CIA Covert Action in Zaire and Angola: Patterns and Consequences

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"Covert action" as practiced by the United States Central Intelligence Agency has been defined as "clandestine activity designed to influence foreign governments, events, organizations or persons in support of U.S. foreign policy conducted in such a way that the involvement of the U.S. Government is not apparent."\(^1\) The CIA has pursued its most substantial African covert actions in Zaire (the former Belgian Congo) and Angola. As the paramilitary, political, and propaganda operation unfolded in Angola in 1975-1976, both U.S. policymakers and distressed African observers were struck by its connection to earlier American intervention in Zaire. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger suggested that Angolan independence was fraught with the same dangers for U.S. security as Zairian independence in 1960: "We cannot ignore, for example, the substantial Soviet build-up of weapons in Angola, which has introduced great power rivalry into Africa for the first time in 15 years."\(^2\) Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs William Schaufele, Jr., discerned "obvious parallels between Soviet efforts to move in on the Congo after independence in

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\(^1\) U.S., Congress, Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Final Report: Foreign and Military Intelligence, Book I, 94th Cong., 2d sess., April 26, 1976, p. 131.


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1960 and Moscow’s behavior in Angola today.” From another perspective, an editorial in a government-owned newspaper in relatively “pro-Western” Ghana complained: “The U.S. is now fighting tooth and nail to prevent the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola from taking the reins of government just as it used Tshombe to destroy Patrice Lumumba in order to prevent his socialist-oriented party from taking power at independence in the Congo.”

This essay compares covert action policies in Zaire and Angola and their proximate results in contexts of overt U.S. and Western support, Soviet and other Communist power competition, and indigenous political and economic circumstances. An opportunity for greater breadth of generalization is provided through reference to other well-documented cases of covert action in the Third World.

Elsewhere, I have discussed the more fundamental and long-term consequences of these CIA operations for American interests. In general, I conclude that CIA and U.S. policymakers’ fears of massive, long-term foreign Communist influence were misplaced. By political ideology and experience, the “left-nationalist” forces in Zaire and Angola were strongly oriented to independent action. And because of their relative internal strength they had less need to depend on foreign supporters than the opposing “moderate” groups. Furthermore, U.S. hopes that moderates assisted by the CIA would be politically effective and broadly disposed to such objectives as orderly economic growth, social advancement, and some form of representative government, have been consistently disappointed. The upshot has been increasing dependence by the moderates on U.S. and CIA support and growing popular anti-Americanism. Finally, covert action has revealed and intensified divisions between African states, fostering a cumulatively unfavorable impression among the so-called “leftist” or “radical” states and some “moderate” ones to boot. Yet it is increasingly clear that the United States must seek areas of agreement with an economically and militarily interdependent Third World and such residual strains and suspicions can be counterproductive.

René Lemarchand has described the problems posed to social science research by the “murky underworld” of clandestine struggle. My own presentation of specific covert exploits in Zaire and Angola is based on public documents, including recently declassified papers from the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations, and confidential personal interviews with policymakers and other informed individuals. When referring to interviews I always indicate the general nature of the source. I make no reference to covert action without

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either documentary proof or the testimony of at least two informed diplomatic or other U.S. government officials.

The evidence is inadequate for in-depth analysis of two important issues: executive and congressional review and control of the CIA, and the rationale for choosing covert rather than overt means. In general, the documentary and interview evidence suggests that with a few probable exceptions the major Zairian and Angolan covert actions were known to top executive officials. But there is little information about the process of review, command, and control in the supervisory 40 Committee of the National Security Council (NSC) and its predecessors. As for the choice of covert technology, it is reasonable to infer that several considerations were influential, depending upon the type of covert action and its environment: effectiveness of proceeding secretly, avoidance of diplomatic problems and an open confrontation with the Soviet Union, and evasion of domestic political accountability.  

Covert Action in Zaire

On June 30, 1960, the Belgian Congo received its independence under a democratic coalition government headed by the militant nationalist, Patrice Lumumba. "Shortly thereafter," Lawrence Devlin arrived in Leopoldville to assume his duties as chief of the CIA station in the American embassy. Within a few weeks he was deeply involved in an effort to overthrow the government and assassinate some of its top officials, the first of a series of covert action and related "intelligence" programs that would continue into the 1970s.

Soon after independence the Congolese army mutinied; Belgian troops reoccupied part of the country, helping to organize the secession of the Katanga province; and Prime Minister Lumumba and Chief of State Joseph Kasavubu called in United Nations forces to help reorganize the army and remove the Belgians. The United Nations, however, delayed in replacing the Belgian troops and refused to move decisively against the Katanga secession. This policy received crucial backing from the Republican Eisenhower administration which shared Belgium's vision of conservative order and was disposed to follow NATO leads in black Africa. As secessionist and political pressures encouraged by Belgium mounted against his government, Lumumba threatened to dispense

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7 These include: the CIA assassination plot against Congo Prime Minister Lumumba in 1960–61; the temporary use of American CIA personnel as pilots in the Congo civil war of 1964 (see Stephen R. Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960–1964 [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974], pp. 229–230); and the presence of American CIA paramilitary advisers in the Angolan civil war of 1975–76. The first and last cases are discussed below.

8 Senate Select Intelligence Committee, Foreign and Military Intelligence, pp. 50, 156–57; see also Senate African Affairs Subcommittee, Angola, pp. 20, 37, 40.

with the U.N. force except for sympathetic African left-nationalist contingents and to invade Katanga with Afro-Asian and Soviet military assistance.

In the view of U.S. policymakers, Lumumba's persistent, emotional, and shifting pleas for outside help against Belgium revealed his "personal instability" which the Soviet Union came to exploit through "leftist," "anti-white," "Communist," and "Pro-Communist" advisers in the prime minister's entourage.\(^\text{10}\) Referring to incidents in which elements of the Congolese army arrested Belgian and U.N. personnel, Ambassador Clare Timberlake warned:

If the U.N. does not immediately act to take the army out of Government control . . . most of the handful of Europeans still in Leopoldville will leave and the remainder would be some foreign embassy personnel, Communist agents and carpetbaggers. We are convinced that the foregoing is the Communist plan. Lumumba, [Minister of Information] Kashamura, Ghanaian Ambassador Djin and [Chief of Protocol] Madame Blouin are all anti-white and the latter is a Communist. So are their Guinean advisers. Our latest arrival [French press secretary] Serge Michel of the [Algerian National Liberation Front] is even more in the Commie camp and anti-Western. They seem to have no trouble urging Lumumba further down roads which his own instincts direct him at least part of the way.\(^\text{11}\)

The State Department noted that Lumumba "was receiving advice and encouragement not only from Guinean and other African leftists but also from European Communists and of course from the Soviet and other Communist representatives in Leopoldville."\(^\text{12}\) (Yet two of the most distrusted counselors, Press Secretary Michel and Ambassador Djin, opposed Lumumba's later decision to accept Soviet aid!)

