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## **Peace and Conflict in The Democratic Republic of the Congo**

### **Intro**

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) seems to have started only several years ago. However, the instability in this region finds its origins much earlier. In the late 1870s, although he never set foot in the country, Belgian King Leopold II privately ventured and succeeded to colonize the DRC. In 1885, Leopold announced the establishment of the Congo Free State, of which he declared himself the ruler. Private European companies were established to exploit the mineral wealth of the DRC while the Congolese people were given no significant role in their own government or economy. Instead, they formed the bulk of the labor force for all European ventures. In 1960, after years of colonial oppression, Congo became an independent state. Unfortunately, Belgium's abrupt departure left Congolese citizens with no government or economic rights. After several years of unorganized government, a glimmer of hope came in 1965 when Joseph Mobutu appointed himself President of the DRC. Mobutu began the campaign of "African authenticity" and forced many European investors out of the country. This led to a major collapse in the economy, and Congo had to resort to taking loans from Belgium.

Following the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, Hutu rebels from Rwanda captured most of the eastern part of the DRC (*Congo, Democratic Republic of the: History*). The conflict between Tutsis and Hutus has played a significant role in the destabilization of the DRC since 1994 and stems from their differing ethnic and socio-economic identification (*Hutus, Tutsis*).

The Hutus and Tutsis differ in appearance and have experienced longstanding socio-economic disparity (fueled by the existence of a market-dominant minority, the Tutsis, and an economically disadvantaged majority, the Hutus) (*Hutus, Tutsis*). The Hutus are the indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes Region in Africa, which includes the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (*Hutus, Tutsis*). The Tutsis migrated to the region from Ethiopia in the 1600's (*Hutus, Tutsis*). The flood of Rwandan Hutu rebels and Rwandan Tutsi refugees into the eastern DRC created an invisible border between the nations. In 1996, the Tutsi rebels captured the DRC's capital, Kinshasa, and appointed Laurent Kabila as president of the country. Unfortunately, his leadership was much the same as Mobutu's, and he was accused by rebels and neighboring countries of becoming a dictator. This led to war between seven nations and various rebel factions on Congolese soil (*Congo, Democratic Republic of the: History*).

### **Components of the Conflict**

The DRC conflict involves a complex array of relationships, settings and interests. Many have called Congo's ongoing conflict Africa's First World War (Weiss). The key actors involved in the conflict include the DRC's current president Joseph Kabila, Joseph's father and predecessor Laurent Kabila, Laurent's predecessor Mobutu Sese Seko, Rwandan genocide perpetrators (otherwise known as the Interhamwe), numerous rebel armies, militias and militia leaders, the RCD (Congo's current transitional government), the existing and former Rwandan government, the ALIR (the

Army for the Liberation of Rwanda), the government and peoples of Uganda, Burundi, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Chad, Sudan, and the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups.

### A Foundation

The conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis provides a complex framework of positions, interests and needs (Miall et al. 9). Certainly, the DRC needs security and the ensured survival of all its peoples. Thousands of refugees, militia groups and looters have ravaged the DRC either by inciting warfare, exploiting Congo's natural resources, or by simply putting a greater burden on the DRC's already dilapidated infrastructure, which includes health care, food production, education and sanitation. The DRC also desperately needs economic and political stability to begin to address internal warfare, poverty and despotism that threatens its future. The nature of the turmoil in the Democratic Republic of Congo is that of an intra-state conflict. In his conflict typology, Singer defines an intra-state war as one involving "culturally defined groups whose members identify with one another...on the basis of shared racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or kinship characteristics" (quoted in Miall et al. 31). Some of the interests that have prevented peace in the DRC include those of Laurent Kabila, the former president/dictator of the DRC, and the Hutu people. Kabila's interests lay in maintaining his political power and authority in the DRC. The interests of the Rwanda's Hutu government and many Hutu people was to avenge their economic disadvantage and overthrow the dominant Tutsi minority; the Hutus wanted to get back the power that they felt entitled to as the indigenous majority in the region. In light of his interests, Kabila

took the position of resisting democratization and thus slowing the peace process. In response to its interests, the Hutu government waged genocide against the Tutsis, killing over 800,000 people (Miall et al. 9; Weiss, Part I; *Hutus, Tutsis*). Neither of these actions has led to sustained peace in the countries affected.

