the situation has degenerated into chaotic proportions. The clashes now appear to be confused, misdirected and bordering on irrational, selfish or sectional interest. This presently seems to be the problem of the likes of South Africa, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Initially the South African problem could conveniently be narrowed down to militant black versus conservative white, with apartheid and racial discrimination the bone of contention. It was the basic situation exploited by the super powers to promote their own interest. In the era of emancipation and racial equality, black on black violence constituted a formidable threat to peace and harmony. The problem arose because the parties concerned probably took different stands on certain crucial issues in the course of negotiations. As Adekunle

Ajala summed it up

> *"the on-going black on black violence is a symptom of deep-seated differences between the anti-apartheid movements."*[21]

At the centre of the crisis were the ruling ANC party, and the Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party led by Mongosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi. Buthelezi's party, if names are anything to go by, appears to represent ethnic interests. Its conception of emancipation differed in several respects from other anti-apartheid movements, and the ANC had often accused the Inkatha movement of collaboration with the Pretoria regime. Even as Ajala observed,

> *"it would have been better for the OAU not to allow the ANC to solely embark upon the negotiations with the Pretoria regime."*[22]

He goes on further to emphasise the point that it would have been better if such a meeting had been enlarged "to include the Inkatha Freedom party, AZAPO and all other anti-apartheid movements so that a broad based front might be formed and a negotiation strategy agreed upon before negotiations began."[23]

The fundamental differences have now blossomed into violent clashes among the black population. The resignation of Chief Buthelezi as a cabinet minister from the government of national unity at the height of the clashes now calls to question the ability of blacks to cooperate towards steering the Republic's affairs. The spectre of disunity was also highlighted by the withdrawal of the white National Party from the consensus government (Frederick Deklerk had to resign from his position as one of the Deputy Presidents). South Africa's political problems are far from over, if not compounded, since the hitherto expected unity is no longer feasible under the circumstances.

The Liberian conflict might not have been a direct creation of the Cold War. However, it could have taken a different turn had the Cold War persisted. Charles MacArthur Taylor, the rebel leader's successes in the war to unseat the despotic president, Samuel Doe's regime were largely because the two super powers abstained from it. It started at about the period of the Cold War's end, and the USA and USSR were too busy with their reconciliation processes to get involved. It was not in their interests. Were it otherwise, it is on record that

Mr. Taylor was a fugitive from an American jail. It was from there he escaped and found his way to Libya where he was the guest of Colonel Muammar Ghadaffi, another bitter opponent of America and "Western imperialism." Ghadaffi had earlier enjoyed Soviet patronage. It was he who armed and mobilised Charles Taylor to prosecute the war of liberation against the Doe regime. With the long history of U.S. influence in Liberia, coupled with Taylor's disfavour with the American justice institution, and his association with the Soviet-backed Ghadaffi regime, it would have required little encouragement for the two opponents (superpowers) to take sides. With America behind Doe and USSR supporting Taylor, the conflict might have been even and, with no room for African interference, much more prolonged.

However, the Liberian people had already tired of Doe's repressive rule since coming to power in 1981. The economy was in shambles; protests were silenced with bullets; opposition was not tolerated. Civilians and military figures, some of them Doe's erstwhile friends were executed randomly for flimsy or contrived reasons. Taylor's insurrection was a welcome relief, and he received maximum cooperation from the populace. In less than a year he overran 99% of the country and was a few kilometres away from taking Monrovia the capital. Then the West African Intervention Force ECOMOG led by Nigeria intervened to restore peace (it invariably prolonged the crisis).

The formation and constitution of ECOMOG marked yet another significant development in post-Cold War African politics. According to M.A. Vogts

> *"the lack of international interest or concern for the state of security in Africa is amply demonstrated by the failure of the United Nations to take meaningful action in dealing with African conflicts.... in Liberia, Somalia, Sierra-Leone and Sudan, even when these led to the loss of thousands of African lives."*[24]

A situation had now arisen where Africans for once had to seize the initiative to take pragmatic steps towards conflict resolution on the continent, without Cold War interferences. The ECOMOG, an acronym for ECOWAS Monitoring Group was (still is) a military intervention force comprising of troops from Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Senegal and Burkina Faso. The primary objective was to restore and enforce peace and security in Liberia, and

attempt to resolve conflicts among the warring factions which included Charles Taylo NFL, the Liberian government forces and the minor factions involved in the conflic However, there was a deadlock. Taylor was practically in charge of the whole country. was merely left for him to take Monrovia to enable him assume absolute control. Monro was Doe's last stronghold and the last bastion of government's presence. The presence ECOMOG in Monrovia checkmated Taylor's final assault. However, he was too far-gon with power so close to his grasp, to withdraw. Meanwhile Doe was hanging on to the la stings of power and counting on ECOMOG's presence to secure him. ECOMOG still prov it is possible for African nations to cooperate in the area of security and conflict managemen even at the continental level.

Eventually, Doe was abducted from the ECOMOG compound by a detachment of troop from a rebel faction led by Prince Yormie Johnson, and later butchered. ECOMOG in its mediator role did not engage them in combat. Johnson would later be granted asylum in Nigeria, but ECOMOG would be compelled to engage in pitched battles with Charles Taylor's forces when Taylor refused to cooperate with ECOWAS peace initiatives. The organisation also hoped to prevent the entrenchment of yet another dictatorship after the ousting of one.

In the Liberian presidential elections conducted in April, 1997, and supervised by ECOMOG, Charles Taylor won an overwhelming majority. If for no other reason, Liberian themselves, tired of incessant conflicts felt it would be in their best interests to vote him in. As a BBC correspondent captured the mood, "a Taylor defeat is more ominous than a Taylor victory."[25] It meant that if Taylor were to lose, he was likely to take to the warpath again, constituting further nuisance. The success of the conduct of the elections also was attributable to the heavy financial and logistic support provided by ECOWAS nations, especially Nigeria.

The involvement of a section of African governments towards resolving the Liberian crisis successfully, could provide a model for security management and conflict resolution on the continent. Bassey Ate therefore suggests that

> *"Indeed, African intellectuals should now conceptualise national and*

Considering the wealth of natural resources available to most African nations, it is ponderous that they have been unable to tap them effectively towards sustained economic development and self-reliance. This may be explained in the light of perpetual civil strife generated by the Cold War which diverted attention from economic activities, while available resources were channelled into supporting ideological inspired conflicts. For instance,

> *"the Horn of Africa was turned into an ideological battle ground with disastrous consequences for states in the area. Between 1976 and 1980 Ethiopia expended much of their total export earnings on arms importation. Money that ought to have been spent on development was expended on arms which were used to destroy not only people and indeed the most productive persons, but also other productive resources of state."*[27]

The foregoing observation by Olusanya reflects the situation in most areas experiencing internecine conflicts on the continent. Also, natural treasures were flagrantly plundered by greedy dictators like Mobutu of Zaire, who set out to enrich themselves at the expense of their countries or mobilise such resources to suppress opposition and perpetuate themselves in power. However, with the current wind of change, despotic rules are not sitting easy. Their fall is imminent since the very forces that used to support their power bids have withdrawn.