On August 18th, Devlin cabled CIA headquarters:

Embassy and Station believe Congo experiencing classic Communist takeover Government . . . Whether or not Lumumba actually Commie or just playing Commie game to assist his solidifying power, anti-west forces rapidly increasing power Congo and there may be little time left in which take action to avoid another Cuba.\(^\text{13}\)

At a National Security Council meeting the same day, Undersecretary of State Douglas Dillon remarked, "If the U.N. were forced out, we might be faced with a situation where the Soviets intervened by invitation of the Congo," and further observed that Lumumba "was working to serve the purposes of the Soviets." President Eisenhower exhibited acute concern that "one man supported by the Soviets" could threaten the U.N. operation, and one top aide in

\(^\text{10}\) Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo, pp. 81-83.


\(^\text{12}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{13}\) Senate Select Intelligence Committee, Assassination Plots, p. 14. Although this report uses a pseudonym for Devlin, and identifies him only as a "station officer," it is clear from the context that he is the chief of station. On Devlin, see Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo, pp. 95-96; 97n.; 138.
attendance remembered the president seeming to issue an assassination order. In any event, other forms of covert action were apparently approved since CIA headquarters on the following day authorized the station "to proceed with operation" (to replace Lumumba "with pro-Western group") and the resulting activities were discussed August 25 at a meeting of the NSC Special Group which oversees CIA covert actions.  

The CIA station quickly undertook "covert operations through certain labor groups" and "the planned attempt to arrange a vote of no confidence in Lumumba" in the Congolese senate. After August 25 when the Special Group agreed at Eisenhower's behest that "planning for the Congo would not necessarily rule out consideration of any particular kind of activity which might contribute to getting rid of Lumumba," a series of assassination plots were encouraged, developed, and put into effect. If any additional impetus were necessary, news arrived on August 26 that an estimated 100 Soviet bloc technicians in the Congo would soon be joined by ten IL-18 Soviet transport planes to be used in a planned central government invasion of Katanga.  

Unfortunately, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Interim Report: Alleged Assassinations Plots Involving Foreign Leaders ignores, save for a few unanalyzed suggestions, CIA political action programs against Lumumba and his followers in the fall and winter of 1960 and the role of Congolese leaders financed by the United States with respect to assassination. As I have shown elsewhere, there is strong circumstantial evidence of a U.S. role in the Kasavubu coup of September 5 against Lumumba; and there are the direct testimonies of a U.S. diplomat on the scene as well as two former U.S. officials that the CIA was involved in the decisive Mobutu coup of September 14. A recently declassified State Department "Analytical Chronology of the Congo Crisis" seems generally confirmatory: "Planning, of an operational nature, dealt with covert activities to bring about the overthrow of Lumumba and install a pro-Western Government ... (Operations under this plan were gradually put into effect by CIA.)" Two reliable U.S. diplomatic sources have now confirmed that the Special Group authorized payment to Kasavubu shortly before his coup. This certainly casts light upon the Senate assassinations report's observation that, on the day following Kasavubu's initiative, two CIA officers approached "a high level Congolese policeman to warn him of the Lumumba danger," offer assistance "in preparation of a new government program" and provide assurances that the United States "would supply technicians."  

Several American and foreign diplomats agree that Colonel Joseph Mobutu and his "Binza Group" of political allies (including Foreign Minister Bomboko,
Finance Commissioner Ndele, and security chiefs Nendaka and Kandolo) constituted a compact and frequently cooperative vehicle of CIA funds and counsel. As the State Department Chronology relates:

The UAR and Ghana were not the only ones to pump money [in their case to the Lumumbists] into the political picture. By mid-November, U.S. activities on the political scene in Leopoldville were of sizeable proportions and may have been fairly conspicuous . . .

Ambassador Timerlake and the representatives of another Agency [clearly the CIA] had intensive discussions with Kasavubu, Mobutu, Iléo, Bomboko, Adoula, Bolikango and others . . . [Timerlake cabled] "I hope the Department is not assuming from a few modest successes that the Embassy has Kasavubu, Mobutu, or any other Congolese 'in the pocket.' While we have consistently endeavored through counsel and advice to guide moderate elements along a reasonable path, they rarely consult us voluntarily regarding their prospective moves . . ."

[U.N. Representative Rajeshwar Dayal] in an interview with the New York Times correspondent (not printed) broadly implied that he knew the U.S. was financing Mobutu . . .

[U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld] told the American Ambassador to the U.N. it would be most helpful particularly if we could put some "fire" into Kasavubu [to help in forming a new government acceptable to parliament] so long as we could do it "delicately" and not "visibly" and so long as we "put nothing in his pocket" — an apparent reference to U.S. "covert" activities in Leopoldville. Among the "modest successes" of the Americans were the frustration of African and Congolese efforts to reconcile Kasavubu and Lumumba, and efforts by Congolese "moderates" to expand the base of Mobutu's regime.

Leaders who were financed and counseled by the CIA also seem to have gone along with more forceful entreaties although their role has been obscured by the Senate Select Committee's report on the alleged assassinations of foreign leaders. The latter notes that Devlin "warned a key Congolese leader" about coup plotting by Lumumba and two of his supporters, and "urged arrest or other more permanent disposal of Lumumba, Gizenga, and Mulele" — a good example of the linkage between CIA "intelligence" and "covert action" programs. But it fails to mention that Deputy Prime Minister Gizenga was in fact arrested by Mobutu and a decision was made to transfer him to his bitter enemies in Katanga. At the last minute he was released by sympathetic U.N. troops from Ghana. Similarly, Devlin is portrayed as an "adviser" to a Congolese effort to "eliminate" Lumumba on the day after Mobutu's coup. But there

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23 Senate Select Intelligence Committee, *Assassination Plots*, p. 18.
is no indication in the Senate report that Lumumba was arrested on the follow-
ing day; he managed to escape his captors.25

In late November Lumumba left U.N. protective custody to try and return to
his political base at Stanleyville. The CIA station worked with the Mobutu
government to set up road blocks and alert troops to possible escape routes.
After Lumumba’s capture it appeared that the troops guarding him might
mutiny and thereby return him to power, so he was transferred to Katanga
where he was murdered, probably on the evening of January 17 or 18.26

The authors of the assassinations report failed to consider this powerful con-
text of CIA political action and influence in reaching their conclusion that:

Despite the fact that [Devlin] knew of a [government] plan to deliver Lumumba into
the hands of his enemies at a time when the CIA was convinced that “drastic steps”
were necessary to prevent Lumumba’s return to power, there is no evidence of CIA in-
volvement in this plan or in bringing about the death of Lumumba in Katanga.27

The CIA was subsidizing and advising (with “modest” success) the top Congolese
leadership that decided to transfer Lumumba. It was a “Congolese
government leader” who voluntarily informed Devlin of the plan. The CIA had
been working with some of its political protégés—as well as other Congolese
and a European—from August through November in efforts to assassinate or
abduct Lumumba.28 Its recommendation for “permanent disposal” of Lumum-
ba’s deputy had been followed by his arrest and a Congolese government deci-
sion to deliver him to his “bitterest enemies” in Katanga. Given this background
of covert political influence including specific assassination plots, the CIA’s
failure to question its clients’ plan to dispose of Lumumba must have appeared
as an expression of tacit consent. In any case it is hard to avoid the judgment
that it represented a definite complicity in murder.

