MATTHEW HUGHES

Fighting for White Rule in Africa: The Central African Federation, Katanga, and the Congo Crisis, 1958-1965

BEFORE THE FORMATION of Zimbabwe in 1980, black guerrilla forces fought a long war throughout the 1970s against the white-controlled government of Rhodesia. Twenty years earlier, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, long before the start of the insurgency that led to the end of white rule, the white settlers of Rhodesia, then part of the Central African Federation, had fought against black rule in the Belgian Congo. The focus of this fight was the Congo's province of Katanga, which bordered on the Federation to the north. The struggle in the Congo forms part of the story of white Rhodesian resistance to black majority rule that lasted until 1980 (and until 1994 in South Africa). Even before Belgium decided to pull out of the Congo in 1960, the Federation's whites were looking to effect a political union with the Belgian settlers in Katanga; and once Belgium withdrew in the summer of 1960, the Federation did all it could to help to preserve white control over the Congo. This article examines the two related issues of the proposed political union between the Federation and Katanga before 1960, and the Federation's support for white settler interests in Katanga and the Congo from 1960 to 1965, when this phase of the Congo crisis ended. It shows that determined white resistance began earlier and cast its net more widely than once thought, thus adding to our understanding of the decay of white rule in central and southern Africa after the Second World War.

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The literature on decolonization in the Belgian Congo leading to its independence on 30 June 1960 is both admirable and comprehensive: it deals with the dynamics in both the Congolese and Belgian camps during the Belgians' hasty withdrawal; the impact of the cold war and the superpowers on events in the Congo; the succession of conflicts that followed the end of Belgian rule leading to the collapse of civil society (and infrastructure); the involvement of Belgium in the Congo after independence; the role of United Nations (UN) peace-keeping

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forces; and the secession of Katanga in July 1960.[1] There is also ongoing interest in the death of the Congolese prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, whom Ludo de Witte accuses agents of the Belgian government of murdering in January 1961.[2]

Missing from this corpus, however, is an in-depth analysis of the role played by the neighbouring Central African Federation. Even Alan James, who examines the links between Britain, the Federation, and the Congo, focuses primarily on Britain's role in the struggle in the Congo. As he explains, 'the literature on the Congo is voluminous. That on Britain's part in the crisis is to all intents and purposes nonexistent.'[3] The gap is even more apparent when looking at the Federation's relations with the Congo: there is no relevant material in Portuguese, and French-language works focus on Belgium's role in the crisis.[4] Meanwhile, in English, with the exception of James and articles that touch obliquely upon the subject, the relevant works – such as J. R. T. Wood's edition of the prime minister of the Federation, Sir Roy Welensky's, papers – focus primarily on events within the Federation.[5] The exception is the interest shown in the death of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, in September 1961 in an aeroplane crash near the Northern Rhodesian airfield of Ndola while attempting to broker a deal to end Katangan

1 See R. Anstey, 'Belgian Rule in the Congo and the Aspirations of the "Évolué" Class', in *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960*: II: *The History and Politics of Colonialism, 1914-60*, ed. P. Duignan and L. H. Gann (Cambridge, 1982); *Che in Africa: Che Guevara's Congo Diary*, ed. W. Galvez (Melbourne, 1999); J. Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession* (Madison, 1966); J. D. Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa* (London, 1990); R. Holland, *European Decolonisation, 1918-81: An Introductory Survey* (London, 1985); I. Kabongo, 'The Catastrophe of Belgian Decolonization', in *Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfer of Power, 1960-80*, ed. P. Gifford and W. R. Louis (New Haven, 1988); M. G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables: The Cold War in Africa – From Eisenhower to Kennedy* (New York, 1982); E. W. Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo: A United Nations Force in Action* (Washington, DC, 1965); C. C. O'Brien, *To Katanga and Back: A UN Case History* (London, 1962); J. Stengers, 'Precipitous Decolonisation: The Case of the Belgian Congo', in *The Transfer of Power in Africa*, ed. W. R. Louis and P. Gifford (New Haven, 1982); S. R. Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-4* (Ithaca, 1978); and M. Crawford Young, 'Zaire, Rwanda, and Burundi', in *The Cambridge History of Africa*: VIII: *From c. 1940 to c.1975*, ed. M. Crowder (Cambridge, 1984).

2 L. de Witte, *De Moord op Lumumba* (Leuven, 1999), pp. 119-24. De Witte's book has been published in English as *The Assassination of Lumumba* (London, 2001). For Lumumba's murder, see also 'Files Show UK Backed Murder Plot' and 'Chronicle of a Death', *The Guardian*, 28 June 2001. See also, T. R. Kanza, *Conflict in the Congo: The Rise and Fall of Patrice Lumumba* (London, 1978) and J.-C. Willame, *Patrice Lumumba: la crise congolaise revisitée* (Paris, 1990).

3 A. James, *Britain and the Congo Crisis, 1960-3* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. xvi.

4 I thank Malyn Newitt and Patrick Chabal for this information. The work on Portugal's role tends to concentrate on the counter-insurgency campaigns in Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau from the late 1960s, after the period examined in this article. An example of this is I. Beckett, 'The Portuguese Army: The Campaign in Mozambique, 1964-74', in *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency*, ed. I. Beckett and J. Pimlott (New York, 1985). In French, see the excellent collection, *Congo, 1959-65*, ed. J. Gérard-Libois et al. (Brussels and Leopoldville, 1960-6).

5 N. White, 'The Business and Politics of Decolonisation: The British Experience in the Twentieth Century', *Economic History Review*, liii (2000), 544-64; P. Murphy, 'Intelligence and Decolonisation: The Life and Death of the Federal Intelligence and Security Bureau, 1954-63', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xxix (May 2001), 101-30 and 'Creating a Commonwealth Intelligence Culture: The View from Central Africa', *Intelligence and National Security*, xvii (2002), 131-62; and J. R. T. Wood, *The Welensky Papers: A History of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (Durban, 1983).

secession. Such works, usually investigative journalism implicating the Federation in Hammarskjöld's death, shed little light on its activities in the Congo.[1] As the British prime minister, Harold Macmillan, told Welensky: 'It is hard indeed that you should have to endure suggestions from various quarters that Hammarskjöld's death was in some way brought about by a plot organised by us, for which you provided the means.'[2] Indeed, most of the work on Hammarskjöld's death fits the category of conspiracy theories that often emerge following the violent death of a famous person in murky circumstances.[3]

One would expect the Federation to be worried about what might happen in the Congo, Katanga in particular, when Belgium made the sudden decision to withdraw as the colonial power in the late 1950s.[4] Established in 1953, and, from 1956, headed by Welensky, the Federation was a ten-year association that tied together Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, managed by the Colonial Office, with Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), managed by the Commonwealth Relations Office. Southern Rhodesia, technically a Crown colony, had enjoyed de facto self-government since 1923. The Federation represented its attempt to dominate Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland and their majority black populations: its capital was Salisbury, also the capital of Southern Rhodesia, and political gerrymandering ensured white control.[5] In its protection of the economically dominant minority group – the white settlers – the Federation is comparable to the East Africa High Commission, with the difference that whereas the Federation was both an economic and a political union, only economic integration was envisaged for British East Africa.[6]

The Federation, autonomous in practice, had both a long-standing economic association with and a political interest in Katanga. The economic connection stretched back to 1899 when Cecil Rhodes,

1 For accusations of skulduggery in Hammarskjöld's death, see Home to Welensky, *c.*4 Oct. 1961 [Oxford, Rhodes House Library], Welensky Papers 259/1. That Hammarskjöld's death might not be an accident was widely discussed in the press at the time and continues to attract interest: G. I. Smith, 'Mercenaries Accused of Killing Hammarskjöld', *The Observer*, 18 May 1980; H. Debelius, 'Tshombe Linked with Hammarskjöld Death', *The Times*, 2 Feb. 1982; D. Pallister, 'Mercenaries Blamed for Death of UN Head in Air Crash in Northern Rhodesia', *The Guardian*, 11 Sept. 1992; C. C. O'Brien, 'Foul Play on the Albertina', *The Guardian*, 25 Sept. 1992; letter to *The Guardian* from G. I. Smith, 30 Sept. 1992; letter to *The Guardian* from B. Rosio, 13 March 1993; M. Evans, 'West "Plotted to Kill" UN Chief', *The Times*, 20 Aug. 1998; C. Coulter, 'O'Brien Dismisses Hammarskjöld Plot', *Irish Times*, 21 Aug. 1998; C. C. O'Brien, *Memoir: My Life and Themes* (London, 1998), pp. 201-34, 362-3. See also, Wood, *Welensky Papers*, pp. 962-3 and [Oxford, Bodleian Library,] Smith Papers, MSS Eng. e.3254.