In the wake of diminishing volume of foreign aid from developed nations, Kunle Amuwo believes that

> *"for the major powerless, the new world order means that they are getting more indebted, more marginalized, more ignored."*[28]

It should be remembered that political reality in Africa was, and is still anchored on economic processes which, by virtue of their control by a minority at once internal and external from the continent, are far from being democratised. The drive to democracy will not succeed merely with the displacement of communist structures and replacement of tyrants. Since the foreign powers are increasingly withdrawing economic aid, "African

countries will now be forced to look inwards for the exploitation of their raw materials for development."[29]

The end of the Cold War, and consequently bipolarity, has definitely ushered Africa into another global phenomenon which has been woven inextricably into her socio-political fibre along with the attendant upheavals associated with change. It is the New World Order which focuses on Western liberal democracy. However, the democratic dream still remains a mirage until fundamental changes in leadership and social structures are effected.

FOOTNOTES

1. Gabriel Partos: The World that came in From the Cold: Perspectives from East and West on the Cold War. London; Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1993 p.viii.
2. Ibid. p260
3. Ibid. p229
4. In 1983 South African Commandos launched an armed operation into Southern Angolan mineral rich provinces. It is suspected that the CIA were covertly involved.
5. G.O. Olusanya (1992) "The Cold War: Its impact on Africa" (Lecture I) p.s. Being a Lecture presented on the one day seminar on Africa and the New World order at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos.
6. M.A. Vogt (1992) "Changing military/strategic Balance in the New World order and its implications on African security." Paper presented at the Conference on the New World order at NIIA, Lagos. p.
7. Gabriel Partos op cit. p.259
8. G.O. Olusanya 1992 "Africa's Response to the New Developments" (Lecture IV) p.1 Lecture delivered at the one day seminar on Africa and the New World order at Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos.
9. M.A. Vogt op cit. p.6
10. G.O. Olusanya (Lecture I) p.3
11. Adekunle Ajala (1992) "Southern Africa and The New World Order." Paper

presented at the one day National Seminar on "Africa and the New World order" NIIA, Lagos. p.2

12. Adekunle Ajala Ibid. p.2
13. Adekunle Ajala Ibid. p.2
14. Ibid. p.4
15. Olusanya (Lecture IV) op cit. p.8
16. Ibid. p.11
17. G.O. Olusanya "The Arms Race and Africa" (Lecture II) One day Seminar NIIA p.10
18. J.J. Ochejele (1992) "Economic Implications on African Politics." Paper read at a National Conference on the "New World order and Democratic processes in Africa" organised by the Centre for Development Studies, University of Jos, July 13-14 p.18.
19. Chakravati Raghavan (1995) Cooperation South United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) May, 1995 Edition.
20. M.A. Vogt. Op cit. p.6
21. Adekunle Ajala op cit. p.7
22. Ibid. .p.7
23. Ibid.
24. M..A. Vogt op cit. p.10
25. As summarised by a BBC correspondence following Vox pop interview on the day of Liberian presidential elections in 1997.
26. Bassey Ate (1992) "The collapse of Bi-polarity: Implications for Africa and Non-Alignment." Paper presented at the one day seminar on Africa and the New World order NIIA p.4
27. G.O. Olusanya "The Cold War: Its impact on Africa" p.10
28. Kunle Amuwo (1992) "The New World order and Democratic possibilities in Africa: A Theoretical and Empirical Consideration." Being a paper read at a National Conference on the "New World order and Democratic processes in Africa", organised by the Centre for Development Studies, University of Jos. July 13-14.
29. *Bassey Ate (1992) op cit. p.4*

CHAPTER FIVE

ZAIRE IN THE ERA OF UNIPOLARITY

5.01 Post-Cold War Politics in Zaire

The most obvious effect of the Cold War's end on Zaire's political direction was the West's tacit and tactical withdrawal of support for the despotic and autocratic regime of Mobutu Sese Seko. The Cold War era witnessed almost thirty years of his corrupt and brutal rule which tolerated no form of opposition. Zaire was of strategic importance to the United States and her allies (particularly Belgium, France and the U.K.) in Central and Southern Africa. Any form of dissent against Mobutu their ally was perceived as being inspired by the Soviet communists, and ruthlessly suppressed. The end of the Cold War shifted attention significantly. From trying to protect their ideological and strategic interests in Zaire and Southern Africa, the West now concentrated on reconciling with their former East Bloc adversaries. Financial and logistic support hitherto enjoyed by Mobutu towards frustrating and undermining Marxist regimes in Angola, Mozambique and Namibia was now withdrawn.

Having witnessed the fall of several similar despotic regimes in Africa, along with the increasing acceptance of democracy all over the world, it became clear to Mobutu that his position was considerably weakened. Pressure from both his fellow countrymen and his erstwhile Western mentors compelled him to give way to the introduction of multi-party democracy into his country. This culminated in the emergence of opposition movements in Zaire between 1989 and 1991.

> *"At this time, a powerful mass movement for democracy was being structured, bringing together a wide range of groupings: peasant organisations, youth organisations, formerly illegal parties, newly registered parties and others still in the process of being formed. An independent press, very critical of the regime was emerging. The dominant slogans were 'change' and 'Mobutu must go'."*[1]

Like most sit-tight rulers, Mobutu still intended to cling to power. This was to be achieved

via the ploy of hijacking the democratisation process and then continuing as a 'democratically elected' leader. However, the weight of popular opinion against him was so overwhelming that at certain times he had to resort to wooing some prominent members of the opposition. The Sovereign National Conference, convened in 1991 to determine the political future of a democratic Zaire was largely unable to do its job effectively because Mobutu went to great lengths to frustrate its progress. It is on record that Zaire's national conference was the longest in Francophone Africa, running intermittently from July, 1991 till it was forced to end in December, 1992.

With the West's shift of interest in Mobutu, it is a point to ponder that Mobutu failed to realise that his time was up. Or that it took so much fighting and bloodshed to finally remove him. Ernest Wamba-Dia-Wamba had foreseen that

> *"There is concern that whether Mobutu wins or loses elections, the possibility of increased bloodshed is high. The wise course of action would have been for Western powers to assist their ally Mobutu to relinquish power honourably without seeking another mandate."*[2]

The end of bipolarity touched off a volatile situation in Zaire's political arena. An embattled dictator was determined to cling to power (despite having outlived his usefulness to the forces that had previously propped him up). This was contrary to the requirements of true democracy whereby policy is determined by the people's collective will. And the will of Zairians in a democratic dispensation was for Mobutu to go. So it was a clash of wills between the rulers and the governed.