Overt diplomacy made an essential contribution to the success of covert
operations in this period. The United Nations controlled potentially decisive
military and financial resources in Leopoldville. But its dependence upon
American economic, political, logistic, and administrative support ensured
these trumps would be used either directly in behalf of American objectives or
indirectly in the manner of benign neutrality. Thus U.N. Representative
Andrew Cordier did not discourage Kasavubu from his CIA-supported coup and
probably gave it a decisive boost by closing the airports and radio station,
preventing Lumumba from mobilizing his supporters. Having invoked the shib-
bboleth of “law and order” this time, the United Nations fell silent and remained
impassive when its military protégé, Mobutu, pulled off another CIA coup
several days later. Although certain political and administrative changes en-

25 Heinz and Donnay, Lumumba, pp. 22-23; “Analytical Chronology,” p. 37; Senate Select In-
telligence Committee, Assassination Plots, p. 17.
26 Senate Select Intelligence Committee, Assassination Plots, pp. 48-49; Heinz and Donnay,
Lumumba, pp. 69-78; 145-46.
27 Senate Select Intelligence Committee, Assassination Plots, p. 49.
28 Ibid., pp. 49, 16-48.
abled the United Nations to assume a more evenhanded stance in the following weeks (for example, it offered protective custody to Lumumba before his escape and capture), it nevertheless gave considerable de facto support to the United States-sponsored Mobutu regime.29

The advent of the Democratic Kennedy administration did not bring any lessening of concern about Soviet exploitation of the Lumumbist movement. After all, Gizenga had set up a regime in Stanleyville that received financial and political support from the Soviet Union and United Arab Republic. But the Kennedy administration had more confidence than its predecessor in the perseverance of civilian moderates and it possessed a new sensitivity to African relations. It decided to bring about a legal parliamentary regime under Cyrille Adoula that would absorb Gizenga and his allies, and gradually to move the United Nations and reluctant NATO allies to deal with Katangan secession. Covert CIA and U.N. bribery of parliamentarians during the conference which eventually selected Adoula has been confirmed by a member of the American embassy and several unofficial sources, and received the following tribute in a CIA memorandum in President Kennedy’s files: “The U.N. and the United States, in closely coordinated activities, played essential roles in this significant success over Gizenga.” This document also revealed the CIA program for Adoula as of November 1961:

The [State] Department, in conjunction with other branches of the Government [clearly the CIA] is endeavoring to help Adoula improve his political base of support and enhance his domestic power and stature. This activity is in the areas of political organization with connected trade union and youth groups, public relations and security apparatus.30

The propaganda component appears to have surfaced in mid-1964 when the Angolan leader, Jonas Savimbi, then resident in Leopoldville, revealed the presence of an American public relations adviser named Muller in Adoula’s office.31 The prime minister’s key political supporters, the Binza group, continued to receive CIA subsidies according to several diplomatic sources. In addition, political action funds were used to keep parliament in line and to launch RADECO, a pro-Adoula political party. Another example of uses of “intelligence” for “covert action” was provided by the CIA’s discovery of a plot to assassinate Mobutu. The information was passed on to Mobutu whose gratitude was said to make him more receptive to CIA suggestions.32

Again conventional diplomacy was a crucial backdrop for covert action to stabilize a pro-Western regime. American support enabled the U.N. force to

29 Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo, pp. 87-109.
30 CIA memorandum, “Congo: United States Assistance to Adoula Against Gizenga,” n.d., pp. 1-3, NSF-JFKPL. A CIA-embassy planned “psychological” campaign is referred to in Leopoldville to Secretary of State, October 2, 1961, NSF-JFKPL.
32 Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo, pp. 109, 208, 210.
subdue Katanga secession, bringing new financial means and nationalist prestige to Adoula's government. U.S. economic aid, at first through voluntary contributions to the United Nations, then bilaterally, greatly increased the government's resources. A military assistance program of equipment and training started in 1963, in conjunction with Belgium and Italy. The American ambassador and U. N. representative took the lead in urging Adoula to purge his cabinet of Gizenga and remove him from the political scene (the Lumumbist leader had left the capital and remained in Stanleyville to reestablish his political base). The United Nations would collaborate in his arrest.33

After the subjugation of Katanga, Afro-Asian support for a U. N. military presence in the Congo flagged and the operation was phased out by mid-1964. Reacting against an increasingly narrow ethno-political regime, Lumumbist rebels—encouraged by Soviet and Chinese diplomats (including intelligence operatives) in neighboring countries—quickly spread across half the country and threatened the capital.

During the Johnson administration, the CIA conducted a major paramilitary campaign against the Kwilu and eastern rebellions for nearly four years. Covert action and planning focused mainly on direct combat operations and were coordinated with overt U.S. and Belgian military assistance in the areas of equipment and support functions. Thus in early 1964 a CIA front organization in Miami furnished Cuban exile pilots to the Congo government to fly armed Italian T-6 training planes against "Mulelist" insurgents in the western Kwilu Province. (The government had no pilots of its own.) In the spring, rebel advances in the east led to the dispatch of six U.S. Department of Defense T-28 fighter planes armed with rockets and machine guns, ten C-47 military transport planes, six H-21 heavy-duty helicopters, vehicle spare parts, 100 "military technicians" to show the Congolese how to operate and maintain their new equipment, and "several" counterinsurgency advisers for Congolese commanders. While Belgium sent pilots and maintenance personnel for the noncombat aircraft, the CIA obtained additional Cubans to fly the T-28 fighters under station supervision.34 Following the fall of Stanleyville to the rebels in August, Secretary of State Dean Rusk approved an "immediate effort . . . to concert with [the] Belgians to help Tshombe [who had just replaced Adoula as prime minister with the backing of Kasavubu and the Binza group] raise gendarme-mercenary force along with bolstering whatever force there is to hold present strong points and to start rebel roll back."35 Again the interdependent overt-

33 Ibid., ch. 5 and pp. 204-207; G. Mennen Williams to George C. McGhee, "Steps Against Gizenga," December 12, 1961, Williams Papers, National Archives, Washington, D.C. [hereafter WP-NA]; Leopoldville to Department of State, December 23, 1961 and January 16, 19, 26, 1962; and Department of State to Leopoldville, January 12, 1962, NSF-JFKPL.
34 Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo, pp. 226-230; Cyrus Vance to W. Averell Harriman, April 20, 1964, National Security Files, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, Texas [hereafter NSF-LBJPL].
covert pattern of support appeared. Four American C-130 military transports with full crews and parachutist "guard" arrived in Leopoldville, along with four or five B-26 bombers, ground vehicles, arms and ammunition. The Belgians also supplied equipment as well as 300 to 400 officers who assumed background roles of command and logistic support. Nearly all this overt assistance was in behalf of a 700-man force of South African, Rhodesian, and European mercenaries that did much of the fighting as "spearheads" of selected government troops. CIA Station Chief Benjamin Hilton Cushing told the Belgian commander that he was prepared to subsidize Tshombe's entire mercenary recruitment if hard currency were lacking (it was not). The agency did supply more Cuban pilots for the B-26s which joined the rest of the CIA air force in support of the mercenary advance. 36 (By January 1965, two additional T-28s were operating in the Congo as were three or four more B-26s apparently provided by Intermountain Aviation, a CIA proprietary.) 37

