

British seek precedent in E. Africa to destroy nations

by Linda de Hoyos

The goals of British intelligence in setting off the latest conflagration in East Africa since mid-October, which have led to a catastrophe for 1.2 million refugees, are now coming into public view. The objective was stated plainly by one Ali Mazuri in the pages of the *Los Angeles Times* on Nov. 13, and then reprinted in the *International Herald Tribune*.

Evidently speaking for the British Foreign Office, Mazuri writes that “the crisis in eastern Zaire and between Zaire and its neighbors poses the greatest challenge yet to the artificial borders that imperial European powers drew at the turn of the century to create the current so-called ‘nation-states’ in Africa. It has taken a Tutsi-trigger to spark an agonizing reappraisal.”

Minimally, Mazuri is exhibiting his endorsement of the carving out of the “Tutsi empire,” from Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi—the driving ideology behind the October 1990 invasion of Rwanda from Uganda using the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front; the Ugandan invasion of Rwanda again in 1994; the July 1996 military coup by Tutsi former dictator in Burundi Pierre Buyoya; and the Oct. 21 invasion of eastern Zaire by the combined armies of Uganda, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, and Burundi. This is the violent emergence of the “Tutsi empire” that the Hutus of central Africa so fear—given their bitter memories of Belgian and British rule through Tutsis during the colonial period.

The military consolidation of this “Tutsi empire” was undoubtedly the subject of the Nov. 22 summit of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Rwandan Defense Minister Paul Kagame, and Burundi’s new military dictator Pierre Buyoya, in a remote town in western Uganda. The chief in this triumvirate is Ugandan warlord Museveni, whose mentor is Baroness

Lynda Chalker, Britain’s Minister of Overseas Development (formerly the Colonial Office).

The on-the-ground goal is use of the Tutsi military machine to pave the way for British financial and corporate exploitation of this area of Africa, site of the resource-rich Great Rift Valley. But, as Mazuri signals, a higher-level goal lies behind the first: the use of East Africa as *the* precedent to destroy the authority of the concept of the nation-state itself.

To be sure, given the deliberately contrived irrationalities of the boundaries among nations left by the retreat of the British and French from direct colonial rule, nearly any country in the former colonial world could be called “artificial.” Within the framework of a monetary system dedicated to the actual infrastructural development of the world’s increasingly impoverished economies, this artificiality—in which ethnic and tribal groupings straddle most borders—could be superseded by mutual cooperation and development.

That is not, however, the British gameplan. Together, the Anglo-French plan is to reverse gears—seek the total annihilation of the borders of “nation-states” so as to weaken any military, economic, or political power such countries might have, reducing them to financial and military satrapies of and for Anglo-French financial and corporate looting.

Zaire the target

The immediate target for setting the precedent for forging an “international consensus” on the destruction of the nation-state is Zaire. Zaire was in fact the first test case for the post-colonial nation-state, when an instigated rebellion in Shaba

province threatened the disintegration of the country in 1961. That danger was avoided, but at great cost to Zaire, including the murder of its foremost leader Patrice Lumumba. For years after, Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko was used as an asset by the United States, Britain, and Israel in the Cold War against communism in South Africa. Now that the Cold War is over, Zaire is dispensable to the British and their orbiting asteroids in Washington.

"This time, let Zaire fall apart," was the headline from Conor Cruise O'Brien, who was United Nations special envoy to the Congo (Zaire) in the early 1960s. For O'Brien and the ilk for which he squawks, the "Tutsi rebel rout" of the "Hutu extremists" should be "unreservedly welcomed." The issue now, he writes in the London *Times* on Nov. 19, is what will happen to the "huge state of Zaire." Despite the best efforts of France to come to the rescue of Zaire and its President Mobutu, says O'Brien, "Zaire's condition now appears to be terminal, and international efforts to preserve its integrity will only increase the agonies of its peoples. It should be allowed to assume such shapes as the energies and aspirations of its various peoples may eventually assign to it. The energies of international diplomacy should be confined to holding the ring, and discouraging the internationalization of the tremendous internal conflict."