2 Macmillan to Welensky, 29 Sept. 1961 [London, Public Record Office, Records of the] PR[im]E M[inister] 11/4049.

3 For a recent discussion, see M. Hughes, Diary, *London Review of Books*, xxiii (9 Aug. 2001), 32-3.

4 While Belgium formally made the decision to withdraw from the Congo in Jan. 1960, new policy initiatives in the late 1950s were a portent of the decision to quit the Congo in 1960. Belgian officials, civil and military, and Belgian civilians continued to work, reside, and direct events in the Congo after the formal withdrawal in June 1960.

5 Murphy, 'Intelligence and Decolonisation', p. 104.

6 A. Adedeji, 'The Economic Evolution of Developing Africa', in *Cambridge History of Africa*: VIII, ed. Crowder, p. 232.

determined to have a share in Katanga's mineral riches, set up Tanganyika Concessions Ltd (or 'Tanks'), which promptly sent an expedition north into Katanga to stake out claims to mineral rights. In response, the Belgian Comité Special du Katanga (CSK) agreed to share Katanga's wealth – 60 per cent CSK to 40 per cent 'Tanks' – and to develop mining as a separate concern. The jointly run Union Minière du Haut Katanga came into being in 1906 as a collaboration between British and Belgian capitalists who, together, provided the initial capital.[1] Inextricably joined, the two companies shared reports, correspondence, directors, dividends and shares, letterhead, and auditors.[2] British money flowed in and out of Union Minière and British directors sat on the board until the 1960s. Captain Charles Waterhouse, formerly a Conservative member of parliament and a frequent visitor to the foreign office during the Congo crisis, was both the chairman of 'Tanks' and a director of the Union Minière.[3] Other British members of Union Minière's board of directors at the time of the Congo crisis included Sir Ulick Alexander and Lord Selborne, while important British firms such as Unilever, the British-American Tobacco Company, and Shell Oil had large holdings in Katanga.[4]

The links between the British and Belgian governments, 'Tanks', the Union Minière, and the Federation led to the formation of a 'Katanga lobby', a shadowy group of businessmen and politicians keen to keep control of the wealth they derived from white rule in Africa. James describes the lobby as an 'important and sometimes influential pressure group', and even though it had no formal structure, among its leading members were Waterhouse and the marquess of Salisbury, a leading critic after 1960 of Macmillan's Africa policy and one of the most influential members of the Conservative Party.[5] The 'Katanga lobby' found its political allies among the reactionary backbench Conservative MPs who had rebelled over the retreat from Suez and in the Federation, owing to their obvious admiration for Welensky.[6] The group's existence was pinpointed by the US under-secretary of state for economic affairs in the John F. Kennedy administration, George Ball, in a memorandum for the president written after a bout of fighting in the Congo in 1961: 'the Macmillan Government should be able to free itself from the pressures of City and Conservative groups in the

1 S. Hempstone, *Katanga Report* (London, 1962), pp. 49-50; F. Coleman, *The Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt, 1899-1962* (Manchester, 1971), p. 9; 'Summary of the Memorial "1906-56" Issued by Union Minière du Haut-Katanga on the Occasion of Its Fiftieth Anniversary (1957)', p. 5.
2 See T[anganyika] C[oncessions] U[nion] M[inière] 98 Usines Lubumbashi 1928 and TC 22 Union Minière (in the latter especially TC to Count Guy de Baillet Latour of UMHK, 16 June 1933; representative of Tanganyika Concessions to Scotland, 19 Jan. 1933; and UMHK AGM of shareholders, 8 July 1935, in [Manchester, John Rylands University Library], Tanganyika Concessions Group Archive.
3 White, 'Business and Politics of Decolonisation', pp. 548-9, 553.
4 James, *Britain and the Congo Crisis*, p. 31.
5 Ibid., p. xii. See also White, 'Business and Politics of Decolonisation', p. 553.
6 Hempstone, *Katanga Report*, p. 50; N. Fisher, *Iain Macleod* (London, 1973) p. 167.

UK and the Rhodesias and join with us in trying to bring about a peaceful reunification of the Congo.'[1] This, however, was more easily said than done.

Katanga's communications and prosperity were tied to Rhodesia's. Coal from the Wankie fields in Southern Rhodesia fed Katanga's furnaces, and British-run railways, both through the Federation and Portuguese Angola, carried the bulk of Katanga's imports and exports: they were an obvious symbol of the intimate economic relationship between the two.[2] In 1960-1, when the Congo's infrastructure collapsed after the Belgians' departure, Federation railways and the British-run Benguela railway through Angola exported all of Katanga's mineral production.[3]

The profits from the economic exploitation of central and southern Africa depended on the maintenance of direct or indirect white political rule in central and southern Africa. But even before Macmillan's speech in Cape Town on 3 February 1960 announcing a 'wind of change' bringing decolonization to Africa, black African nationalism and British government pragmatism were undermining the foundations of white rule.[4] The granting of independence to Ghana in 1957 foreshadowed independence for Britain's colonies in central and east Africa – all of them became independent in the 1960s – and threatened to destabilize the Federation.[5] This shift in Britain's stance encouraged the whites in the Federation to make common cause with fellow white settler communities in Angola and Mozambique, South Africa, and Katanga, in the hope that, by standing together, they could throw up a barrier to black Africa, both internally to demands for political reform, and externally, from the newly independent African states to the north.[6] Conor Cruise O'Brien, an Irish diplomat whom the United Nations posted to Katanga, set out the predicament of the Federation's whites in the foreword he wrote for a radical attack on colonialism published in 1962: 'In Katanga, I came to feel that I was living at the point where the "wind of change" begins to veer: that is, the point where it encounters the escarpment of a relatively solid area of European settlement and rule. The 30,000 or so Europeans of Katanga felt themselves to be backed by the 300,000 or so of the Rhodesias and by more than 3,000,000 in South Africa.'[7] Thus, the Federation's Committee for the Consideration of External Policy in Relation to the

1 Memo, Ball to Kennedy, 23 Sept. 1961, in *F[oreign] R[elations of the] U[nited] S[tates]*: XX: *[Congo Crisis]*, p. 230 .
2 N. Pollock, *Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia: Corridor to the North* (Pittsburgh, 1971), p. 408.
3 Hempstone, *Katanga Report*, p. 50.
4 Fisher, *Macleod*, p. 142.
5 Ibid., Somalia (1960), Tanzania (1961), Uganda (1962), Kenya (1963), Zambia (1964), Malawi (1964), and Botswana (1966).
6 Gérard-Libois, *Katangan Secession*, p. 175.
7 Introduction by C. C. O'Brien to R. Ainslie, *The Unholy Alliance: Salazar-Verwoerd-Welensky* (London, 1962), p. 3.

Defence of the Federation, set up in the late 1950s, recommended 'the advisability of entering into a defence commitment or understanding with the Portuguese and South Africans on the basis that, despite the differences which separated our policies, the geographical facts of our position indicated that we would either stand or fall together in meeting a movement which sought to remove European influence from Africa.'[1]

Welensky's administration was keen to create a NATO-style defence pact for southern Africa – the African Treaty Organization (ATO) – with the Federation as a leading member.[2] From 1958, the head of the Federation's security service, the Federal Intelligence and Security Bureau (FISB), Basil (Bob) de Quehen, rationalized such an organization by comparing it to the South-East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), founded in 1955 to contain Soviet expansion.[3] Hoping to ride on the coat-tails of the containment and, after the Korean War, 'rollback' of Communism, the final version of Welensky's proposal for a defence pact, in December 1959, tried to enveigle Britain and the United States into supporting the Federation by attributing African nationalism to Soviet sponsorship. Had he succeeded, the organization would have thrown up a cordon sanitaire across central Africa. As Welensky explained: 'It will be seen from this suggestion that I have in mind the creation of a firm line stretching across the 10° parallel and running from Ruvuma River, on the East Coast, across the northern boundary of Mocambique, the Federation and Angola to Cabinda, south of Pointe Noire, on the west coast of Africa. I have in mind that the pact which would establish this line would be kept top secret.'[4] In fact, Welensky hoped to create a glacis to the north of this line: 'it might well be to the advantage of Brussels to require the future government or governments of the Congo to subscribe to the pact so that the West might retain some degree of control over the Congo's external affairs.'[5] For similar reasons, French Madagascar and French Equatorial Africa might be asked to join.[6]

Britain's lack of interest in the idea of a regional defence pact prompted Welensky to pursue an alternative strategy of a bilateral defence pact with Portuguese Africa.[7] As early as November 1958, he