As certain African countries began to ship arms to the rebels across Lake Tanganyika with apparent promises of Soviet replacement, the CIA engaged pilots and crews, reportedly South African, for patrol boat operations. A CIA front organization, Western International Ground Maintenance Organization (WIGMO) chartered in Lichtenstein, handled maintenance for the boats as well as the fighter planes with a staff of 50 to 100 Europeans. 38 The WIGMO mechanics and maintenance personnel enabled U.S. and Belgian military personnel to escape direct association with air and sea combat operations; they also represented an attempt by the CIA to get away from its increasingly visible Cuban connections. 39 Yet the CIA also formed a force of 17 to 18 Cubans for a possible operation to rescue U.S. diplomatic hostages, including CIA personnel, in Stanleyville. This objective was achieved on November 24, 1964, when U.S. C-130s dropped Belgian paratroops on the city. At that moment, the Cubans were accompanying a mercenary force just hours away, and prepared to act if the airdrop was canceled. 40

By mid-1966 there were said to be 12 Cuban aviators and 100 other WIGMO personnel in the Congo, 41 but the paramilitary campaign ended, according to Special Group member Cyrus Vance, around mid-1967. 42 However, in July 1967 a mutiny of white mercenaries against the government raised a new threat of dismemberment and dangerous instability. Three C-130s with "sup-

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37 Leopoldville to Department of State, January 11, 1965, NSF-LBJPL.
39 For evidence of increasing Cuban visibility, see Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo, p. 230, n. 47.
40 Ibid., pp. 246-252.
42 Senate Select Intelligence Committee, Foreign and Military Intelligence, pp. 155-56.
porting personnel" were rushed in to fly armored cars and troops to battle. But senior congressmen, fearing a new Vietnam, forced President Johnson to withdraw two of the planes in August and the third in December. Johnson also issued an order that the United States "would not again get so involved in Africa except out of the most overwhelming necessity." Still, according to a high State Department official and another diplomatic source, the temptations of covert action were strong enough to sanction a return of several Cuban combat pilots to the Congo in late 1967.

On the political action side, say reliable diplomatic sources, the CIA continued to assist the Binza group during the Tshombe era (1964–65). In view of a constitution that vested great power in the president's office, there was increasing competition between Prime Minister Tshombe and President Kasavubu, both of whom looked forward to a future presidency. The Americans were "concerned" when Kasavubu sought "an opening to the left" by dismissing Tshombe and appointing a government ready to consider not only the dismissal of mercenaries, but also the recognition of Communist China and improved relations with left-nationalist African states. According to three informed individuals—a U.S. official then in Washington, a Western diplomatic Congo specialist, and an American businessman who talked with the returned CIA man, Devlin—the CIA was at least "involved" in the second Mobutu coup of November 25, 1965.

As the CIA-assisted repression succeeded, Mobutu began to consolidate his political and financial hold. Trained Congolese pilots started returning from European military schools. There seemed to be a decreasing need for covert action. A U.S. diplomat whose information has always proved reliable states that CIA political action payments to Mobutu ceased "at the end of the 1960s." Still, according to a State Department official and a foreign diplomat in Zaire, the agency was in charge of training Mobutu's personal bodyguard "during the 1970s." The diplomat personally observed that the CIA station chief, James Kim, continued to furnish Mobutu with "intelligence" regarding both African and internal political developments, and "tried to influence him" partly through such contacts as Dr. William Close, an American citizen who was Mobutu's long-time personal physician and political counselor. A 1967 White House memorandum referred to Close's letter to President Johnson "commending" him on his decision to send C-130s to the Congo that summer. It noted that Close "exercises considerable influence on President Mobutu, has been used by him as


an emissary on many occasions, and has always been helpful and cooperative with our Embassy at Kinshasa."\textsuperscript{46}

By 1975 when the political crisis in neighboring Angola exploded, the rationale for American support of Mobutu was no longer confined to the dangers of Soviet subversion in Zaire and its consequences for other African countries. As the deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs explained at a Senate hearing:

Despite temporary aberrations [Zaire] has been a good friend to the United States. . . . We do have . . . a warm spot in our hearts for President Mobutu. At a time when our aid and advice were critical to the development of Zaire, he was good enough—and I might say wise enough—to accept our suggestions and our counsel to the great profit of the state. . . . [There is] a basic commonality of attitudes and policies in foreign affairs [between our two countries].\textsuperscript{47}

Given such outstanding reliability Secretary of State Kissinger was reportedly "banking" on Mobutu "to oppose Moscow's interests" in Africa generally and "to further Washington's interests in various international forums"—particularly those where the United States was being assailed by Third World forces.\textsuperscript{48} Since Zaire was to bear much of the burden of anticommunism in Africa and moderation in the Third World, a high State Department official noted "a thrust" in Washington to bolster the country "in the hope that it could extend its hegemony throughout the continent."\textsuperscript{49} In the same vein, CIA Director William Colby designated Zaire "a future regional big power."\textsuperscript{50} The Republican administration was also sensitive to growing U.S. economic interests in Zaire including over $200 million in direct private investment with more planned, and a deepening involvement on the part of private and public creditors. Of concern to the United States, remarked the deputy assistant secretary, "are not only Zaire's stability and development but also the security of three-quarters of a billion dollars in U.S. investments, loans, and contracts and our access on favorable terms to Zaire's mineral resources."\textsuperscript{51} For all these reasons the United States rushed to Mobutu's aid in 1975 when copper prices and government revenues fell, debt repayment problems with U.S. and foreign creditors arose, popular discontent with a corrupt, irresponsible regime became increasingly overt, and Mobutu worried about the presence and example of a postcolonial, leftist regime in neighboring Angola. Abandoning its "low profile" in Africa, the administration provided more than $100 million in overt aid (nearly $30

\textsuperscript{46} John P. Walsh to Walt W. Rostow, The White House, memorandum, "Reply to Letter from Dr. Close to President Johnson," August 25, 1967, White House Central Files, LBJPL.

\textsuperscript{47} U.S., Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on African Affairs and Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Security Supporting Assistance for Zaire, 94th Cong., 1st sess., October 24, 1975, pp. 3, 32–33.


\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., January 4, 1976, 4: 2.