But most of all, it was the lack of a clear understanding of the true principles of democracy and democratic governance on the part of the political class and the populace that accounted for Zaire's post-Cold War socio-political turmoil. According to Wamba-Dia-Wamba,

> *"In the context of the 'triumph of capital' and the collapse of socialist states, it is difficult without a concept of emancipatory politics, to distinguish democratic mystification (democracy as imperialist policy) from the real thing: the people's capacity to have control over themselves and their leaders."*[3]

That Zaireians had only a vague and probably distorted conception of democracy may be attributable to the fact that the country never had the privilege of a first hand experience of democratic governance. From Patrice Lumumba's post independence leadership, to Joseph Mobutu's coup, broken by Tshombe's secession bid, Zaire had been too embroiled in civil strife and armed conflict to map out a concrete political agenda. That Lumumba had Soviet sympathies was suggestive of the fact that he wasn't particularly committed to Western ideals which included 'democracy'. Joseph Kasavubu's regime was mostly propped up by the military, which later overthrew him and paved way for Mobutu's three decades of tyrannical dictatorship with virtually no political focus. In the light of the preceding 'power politics', it was not surprising that even opposition politicians later co-operated with the Mobutu regime in a bid to secure power, even at the expense of the masses whose interests they were supposed to represent.

With the universal acceptance of democracy, political change in Zaire was both imperative and inevitable. Active political associations emerged as pressure groups under the umbrella of 'the civil society group'. There was agitation for working out a framework for a transition to democratic rule, outside of the provisions of Mobutu's constitution. It was the persistence of the civil society group and other progressive parties in March, 1991 that eventually compelled the Primer Minister, Mulumba Lukodji to organise the Sovereign National Conference in July, 1991.

However, the very foundations of political change in Zaire were suspect. Wamba-Dia-Wamba observes that

> *"the political class has always been more interested in securing and maintaining the backing of its Western partners than in placing real trust in the Zaireian masses."*[4]

On their part, the masses supported only those who had consistently fought against Mobutu. To them, change meant 'Mobutu must go.' It was for this reason that the UDPS led by Etienne Tshisekedi became more popular than other parties. For twelve years, Tshisekedi had inspired the struggle for political change against the Mobutu government, and during the Cold War years, the UDPS was actually an illegal party. In the face of these sharp divisions

between the political class and the mass movement for democracy, it became necessary for a national reconciliation to be the basis for any political progress.

By early 1991, a number of parties, seeing the need to present a formidable opposition front rallied round the UDPs, and on 19th July, 1991, evolved into the Sacred Union of the Opposition – USO. Unfortunately, conflicting inclinations soon split the union into two groups, the liberals and the radicals. This espousing of elitist politics would eventually alienate the party from the masses. On the 22nd of July, Mobutu attempted to appoint Tshisekedi Prime Minister in an obvious conciliatory move. Under pressure from the grassroots, Tshisekedi declined the offer.

The Sovereign National Conference opened on 7th August, 1991. From the onset, Mobutu conspired to subvert it, in the hope that it would fail, or he would control it. He infiltrated all kinds of agents into the conference, resulting in the conference's opening marked by tensions and frictions over who should be represented. Although measures adopted by the Conference ensured that most Mobutu agents were rooted out and only genuine participants retained, Mobutu supporters still succeeded through an elaborate ruse in getting of their own elected as president of the 2,850 man conference. Efforts by Mobutu to manipulate the conference through him proved ridiculously unsuccessful, and the man, Mulumba Lukodji was forced to resign. Mobutu also tried to gain control of the conference by creating fake parties, and bribing people to join and support his own MPR, playing on tribal sentiments, and creating situation to divert attention from conference debates.

Meanwhile, the USO had its own plans, and embarked on a series of negotiations with Mobutu's camp "as a power-sharing bid which was intended, so it seemed, to pre-empt the mass movement for democracy."[5] Led by the likes of Kengo Wa Dondo, Thambwa Muamba, Joseph Ileo and Nguza Karl-I-Bond,

> *"most of its members appeared above all to be hungry for power. For them, placing one of their own at the head of government would have meant a transition to democracy."*[6]

In fact Kengo Wa Dondo and Nguza Karl Bond were later to serve as Prime Ministers under Mobutu.

Between September and October, civil disturbances prompted Mobutu to appoint Etienne Tshisekedi Prime Minister in an effort to diffuse the tensions. He dismissed Tshisekedi a month later for refusing to release $800,000 US to pay the military, and replaced him with Jean Nguza Karl-I-Bond. Meanwhile, Mobutu's geopolitical manipulations claimed their first casualty at the National conference. In January, 1992, several delegates from Katanga walked out on it in annoyance. The chaos which ensued was exactly what Mobutu had hoped to achieve in his efforts to frustrate the conference. On the 19th of January, Prime Minister Nguza suspended it.

In reaction, Christian groups staged a peaceful demonstration on 16th February, 1992 for the resumption of the conference. They were attacked by the security forces, and several people including children were killed. Undaunted, the people held yet another demonstration on 1st March. Mobutu was again compelled to cave in to popular demand, and on 6th April, the conference resumed, this time chaired by the Bishop of Kinsangani, Monsignor Laurent Pasinya. On the 5th of May, the conference declared itself sovereign, a move designed to checkmate Mobutu's attempt to influence its proceedings. A decision was reached that during the transition period, Mobutu would be allowed to rule, but with no political responsibilities.

In August 1992, Mobutu reached a compromise with the Sovereign National Conference-SNC. In exchange for his remaining in charge of the armed forces, he agreed that the SNC choose a Prime Minister. His principal political adversary, Etienne Tshisekedi was elected, obviously to counterbalance Mobutu. It was now clear that politics in Zaire was now reduced to more or less a face-off between the two men. Ernest Wamba-Dia-Wamba observes that

> *"the election of Tshisekedi as prime minister weakened-instead of reinforcing as some believed-those elements which supported liberation and democracy."*[7]

Focus had now shifted from emancipatory politics, which had concentrated on organising the masses and strengthening the pressure coming from the people outside the conference. From that point, the opposition parties made people to believe that the election of Tshisekedi was

the key to achieving the democratisation process. This was a negation of the key principle in the concept of participatory democracy – that no one should be considered indispensable. The grip of the mass movement for democracy was now weakened because the power of the people to remove Mobutu's despotic regime was effectively transferred to Tshisekedi. He had now assumed the dimension of a living myth. Conference participants were compelled to support him, regardless of his errors, out a sense of political expediency and not political principles.