1 Committee for the Consideration of External Policy in Relation to the Defence of the Federation, 30 Sept, 1961. Annex: 'An Examination of the Factors Likely to Shape the External Policies and Defence of the Federation, September 1961', Welensky Papers, 231/4.
2 See memo, 22 Dec. 1959 [London, Public Record Office], C[olonial] O[ffice Records] 968/699.
3 See letters and reports, Welensky Papers, 234/4.
4 Memo, Welensky, 22 Dec. 1959 [London, Public Record Office], CAB[inet Records] 21/3175.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid. See also AT (FED) 14, 31 Dec. 1959, Prime Minister's Visit to Africa, Jan. 1960, Sir R. Welensky's Proposal for an African Defence Pact, Additional Brief by the CRO, CAB 21/3175.
7 'Sir Roy Welensky's Proposal for Defence Talks with the Portuguese', n.d. [*c*. Jan. 1960] in 'Proposed Talks between the Federal Government of Rhodesia and the Portuguese Government', CAB 21/3175. For the British response, see note for PM by CRO, 1 Jan. 1960, CO 968/699 and Prime Minister's Visit to Africa, Jan. 1960, Sir R. Welensky's Proposal for an African Defence Pact,

had met the Portuguese dictator, António de Oliveira Salazar, to discuss how best to link the Federation with its neighbours, the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique. He suggested that all three should jam radio broadcasts from Egypt to help in containing the spread of Soviet influence,[1] and when the Portuguese seemed keen, Welensky put the idea to Macmillan in May 1960. But Macmillan, who was no more interested than he had been in the idea of a defence pact, merely agreed to mull it over.[2]

Welensky's proposed defence pact with the Portuguese concentrated on issues such as joint military and security planning, improved communications, and counter-propaganda, as well as better trade links designed to integrate the economies of the Federation and Portuguese Africa.[3] He was confident that Portugal would at least build connections with the Federation, especially in the 'context of controlling subversion'.[4] Thus, when events in the Congo overtook the negotiations, the Portuguese authorities in Angola worked closely with the Federation in the Congo in the early 1960s.

At the same time as the Federation was negotiating with the Portuguese, it proposed a political union with Katanga. Indeed, in 1958, long before the Belgian government announced its plans to withdraw from the Congo, the settlers in Katanga had suggested a merger with the Federation.[5] Talks between the two sides intensified in late 1959 and early 1960 when a 'European group from Katanga' and senior figures from the Federation met to discuss 'questions of common interest posed by the accession of the Congo to independence'.[6] As a British secret service report noted in December 1959, Welensky played a key role in the discussions: 'He [Welensky] told me that he had recently received a secret delegation from the Katanga area … This delegation had asked him whether, if certain political developments took place in the Congo, the Katanga area might be received into the Central [African] Federation.'[7]

The white settlers in the Federation regarded a united black Congo in control of Katanga as a 'grim warning' of what might happen if Britain gave independence to any of the Federation's territories.[8] The sudden decision by Belgium in January 1960 to withdraw from the Congo and grant independence within six months made the talks with

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Additional Brief by the Commonwealth Relations Office, 31 Dec. 1959, CO 968/699.

1 Note of conversation, Welensky and Salazar, 29 Nov. 1958 [London, Public Record Office], F[oreign Office Records] 371/131639. See also, Welensky to Macmillan, 22 Dec. 1959, CAB 21/3175.

2 Notes of mtg., Welensky and prime minister, 9 May 1960, PREM 11/3083; memo, Stephen to Bligh, 4 May 1960. in 'Proposed Talks between the Federal Government of Rhodesia and the Portuguese Government', CAB 21/3175.

3 Sir Roy Welensky's Proposal for Defence Talks with the Portuguese, CAB 21/3175.

4 Ibid.

5 Cutting from *The Times*, 9 March 1960, FO 371/146632.

6 Gérard-Libois, *Katangan Secession*, p. 57.

7 Report, British SIS officer (MI6), 'Notes on a Visit to Africa', 11 Dec. 1959, PREM 11/2585.

8 M. Garnett, *Alport: A Study in Loyalty* (Teddington, 1999) p. 166.

the Belgians in Katanga more urgent: the Federation faced the prospect in June of a black-run administration in a neighbouring province geographically and culturally akin to the 'Copperbelt' zone of the overwhelmingly black Northern Rhodesia. In March 1960, three months before the hand-over of power in Leopoldville, the local Katangan paper, the *Echo du Katanga*, reported that the Rhodesians were proposing a new federation to be made up of Katanga, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, and Mozambique, or that Katanga could join the existing Federation. The press speculated that the Belgian government would support the merger.[1] The same month, the Belgian consul-general in Salisbury, Etienne Harford, told Welensky that the Belgian government suggested that, when the Congo became independent, Katanga should enter into a 'political association' with the Federation.[2] The *Rhodesia Herald* confirmed Harford's offer: not only the settlers and mining companies of Katanga, but also the Belgian government wanted a political union that would allow the settlers to carry on business as usual after independence.[3]

In March, Welensky revealed in an interview with Rene MacColl, a reporter with the *Daily Express*, based in London, that Katanga might well join the Federation. When MacColl asked him if there would be a political tie with a break-away Katanga:

> 'Yes' rejoined Sir Roy – then added characteristically and with a twinkling eye: 'Now I suppose there is going to be the hell of a row for my having told you this … Suggestions have been made to me – I got the latest letter on the subject only yesterday from a source which I had better not name – that the federation should "hold out the hand of friendship" to Katanga when the Congo gains its independence.'[4]

A supportive editorial summed up the mood of the paper: 'If Katanga decided to become a state in the federation, its mineral wealth would be linked with the copper, coal, and water power of Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Central Africa would be better off and therefore nearer freedom. Sir Roy Welensky's ideal would be closer to realisation.'[5] With whom exactly was Welensky negotiating? According to MacColl, the talks had been inspired by mining groups; meanwhile, 'the *Daily Express* let it be understood that the approaches had not been made by representatives of the 30,000 Europeans in the province, nor by the powerful Union Minière, but by Moise Tshombe, the Conakat leader.'[6]

1 Cutting, *Echo du Katanga*, 4 March 1960, FO 371/146630. See also, Smith Papers, MSS Eng. c.6490, ff. 102-3 (pp. 29-30).
2 'Katanga – Sir Roy Confers', *The* [Rhodesian] *Evening Standard*, 4 March 1960, Welensky Papers, 262/7.
3 'Katanga to Link with Federation', *Rhodesia Herald*, 2 March 1960, Welensky Papers, 262/7.
4 'There's going to be hell because I've told you this – Rene MacColl interviews Sir Roy Welensky', *Daily Express*, 2 March 1960.
5 Editorial, *Daily Express*, 2 March 1960.
6 Gérard-Libois, *Katangan Secession*, pp. 56-7.

When the issue of Katanga joining the Federation was raised in London, officials noted that Welensky had received letters urging collaboration from sources he declined to name; these were almost surely Belgian settlers keen to join the Federation, and who were intimately associated with mining interests in Katanga, including the powerful Union Minière.[1] Belgian diplomatic staff told their British counterparts that the Union Minière was utterly opposed to a black-run Katanga: 'Should such a prospect arise, they would seriously consider the possibility of seeking the amalgamation of the Katanga with Northern Rhodesia.' The Belgian diplomats added how, for years, there had been close contacts between the white settlers of Katanga and Northern Rhodesia.[2]

The local press seized on these reports of an alliance. On 3 March 1960, the *Rhodesia Herald* recorded that the fear of an independent black Congo was driving Katanga into a union with the Federation. This news came as no surprise in the Federation with the *Rhodesia Herald* reporting that many Rhodesian MPs 'were offering bets that Katanga would soon be Federal controlled. They admitted yesterday morning that on Tuesday they had heard rumours of an approach having been made to … Welensky … from a source which the Prime Minister was not prepared to disclose.'[3] At the same time, in the *Northern News*, Welensky maintained that 'certain circles' in Katanga had approached him and that he made it clear to the group that he favoured some form of amalgamation.[4] Further confirmation came in another article in the *Rhodesia Herald*:

> Police are investigating a new but powerful Belgian Congo-Northern Rhodesia alliance group which is busy canvassing support on the Copperbelt. The new organisation – Fetrikat – is affiliated to the powerful Conakat Party and has its headquarters at Elisabethville. The group promises access to the Congo after June 30 only to members. The group is electing 'reliable' people to its ranks. It seeks alliance between the Haut Katanga Province and Northern Rhodesia's Western Province which includes the Copperbelt.[5]

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Why did a political union between the Federation and Katanga never materialize? The answer can be found in both external and internal

1 Note on parliamentary question by the Viscount Stansgate on report of a political association between Katanga and Rhodesian Federation, 8-9 March 1960, Government's response to question to be given by Viscount Hailsham on 9 March 1960, FO 371/146631.
2 Embassy, Bogotá, to Boothby (FO), 2 Feb. 1960, FO 371/146630. See also, '"Federal Katanga" Move Was No Shock in SR', *Northern News*, 3 March 1960, Welensky Papers, 262/7.
3 'Katanga Africans Fear Future – Hence Hints at Federal Links', *Rhodesia Herald*, 3 March 1960, FO 371/146630.
4 'Sir Roy Maintains that Congo "Circles" Approached Him on Katanga', *Northern News*, 8 March 1960, Welensky Papers, 262/7.
5 'Police Probe Activities of Copperbelt Congo Group', *Rhodesia Herald*, 9 June 1960, Welensky Papers, 189/4.

factors. Externally, Britain, the United States, and the United Nations, keen to maintain the integrity of the Congo, worked together to prevent the loss of Katanga, Congo's richest province. There were also internal factors limiting Welensky's actions. At about the same time as Belgium was making the decision to pull out of the Congo, serious rioting erupted among the black population of Nyasaland, and there were further disturbances in Northern Rhodesia. In March 1959, the governor, Sir Robert Armitage, declared a state of emergency in Nyasaland and imprisoned the black leader, Hastings Banda. Following these disturbances, Britain appointed the Monckton Commission to inquire into the future of the Federation, and held a conference at Lancaster House in early 1960 that brought together Welensky and African nationalists such as Kenneth Kaunda of Northern Rhodesia and the recently released Banda. The conference achieved nothing, but Welensky could see that the talks with leaders such as Banda were 'the beginning of the end'.[1] Led by Iain Macleod, the secretary of state for the colonies, Britain was pushing for independence for Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, something that both countries achieved in 1964.

