

Editorial

Africa is the soul of the United States

The failure of the U.S. government to take appropriate action in support of Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko, shows a failure to grasp the magnitude of the crisis in central Africa. What is occurring is genocide against the Hutu people on a scale hitherto unprecedented, even compared to the previous evil in this century. Hundreds of thousands of people will die within days if appropriate military action is not taken.

The problem is complicated by the despicable role of the former colonial powers, Britain and France, in trying to reassert control over Zaire. The issue is not one merely of stopping the Tutsi invasion from Uganda into Zaire, but of seeing that the national sovereignty of Zaire is not violated.

It would be impermissible to allow the British or the French to use rescue efforts in Zaire on behalf of the Hutus, as a pretext for great power intervention into that country. It is unthinkable to allow Tutsi forces to annihilate the Hutus. Thus, U.S. intervention into the situation is urgently needed.

The United States must act, under international law, to uphold the sovereignty of Zaire. If Zaire requires assistance to move its troops into the area now occupied by invaders, the United States should provide military transport and other assistance, including logistical support, to assist this. And, in that context, to assist the Zairean forces in not only asserting their proper sovereignty over this territory, but to stop the genocide.

The United States should ask to cooperate with the government of President Mobutu, in order to deliver into this area, where there are air bases, the means to assist in remedying the great suffering and death rates, and other morbidity rates, occurring among the victimized population.

If that is not done, the United States will no longer have moral authority in any part of the world. It is up to President Clinton to act now. His moral authority is being put to the test: Will he act to stop the British and French from killing Africa?

But, this is not merely a question for the President. Where, after all, is the outcry from the American peo-

ple? What, for instance, is the leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus urging? So far, the only serious opposition to this mass murder has come from the Catholic Church and from Lyndon LaRouche and his associates.

The moral indifferentism being shown by the entire U.S. political establishment to the ongoing genocide in eastern Zaire, is testimony to the degradation of Western culture in the last 40 years.

In 1949, the United States mounted the Berlin airlift, which saved the people of that city from being victimized by communist tyranny. Today, 1 million refugees in the heart of Africa lack food, clean water, and medicine, and the response is pitiful. The Berlin airlift, and the airlift to Goma, Zaire in 1994, were cited as precedents by Germany's Civil Rights Movement Solidarity in an appeal directed to President Clinton and Americans of goodwill, calling for an emergency mobilization.

We heartily endorse their statement, from which we have selected these excerpts: "Especially in light of the fact that international institutions have again failed to take appropriate action, we appeal to you, as President of the United States of America, to act. . . . We trust that you will face the challenge, but America, the country of Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, cannot allow 1 million Africans to vanish simply because governments refused to deliver the help which could have saved them. . . ."

"Mr. President, beyond the immediate relief for the humanitarian catastrophe, we appeal to you also to use the weight of your office to help facilitate serious negotiations between the current governments in Rwanda and Burundi, and their opposition forces. This most tragic history of never-ending cycles of violence and mass murder between the Tutsi and Hutu can only be broken, if the parties in question are able to negotiate a peaceful common future."

The fate of Africa hangs upon the response of the American people to this crisis, but so, too, does the soul of America.