With the struggle for democracy hijacked and reduced to a mere conflict between Mobutu and Tshisekedi, the efforts towards national reconciliation – the key ingredient to entrenching a genuine democracy – were completely eroded. Mobutu and his supporters at this time did all they could to sabotage the SNC's proceedings and tried to prevent Tshisekedi's government from working.

That the West was no longer interested in Mobutu became obvious when in October, 1992, Herman Cohen, former US assistant secretary of state for Africa advised Mobutu to stop reneging on his promises to adhere to agree rules and procedures of the SNC. Significant gains made by the SNC were the unanimous adoption of a draft constitution, and the election of an interim parliament the High Council of the Republic - HCR between November and December, 1992. The US State department openly supported the resolutions of the HCR and Tshisekedi's government. Not to be outdone, Mobutu ordered the suspension of the High Council on 11th December, 1992.

Crisis erupted again when a stay-at-home protest was declared in Kinshasa. Security forces swung into action, killing several people. The state of disorder expanded to include the armed forces when in January, 1993, soldiers refused to accept their salaries in newly issued Zaire bank notes (considered virtually worthless). Instead they embarked on a looting and pillaging spree. Mobutu's elite special forces intervened and in the ensuing street battles, over 100 people were killed, including the French ambassador who had been witnessing the scene from his office window. Mobutu blamed the situation on Tshisekedi and illegally dismissed him – once again.

In February, 1993, members of the HCR were held hostage in the presidential palace by the

army – for three days. This sort of undermining the HCR created further room for Mobutu's manoeuvring. He tried to revive the defunct parliament which had been dominated by his MPR party. This group, known as the FPC voted to elect a Mobutu lackey Faustin Birindwa to replace Tshisekedi – all outside the framework of the National Conference. Later in 1994, a compromise parliament, now heavily dominated by Mobutu's allies elected Leon Kengo Wa Dondo as Prime Minister, a position he was to hold till he resigned on 24th March, 1997.

From December, 1992 to February, 1994, it was virtually impossible to implement the decisions of the Sovereign National Conference due to Mobutu's consistent interferences. It prevented the transition from effectively taking off. This situation can be attributed to sharp divisions among the political class which constituted a formidable impediment to reconciliation efforts. The political class was structured through the politics of the Cold War. During this period this class ruled the country by force in close alliance with Western powers, with absolutely no regard for the people's demands. Wamba Dia-Wamba sums it up thus

> *"Post Cold War democratisation circumstances have caused a split in the political class: the bloc around President Mobutu refuses to relinquish power and adjust to the requirements of democratisation. The opposition bloc around Tshisekedi, enjoying considerable popularity among the masses of the people ,in the main sticks to the national conference decisions."*[8]

With efforts at national reconciliation often stalemated by accusations and counter accusations, mutual suspicion and cover-ups of past crimes, a political deadlock was created. Between 1996 and early 1997 witnessed frequent interference of the military into political and administrative matters, obviously intimidation tactics sponsored by Mobutu. A seemingly insurmountable obstacle arose, especially in the way of a political solution to dictatorship.

Mobutu obviously over-reached himself when in addition to his many crimes he attempted to annihilate the Banyamulenge Tutsis of Eastern Zaire. This ignited the spark for a more drastic dimension in the struggle to remove Mobutu. It came in the form of armed insurrection led by Laurent Desire Kabila – beginning in September, 1996, with a revolt of

the Tutsis. Armed conflict now became the dominant issue in Zaire's political arena till Mobutu was finally forced to flee by advancing rebels in 1997.

5.02 THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AFTER MOBUTU: WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS.

It is rather difficult to make concrete projections about the future outcome of events for any African nation, given the unpredictable political climate and uncertain direction of the continent. Ali A. Mazrui attempts to explain the problem of trying to determine objectively what would transpire in future for a given state. He says

> *"In attempting to grapple with the future, a distinction has to be made between prediction and forecast. Prediction is to look at trends on the basis of 'if this happens, then that happens'. One is allowing for the possibility of the 'if' being different and the 'then' varying accordingly. A forecast is a more definite attempt to enter into the realm of the future and concretely define what is likely to happen. But the line between prediction and forecast is clearly thin, and attempts to grapple with the future are fraught with the hazards of misconception and miscalculation."*[9]

In the light of the foregoing, projections would have to be made based on how the present trend of events appears to be shaping the future, without making hard and fast statements about what is expected to happen. Here, what the future is likely to be in the Congo should be a likely consequence of historical and current occurrences.

The overthrow of Mobutu Sese Seko's three decades of tyranny, corruption and dissipation marked the end of an era in Zaireian history. The emergency of Laurent Desire Kabila and the rechristening of, or rather reverting to, the (former name) Democratic Republic of Congo, has ushered in another. As Congo-Zaire's past course was charted largely by the character of leadership coupled with external motivating factors, to wit its involvement with the Cold War-related operations in the region, the determination of its future destiny is likely to lie in the conduct of its new leadership vis-à-vis the new world order. If history is anything to go by, the outcome of future events will likely be determined by Kabila's national development

policies and political orientation and how these would be influenced by the world's political and economic forces in this dispensation.

Laurent Kabila's history of struggle in the Congo dates back to the 1960s liberation struggle for Zaire's independence, where is reputed to have fought beside the legendary Marxist freedom fighter Che Guevera. His sympathies appear to have lain with Patrice Lumumba, the new republic's Prime Minister. However, all through the violent upheavals that characterised the early post independence years, he remained an unknown quantity in Congolese politics.

His rise to prominence climaxed in his May, 1997 dramatic termination of Mobutu's thirty-two year old brutal dictatorship, after just about seven months of adventurous guerrilla warfare. He had for the better part of Mobutu's reign been, at best, an occasional nuisance because Mobutu's position at that time was practically unassailable. Backed by the military weight of the United States, Belgium and South Africa, Mobutu was able to ruthlessly crush any insurrections, within or without, against his regime. Thus the success of Kabila's campaign can be seen as a function of the Cold War's end, as evidenced in the West's abandonment of Mobutu and its increasing apathy to African political crisis. The West might not have overtly supported Kabila, but it uncharacteristically refrained from coming to Mobutu's assistance.

Just like Mobutu's dictatorship shaped the course of events in Zaire as they eventually turned out, it may be assumed that the future of Congo lies with Kabila. His social, economic and political initiatives may either lead the mineral-rich republic into prosperity and stability, or plunge her back into another period of strife. That the end of the Cold War led up to events that precipitated for Zaire a period of instability reminiscent of the post independence chaos is not in question. Charles Lerche Jr., writing in 1965 foresaw almost accurately such an eventuality: "After the Cold War may lie conflagration and destruction."[10] Thus the present situation is still well within the ambits of his further projection that.