This "internal conflict," however, has already been internationalized by virtue of the fact that 1) the war in eastern Zaire is the result of an invasion from Rwanda, itself a satellite of Uganda and the recipient of the largest allocation of aid for Africa from Britain; and 2) that invasion has caused a humanitarian catastrophe, threatening the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians.

O'Brien's insistence that the conflict in Zaire not be internationalized is the ruse by which Zaire is to be carved up, while the international community agrees, that by virtue of being a weak state, it should not exist at all. Since the Zairean civilian government is virtually nonexistent, this means the destruction of its army, particularly Mobutu's elite and effective Presidential guard. This would open up Zaire to exploitation by British mining and plantation interests, now dominating Uganda's economy. And, it would eliminate Zaire as a center of resistance to British neo-colonialism, although one that retains its dependence on France.

O'Brien's demand is the real subject of the current debate on whether an international multilateral force will go into eastern Zaire to deliver urgently needed aid to what is believed to be 700,000 terrorized refugees still roaming about without food, water, or shelter.

The Schiller Institute of Lyndon and Helga LaRouche has demanded that President Clinton take immediate, unilateral action, in coordination with Zaire, to carry out the necessary aid measures for the stranded refugees, and also *secure Zairean national sovereignty* against the British-backed Tutsi invasion.

France, along with other European powers, had gained

agreement for a multilateral force to deliver aid, but this is now being reconsidered, since more than 500,000 refugees started trekking back to Rwanda under the gun of the Tutsi military, when the Mugunga camp fell to the Tutsi onslaught on Nov. 15.

On Nov. 20, Pope John Paul II said that a multinational force for eastern Zaire should proceed. The pontiff noted that many Rwandan Hutu refugees had returned home in the past days, but said that "immediate and large-scale actions" were still needed. He made a specific appeal to countries which have agreed to participate in the Canadian-led force, originally intended to help feed refugees in Zaire and help them return home, who now say they are rethinking their mandate.

Debate beginning?

Up to now, the Clinton administration, believed to be taking the lead of National Security Council Adviser Anthony Lake, has toed the British line on East Africa, and rumors abound of Pentagon involvement with the Tutsi militaries. However, the consensus in Washington is showing signs of fissure. U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda Robert Gribbin announced Nov. 21 that no aid delivery was necessary, as most refugees had returned to Rwanda from Zaire—the claim of the Rwandan Patriotic Front in Kigali. This has been backed up by Roger Winter, director of the U.S. Committee on Refugees, who had set himself the personal goal of restoring the Tutsis to power in the early 1990s, and who rode into Rwanda in spring 1994 at the front of the RPF invasion force.

But this claim has prompted ire among others heavily involved in U.S. policy toward Africa. Lionel Rosenblatt, head of Refugees International, angrily and publicly demanded Gribbin's recall from Kigali. The State Department was equivocal. Said State Department spokesman Glyn Davies, "We believe Gribbin is doing a great job in tough circumstances," but, "I would say that Ambassador Gribbin was, as he pointed out, expressing his own view in the recent interviews with the press on the situation in eastern Zaire."

The outcome of this debate has strategic importance for the United States. For one, what happens to the moral authority of the United States in the world today, if President Clinton stands by and watches hundreds of thousands die from disease, hunger, and thirst in Zaire? What happens to the hundreds of thousands already herded into Rwanda against their will? The Associated Press reported Nov. 21 that "Zairean rebels" were separating young Rwandan Hutu men from the crowds of returning refugees, and no one knows where they have been taken.

Will the United States be complicit in the mass murder known to be ongoing in Rwanda? Will the United States be complicit in the British destruction of the already weakened nations of Africa, and the delivery of their populations to Anglo-French recolonization? It is difficult to fathom what national security interests could possibly be served by continuing to follow London's murderous lead in Africa.