\textsuperscript{51} Senate African Affairs Subcommittee, Security Assistance, p. 3.
million in military sales credits; $21.5 million in security supporting assistance for fiscal year 1976 and the transitional quarter; about $29 million in Food for Peace and Commodity Credit Corporation loans for fiscal year 1976; and a $20 million Export-Import Bank loan in process), and played an active role in the rescheduling of Zaire’s foreign debt.\textsuperscript{52} Covertly, one reason for the surprising CIA operation in Angola was to boost psychologically the Zairian regime, as we shall see later. It remained to be seen whether, in light of Mobutu’s continuing precariousness, the Carter administration would expand CIA programs in behalf of either Mobutu or a replacement team. Ironically, Lawrence Devlin was now back on the scene as the American representative of U.S. businessman Maurice Templesman—a major supporter and beneficiary of Mobutu’s regime. Devlin had risen to the top of the CIA’s clandestine Africa Division before finding his upward mobility in the agency stalled. According to diplomatic sources, Mobutu relies upon him to make contacts with U.S. officials at moments of “misunderstanding” or strain between the two countries, and considers him a “second CIA” to keep an eye on the first one in the event of changing U.S. policies.

As we have seen, CIA covert operations and interrelated overt diplomacy played essential roles in the triumph of American-approved leadership. After 1967 they continued to sustain the Zairian government. Even though their immediate impact was probably not decisive, their retrospective and potential influence was undoubtedly intimidating. By 1975 Mobutu’s external fears (and hegemonial ambitions)\textsuperscript{53} and his internal difficulties had provoked an escalation of U.S. support that again threatened to become the arbiter of Zaire’s political destiny.

Yet even this heavy external involvement might not have been sufficient had the Lumumbist opposition been more effective and its external supporters more vigorous. Lumumbism in its various guises was the most popular political force in Zaire during the early 1960s. While it has not been possible to take a public opinion poll in recent years, a serious potential for left-nationalist politics remains in various forms: a small, persistent rebel stronghold in the eastern Fizi-Baraka region (Popular Revolutionary party); the presence of ex-Katanga soldiers in Angola, reportedly radicalized by the Popular Movement of Angolan Liberation (MPLA) which recruited them when Zairian troops intervened in the Angola civil war; the emergence of certain military officers with “progressive” views; and, above all, the increasingly overt expression of popular discontent. But the Lumumbists had difficulty in creating a reasonably unified political movement. While fomenting rebellion during the 1960s, they were unable to overcome political, ethnic, and social divisions to forge a strong, modern organization for revolutionary warfare, although the Kwilu Mulelists, Popular


\textsuperscript{53} For influence in Angola and especially in oil-rich Cabinda Province.
Revolutionary party, and later perhaps the ex-Katanga soldiers in Angola progressed further along these lines. Also, considering the scale of U.S., U.N., and Belgian involvement only the Soviet Union among the pro-Lumumbist powers had the capacity to bring to bear an effective external counterweight. But the Soviets assigned Africa a low strategic priority, and until June 1964 African support of the United Nations operation presented serious political and logistic obstacles to a unilateral Soviet role. Furthermore, the Soviets were skeptical about the trustworthiness and political effectiveness of some of their newfound Zairian friends. For example, in October 1961 the American embassy reported to Washington: "There is evidence some disillusionment among Communist bloc and neutralists with Gizenga's force and effectiveness." The embassy also communicated this piece of relevant evidence:

Canadian [Consul General] Gauvin whom we have found to be accurate well-informed colleague showed Embassy officer today telegram reporting ninety minute conversation with Canadian Charge Rahman who has represented Soviet interests Congo since expulsion Soviet diplomats. Rahman indicated Communists have given up Gizenga as third rate theorist.55

In 1965, even Ché Guevara and his band of more than 100 Cubans in the Eastern Congo were said to be disillusioned with the rebel forces.56

Covert Action in Angola

Until 1975 Portugal refused to follow in the path of peaceful European decolonization of black Africa. President Salazar told the American ambassador in 1961 that the "only nationalism" in Angola and Mozambique "was Portuguese, deriving from centuries of close association with Portugal."57 This dogma was enforced by the suppression of any political activity that seemed to have a modern, African nationalist tone.

Influenced in part by the achievement of independence in the neighboring ex-Belgian Congo, various clandestine Angolan movements participated in the violent revolts of February and March 1961 in Luanda, the capital, and the northern section of the country. The Portuguese responded to these poorly prepared uprisings with a veritable blood bath. However, as we have seen, the liberal Kennedy administration had decided to fight the cold war with a new emphasis upon Afro-Asian sentiment. Thus the United States voted for the March 1961 U.N. resolution calling for self-determination in Portuguese Africa.

54 On the Mulelists, see Weissman, American Foreign Policy in the Congo, pp. 215-17. The judgments about the Popular Revolutionary party and Katangan soldiers are based on interviews with U.S. diplomats and scholarly observers.
55 Leopoldville to Department of State, October 14, 1961, NSF-JFKPL.
56 Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence (New York: Dell, 1974), p. 139.
57 Lisbon to Secretary of State, July 15, 1961, NSF-JFKPL.
In July Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs G. Mennen Williams exhorted his colleagues:

Angola has become for much of the world, as Berlin is for Europe, the center of the great battle between freedom and oppression. . . . Angola in the eyes of much of the world is the test case of America's commitment to freedom. . . . The unacceptable alternative is to temporize and see Soviet Communism come on the scene as the spurious and cynical champion of "freedom" for Portuguese Africa.\(^{58}\)

With National Security Action Memorandum No. 60 of July 14, 1961, the United States launched a quiet diplomatic campaign, including promises of economic aid, to persuade Portugal to institute reforms leading "eventually to self-determination."\(^{59}\) Military assistance and sales to Portugal were restricted to materials filling "actual needs of Portuguese NATO forces remaining in Europe," and commercial arms export licenses were screened for items "not clearly for NATO needs." Overt support for the Angolans themselves included an emergency food and humanitarian assistance program for the estimated 125,000 Angolan refugees in Zaire and a preuniversity training program for Portuguese Africans at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania.\(^{60}\) By May 1963 the latter had provided scholarships to twenty-four students, nine of whom were Angolan.\(^{61}\) Finally, as Secretary Kissinger acknowledged, the United States soon began to supply covert "financial, nonmilitary aid" through the CIA to Holden Roberto, the leader of an Angolan political movement based in Zaire.\(^{62}\) As early as April 1961 the American embassy in Leopoldville was in close contact with Roberto. When the Portuguese foreign minister privately accused "U.S. services" of being involved with "Portugal's enemies," the State Department ordered the embassy "to initiate no further contacts with Roberto unless otherwise instructed," although he still could be seen at his own request.\(^{63}\) For Secretary of State Rusk, Roberto came to represent the "moderate" alternative to the opposing "de Andrade extremist group tied to Moscow."\(^{64}\)

In contrast with Zaire, overt support for America's favorites was limited by the persistence of colonialism and the military importance of a Portuguese air


\(^{59}\) L.D. Battle to McGeorge Bundy, The White House, memorandum, "Task Force on Portuguese Africa: Chairman's Report on Actions Taken," July 31, 1961; Lisbon to Secretary of State, July 15, 1961, p. 3; both in NSF-JFKPL.


\(^{61}\) G. Mennen Williams to W. Averell Harriman, May 2, 1963, p. 3, WP-NA.

\(^{62}\) Senate African Affairs Subcommittee, Angola, p. 8.

\(^{63}\) Lisbon to Secretary of State, May 1, 1961; Department of State to Lisbon and Leopoldville, May 10, 1961; Lisbon to Secretary of State, May 20, 1961; all in NSF-JFKPL.