> *"how future generations will fare will in large measure be determined by how effectively men now alive take advantage of the new openings for meaningful action they are facing and will face during the coming*

decades." [11]

It will be recalled that a Banyamulenge Tutsi revolt provided the needed catalyst for Kabila to successfully launch his Democratic Alliance for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL) forces against the Mobutu regime. Mobutu's attempt at displacing or exterminating the 300,000 -- strong Tutsis evokes one of Africa's perennial and seemingly intractable problems, ethnicism. Ethnic strife has always been a crucial factor in precipitating civil wars and other major crisis in Africa.

The Banyamulenge Tutsis who though had settled in Congo since 1800, had their antecedents in Rwanda. At the time of Kabila's drive to unseat Mobutu, the Rwandan Tutsis were engaged in an ethnic-motivated civil war against their Hutu compatriots. Large bands of both had gravitated into Zaire either as refugees or renegade fighters. The Rwandan Tutsis invariably teamed up with their Zairian Kinsmen in Kabila's forces, giving it a sort of multinational orientation. Astri Surke and Lela Garner Noble observed that

> *"the interaction between internal and external forces is particularly significant in ethnic conflicts. When ethnic conflicts do become internationalised, national ambitions are subordinate to or a catalyst for other forces of power politics."* [12]

The Zairian crisis had experienced a spillover effect as it was caught in an intricate web of two civil wars, ascribing to it an international significance. From all indications, the Rwandan crisis had extended into Zaire as Kabila's Tutsi elements proceeded to attack the virtually defenceless Hutu refugees. Barely two months after Kabila's assumption of power, it was revealed that the United Nations investigator, banned by the Kinshasa government, had identified 134 separate massacres of Rwandan refugees by forces allied to Laurent Kabila before he became President. Evidence appeared to point to genocide and systematic executions.[13]

The conduct of Kabila's men indicates that, although he had claimed that his cause was motivated by the desire to protect a marginalized people, he was guilty of committing the

very same acts against which he claimed to have taken up arms. However, former Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere, in a report, accused the Western media of mounting as tremendous campaign aimed at demonizing Kabila in reporting massacres of Hutu refugees. He said Kabila was a victim who could not be held responsible for events outside his control, and insisted on waiting "until Kabila commits his own crimes."[14]

Four months after Nyerere's defence, on 4th September, 1997, Kabila reportedly expelled forcibly over seven hundred thousand Rwandan and Burundi refugees.[15] This act was reminiscent of Mobutu's action against the Banyamulenge, howbeit on a grander scale. It showed him up for a hypocrite equally guilty of ethnic crimes, while his adamant refusal of investigations into massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees when he was advancing raised several eye brows over his human rights records.[16] Consequently there are fears in several quarters that Kabila's claim of being a liberator of the oppressed is a sham, and that there is a likely recurrence of human rights abuses and ethnic violence reminiscent of the Mobutu era.

Shortly after Kabila took over the reins of government, political commentators and observers pointed out areas where Kabila would be required to work at putting right if he expected to attain the much desired political, social and economic stability. Femi Osinusi's advice shortly after Kabila took over, provides a broad view of the scope of these expectations:

> *"It is expected that Kabila's new regime will focus extensively on the economy of Zaire while making efforts to bring the country back to its former glorious days. Indeed he must solve economic problems."*[17]

In addition to solving economic problems, he was (is) expected to provide a political direction, with new democratic structures while tapping political resources and ingenuity of some of the country's political trojans like Etienne Tshisekedi and Kengo Wa Dondo who understand the chemistry and mechanics of politics,[18] to tackle corruption,

> *"which had eaten deep into the consciousness and the very foundations of the country with Mobutu ruling the prowl"*[19]

and to guard against getting intoxicated by power. The question is, how well has Kabila met these lofty expectations? How much has he done towards attaining the noble goals?

Shortly after assumption of power, Kabila suspended all four hundred political parties which had sprung up by 1990 following the introduction of multi-party politics. He explained the measure as based on security reasons to contain the chaos of the long drawn-out transition of the Mobutu regime. However, this did not go down well with many who had initially welcomed him as a liberator after decades of Mobutu's dictational rule. One after the other, opponents of that regime like Joseph Oleghankoy and Arthur Zahidi Ngoma were jailed while the main opposition leader in the new Democratic Republic of Congo, Etienne Tshisekedi was ordered by government to quit politics, and banished to his village in the Kasai province.

Kabila's elimination of all traces of democratic structures, and intolerance of opposition elements only points to dictatorial tendencies. It is not out of the ordinary in African politics. Individuals emerging through insurrection or coups are reluctant to listen to the people's will and stake power via the polls, or share it; the feeling is that they have earned it as a birthright which cannot be compromised. Although they may have risen to power on a wave of popularity, they eventually turn into dictators and despots, wielding absolute authority and brooking no differing or critical opinions. Bertrand Russell once wrote:

> *"To those who have but little power and glory, it may seem that a little more will satisfy them, but in this they are mistaken: these desires are insatiable and infinite..."*[20]

Therefore, there is no allowing any limiting influences on the powers of a ruler coming in through force. Any such attempt is met with ruthless suppression. Doe of Liberia, Mobutu of Zarie, Mengistu of Ethiopia, Bokasa of Central African Republic, Barre of Somalia, Gadaffi of Libya, Banda of Malawi and Rawlings of Ghana, to mention but a few are some examples of such leaders. In anticipation of a similar development in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tshisekedi had repeatedly called on his supporters to oppose the new government, as it had not been democratically legitimized.[21].

It does not seem likely that after such a long history of struggle in the Congo, Kabila would be willing to stake power, share it such that his influence will be limited or relinquish it in a hurry by allowing a democratic platform to determine the future of the nation's leadership.

Despite the several changes in leadership structure and increasing preference for American multi-party democracy, the situation in Democratic Republic of Congo indicates that emerging leaders are most likely to prefer the typical African sit-tight posture.