Much as Welensky favoured a union with Katanga, the gradual destruction of the Federation and the future of white rule in the region were more pressing concerns. He was fighting a political rearguard action, attempting, for instance, to block the deployment of British troops to Nyasaland whom he felt would aid Britain's policy of independence for black Africans.[2] When Macmillan visited the Federation in January 1960, Welensky found him to be 'bland and unrepentant' on Britain's new policy towards its African possessions;[3] angered by the Conservatives' lack of support for his administration, Welensky, it has been argued, threatened a *coup d'état* in February 1960 if Africans were put in control in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia.[4] The constitutional future of the Federation dominated Welensky's agenda in late 1959 and 1960; pressed by Britain and African nationalists, his administration tried, unsuccessfully, to preserve the Federation created in 1953. As Lord Alport, British high commissioner to the Federation, recalled, the 'excitement and flurry' of Katanga was a side-show in which Welensky escaped or temporarily avoided 'the less interesting but perhaps more difficult problems of the constitutional future'.[5]

With the Federation collapsing, it made little sense for Welensky to gamble on an overt political or military adventure to support a secessionist movement in Katanga that all the major world powers and international organizations opposed. Neither was there internal

1 Wood, *Welensky Papers*, p. 728.
2 Macleod to prime minister, 13 July 1960, PREM 11/2883/182-5. See also, CO 1015/2224.
3 Wood, *Welensky Papers*, p. 731.
4 H. Franklin, *Unholy Wedlock: The Failure of the Central African Federation* (London, 1963) pp. 200, 203.
5 Alport to Garner (CRO), 5 Jan. 1962 [Colchester, University of Essex], Alport Papers, box 18, file 3.

support in the Federation from the majority black population for Katangan secession: blacks in Northern Rhodesia watched with 'satisfaction' as desperate Belgian settlers from Katanga streamed over the border seeking sanctuary and a haven from the anarchy in the Congo after July 1960.[1] Neither were the Rhodesian armed forces strong enough to maintain order within the Federation while also deploying north into Katanga to support any attempt at political union. The Rhodesian army order-of-battle in 1966 – when it was a stronger force following reforms instituted by Welensky – was two regular battalions (one 'European' – the Rhodesian Light Infantry – and one 'African' – the Rhodesian African Rifles); a Special Air Service squadron; eight Territorial (TA) battalions (the Royal Rhodesian Regiment); and one TA artillery regiment. This represented a total strength of 3,270 regulars and 8,097 TA reservists.[2] Responsible for a huge landmass covering 487,137 square miles of rough terrain with poor communications, the fully stretched force had little or nothing in the way of a reserve able to deploy into the expanse of Katanga. In normal circumstances, the Federation could call on the considerable strength of the British armed forces in an emergency, but this was not possible considering Britain's differences with the Federation over both a political union with Katanga and the future status of the Federation. As the editor of Welensky's papers noted, following a meeting between Macmillan and Welensky in May 1960: 'Macmillan's constant harping on British military involvement arose out of more than a concern for the Federation. A sizeable force would have given Whitehall the means to influence policy in the Federation which the current Federal control of the armed forces denied to it.'[3]

Aware of his weakness, Welensky tried to upgrade his armed forces: he instituted reforms to increase the strength of the army and brought in some new equipment such as Ferret armoured cars, modern machine-guns, and Belgian FN semi-automatic rifles to replace the Second World War-vintage weapons in use in 1960.[4] The federal cabinet in July 1960 recognized that its army was inadequate to deal with both further disturbances in Nyasaland and 'any intensification of tribal clashes in Katanga'.[5] Moreover, the cost of the extra spending on defence in case there was a spill-over of trouble in Katanga into Northern Rhodesia following Belgium's departure was estimated at £2,650,000 as an initial outlay, plus £970,000 as recurrent expenditure.[6] As the federal cabinet noted, this 'would tax the country's

1 Wood, *Welensky Papers*, p. 797.
2 Details [London, Public Record Office], F[oreign and] C[ommonwealth] O[ffice Records] 36/54.
3 Wood, *Welensky Papers*, p. 799.
4 Ibid., p. 801.
5 Minutes, federal cabinet, FGC(60) 27th mtg., conclusions of a special meeting … 12 July 1960, Welensky, Barrow, Coldicott, Owen, Goldberg, and Graylin present, Welensky Papers, 110/3.
6 Minutes, federal cabinet, FGC(60), 28th mtg., annexure entitled Strengthening of Defence Forces in Conclusions of a Meeting held in the Cabinet Room, 18 July 1960, Welensky Papers, 110/3.

financial resources to the utmost, but it was felt that that position would have to be faced'.[1]

Once Katanga under Tshombe seceded from the Congo in July 1960, Welensky urged Britain to sanction the deployment of Federation troops to help Tshombe. Welensky saw in Tshombe's secessionist Katanga a local ally, a pro-Western breakaway state that would help preserve white rule in the region.[2] Knowing that Britain's response would be negative, Welensky still reserved the option of using his forces in any role that best served the interests of the Federation.[3] But the deployment of Federation troops outside the borders of the Federation in anything other than small advisory teams was impossible, considering the limited size of the force and its primary role in maintaining order within an increasingly turbulent Federation. Faced with the impracticability of a political union with Katanga backed by Federation military force, Welensky shifted his policy towards Katanga, providing less overt and indirect support in the form of economic, military, and political support for Tshombe and an independent Katanga.[4] As a US special report from 1961 noted: 'White settlers in Northern Rhodesia and Angola fear an extension of the Congo's disorder into their areas. To prevent this, they are willing to give some political support and to countenance the passage of some military supplies, mercenaries, and advisers to Tshombe. They are also willing to grant Katanga continued access to the sea for its exports.'[5]

While unable or unwilling to use its troops in Katanga to help Tshombe resist military attempts by the United Nations to force him back into the framework of a united Congo, the Federation (and South Africa) became the recruiting ground and forward base for a largely white mercenary force that was deployed in Katanga as Tshombe's private army. These mercenaries opposed and fought UN forces in the province that were trying to re-integrate Katanga.[6] Largely paid for out of the Katangan budget – 1,977.8 million Katangese francs in 1962 was spent on mercenaries – this force was initially composed of French and Belgians (who deservedly earned the sobriquet *les affreux*) but, by 1961, the focus of recruitment had shifted from Paris and Brussels to

1 Minutes, federal cabinet, FGC(60), 28th mtg., annexure entitled Strengthening of Defence Forces in Conclusions of a Meeting held in the Cabinet Room, 18 July 1960, Welensky Papers, 110/3.
2 Message to sec. of state for Commonwealth Relations from the Federal Prime Minister – handed to High Commission in Salisbury, 14 July 1960, Welensky Papers, 258/4.
3 'Note on Opposition Question in the House of Lords on 14 July 1960 on How Welensky Would Use His Forces', Welensky Papers, 258/4.
4 In Aug. 1960, in response to appeals from Tshombe for military support, the Salisbury government prevaricated, worried that any overt flow of arms would soon become common knowledge and so discredit the CAF in the international arena (from Barrow, minister for home affairs, CAF to Macmillan following conversation with Tshombe's special envoy, M. Onckelinx, 31 Aug. 1960, Welensky Papers, 258/4).
5 Special National Intelligence Estimate, 7 Dec. 1961, quoted in *FRUS*, xx. 295.
6 See S. J. G. Clarke, *The Congo Mercenaries: A History and Analysis* (Johannesburg, 1968). See also, 'Britain Under Guard Tells: How I Raised a Pocket Army', *Daily Express*, 24 June 1961, FO 371/155000.

Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Seeing Tshombe a bulwark for the whites of the Federation, Welensky, despite repeated requests from Britain and the United Nations, failed to halt the recruitment of mercenaries in Salisbury and Bulawayo.[1] Not just the United Nations but also the local press commented on the recruitment drives for mercenaries in Southern Rhodesia after 1960.[2] Often done out of hotel bars,[3] this recruitment seems to have included ex-Rhodesian army personnel;[4] indeed, two Rhodesian Light Infantry soldiers, Firth and Damer, picked up by the United Nations in Katanga, claimed they had had no trouble getting past the Federation border authorities. As the British consul in Katanga concluded: 'It would seem reasonable to ask the military authorities in Rhodesia to place Katanga out of bounds to their personnel on leave, in present circumstances. Firth and Damer held leave passes from their commanding officer and assured me that they had come here with his knowledge.'[5]

The Congolese authorities, other African states, and the United Nations repeatedly blamed the Rhodesians for the mercenary problem. The UN mission to the Congolese foreign minister reported back in 1961 how 'it will be recalled that Captain Wicks [a mercenary officer] was staff officer [état-major] within the contingent of South African mercenaries attached to the Katangan Gendarmerie and was actively engaged in the recruitment of men for this contingent in South Africa and Rhodesia.'[6] Two months later, another UN officer, Brian Urquhart, made similar comments that were passed back to the foreign office: 'he [Urquhart] had little doubt, in view of the volume of reports reaching the United Nations, that a good deal of questionable activity was indeed taking place on the Rhodesian side of the frontier.'[7] The Nigerian foreign minister, Jaja Wachuku, made the same point when he appeared on an American television panel discussion in October 1961, articulating the view held by many newly independent African states on the Federation's involvement in Katanga.[8]

Even British officials, some of whom felt sympathy with the whites of the Federation, noted the wilful nature of Federation activities in Katanga. Thus, the British ambassador in the Congo in 1963, Sir D. M. H. Riches, sent back a note to the foreign office on the issue of black gendarmes from Tshombe's force who were using Northern Rhodesia as a safe-haven to escape Katanga:

1 Clarke, *Congo Mercenaries*, ch. 5, pp. 52, 34.
2 Extracts from *Sunday Mail* (9 April 1961) and *Herald* (10 April), encl. in High Com. (Salisbury) to CRO, 10 April 1961, FO 371/154997.
3 UK mission at UN to FO, 14 April 1961, FO 371/154997. See also, response to office of the high commissioner in Salisbury to CRO, 31 May 1961, FO 371/154997.
4 Riches (Leopoldville) to FO, 26 Sept. 1961, FO 371/155002.
5 Dunnett (Elisabethville) to FO, 19 March 1962, FO 371/161533.
6 Officer-in-charge of the United Nations mission to the minister of foreign affairs of the Congo, 22 Aug. 1961, FO 371/155001.
7 UK mission at UN to Wilford (FO), 3 Oct. 1961, FO 371/155002.
8 Ormsby Gore (Washington) to FO, 29 Oct. 1961, FO 371/155003.

I assumed that it [a reference to an exchange of telegrams] was an answer to the Central African Office's telegram No. 608 of November 30 and that what it was saying was that the Northern Rhodesian authorities have no intention of departing from their present practice in dealing with ex-gendarmes crossing the border from Katanga and are not prepared to go even so far as to make one or two token hand-overs to show they accept the Congolese position. If this is correct, it is very disappointing. The Congolese will not understand any more than I do, why armed intruders into Northern Rhodesian territory cannot be handed back to them; or if there are insuperable legal obstacles to that, why they cannot be warned in advance when and where the intruders are to be put across the border so that they can be on the other side to meet them. Refusal to go even this far would look to them at the best like over-scrupulous legalism, and at the worst like deliberate connivance at rebellion.[1]

Even when the Federation authorities under pressure did restrict mercenary recruitment – as they did at times – this led to a temporary displacement of mercenary recruitment, usually to South Africa, and all the while there was the question of overly lax visa controls that allowed mercenaries from South Africa and Europe to pass unhindered through the Federation, using it as a convenient transit point for travel to Katanga.[2] When responding to reports of Belgians passing through the Federation, the latter professed that it could do nothing to stop anyone who had legal travel documents from transiting the Federation.[3] However, further British reports showed that the Rhodesians were allowing passengers travelling with the Belgian airline Sabena to land at Ndola in Northern Rhodesia close to the Katanga border without visas. As one CRO official concluded, if the Federation confirmed that this was the case, 'there will now be virtually no control over the possible entry of mercenaries into Katanga via the Federation and that the present arrangement whereby all transit visa applications are referred to Salisbury, appears to be valueless.'[4] There is also evidence that the Federation colluded with Belgian and Union Minière officials over mercenary recruitment and passage to Katanga. For instance, it was reported that recruitment in Salisbury was carried out by one Monsieur Bogard, a former employee of Union Minière.[5] Moreover, Marcel Hambursen, a Belgian industrialist from Namur responsible for mercenary recruitment – for which the French authorities sentenced him to a year in jail – travelled without any hindrance through the Federation on his trips to and from Katanga.[6]

The forward staging post and safe-haven for the mercenaries was the border town of Ndola. It is perhaps for this reason that so many

1 Rose (Leopoldville) to Millard (FO), 6 Dec. 1963, FO 371/167303.
2 A. Mockler, *Mercenaries* (London, 1969), pp. 162-3.
3 Riches (Leopoldville) to Boothby (FO), 12 Jan. 1962, FO 371/161533.
4 Browne (CRO) to Scott (Salisbury), 30 Aug. 1962, FO 371/161535.
5 Riches (Leopoldville) to FO, 7 Oct. 1961, FO 371/155002.
6 Scott to Evans, home affairs, Salisbury, 17 April 1962, FO 371/161534. For jail sentence, see '6 Mois de prison avec sursis à l'ex lieutenant Ropagnol', *Le Monde*, 5 July 1962.

conspiracy theories emerged when Hammarskjöld died in September 1961 near the town. After all, as UN Secretary-General, he was flying into one of the main centres of opposition to the UN operation to reintegrate Katanga: not only English-speaking mercenaries, but also French soldiers-of-fortune such as Colonel Roger Trinquier[1] used Ndola as a convenient meeting point when liaising with Katangan officials from Tshombe's ministry.[2] The US military attaché in Leopoldville, after noting the presence of suspicious aircraft at Ndola airfield, had breakfast in the airport canteen; at an adjoining table were 'eight or nine Europeans of whom some were wearing Katanga emblems. Three of these he recognised as having been pointed out to him on a previous occasion by Colonel Egge [of the UN force in the Congo] as being ex-mercenaries. Some of this group left the table saying that they now had to catch the aircraft to Kolwezi. The conversation was in French.'[3] The reference to warplanes at Ndola tallies with UN reports accusing the Federation of using Ndola as an airbase for Katangan warplanes: 'In this regard I might call to your attention that although Sir Roy has vigorously tried to explain away the crossing of the 48 jeeps at Kipushi, he has never made any public reference to the activities of the Dornier aircraft based at Ndola and piloted by one Mr Wickstead – probably because the evidence we presented was too convincing for Sir Roy to deny.'[4] The capture in Katanga in September 1961 of the landlord of Ndola's Elephant and Castle public house, a Mr Catchpole, by UN forces during a major sweep against mercenary forces, further weakened Federation claims that Ndola was not a mercenary base.[5]

After Ndola, Kipushi airfield, which straddled the Katangan-Northern Rhodesian border, was the next stop on the route in and out of Katanga. As one mercenary recalled, he and his comrades 'flew regularly' between the two towns.[6] UN reports give credence to the Ndola-Kipushi link:

> Further information received from Elisabethville gives additional evidence that Ndola Airport is being used as a recruiting and forwarding point for mercenaries returning to Katanga … Evidence received from a number of independent and reliable sources leaves little room for doubt that both recruitment of mercenaries and provisioning of supplies to the Katangese forces are being organised along the Rhodesian border. These sources have also confirmed the

1 For an account from the French mercenaries of their war in the Congo, see Colonel Trinquier, Jacques Duchemin, and Jacques Le Bailly, *Notre Guerre au Katanga* (Paris, 1963).
2 Mockler, *Mercenaries*, p. 160.
3 UK mission at UN to FO, 30 Sept. 1961, FO 371/155002.
4 Robinson to Home, 10 Jan. 1962, FO 371/161/532. The UN report Robinson quoted from (albeit with some very minor grammatical changes) can be found at: Statement to the Advisory Committee on the Congo, New York, 9 Jan. 1962, by U Thant, in *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations*: VI: *U Thant, 1961-4*, ed. A. Cordier and M. Harrelson (New York, 1976), pp. 80-1.
5 Embassy, Leopoldville, to FO, 30 Oct. 1961, FO 371/155003.
6 Jones (Elisabethville) to Ure (Leopoldville) and Alexander (FO), 6 Nov. 1962, FO 371/161536.