\(^{64}\) U.S., Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, "Angola," April 3, 1962 (U.S. and Brazilian officials), p. 2, NSF-JFKPL.
base to the United States. The diplomatic effort rapidly ebbed, leaving covert action an isolated and ineffective strand of U.S. policy. Already in December 1961 Assistant Secretary Williams was complaining that "the importance to the United States position of the Azores Air Base" had resulted in "too great constraints" against "a full and open statement of our arms policy towards Portugal," and protesting "our inability to hold a 'press backgrounder' on Angola" and "[the] withholding [of] public mention of our Lincoln University training program." 65 By mid-1963 Williams observed that, "responding to Portuguese sensitivities . . . we have softened our approach during the past year." 66 This was evident in the failure to maintain a consistent and anticolonial position at the United Nations, to "expand modestly" on "the very limited contacts we have with Portuguese Africans," and to "give assistance to Portuguese African refugees and students." 67 Roberto himself wrote to President Kennedy in December 1962 complaining about these developments. 68

With Portugal steadfast and the United States fainthearted, Roberto depended increasingly upon the hospitality and assistance of the Zairian government. Of course top Zairian leaders were on the CIA payroll and their relationship with Roberto could only be enhanced by the sense of a common benefactor. But the Zairians also had independent interests of their own. For instance, Prime Minister Adoula was a close friend of Roberto and worried that the Angolan would be "pushed aside by less moderate [forces]" and Adoula would "find himself with [a] Communist-oriented government in exile" in Zaire. 69 Apparently acting on its own initiative, Zaire permitted Roberto's Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE) to send men and material over the Angolan border and established a training base at Kinkuzu where Algerian-trained Angolans instructed the GRAE army, which was supplied with Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan weaponry. 70 According to Professor John Marcum, Adoula even financed Roberto out of his own funds when necessary. 71 Zaire's decision in 1963 to recognize the GRAE as the sole legitimate Angolan nationalist movement seems to have been taken against the advice of Assistant Secretary Williams and the American embassy. At this moment the State Department was encouraged by the efforts of the Soviet-assisted MPLA "extremists" to diversify their international backing:

U.S. has been under impression GRAE and Roberto represented a pro-Western stand in resistance movement. . . . MPLA has received Communist support and has some Communist sympathizers in it. However in the last ten months some extreme leftists have

65 G. Mennen Williams to Walt Rostow, December 13, 1961, pp. 1-2, WP-NA.
66 G. Mennen Williams to W. Averell Harriman, May 2, 1963, p. 1, WP-NA.
67 Ibid.
68 Holden Roberto to the President, December 19, 1962, NSF-JFKPL.
69 Stanleyville to Department of State, March 28, 1964, p. 2, NSF-LBJPL.
been removed. Recent expulsion da Cruz and Migueis and Neto visit U.S. and Western Europe last year indicate MPLA seeking contacts with West. U.S. policy is rpt [sic] not to discourage MPLA (Neto-Andrade faction) move toward West and not to choose between these movements. Difficult to assess degree of support each group has in Angola [and] how flexible groups would be in dealing with Portuguese. 72

The Department was also concerned that Zairian recognition would lead to a diplomatic break between Zaire and Portugal and prevent "meaningful talks" between the Portuguese and their nationalist opponents. 73

The inadequacy of a largely covert, financial, and nonmilitary U.S. role was underlined at the end of the year when Roberto appeared to the American embassy in Leopoldville to be "considering basic reorientation Angolan nationalist policy in favor closer cooperation with Communist bloc." 74 Roberto’s labor adviser, Carlos Kassel, approached embassy officers with the information that:

Since Roberto’s recent return from New York he had found him changed man . . . completely disillusioned with western, and specifically U.S. policy on Angola. He was convinced that the U.S. would never jeopardize its military ties with Portugal and that, in last analysis, it was U.S. military aid to Portuguese that enabled them to hold Angola. 75

At Kenya independence ceremonies in Nairobi, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi was supposed to have offered Roberto "large-scale military aid," and a visit to Peking by a CRAE delegation was envisioned. Kassel himself was instructed to "establish contact" with the Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions. 76 At this point, the Zairian authorities themselves came under attack by Chinese-inspired rebels, and "indicated their concern re Chicom [Chinese Communists] involvement with Angolan nationalists, and stated that Chicom technicians would not be welcome in [Zaire]." 77 Yet the United States and Zaire remained concerned that Roberto "might soon be ousted by extremists . . . mortgaging their future to the Communists," and ultimately reaching "a stage where they will no longer be disposed to negotiate a moderate and evolutionary settlement when Portugal finally comes around to offering one." 78

Given the constraints on overt diplomacy and the liberals' preference for non-violent nationalism, Williams could only suggest, in May 1964, that new and expanded covert political action programs be launched in Angola and Mozambique. The assistant secretary's proposal seems, in retrospect, to have been

72 Department of State Circular to All African Posts, July 4, 1963; July 17, 1963; both in NSF-JFKPL.
73 Department of State Circular to All African Posts, July 4, 1963, p. 2, NSF-JFKPL.
74 Leopoldville to Department of State, December 30, 1963, p. 1, NSF-LBJPL.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Department of State to Lisbon, January 17, 1964, p. 5, NSF-LBJPL.
rooted in some wishful thinking which failed to take account of the difference between Portuguese and other European colonialisms in Africa:

We believe that the nationalists should alter their present [violent] tactics and concentrate their energies, with our clandestine assistance, in setting up an extensive political organization within and outside the territories. This organization should be based on non-racial principles. . . . Inside the territories [it should conduct] political campaigns designed to bring about a political consciousness and manifestations of public support for self-determination.

The difficulties involved inside the territories are not underestimated: how to reorient the whole strategy and tactics of an organization which until now has been patterned on the Algerian rebellion and has concentrated on violence; how to overcome the insistence of extremist and pro-Communist elements to step up terrorism; how to organize an effective, resourceful, secret and extensive underground network; how to undertake strikes and other public demonstrations in the face of the ubiquitous and ruthless Portuguese secret police; how to obtain widespread public support in the face of fear of retaliation against the civilian population, etc.

Nevertheless, violence has paid off. Moreover . . . by and large the newly emerging nationalism, particularly in Africa, have won their independence through broadly based political and nonviolence movements that won indigenous and then worldwide backing.79

The fate of Williams's proposal is not known.