The new regime in the Congo has been shrouded in controversy as regards efforts towards economic development. The issue of economic development seems to hinge upon Laurent Kabila character and his attitude towards finances. Some thirty years ago, Che Gueverra the Marxist guerrilla wrote of his comrade in arms

> *"Nothing leads me to believe that Kabila is the man of the hour. He is too addicted to drinks and women. He has not shown any traits of a mass leader."*[22]

However, Kabila ably demonstrated his leadership capabilities long after Gueverra's death, sustaining the struggle and mobilizing a United front to successfully overthrow Mobutu's hitherto formidable regime. In any case, the ability to wage a war successfully does not presuppose economic astuteness. Commentators have observed a streak for avarice in Kabila's future aspirations. In his comments on Kabila, Abiodun Raufu observes that

> *"from his record, utterances and deeds, it may be well that Kabila and Mobutu have more in common than the middle name they share, 'Desire'. Long before he entered Kinshasa, Kabila like his predecessor had shown that he has his eyes more on the country's vast mineral resources than the welfare of his beleaguered compatriots.*[23]

This argument he backs up by citing Kabila's intentions in the statement

> *"my long years of struggle were like spreading fertilizer on the field. Now it is time to harvest."*[24]

Considering the difficult times, the country needs a man of vision to put it in shape and not one to want to preside over a harvest. Kabila needs to provide purposeful leadership if the Congo is not to witness another era of national plunder, albeit with predictably disastrous consequences.

Some schools of thought argue that Kabila's actions may be a reaction to the West's quest for further exploitation of Zaire's fabulous mineral wealth. Such is the position of Bode Animashaun whose belief that from the onset, the West was anti-Kabila, is reflected in his comment that throughout the Liberation war, the Kabila led Alliance of Democratic Forces for the liberation of Congo (ADFL) " in the fight to restore sanity to the now rechristened DRC, would have to contend with the West."[25]

Martin Luther Kassongo also talks about the western powers being worried that the vast resources of Congo, which include Uranium, diamond, gold, zinc, tin etc. would no longer be available for their loot. However, in the light of further developments, this belief does not hold water, considering that it is only the West that seems to be best equipped to tap those mineral resources, and has indicated an interest in that direction. Another report revealed that Zaire, now renamed Democratic Republic of Congo is wide open for business. Zaire's vast mineral wealth is

> *"beckoning foreign companies, prompting a scramble that recalls a grab for wealth 120 years ago. American, Canadian and South Africa mining companies are negotiating deals with the new regime."*[26]

The argument that Kabila's government is poised to clash with the West over the Congo's economic pontentials is finally put to rest by Raufu when he reported that shortly after assumption of power, Kabila began to cut deals with interest mining companies, observing that Kabila had signed a one billion dollar deal with American mineral fields Incorporated (AMF),an Arkansas-based U.S. company the previous month.[27]

It is thus clear from Kabila's actions and utterances that he is no saint, neither is he an adept politician nor economic reformer. The obvious signs indicate a tendency towards an authoritarian dictatorship as well as a penchant for acquisition of wealth reminiscent of Mobutu. But experience should also teach Laurent Kabila, who has very much been part of history that to exhibit such tendencies in government will be quite detrimental. In the new world order, democratisation has become one of the political conditionalities for foreign aid or loans by major leading institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. It would not be an

advantage for him to allow anti-democratic activities isolate him from the international community, now that America is firmly in the driving seat of international affairs. He also has the responsibility of reconciling with his Rwandan and Burundi neighbours, or risk the possibility of insurrections against him launched from those countries.

Following Kabila's clampdown on opposition, he was accused by Roman Catholic Bishops of the Democratic Republic of Congo of power abuse.[28] They denounced summary justice without trial, body mutilations, requisition of churches and schools for improper purposes and stirring up of hatred towards so-called enemies of the people, adding that

> *"the change of people at the head of the country is not enough. The fall of the old regime of Mobutu Sese Seko does not bring about the desired change."*[29]

Apparently, the way forward for Kabila lies in purposeful leadership, economic moderation, ethnic reconciliation, social justice and political tolerance. Anything contrary instantly transfers him along the path earlier trodden by Mobutu. A casual look at the present state of affairs reveals that the Mobutu phantom is still looming over the Congo and Kabila the instrument of redemption for his country has a great deal of work to do in order to restore the much needed confidence and dignity to the abused people of Congo.

FOOTNOTES

1. Wamba-dia-Wamba Ernest Zaire: From the National Conference to the Federal Republic of Congo? (1996) p.127
2. Ibid. p.126
3. Ibid. p.138
4. Ibid. p.128
5. Ibid. p.128
6. Ibid. p.128
7. Ibid. p.135
8. Ibid. p.142

9. Ali A. Mazrui "Africa in World Affairs," an article in the Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, Vol.1 No. 1 (1975/76) p.71
10. Charles O. Lerche Jr. (1965) The Cold War and After Prentice – Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey p.142
11. Ibid p.142.
12. Astri Surke and Lela Garner Noble (ed.) Ethnic Conflict in International Relations Praeger Publishers, New York, 1997 p.2
13. "UN Panel Indicts Kabila", a report in the National Concord, Lagos 14th July, 1997 p.6
14. "Nyerere Tells West to Hands off Zaire" cited in The Daily Times, Lagos 21st May, 1997 p.37
15. Wendy Lubelkin, Editorial in the National Concord, Lagos 10th September, 1997, p.4
16. Reported in the Guardian, Lagos, 27th October, 1997 p.9
17. Femi Osinnusi, "Laurent Kabila and Zaire's Future" Nigerian Tribune, Ibadan, 21st May, 1997, p.4.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Pini Jason (quoting Bertrand Russell), "Sunset for sit-tight Sese Seko," article in Vanguard, Lagos, May 30, 1997.
21. Reported in The Guardian, Lagos, 28th June, 1997 p.32
22. Abiodun Raufu (quoting Che Guevera) in "Zaire After Mobutu", The Punch, Lagos, May 21, 1997 p.17.
23. Ibid
24. Ibid
25. Bode Animashaun, "Kabila and the Democracy Bogey", The Guardian, Lagos 12th June, 1997 p.33
26. Robert Block, "Intrigue Inside Kabila's Kingdom: Foreign Businesses seek Inroads" Daily Times, Lagos, 21st May, 1997
27. Abiodun Raufu, op cit. p.17
28. Reported in Daily Times, Lagos 9th July, 1997
29. Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.01 SUMMARY

Since the earliest European ventures into Africa, the continent has remained the focus of depredations by the world's dominant economies. Their influence has always determined political and economic direction, as well as policy formulation in Africa. At various times, Portugal, Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands have left significant marks on the face of African history, depending on the level of involvement. Those who eventually assumed colonial control saw to a systematic politico-economic underdevelopment, as evidenced in Africa's present circumstances. In contemporary times, it has been the struggle for global domination between the United States and the Soviet Union that has shaped the face of political Africa.

The quest for world domination between United States-led capitalist West and the Soviet - led Communist East bloc was symbolised in the phenomenon referred to as the "Cold War." It dictated the trend of events in the world, and invariably in Africa. This made the Cold War

> *"neither a cosmic inevitability nor a historical accident but a result of a political process rooted in the international system itself."*[1]

The war was more of an ideological, psychological, and economical than military confrontation. Initially characterised by an arms race which saw an intimidating stock-piling of awesome nuclear arsenals, a game of global power politics evolved, even as perspectives shifted from armament to psychological warfare. The struggle for power thus expanded to involve other regions outside the East and West blocs especially the Third World to which Africa belongs.