entry into Katanga of considerable numbers of Rhodesian and other mercenaries across the frontier at Kipushi.[1]

Moreover, Federation authorities deceived Alport over the facilities at Kipushi. Alport complained that he was never told about improvements to the landing facilities at Kipushi, nor alerted to the fact that camouflaged aeroplanes were visible on the Katangan side of the landing strip. It was also the case, as Alport recalled, that the Federation authorities exercised no control over the arrival and departure of flights:

> I said [to Welensky] that I was gravely concerned at what appeared to be a serious breach of faith and that the evidence I possessed seemed to show that there was collusion between the Federal Army and the Katanga Authorities … I said that while I was not inferring that either he or Parry [H. N. Parry, secretary of the Federal cabinet] had deliberately misled us, it was clear that the orders he had given in my presence [to block Kipushi airfield] were not being carried out and that the consequences could be very serious for the reputation of the Federal Government.[2]

The Federation also became a conduit for supplies and matériel going to and from Katanga. US intelligence reports noted the passage through the Federation of military equipment, mercenaries, and advisers bound for Katanga, and that the Federation provided Katanga with a vital trans-shipment route for its imports and exports.[3] Tshombe's agents bought Land Rovers, small vehicles, lorries, and small arms in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Angola;[4] the easiest way to get this equipment to Katanga was via Northern Rhodesia and the movement of military convoys was a frequent topic for discussion. U Thant, Hammarskjöld's successor as UN Secretary-General, commented on reports that forty vehicles armed with machine-guns and driven by mercenaries had crossed the Federation border into Katanga.[5] This probably stemmed from an earlier statement by the Congolese foreign minister who protested 'energetically against the fact that the authorities of Rhodesia and Nyasaland had allowed the transportation of equipment and arms to Katanga … He [the foreign minister] raises the point that, once again, the authorities have allowed forty-eight jeeps driven by European mercenaries to cross the border with Katanga.'[6] Alport went to see Welensky to discuss the issue of the convoys crossing Federation territory to and from Katanga:

1 Extract from UN report in UK mission at UN to FO, 3 Oct. 1961, FO 371/155002.
2 Alport to CRO[?], 12 Dec. 1961, Alport Papers, box 18, file 4.
3 US Special National Intelligence Estimate, 7 Dec. 1961, in *FRUS*, xx. 295. See also, James, *Britain and the Congo Crisis*, pp. 151-2.
4 FO to UK mission at UN, 10 Oct. 1962, FO 371/161535.
5 U Thant to Dean, passed to Welensky, 1 Jan. 1962, Welensky Papers, 259/2.
6 Congolese for. min. to British embassy, Leopoldville, 27 Dec. 1961, FO 371/155003.

When I saw Welensky yesterday to report on my visit to Ndola and to thank him for the facilities provided for me by the Federal Government, I took the opportunity of emphasising to him the grave consequences which might arise if there was any suspicion that any military material, weapons, or personnel were reaching Katanga from the Federation during the next few days while the negotiations at Kitona were in progress. I told him that I was not rpt not satisfied with the public explanations which had been given respecting the convoy of 15-20 lorries which crossed into Katanga by night some days ago. I said that while I knew that some of the lorries were meat lorries, as alleged by the Federal Government, others were reported to me as being painted in Katanga Army colours carrying goods of an undefined character, and had been taken over by Katanga Army drivers on the Katanga side of the frontier.[1]

Commenting on the differences between the Federal and Territorial administrations in the Federation, Alport's view was that Welensky – despite efforts by the Northern Rhodesian governor, Sir Evelyn Hone – had no intention of closing the border and 'anyhow the presence of an active enforcement system might cramp a lot of people's style.'[2] As Alport noted, at Kipushi 'local relations with Katangese and Union Minière personnel are perhaps a shade too cordial.'[3] The United Nations also charged the Federation with assembling seven Fouga Magister jets smuggled in from Europe and bound for Katanga at the airbase at Ndola; according to the United Nations, Katangan forces also quickly made good any losses in equipment after engagements with UN forces from military stocks in the Federation.[4] Considering these reports, U Thant, in January 1962, addressed the UN Advisory Committee on the Congo on the issue of the porous nature of the Federation frontier with Katanga:

I have asked you to come to this meeting for three main reasons: (a) I wish to consult you about the replies I have received to my request to the governments of the United Kingdom and Portugal that observers be stationed along the frontiers of Rhodesia and Angola for the purpose of controlling illicit traffic with Katanga, about which you have already seen something in the press … Here I might say that this approach was made because we finally had some concrete evidence of illicit assistance to Katanga from the Rhodesian side, which we immediately presented to the British government and which Sir Roy Welensky has promptly denied in phraseology that could not be described as gracious.[5]

Alongside the covert military support afforded Katanga, Welensky launched a diplomatic offensive in support of Tshombe's Katanga, mainly in the form of increasingly strident correspondence with

1 Alport to Home, 20 Dec. [1961], Alport Papers, box 18, file 4.
2 Ibid.
3 Alport to CRO, 14 Dec. 1961, Alport Papers, box 18, file 4.
4 UN Katanga Command Report, 30 Dec. 1961, Welensky Papers, 259/3.
5 Statement to the Advisory Committee on the Congo, New York, 9 Jan. 1962, by U Thant, *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General*, ed. Cordier and Harrelson, pp. 80-1.

Britain. In a series of letters to the foreign secretary, Lord Home, and Macmillan, Welensky emphasized the dangers facing Tshombe, pointing out that if he fell from power, 'the alternatives are too frightful to contemplate. Surely the time has come for the West … to exert its influence to retrieve the situation.'[1] Unwilling to 'stand idly by and watch Mr Tshombe destroyed … if he is in danger of being destroyed by Afro-Asian pressures masquerading as United Nations operations I shall do everything in my power to assist his survival', Welensky questioned whether the British government had fallen for the Afro-Asian line that Tshombe was a Belgian puppet.[2] While many UN personnel were convinced that Britain's opposition to the use of force to defeat Tshombe was thinly disguised support for Tshombe, Britain never openly supported Katangan independence or a political union of the province with the Federation:[3] such a move ran counter to the thrust of British colonial policy and could have led to greater expense and commitment in Africa. It would also have gone against the wishes of the United Nations and the United States, both of which wanted to preserve a united pro-Western Congo.

There was, nevertheless, an element of ambivalence to British policy toward the Congo: while Britain vacillated over Katanga as it tried to safeguard its investments in the mining concerns there, it did not become directly involved.[4] Thus, on 15 July 1960, less than two weeks after Katanga's secession, Macmillan passed on a message to Welensky informing him that if Tshombe were able to sustain his independence, 'ad hoc recognition would probably have to be considered.' But as Macmillan added, it was important that neither Britain nor the Federation should give any grounds for an accusation that they were assisting in the break-up of the Congo.[5] Britain's willingness to join with Southern Rhodesia, Belgium, and Portugal in protesting UN actions, along with Britain's blocking of overfly rights for UN warplanes that needed to cross British East Africa to get to Katanga, seemed to give substance to the charge that Britain was helping Katanga.[6] It is true that elements in the British establishment worked to support the Federation, something that is noted in the secondary literature, but the prevailing mood in Britain was that Welensky and the Federation should work to preserve a united Congo.[7] In July 1960, the minister of

1 Welensky to Macmillan, 23 Jan. 1961, Welensky Papers, 258/5. See also, Welensky to DO by way of CRO for attention of prime min. and for. sec., 2 Sept. 1961 [London, Public Record Office], D[ominions] O[ffice Records] 158/68.
2 Welensky to Home, 21 April 1961, Welensky Papers, 258/5.
3 B. Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld* [1972] (New York, 1994), p. 558.
4 Clarke, *Congo Mercenary*, p. 34.
5 Metcalf (Salisbury) to Welensky, 15 July 1960, Welensky Papers, 258/4.
6 See Home to Welensky, 25 April 1961, Welensky Papers, 258/5 and Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld,* pp. 575, 577.
7 For British support for Katangan secession, see Murphy, 'Intelligence and Decolonisation', pp. 117-18; Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, pp. 577, 579; and G. Abi-Saab, *The United Nations Operation in the Congo, 1960-4* (Oxford, 1978) p. 132. For a contrary view, see White, 'Business and Politics of

state for foreign affairs, John Profumo, when confronted with Captain Charles Waterhouse, a director of the Union Minière and keen to interest Britain in Tshombe's break-away state, made it clear why Britain opposed secession, pointing to the advantages of a wider settlement that kept the Congo together, as a 'state truncated of its richest province would become just the sort of African slum in which communism would be most likely to take root'.[1] A few months later, in September 1960, Macmillan echoed Profumo's worry, pointing out that Katangan secession would turn a large tract of Africa into 'a kind of Africa slum … wide open to Communist penetration'.[2]