Later on, during the Johnson administration, even covert assistance took on an air of ambivalence. CIA funds continued to flow to Roberto: according to a former official of the State Department's African Bureau, doubts about Roberto's "leadership quality" were not sufficient to jeopardize "our historic relationship." On the other hand, Marchetti and Marks state—and two former officials confirm—the United States decided to sell Portugal twenty B-26 bombers for use in her African territories.[CIA employees delivered seven planes to Portugal before they were arrested by U.S. Customs personnel in a bureaucratic snafu.]4 This break with the last vestige of overt pressure on Portugal—the arms embargo—was protested in vain by Williams.81 While the specific motivation for this sale is not known, there is some evidence that it might have had to do with the provision of certain facilities for Polaris submarine forces by Portugal.82

In spite of having gained recognition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1964, the GRAE remained largely dependent upon one African coun-

79 Ibid., pp. 3-4, 7-8.
80 Marchetti and Marks, CIA and Cult of Intelligence, pp. 155-57.
81 G. Mennen Williams to Mr. Kitchen, September 17, 1965, WP-NA.
82 Lisbon to Secretary of State, July 31, 1964, NSF-LBJPL, reveals that the United States asked Portugal for "early action" on its request for LORAN-C facilities for Polaris submarine missiles. The installation of a Portuguese complex was considered "exceedingly important" for missile accuracy and "redundancy of navigational aids" for Polaris submarines and an eventual multilateral force. The American ambassador to Lisbon believed that any agreement was "likely to be a straight quid pro quo deal" involving U.S. military equipment for the war in Africa.
try, Zaire. The Mobutu regime provided limited funds and weapons. More important, the Mobutu regime arrested Roberto’s internal opposition and imprisoned them at the Kinkuzu base, and it continued an earlier policy of denying the MPLA access to the Zaire-Angola border, the most suitable frontier for guerilla operations. Nevertheless, the Soviet-assisted MPLA was finally able to mount revolutionary warfare from bases in Congo-Brazzaville and, most significant, Zambia. By 1969 the latter operations were “rated by the Portuguese as the most effective guerilla force they face,” and Roberto was increasingly accused of lassitude and embourgeoisement.

Although Roberto’s group had a much smaller ethnic base than the MPLA, it was less inclined to create a multiethnic organization and conduct guerilla warfare outside its own ethnic redoubt. In contrast with the MPLA, Roberto’s elitist political model, which one scholar aptly described as “an extension” of Zairian politics, excluded such other basic elements of successful anticolonial warfare as modern political education rooted in concrete problems and reliance on the armed masses. In 1971 the OAU withdrew recognition from his movement.

Both overtly and covertly, U.S. policy in Southern Africa moved even further away from African nationalism during the Nixon and early Ford administrations. Conservative Republican policymakers found it convenient to accept such assumptions as: “The whites are here to stay and the only way that constructive change can come about is through them”; and “Violence in the area will not increase greatly because the blacks recognize the military superiority of the whites, and will not risk their security in confrontation.” From these they drew the policy implication that the United States could adopt “a general posture of partial relaxation [of restrictions on dealing with the white regimes] balancing our relations in the area by compensating for—rather than abandoning—our tangible interests in the white states.” In the case of Angola, this meant “avoiding pressures on the Portuguese,” particularly “as the Azores negotiations come forward.” Hence the Republican administrations eased the arms embargo on Portugal by exempting nonlethal equipment that had dual civilian and military uses such as Boeing 707 transport planes. And, according to intelligence sources, CIA covert action subsidies for Roberto were scaled down to “minimal” payments of about $10,000 per year for “intelligence collection.”

83 Marcum, “Three Revolutions,” pp. 11, 14, 16; Davidson, Angola’s People, p. 242.
With the decline in American support, Roberto’s movement came even more under the influence of Mobutu whose dependence on the United States in the early 1970s had somewhat diminished. Zaire took the initiative in training and supplying Roberto’s forces, and putting down a mutiny of 1,000 GRAE troops in 1972. Zaire’s importance rose further in 1974 when a revolutionary military government in Portugal commenced decolonization and Roberto’s historic opportunity seemed to have arrived. Mobutu had followed Nixon to China in 1973 and, in turn, prepared the way for a subsequent visit by Roberto. Between May 1974 and October 1975 the Chinese, previously unsuccessful in exploiting divisions within MPLA and GRAE, provided approximately 120 military instructors for Roberto’s forces—now called the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) in Zaire. The Chinese also trained an estimated 5,000 FNLA troops and equipped them with small arms (Soviet-made AK-47 rifles, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, and light mortars). Mobutu intervened with President Spinola in a vain effort to procure Portuguese recognition for MPLA and dissident Chipenda who later joined the FNLA.

By January 1975, when the Portuguese set up a transitional tripartite coalition government in Angola, the FNLA assisted by the Chinese and Zairians, had a large edge over the Soviet-aided MPLA in troops trained or in training, amount and quality of military equipment, and the number of nearby foreign advisers. The third major group, Jonas Savimbi’s National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), though rooted in Angola’s largest ethnic group, suffered from parochialism and opportunistic leadership, and had a very small and poorly armed force. According to American diplomats in Luanda, the MPLA did not achieve parity in military resources until late spring. Nevertheless, a CIA proposal to bolster Roberto with $300,000 in political action funds was approved by the 40 Committee and President Ford in late January. The CIA’s request for a $100,000 subsidy to Savimbi was rejected. An official of the 40 Committee recalls that the “basic concern” in this decision was not to respond to the Soviet-assisted MPLA but rather to “bolster psychologically our immediate ally,” Zaire. Thus U.S. covert and overt “successes” in Zaire were now leading toward further intervention in Angola.

Elsewhere Gerald Bender has shown that after a couple of rounds of Soviet-Cuban and U.S.-Zairian-South African escalation, the MPLA did not have a significant advantage in military supplies and training, but its political and organizational superiority helped it drive the opposition from Luanda, Cabinda, and key southern ports and district capitals. As Bender also indicates, the 40 Committee approved a $14 million, two-stage program of arms and other aid to

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Roberto and Savimbi on July 17, and President Ford signed on July 27. An additional $10.7 million was approved in early September. Secretary Kissinger's public statements and interviews with two members of the 40 Committee suggested a threefold objective of covert action: to avoid a precedent of Soviet expansion that could lead to pressures—and accommodationist tendencies—elsewhere in the world; to work with the "moderate" anticommunist leaders of Zaire and Zambia who feared the consequences of a Soviet-assisted MPLA victory on their own political positions; and to prevent Soviet- and MPLA-assisted black extremists for making gains in Namibia, Rhodesia, and the rest of Southern Africa. The second concern, for Zaire and Zambia, was highlighted in administration briefings to congressional committees at the end of July. Considering the relative depth of the past U.S. commitment to Zaire, and published remarks by Kissinger aides, it is reasonable to suppose that Zambia was of secondary importance.

Unlike the Zaire operations of 1964-67, U.S. military aid was entirely covert in nature although CIA Director Colby warned that the chances for exposure were "considerable." Kissinger justified the attempt at total secrecy by referring to legal obstacles to military assistance to insurgents, especially through neighboring states, and by contending that overt aid could have led to an "unmanageable" and "open" confrontation with the Soviet Union. Still, legal barriers might have been surmounted and the risks of disproportionate Soviet reaction to some overt aid lessened if Congress and the public had been as supportive as in the days of the Zaire rebellions. Indeed the secretary himself pointed out that Soviet and Cuban intervention was "an attempt to take advantage of our continuing domestic division and self-torment."