Africa became involved in the Cold War in the late 1950's and early 1960's when most African countries were at the threshold of attaining independence. This involvement resulted in the formulation of policy for most African countries dictated from either Washington or the Kremlin. The global friction between East and West inevitably reflected on African

internal politics precipitating intense power struggles within its body polity. Although, most African nations opted for non-alignment in a bid for a distinct identity, it became evident that they had been polarised along two ideological lines, the Eastern socialist\Marxist and the Western liberal capitalist. This resulted in more emphasis placed on the acquisition of political power, with the resultant struggles for power directly initiated or at least encouraged by either of the major Cold War antagonists. Resources were channelled to support ideological interests rather than economic development. This constituted yet a second global phase of Africa's underdevelopment.

The super powers concentrated on expanding as well as strengthening territorial influence in the African continent, installing or supporting regimes, depending on ideological sympathies–capitalist or Marxist, and notwithstanding that many of these were inept and counter productive. They enjoyed financial and military support as long as they served the interest of their mentors in Washington, London, Paris or Moscow. This was the kind of role played by Mobutu of Zaire in his thirty-two year reign–promoting the interests of his American mentors.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1989 dramatically ended the Cold War. It was as a result of the success of liberal market economies of the capitalist West compared to the failure of the restrictive Marxist economic approach which saw the Soviet economies in severe recession. According to Partos "the destruction of the communist ideology came when people noticed that the system was losing..."[2] To arrest the situation, the USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev introduced the twin economic reforms. Perestroika and Glasnost; while they were supposed to work within the confines of communist system, their liberal content and direction were diametrically opposed to the socialist economic model, and more according to capitalist configurations. It became incumbent that for the reforms to work, required increased cooperation with the West. The inevitability of Soviet collapse became apparent with the realisation that economic restructuring could only be effective if the whole communist system was discarded and not merely changed.

The destruction of the Soviet empire and to wit communism profoundly affected the direction of world politics. With the end of the Cold War, a New World order emerged. As

had earlier been observed, the global structures instituted by the Cold War had polarized African nations into two broad groups–the socialist and the capitalist oriented. This emergence of a New World political and economic direction was proving to be full of surprises, uncertainties and disorders. It had a domino effect on African affairs as part of the global order which dictated political and economic trends on the continent.

The end of bi-polarity, a function of the Cold War's demise on the African continent was first evident in the most active theatres of the war on the continent, South Africa and Angola, with the signing of the tripartite agreement with Cuba in 1988. South Africa representing capitalist interests and Angola representing Marxist ideals were often locked in open armed aggression, with South Africa launching military offensives into Angola. Angola on the other hand supported South Africa guerrilla movements like ANC and the Namibian SWAPO. The South African advance was only contained with the military assistance of Cuba, a communist bastion in the West. Thus an overt resolution of hostilities and a new dawn of cooperation signified the end of bi-polarity and suggested an end to Cold War conflicts.

This research sought to investigate the impact of the Cold War's end on the political terrain in Africa, the changes and recent developments in the continent's body polity. Developments in the democratic Republic of Congo, previously known as Zaire, have been used as a case study of the effects of the end of bi-polarity upon events and the political direction of the continent. How the Cold War's end has affected relationships among the hitherto polarized nations or groups, the political upheavals precipitated by the general gravitation towards democracy, the changes in leadership and the new attitudes of the former belligerents towards their African protégés.

In the course of research, the Zairean (or Congolese) situation was not examined in isolation. Other African nations were also examined, most especially Zaire's neighbours around Southern and Central Africa where the conduct of the Cold War was most significant, while mention was also made about the impact of the Cold War's end on other nations all over Africa. The history of the Cold War was also examined with events leading to its end along with the degree of African involvement, and most especially how events in Africa were

mirrored in the Congo Democratic Republic.

The review of related literature examined the perspectives of different writers on the history of Zairean involvement in the Cold War and how its end has shaped events in that country and Africa in general. Various deficiencies were identified in their arguments, considering their lack of in-depth research, the restrictive or subjective nature of some, as well as the inconclusive analyses, lending credence to the validity and relevance of this research.

In the analysis presented, African involvement in the Cold War is established to have dated back to the period of attainment of independence by most African states in the 1960s Still in search of political and economic systems for development, they became the inevitable pawns of the U.S-led West, and Soviet-led East blocs, already engaged in ideological conflict towards global supremacy. These took advantage of, and indoctrinated certain candidates or political associations in the Belgian Congo (and elsewhere in Africa). The recipients failed to examine the motives behind the assistance received or future implications, and were thus unconsciously dragged into the conflict. The consequence is a spectre of underdevelopment reminiscent of the colonialist activities.

Some schools of thought believe that neither the Cold War nor its end had anything to do with present upheavals in the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, later events proved that the African continent was most crucial to the Cold War prosecutors. In the course of research, this work uniquely also brings out the fact that the granting of independence to most African nations at about the same time was a function of the Cold War itself on Africa's political terrain. This is due to the fact that the colonialists were mostly of the capitalist bloc and must have felt morally bound to show the freedom, the liberality of capitalism which they advocated as a better system when compared to the socialist system which they preached against and tried hard to shield their colonies away from. The shoddy and hasty nature in which Belgium left Congo (Zaire), and several other stage-managed changes of power in Africa, lend credence to this claim.

There is also a general agreement that the demise of bi-polarity rendered Mobutu and his ilk irrelevant to the West's interests. The Zairean problem is cited from a historical perspective

pointing out the nation's importance to the international community at that time. The super powers had used the United Nations as a front to wade into 1960 crisis in order to plant their different ideologies. It was the West that orchestrated Mobutu's takeover in 1965 to provide a destabilizing factor to a growing communist empire. Throughout the Cold War he was used to further their ideological expansionist policies. His country served as an impregnable and efficient stronghold for the West while it lasted. It's end thus signalled the beginning of his end. With no further support, the man who had vowed not to brook the idea of a second party was forced to make concessions allowing for multi-party elections by 1990.

The degree of America's involvement is pointed out, having emerged as the dominant force in a unipolar world. It emphasises how the U.S world increasingly determines direction of national issues in African nations, often at the expense of the former colonial masters. America in other words, seeks to realign post Cold War Africa to be AAnglophone in its international voice, pro-American in its diplomacy...4" Hardly any attention is paid to the leadership issues occasioned by the political changes. Only Max Amuchie is wary of the future of the new Democratic Republic of Congo under Kabila, but fails to justify his warnings.

