

# London gameplan for Congo proceeds apace

by Linda de Hoyos

A U.S. delegation led by Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice is touring the Central Africa region, in the hopes of achieving a negotiated settlement for the multi-country conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.). After beginning in South Africa, where President Nelson Mandela has led several unsuccessful attempts to mediate the conflict, Rice headed for Angola on Oct. 27. According to the Associated Press, she arrived in Luanda with the “hopes of persuading the government to withdraw troops it has sent to Congo to support the Congolese government in its war against rebels.” On Oct. 21, U.S. Special Envoy Howard Wolpe had visited Harare, Zimbabwe, in an effort to dissuade Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe from sending more troops to the D.R.C., in response to the seizure of the central Congo town of Kindu by the “rebel forces.” “We are anxious to get a cease-fire in place,” Wolpe explained his mission in Harare. “We do not want things to get out of control.”

The negotiating points of the U.S. delegation appear to match those put forward by a summit of East African heads of state—Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi, and Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa—held in Nairobi, Kenya, Oct. 19, which called for a negotiated settlement for the war in Congo. The modalities for such a settlement would include: immediate cessation of hostilities; immediate negotiation for a cease-fire agreement and troop standstill; measures to address the security concerns of neighboring countries; security for marginalized groups; orderly withdrawal of all foreign troops; initiation of dialogue; deployment of an international peacekeeping force under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The summit correctly noted, that the conflict in the Congo, which began Aug. 2, “threatens to engulf the whole region” or become “Africa’s first world war,” as Rice voiced her concern about the situation. The demand for a cease-fire and renewed negotiations had come from Uganda’s Museveni and the Congo rebel forces immediately after their seizure of Kindu on Oct. 14, in an attempt to stave off counterattack by the forces that had been invited to defend the Congo by President Laurent Kabila—Zimbabwe, Chad, Angola, and Namibia.

The Congo Alliance, as it is called, has no illusions, however, that it is fighting Congolese forces. The war in Congo began on Aug. 2 with an invasion across the border into Congo from Rwanda, by combined Rwandan and Ugandan troops.

As *EIR* reported last week, the Kivu provinces of eastern Congo have come under the occupation of Rwandan forces, while toward the north, troops of the Ugandan Popular Defense Forces operate. The seizure of Kindu has placed the Rwandan-Ugandan force in line to go either south into Katanga, in efforts to take Lubumbashi, or further into central Congo to seize the diamond town of Myuji-Mayi. All of the region seized by the Rwandan-Ugandan combine is drenched in minerals.

The attempts for a cease-fire from Museveni et al., after the fall of Kindu, did not succeed. After meeting with Kabila on Oct. 14 in Lubumbashi, Zimbabwe President Mugabe said the allies would now review the situation. “We had believed the conflict was going to be resolved through peaceful means since we were negotiating with Rwanda and Uganda, but it would appear that the more we negotiate peace and assure them that we would want to see peace, the more they take advantage of the peaceful negotiations to extend their areas of control.”

By Oct. 22, the allies of the Congo had decided to step up their presence in Congo, after a meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe. “A prolonged struggle in our region that destabilizes the principle of the region and principles of democracy . . . that destabilization must be resisted. What is a threat to your neighbor is a threat to you,” they said. Coming under fire from the international community and from Zimbabwe’s internal opposition, Mugabe defended the decision: “Resources must be utilized for the survival of the people, for the avoidance of fraction, trouble, for the creation of harmony, peace, and stability in the region. . . . We have pledged our support to President Kabila and we have assured him we will not allow the D.R.C. to fall into the hands of those who have invaded it. Never. Never.”

Hence, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia are coming under pressure to cease and desist in the Congo. Observers have noted with consternation that while the United States places its diplomatic pressure on the Congo allies, it is not placing the same pressure on the invaders. In contrast to the demands placed on Zimbabwe and Angola for immediate withdrawal, U.S. envoy Wolpe on Oct. 26 visited Uganda, to meet with President Museveni, where “they discussed the proposals which have so far been made by the region on how to resolve the conflict in the D.R.C.” and where Wolpe wanted to see how his government “could be of assistance.” Hence, Museveni is being treated as a leader seeking a settlement, as if his troops were not in Congo in violation of international law!