Various American diplomatic sources provided the following breakdown and description of covert action expenditures by the middle of the fall 1975 (in millions):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>political action support</td>
<td>$5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other propaganda</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>travel, miscellaneous</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arms and equipment</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communications gear</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shipping of arms and equipment</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$22.95</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

93 Senate Select Intelligence Committee, Foreign and Military Intelligence, p. 152; 'The Pike Papers' (House Intelligence Committee Report), Village Voice Supplement, January 1976, p. 37.
94 Senate African Affairs Subcommittee, Angola, pp. 6-19.
96 The quotation is from an interview with an intelligence official. The substance of Colby's disagreement is conveyed in Washington Post, December 19, 1975.
97 Senate African Affairs Subcommittee, Angola, pp. 20, 37, 40.
98 Ibid., p. 15.
Arms were provided to FNLA and UNITA both directly and through replacement of arms supplied by Zaire and possibly Zambia. The latter course had the virtue of speed and, by providing much non-American equipment, helped submerge the U.S. role. The first direct U.S. arms shipment went in C-141s to Zaire. It was thought that Mobutu would "know we were serious" when he saw the large planes. A propaganda campaign to expose Soviet arming of MPLA and embarrass the conduit countries was launched. Savimbi and Roberto received regular monthly political action payments for internal propaganda, organizational sustenance, etc. These subsidies and other monies were also used to hire white mercenary "military technicians"—former Portuguese sergeants, Brazilians, Frenchmen, and others. Although paid with CIA money, the mercenaries were not hired or directed by CIA personnel. The United States was covertly financing third country nationals as it had in Zaire, but this time the CIA did not take on as direct a supervisory role as in WIGMO. Instead the pattern was one that had been foreshadowed by the CIA's offer in 1964 to subsidize Tshombe's own recruitment of white mercenaries. As in Zaire, American CIA personnel were forbidden to give in-country military advice or training to their clients. However, according to American diplomats, United States CIA personnel did help assure the delivery of equipment airlifted from Zaire to their protégés in Angola. And two former CIA officials have acknowledged a limited paramilitary advisory mission in Angola under the guise of "intelligence gathering." Finally, although the CIA ran its Angolan operation out of its Kinshasa station, there was also a CIA station in Luanda that "did intelligence collection feeding into FNLA and UNITA." Again "intelligence" was deeply entwined with covert action.

By mid-November the 40 Committee and the president had authorized a final dose of $7 million making a total of $32 million for covert action in Angola during 1975. However the arrival of South African combat troops to bolster the increasingly desperate FNLA-UNITA coalition had already begun to undermine both African and domestic tolerance for U.S. policy. The Soviets and Cubans were further encouraged by the relatively impressive performance of the MPLA, a group they had known and aided for more than a decade though not always without reservation. In these circumstances, so different from those that had obtained in Zaire, the Soviet Union and Cuba provided massive military assistance in the form of arms and troops. In late January, a congressional coalition of liberals and conservatives succeeded in stopping the covert action program. Shortly thereafter the South Africans, anxious to resurrect

99 John Stockwell, In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978); see also Sunday Times (London), May 21, 1978, p. 9 for an interview with William Colby. Stockwell was the head of the CIA's Angola (Covert Action) Task Force in 1975-76 and Colby was the CIA director for almost all of that period. For an examination of Stockwell's argument, which includes additional details of CIA activities in Angola and confirms the above description, see Stephen R. Weissman, "Controlling Our Secret Service," Africa Today 25 (July-September 1978): 51-58.

100 Senate Select Intelligence Committee, Foreign and Military Intelligence, p. 152.
their policy of detente with moderate black Africa, also withdrew. The MPLA was victorious.

**Patterns**

The rationale, mechanisms, and short-term local results of covert action in Zaire and Angola bear comparison with similar U.S. efforts in other parts of the Third World. As in Vietnam, Laos, Chile, Cuba, etc., a prime motive of covert intervention was fear of external Communist subversion and its international implications. Each administration sought to deal with this fear in conformity with its own political ideology. Beyond this negative sort of preoccupation, the Mobutu regime was increasingly counted on to oppose Moscow’s interests and advance Washington’s in continental and Third World arenas. Zaire’s position as a regional strong point for American policy—in many ways reminiscent of the Chilean “showcase” in Latin America—helped stimulate the abortive CIA paramilitary operation in Angola.

Together Zaire and Angola have constituted the terrain for a particularly wide variety of covert action techniques employed by the CIA in the Third World. These included: propaganda; manipulation of labor unions and student associations; subsidization of political leaders and parties, military and internal security functionaries, and coup makers; political assassination plots; technical assistance for a presidential bodyguard and security apparatus; provision of third country foreign military combat and combat-support personnel; supply of arms and related equipment. In addition, CIA “intelligence” activities were often difficult to distinguish from covert action since the political and military information gathered might be consumed by the CIA’s local allies as well as U.S. analysts. And in a period of diminished covert action, “intelligence” support could help sustain a favorable disposition on the part of a Mobutu or a Roberto pending future occasions for clandestine struggle. Similarly the CIA “intelligence” program for the Chilean military during the leftist Allende government included the passing of antigovernment information to a Chilean officer, and was partly designed “to put the U.S. government in a position to take future advantage of either a political or military solution depending on developments within the country and the latter’s impact on the military themselves.”

Just as covert action support of Mobutu and Roberto escalated in the period of Angolan decolonization, so too did covert assistance to the Chilean military in the aftermath of the 1973 coup against Allende.

Covert action provided the most direct and aggressive U.S. assistance to political leaders in Zaire and Angola. But realization of its proximate objectives also depended upon: the degree of significant, often closely coordinated, overt support from the United States and other pro-Western countries; the relative ef-

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fectiveness of local political groups; and the scale of Soviet and other foreign Communist intervention. In Zaire, conventional U.S. economic and military aid, at first in cooperation with the United Nations and then with Belgium, created a powerful context for CIA manipulations. Although the regime founded more than once, the more popular Lumumbists were unable to mount a well-organized challenge or to provoke a foreign Communist involvement commensurate with international aid to the "pro-Western moderates." The Soviets in particular were constrained by African resistance to intervention outside the United Nations and doubts about the political capacity of certain Lumumbist leaders. But in Angola things were different. There was a dearth of U.S. and other overt support for the FNLA against their colonial overlords, and even CIA assistance dropped off at the end of the 1960s. A burst of Chinese and CIA aid for FNLA-UNITA in 1974–75 produced a competitive Soviet effort in behalf of MPLA, whose political and military superiority was increasingly evident. This fact, and the ramifications of South African intervention, laid the African and U.S. domestic bases for a low-risk, decisive military thrust by the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Elsewhere in the Third World the CIA's immediate achievements have been influenced by a similar set of factors. For example, in Chile covert and overt assistance to the centrist Frei government could not overcome the growing internal crisis that assured the election of leftist President Allende. Subsequently internal polarization exacerbated by diplomatic and CIA tactics, and the Soviets' unwillingness to provide massive financial aid, helped pave the way for a right-wing military coup. On the other hand, the Communist-led Vietnamese, backed by current and potential Soviet and Chinese aid, were able to stand off massive CIA and other intervention until the domestic support in the United States eroded.