The generally hostile atmosphere in Britain towards Katangan secession did not deter Welensky, using his semi-autonomous position in Salisbury, from trying, unsuccessfully, to convince Britain that it should provide more help for Katanga. On 30 August 1961, after the launch of the first UN operation – *Rumpunch* – designed to extend its influence in Katanga against Tshombe's gendarmes and mercenaries, Welensky stood up in the Salisbury parliament and accused the organization of trying to subjugate the province by force, assuring MPs that he would take 'necessary measures' to help the Katangan people who, 'regardless of race, stood up like heroes'.[3] The following day, the British vice-consul in Elisabethville, who also represented the interests of the Federation, read the text of Welensky's speech to Tshombe in a clear show of support for Katanga.[4] Welensky, however, failed in his attempts to get Britain to honour its pledges to stop the United Nations from using force in Katanga.[5] While unable to check the United Nations' move to military action, the Federation, nevertheless, did all it could to help Katanga, short of direct military intervention, including the production of propaganda material such as a booklet published for public consumption that detailed UN atrocities against white settlers in Katanga. Designed to paint as negative a picture as possible of the UN force in Katanga, the booklet included statements of the rape of male and female settlers in Katanga by marauding UN soldiers.[6]

While African and Asian states strongly supported Operation *Rumpunch*, Welensky's response was to mobilize troops, armoured cars, and warplanes, supposedly because of the serious threat to Rhodesian security. As he stated in parliament in Salisbury: '"nothing so disgraceful in the whole history of international organisation" had ever hap-

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Decolonisation', p. 561.

1 Memo, Boothby, 'Congo: British Business Interests in the Katanga', 20 July 1960 , FO 371/146640.

2 Macmillan to Barrow, 10 Sept. 1960, Welensky Papers, 258/4.

3 Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, pp. 557-8; R. Welensky, *Welensky's 4000 Days: The Life and Death of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (London, 1964) p. 230.

4 Abi-Saab, *United Nations Operation*, p. 132.

5 Welensky to Robinson for Sandys, 31 Aug. 1961, Welensky Papers, 258/6.

6 *United Nations Operations in Katanga, 1961. Evidence Published June 1962*, published by the Federal Government of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Welensky Papers, 261/2.

pened before,'[1] and the mobilization of Rhodesia's armed forces along the Katangan border was a show of military support for Tshombe.[2] To back up his threat to use force, on 13 September 1961 Welensky moved Royal Rhodesian Air Force (RRAF) warplanes to Ndola; with the RRAF went troops, including Rhodesian Light Infantry units, and Selous Scouts armoured formations.[3] Welensky also issued a warning that if the United Nations tried to use Sabre jets in Katanga, the RRAF would be forced to retaliate if, as Welensky believed was inevitable, the Sabre jets violated Federation airspace.[4] The military build-up was apparent to visitors to the Federation: Bengt Rosio, the Swedish consul-general in Leopoldville, on a visit to Northern Rhodesia, found a 'raw hatred' of the United Nations and roads 'absolutely jammed' with heavy army vehicles.[5] The support given to the Katangans by the Federation might even have extended to the use of bases inside Northern Rhodesia: in 1961, the US state department reported that Tshombe's forces were using Kipushi airfield for logistical support, movement of soldiers, and as a safe-haven for their warplanes, something that Welensky vehemently denied.[6]

The mobilization of Federation military units failed to cow the United Nations from taking action in Katanga in late 1961 and 1962. Welensky's armed forces were too weak militarily to provide Tshombe with direct military support, and with Britain unwilling to provide more than fitful diplomatic support, Welensky watched from the sidelines as UN troops deployed for battle with Tshombe's mercenary-led army. Furious at the deployment of UN forces in Katanga in September 1961, Welensky informed the parliament in Salisbury: 'What has happened in Elisabethville today is the law of the jungle. The right of the biggest to impose his will on the smallest … A government that is out of step can be made to toe the line. If not it can, upon a pretext, be taken over by the Secretariat of the United Nations.'[7] Welensky did what he could to help Belgian settlers escaping the war in Katanga,[8] and he agreed to a secret FISB-organized military operation, opposed by Britain, in which Rhodesian forces infiltrated into Katanga to help

1 Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, p. 575. Quotes from A. Gavshon, *The Last Days of Dag Hammarskjöld* (London, 1963).
2 Statement, Welensky to Federal parliament, 13 Sept. 1961, PREM 11/3187.
3 Governor (Salisbury) to CRO, 13 Sept. 1961, PREM 11/3187.
4 'Points to emphasise for *Daily Express*', Sept. 1961, Welensky Papers, 262/2.
5 Translated and transcribed tape recordings encl. in Smith to de Kemoularia, 8 Dec. 1981, Smith Papers, MSS Eng. c.6490. f. 115 (p. 42).
6 Telegram state dept. to embassy (Brussels), 1 Dec. 1961 in *FRUS*, xx. 285. For denial, see Welensky to Robinson for Macmillan, 7 Dec. 1961, Welensky Papers, 259/1.
7 Statement, Welensky to Federal parliament, 13 Sept. 1961, PREM 11/3187. See also, Welensky to CRO, 17 July 1960, PREM 11/2883/37; Alport to Duncan Sandys, 15 Jan. 1962, Alport Papers, box 18, file 3; Welensky to O'Doneven, 26 Jan. 1976 [London, British Library] Welensky Papers, Add. MSS 71586; and Cabinet Minutes of Federal Cabinet. FGC(61) 14th mtg., Federal Cabinet, 17 April 1961, Welensky Papers, 110/3.
8 On help for refugees, see Howard (Salisbury) to Whitehead, 1 Aug. 1960 [Oxford, Rhodes House Library], Whitehead Papers, MSS Afr. s.1482/2c.

Tshombe leave the province. They also, it seems, took Tshombe's gold reserve back to Salisbury for him.[1]

But direct military intervention was impossible. Thus, from 1963 to 1965, with the ascendancy of the United Nations in Katanga, the Federation, with assistance from the Portuguese authorities in Angola and from South Africa, intensified its policy of destabilizing the Congo by supporting mercenary forces.

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Following defeat at the hands of the United Nations in late 1961 and 1962, the mercenary force in Katanga gradually dissolved. Some of the mercenaries, such as Bob Denard, after escaping to Angola, went off to fight other wars (in Denard's case, in the Yemen). Many, however, decamped to eastern Angola where they 'signed on' with the Portuguese; others, such as Jean (or Jacques) Schramme, simply remained in Angola alongside over a thousand Katangan gendarmes, all awaiting orders from Tshombe.[2] The Portuguese authorities willingly provided a safe-haven for the mercenaries and gendarmes from Katanga:[3] Portugal had supplied arms – including warplanes – for the mercenaries using Luso (now Luena) as a forward base, so it came as no surprise that mercenaries and gendarmes could settle unmolested in eastern Angola after their defeat in Katanga.[4] Indeed, Portuguese trawlers shipped mercenaries from South Africa to the Congo via Angola in 1964.[5] The mercenaries also took as much heavy military equipment with them as they could to Angola.[6]

Using eastern Angola and Northern Rhodesia as their base, mercenaries who had been ejected from the Congo by the United Nations regrouped and re-equipped with Rhodesian and Portuguese help. As the British embassy in the Congo noted following information delivered by a secret source:

> I am afraid there is growing evidence that we must take seriously the possibility that Tshombe, with help from outside sources (particularly Rhodesian and Portuguese) is organising a force of ex-mercenaries and Katangan gendarmes in Eastern Angola … The entry of fairly large bodies of ex-gendarmes into Northern Rhodesia … also seems to show that there is some guiding hand at work … Maybe I am building more into this than is warranted but I cannot help feeling that it would be only prudent for us to consider whether there is not evidence to show that certain elements in Southern Rhodesia together with the Portuguese and Tshombe are acting in concert to constitute an armed

1 'The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Observations of a part time spy of the Federal Army. An account of the service of WF Faulds – Captain – the Royal Rhodesian Regiment, 1959-64' (Pittenweem, 1996) [Oxford, Rhodes House Library], Faulds Papers, MSS Afr. s.2321.
2 Clark, *Congo Mercenaries*, p. 33.
3 Mockler, *Mercenaries*, pp. 170-1.
4 Wardrop (Luanda) to Foster (FO), 20 Feb. 1963, FO 371/167281.
5 Embassy, Pretoria, to FO, 4 Sept. 1964. FO 371/176716.
6 Leighton (Lusaka) to perm. sec., prime minister's office, 8 May 1964, FO 371/176733.