## Sitting round the table

There is now a military stand-off in the D.R.C., which if not settled soon, either through negotiations or decisive military action, threatens to turn all Central Africa into a quagmire of perpetual war. Given the dangers to all parties, negotiations are definitely in order. A review of the interests of all the parties involved helps explain the anomalies in the

reactions of not only the United States, but the international community, to the war. Start from the top:

- British Privy Council: While the British have also demanded an immediate cease-fire in the Congo and launching of negotiations, the invasion of Congo by Rwanda and Uganda—as the same invasion in 1996-97—is the realization of the desire on the part of the British oligarchy, since the days of Belgium’s King Leopold, to have direct control of the mineral wealth of eastern Congo. Suspected of aiding in financing the “rebellion” against Kabila are such companies as Banro Resources, along with other British Commonwealth extraction companies that funded Kabila’s march on Kinshasa in 1997.

As *EIR* has documented, the 1990 invasion of Rwanda by the Ugandan Army, which set into the motion the events that have led to the current war, had as its objective the use of Rwanda as a springboard for the taking of eastern Congo, a mission the Museveni-allied Rwandan Patriotic Front has been eager to execute. In the case of the invasion of Congo, the aim is not simply the seizure of Congo, but also to use that area as a springboard to go after the governments further to the south, particularly Zambia, where a mining consortium led by Anglo-American has already put the government under financial siege for the purposes of acquiring Zambia’s rich copper fields.

The British call for peace in the Congo, but their money is directed otherwise. On Oct. 2, the British government donated £67 million to the Ugandan government, the largest financial package ever delivered to Uganda. The money permits Museveni to continue to divert government funds to military operations, which now use up 20% of the Ugandan national budget.

- Rwanda and Uganda: Museveni has sent troops into Congo under the direction of his Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, James Kazini, the President’s nephew. According to all accounts, including from their Rwandan allies, the Ugandan troops are now plundering the areas under their control, particularly hauling out the gold of the Haut-Zaire province. Museveni has claimed that he sent troops into Congo in order to rout Ugandan rebels from their safe haven, but such battles have not occurred, although hundreds of Ugandan soldiers were captured in the battles for Kinshasa in September.

In Museveni, a man who sees the entire central and eastern Africa as land that should be under his dominion, the British have found the right man to execute their plans on the ground. Although Museveni has loudly called for a cease-fire, in his long career in military conflict, he has never been known to have been engaged in negotiations in good faith, but rather sought to use negotiations either for the purpose of deception, or for buying time for building up his forces for a new offensive.

As for the Rwandan government in Kigali, it has publicly stated its desire for a second conference of Berlin, after the

1884 Berlin conference where the European powers divided the African continent among themselves. In the failed talks in Lusaka Oct. 26, the Rwandans were accused by the Congolese of seeking more “living space” in eastern Congo. All of Kigali’s actions on the ground in eastern Congo, including the transfer of Tutsi populations to rich agricultural land in the east, indicates their intention to stay in the area permanently.

- The Kabila government: President Laurent Kabila wants to stay in power, and also wants to rebuild Congo, so that it ceases to be nothing but a looting ground for western mining interests. His refusal to talk to rebels, before the Rwandan and Ugandan troops have withdrawn from Congolese territory, has been the death knell of every mediation effort.

- Congo Alliance: Those nations coming to the defense of the territorial sovereignty of Congo at the invitation of Kabila have drawn the line against the continuing destabilization of the continent coming from Museveni, as indicated by Mugabe. If serious negotiations do not begin soon, or if they fail to take decisive military action to force the withdrawal of Rwandan and Ugandan troops, they risk becoming involved in a protracted war of attrition, giving time to the British et al. to wage international campaigns against their economies and political leadership.

- The United States: Backing Museveni to the hilt both militarily and financially, U.S. policy in eastern Africa has been hijacked by the “war gang” centered around Roger Winter of the U.S. Committee on Refugees, Susan Rice, and John Prendergast at the National Security Council. Their policy hinges around backing of Museveni for war against Sudan. Their calls for Rwanda and Uganda to remove their troops from Congo, have not been matched by any action backing up the words. Under Rice et al., the United States has not acted in its own interests in Congo, but served as junior—and most hard-working—partner to British Privy Council aims. If the United States were to take action to impose a just peace in Congo, then a settlement could be achieved. If, however, Rice et al. continue their antics of attacking allies legally inside Congo, while giving Museveni free rein, it is unlikely that peace can be achieved unless it is a peace of victory—disguised or otherwise—for Uganda and Rwanda.

- The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo: This grouping of more than 40 million people has not been consulted. The long-suffering Congolese people seek a unified Congo under democratic nationalist rule. By all accounts, if the British and their allies succeed in their plans in placing Congo or parts thereof under Rwandan and Ugandan tutelage, this will not be tolerated by the Congolese people, and a long war will ensue inside the country.

Therefore, for those who want peace in Central Africa the most pertinent question is: By whom and how will the Ugandan and Rwandan troops be forced out?