The most neglected issue is that of the Zairean problem from a global perspective, and that is what this research set out to achieve inter alia.

From the onset, the implications of the end of bipolarity on political change in Africa were highlighted and investigated. It is evident that African nations are still engaged in a search for political identity and economic systems for the purpose of national development. It was in the course of this search that they were drawn into ideological conflicts of capitalism and socialism imposed on them by the East and West. Furthermore, in the face of lean or depleted resources they faced the problem of tackling myriad economic problem including foreign debts and inflation; the aid hitherto received has considerably reduced and instead channelled to the East to strengthen Western influence there.

Considering the fact that Africa has been the scene of civil strife, Africans now have the opportunity to devise an autonomous system of conflict management and security. A sub-

regional model is in place at least in the Western sub-region considering the Nigeria-led ECOMOG's activities in Liberia and Sierra-Leone. The OAU faces the task of establishing a wider encompassing peacekeeping and monitoring force. This becomes most important because after the dismantling of multinational empires, we are witnessing the fragility of states trying to maintain national integrity or to build a viable nationhood. This in itself has generated a considerable amount of conflict and turmoil.

The quest of African nations for a viable nationhood is equally dependent on economic and political factors. In view of the depredations the once vibrant economies of African nations have suffered through the combined activities of profligate dictatorships and their mentors in Washington and Moscow, African leaders are saddled with the task of looking inwards to rebuilding the economy. As events have proved, a nation's level of self-determination and actualization depends on her economic strength. In the face of withdrawal of foreign aid in a unipolar world, most African nations would strive even harder to adopt American ideals and set standards so as to be among the few to get certain assistance. Thus a tendency towards multiparty democracy and free access to markets in Africa remain on the increase today.

However, despite the tendency towards liberal democracy, dictatorial regimes still thrive, with sit-tight leaders becoming increasingly intolerant of opposition. The terrain is fraught with ethnic rivalry and vindictive violence. The Zairean problem is believed to be rooted in subtle ethnic factors, a recurring matrix in the geo-politics of the country, given its multi-ethnic constitution. Interestingly enough, issues such as ethnicism were glossed over by the Cold War. Although, it may appear that national interest may transcend the ethnic phantom, it remains a crucial factor. Research has observed that nationalism itself is an aspect of ethnocentric thinking, which is based on rigid distinctions and stereotypical attitudes between groups. These (distinctions and stereotypes) are as difficult to prove as they are to dispel. This is Congo's worst enemy on the inside in the unipolar world. In essence, one is saying that there appears to be a thin dividing line between the motivating factors in Congo's national crisis even in the years to come. From the ethnic and ideological divisions dating from the quest for nationalism, to the power struggle between Lumumba and Kasavubu, Tshombe's secessionist bid in Katanga through to Mobutu's takeover and ruthless authoritarian rule. It lends credence to the idea that perhaps only a radical departure from

ethnic politics, sectional interests and the crave for absolute power may end the crisis in Congo Democratic Republic and Africa at large.

The end of the Cold War has indeed changed the political face of Africa. In some cases, it is leadership changes, whether total or pseudo, whether democratic or autocratic; military coups, insurgency, civil wars, ethnic strife. These apparently were activated by factors associated with the end of bipolarity. In the area of leadership change, many leaders hitherto supported by the U.S. or the Soviets for ideological reasons have been abandoned. Some have been replaced by other despots. There have been upheavals in Guinea, Algeria, Somalia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, Congo Democratic Republic, Liberia, Sierra-Leone, the Gambia, South Africa, Kenya, Togo, Benin, Tchad, Niger, Morocco. Even where a democracy is said to be entrenched, disenchantment is rearing its head, creating an atmosphere of disorder and violence in Uganda, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Nigeria. While takeovers are the prerogative of militant adventures, some rogues have shed (or are about to) their military uniforms and assumed civilian leadership status through sham electoral processes they initiated and orchestrated. Even a few without military antecedents have done the same. African leadership still needs extensive education on the dictates of true democracy and free elections. A radical departure from the inherent tendency towards despotism is essential.

Africa has not seen the last on wars yet. This is because boiling issues long left unattended to or glossed over during the Cold War years would certainly rear their ugly head. So far, one of such has been the emergence of Eritrea.

The Democratic Republic of Congo would not be spared from civil strife both from within and her neighbours in a manner suggesting spillovers. Democracy would remain a mirage for still sometime to come despite heavy American presence and dominance.

6.02 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the research carried out and observations made, we make the following recommendations:

That Africans should be better organized and positioned to tackle African problems, particularly those bordering on peace and peacekeeping. In the light of the foregoing, sub-regional groupings would appear most ideal if properly managed. This assertion is based in part on the relative success of the Nigerian led ECOMOG forces in restoring normalcy in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the efforts of the South African Development Cooperation in that region.

The reform of the OAU becomes even more desirable when are considers issues such as those in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire). The reforms could be in the areas of a high command to assist in peace keeping and to form a pressure block in order to press for debt relief and other subsidies.

The United Nations also has a moral role to play in the post cold war African politics. This should be in the areas of conflict resolution on the scale carried out in such areas as Bosnia-Harzegovina, Kosovo, East Timor or even on the scale in Sierra Leone.

This assistance could also be in the form of sponsorship of the democratic processes. It could also take the form of debt relief subsidy since most of the debts were procured to fight or maintain Cold War positions like in the case of Mobutu's Zaire. Debt relief would surely aid debtor nations of Africa to tackle other pressing issues of development and provision of basic needs of the people. This could also aid in the reconstruction, rehabilitation and reintegration of displaced persons and try to reorient the people towards popular rulership.

Furthermore, governments and peoples of African nations and the Democratic Republic of Congo in particular should integrate the diverse socio-political and ethnic groupings who must be duly taken into consideration and actively involved in governance, for any meaningful progress to be made in the search for peace. However, the most difficult task would be that of positioning the national psyche of the people, who have lived in antagonism of one another, on the path of peaceful and progressive coexistence. But as daunting as the task seems, it is one that has to be accomplished regardless of time.

FOOT NOTES

1. Charles O. Lerche Jr. The Cold War... And After, Prentice–Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey (1965) p.2.

2. Gabriel Partos: The World That came in From the Cold: Perspectives From East and West on the Cold War (1993) London, Royal Institute of International Affairs p.260.

3. Charles O. Lerche Jr. op cit. p.90 made a generalised projection that: "African involvement in the Cold War cannot be considered as any more than peripheral, of relatively low interest to both parties, and therefore, meriting minor risk." However, later events in Africa rendered this statement invalid.

4. Bruce Nelan "Zaire's New order". Time Magazine (Atlantic Edition) May 12th, 1997 p.54..

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