force in Eastern Angola for eventual use in Katanga … The Congolese know that the ex-mercenaries and ex-gendarmes are using Northern Rhodesia as a bolt-hole. On November 10 Ileo gave Bill Wilson a list of ex-mercenaries (Michel Bloch, Robert Lefebvre, Barthier, Schramme, Bob Denard, Vlaeyen) who were thought to be using Northern Rhodesia as a base for their activities … I can only say that if we – or rather the Government of Northern Rhodesia – not only fail to expel these ex-mercenaries … we shall be seen to the Congolese and African nationalists in general to be aiding and abetting Tshombe and the colonialists.[1]

In 1962-3, Tshombe built up, maintained, and paid for a mercenary force for future use in the Congo, a force which had 'tentacles in Northern and Southern Rhodesia and in Angola'.[2] Before 1963, the FISB had forged links with both Portuguese Africa and South Africa,[3] including extra-territorial joint Federation-Portuguese operations in places such as Dar-es-Salaam.[4] The Angola operation utilized these connections, allowing the Federation and the Portuguese to co-ordinate activities across Northern Rhodesia and Angola. As the British consul-general in Angola, J. C. Wardrop, saw on a visit to Cavungo in eastern Angola, the Northern Rhodesian police had cordial relations with their counterparts in Angola and a tradition of cross-border co-operation. Portuguese officials and British and US missionaries stressed 'the close and easy relations previously maintained between the Cazombo territory and Northern Rhodesia, referring among other things to visits made to the Angolan side by Northern Rhodesian police officials'.[5]

South Africa's role in Katanga is less well documented. Before 1962, it had been one of the sources for weapons supplied to the mercenaries fighting in Katanga.[6] Bob de Quehen of the FISB encouraged Welensky to push the South African prime minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, to create an organization such as the FISB that would be able to impress on Verwoerd the importance of South African involvement in Katanga.[7] It is not clear whether he was successful. Certainly, the South African police did little or nothing to stop the recruitment and passage of mercenaries for Katanga and the Congo;[8] senior South African army personnel such as Brigadier Jan Robertse and Commandant W. P. Louw had talks with Tshombe's contact in South Africa.[9] In addition, South Africa provided the mercenaries with equipment such as boots and had expressed a willingness to supply other material, an offer

1 Rose (Leopoldville) to Millard (FO), 29 Nov. 1963, FO 371/167303. For the FO's response see memo, Millard, 'Mercenaries in Angola', 5 Dec. 1963, FO 371/167303.
2 Embassy, Leopoldville, to FO, 5 March 1964, FO 371/176732.
3 Murphy, 'Intelligence and Decolonisation', p. 117.
4 De Quehen to Welensky, 17 July 1962, Welensky Papers, 239/2.
5 Stewart (Luanda) to Wilson (FO), 24 July 1964, FO 371/176733.
6 Alport to sec. of state, 20 Dec. [1961], Alport Papers, box 18, file 4.
7 De Quehen to Welensky, 2 Aug. 1962, Welensky Papers, 239/5.
8 'Two Secret Flights to the Congo', *Sunday Mail*, 23 Aug. 1963, FO 371/176716.
9 Embassy, Pretoria, to FO, 4 Sept. 1964, FO 371/176716.

rescinded after a 'returning South African mercenary had made indiscreet remarks about the extent to which the South African Government were helping No. 5 Commando'.[1]

In July 1964, by which time UN troops had left the Congo, Tshombe was back in power as the prime minister of a government of national reconciliation in the Congo, a post he held until October 1965, when he was replaced by the pro-Western Joseph-Désiré Mobutu (later Mobutu Sese Seko). Once in power in Leopoldville, Tshombe recalled his gendarmes from exile to suppress a rebellion by pro-Lumumba forces in eastern Congo around the city of Stanleyville. To support the black troops attacking Stanleyville, he built up a strong force of at least 400 white mercenaries using the existing cadre in Angola, plus new mercenaries recruited in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.[2] In August 1964, Tshombe's force, led by English-speaking commanders such as Mike Hoare[3] at the head of No. 5 Commando, attacked eastern Congo assisted by Belgian paratroopers dropped from US-supplied aeroplanes.[4] As with the Katanga operation of 1961, the mercenaries had been openly recruited in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa before flying to Kamina in the Congo for training.[5] As British embassy staff in Pretoria noted, South African recruiting offices, under direction from Tshombe in Leopoldville, enlisted hundreds of recruits in late 1964 and early 1965: 'Captain Eric Bridges, in charge of Johannesburg Recruiting Office, has told Press that he has orders from Leopoldville to launch a new drive for 300 South African mercenaries and have them ready for transportation to Congo within a month. He added that almost all new recruiting would be in South Africa although there might also be a little in Salisbury.'[6] The mercenaries from South Africa – using Jan Smuts Airport in Johannesburg – flew with a Rhodesian commercial airline via Salisbury to the Congo; at the same time, Rhodesian banks channelled the mercenaries' pay.[7] The British embassy in Leopoldville reported that the vast majority of the mercenaries used by Tshombe in 1964-5 had

1 Mason (Leopoldville) to Le Quesne (FO), 13 Nov. 1965, FO 371/181705.
2 Kalb, *Congo Cables*, p. 378.
3 For an account of Mike Hoare's time in the Congo in 1964-5, see Hoare, *Congo Mercenary* (London, 1967) (repr. as *Mercenary*) and Hoare, *The Road to Kalamata: A Congo Mercenary's Personal Memoir* (London, 1989). Hoare also served in Katanga in 1961-2 and an account of the Katanga operation can be found in Hoare, *Congo Warriors* (London, 1991). The brutal nature of the mercenary war in the Congo is well illustrated in D. McCullin's autobiography, *Unreasonable Behaviour* (London, 1990).
4 Clarke, *Congo Mercenaries*, pp. 35ff.
5 Mockler, *Mercenaries*, p. 174. See also, FO to Leopoldville, 4 Aug. 1964, FO 371/176716.
6 Embassy, Pretoria, to FO, 6 Jan. 1965, FO 371/181705.
7 For routing of mercenaries via Salisbury, see consulate-general, Johannesburg, to embassy, Cape Town, 8 Feb. 1965, FO 371/181705. For details of pay, see notes of discussion with Alistair Wicks (Hoare's 2i/c) by Lt.-Col. Dick Kirke, military attaché [?in Leopoldville], 4-6 Jan. 1965 and sent back to FO, FO 371/181705. For Jan Smuts Airport and Rhodesian commercial airline, see extract [obviously an advance copy] of Salisbury *Sunday Chronicle* [*sic* – not *Sunday Mail*], 23 Aug. 1964, high commission, Salisbury, to CRO, 22 Aug. 1964, FO 371/176716.

Southern Rhodesian or South African passports, ignoring the fact that Tshombe also used French-speaking mercenaries in the fighting in 1964-5 in eastern Congo.[1] Britain could do little to stop the 'continuing supply programme' that Southern Rhodesia ran for the mercenaries in 1964-5, knowing that this would be viewed by Welensky as evidence of a 'pusillanimous' approach to the Congo and so ignored.[2] Indeed, as late as 1976, Welensky could be found helping a friend who wanted to serve as a mercenary with the Rhodesians in their counter-insurgency war against black insurgents.[3]

In 1961, a resident of Northern Rhodesia had written to Welensky assuring him that neither he nor his white neighbours had any doubt that 'the White Kaffirs of the British Government have betrayed us. Let us now for the love of God have the "Boston Tea Party."'[4] This was a sentiment echoed by Welensky who, in 1963, the year that the Federation collapsed, wrote to a friend explaining that if the British government 'think I'm throwing up the sponge they have another thing coming. I'm determined to do everything I can to see Southern Rhodesia get its independence. That to me is now priority number one.'[5] Welensky and the white settlers of the Federation had their 'Boston Tea Party' when, in 1965, Southern Rhodesia – now led by Ian Smith whose Rhodesian Front Party had ousted Welensky from power in 1964 – issued its unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). This began a long struggle to preserve white rule in Rhodesia, a conflict that continued until the formation of Zimbabwe in 1980, an event witnessed by Welensky who retired from politics in 1965 and lived until 1991. As this article has attempted to show, the military and political struggle against black rule in the region began in the late 1950s and early 1960s when the whites of the Federation supported the Belgians and Tshombe in Katanga and the Congo; after 1965, this fight against black rule moved from the Congo to the borders of Southern Rhodesia.

University of Salford

1 Embassy, Leopoldville, to FO, 1 Aug. 1964, FO 371/176716; 25 Nov. 1964, FO 371/176717.
2 Tel., Salisbury, to CRO (copied to FO), 4 Aug. 1964, FO 371/176716.
3 Welensky to O'Doneven, 26 Jan. 1976, Welensky Papers, Add. MSS 71586.
4 Giblin to Welensky, 11 Feb. 1961, Welensky Papers, 233/4.
5 Welensky to O'Doneven, 16 April 1963, Welensky Papers, Add. MSS 71586.