### Political

Since Belgium's abrupt departure and the DRC's liberation in 1960, the DRC has been plagued with a series of corrupt and self-serving leaders. In 1960, shortly after Lumumba took office and demanded that Africa be economically and politically independent of the US and Europe, his private secretary, Mobutu Sese Seko, with help from the US and Britain, overthrew Lumumba and declared himself president (*Facts on Mobutu*; Amnesty International 2003). At one point during his 32 years in office, in response to pressure from the US and other western nations, Mobutu did allow the formation of 200 parties, promising elections and a transitional government (Shah). However, most of the parties were run by his own people, and he never followed through with the elections or the transitional government (Shah). Both Mobutu and his successor, Laurent Kabila, were ruthless dictators unwilling to give the Congolese people a voice or minimal civil liberties. Ironically, both leaders were US allies and received heavy military funding and gifts from the US during their periods in office (Shah). The political instability forged by Mobutu and Laurent Kabila has certainly stalled the DRC in its efforts to establish a stable and regulated economy and to put a stop to the violence and looting that continues to devastate the country. Fortunately, since Laurent Kabila's

assassination in 2001, his son and successor Joseph Kabila has been much more open to the democratization of and establishment of peace in the DRC and the well-being of his country (*Congo, Democratic Republic of the: History*).

In addition to a series of corrupt and coercive dictators, as a consequence of the Rwandan genocide, the DRC's borders have been compromised by the large numbers of refugees, Hutu rebels and members of the Interhamwe, and members of the Ugandan, Rwandan and Burundian armies and governments, all of whom have disregarded the DRC's dominion in order to pursue their respective interests (1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices). Whether to persecute Hutu rebels, kill more Tutsis, or pillage the DRC's resources to pay for more weapons and ammunition, these various groups' occupation of the DRC threatens the mere existence of the DRC as a sovereign state. Many of the groups flooding the DRC are contentious and fighting amongst each other creating more deaths and destruction throughout the country (Weiss). The DRC has been so gravely compromised and its own people put in such danger that the DRC is in some sense collapsing into itself. According to the U.S. Department of State, "The current crisis in eastern DRC has its roots both in the use of the Congo as a base for various insurgency groups attacking neighboring countries and in the absence of a strong Congolese Government with a military capable of securing Congo's borders" (1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices).

### Economic

Vast unemployment and poverty, corrupt leadership, illegal and unbridled exploitation of its natural resources, the effects of the "business of war" and its debt and national deficit are all facets of the DRC's economic sector that burden the country and

make it more vulnerable to abuses and the continuation of its conflict. The average Congolese person lives on between 18 cents (in rural areas) and one U.S. dollar (in more urban areas) a day (*Congo (DRC)*). The per capita income in the DRC is currently about 100 U.S. dollars (per year) (*Congo (DRC)*). The DRC depends on cash crop agriculture as one of its main sources of GNP. However, growing rubber, cotton, coffee, sugar, cocoa and tea will not feed its 68 million person population (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs). The problem with Congo switching to agriculture fit for human consumption is that cash crops can be sold more readily to the U.S. and other western countries for U.S. dollars, which, due to extraordinary inflation in the DRC, are worth considerably more than the DRC's currency (the FC, which is currently worth three one-hundredths of one U.S. dollar (*Congo (DRC)*; UNICEF)). In addition, the DRC lacks any sort of industrial base, which is a condition of a country being able to support western capitalism, an institution that has been imposed on the DRC by various European and U.S. companies.

Corrupt leadership and unsound policy have also contributed to the economic instability and depletion of the DRC. It has been documented that, during his period in office, President Mobutu reserved approximately 64.7% of the country's budget for his own discretionary spending, though more official DRC figures puts his reserve at 95% (Hartung et al.; International Institute for Strategic Studies, <http://www.iiss.org/>). In addition, according to the U.S. State Department, "The Government's economic policies have resulted in massive unemployment, inflation, and a devaluation of the currency, putting basic education out of reach of many families" (1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices).

Perhaps most central to the conflict in the DRC is the DRC's wealth of natural resources and the subsequent corruption and abuse inflicted on the DRC by various parties in pursuit of these resources. The Congo has an incredibly rich supply of copper, timber, diamonds, gold, tin and Coltan (United Nations Security Council). The eastern Congo is particularly rich in resources and fertile soil due to nearby volcanic activity. The entire Congo is also covered with rain forest and several rivers. Unfortunately, since the Rwandan genocide and the subsequent flooding of refugees, rebels and violence into DRC, the DRC has been exploited for its natural resources, not only leaving it with less economic potential, but leaving its environment seriously damaged (Shah). The reasons for this degree of exploitation include the following: poverty among Congolese citizens, refugees and rebel armies; the need for money with which to buy weapons and ammunition; and in terms of the U.S. and Europe's involvement, western consumption and capitalism (Harden).

Coltan is perhaps the most prized and desired resource of companies and African civilians/rebels in the DRC (Harden). When refined, Coltan becomes metallic tantalum, a heat resistant powder that can hold a high electrical charge and is used in virtually every computer chip, cell phone, pager, nuclear reactor and a variety of other products that rely on high voltage electrical power (Harden). Companies that use Coltan from the DRC include Nokia, Ericsson and Sony (Essick). In the year 2000, one kilogram of Coltan went for 200 dollars, which was (and still is) about twice the annual per capita income of a Congolese citizen (Harden).

Not only are neighboring African states plundering the DRC, but several large and influential European and US enterprises have large holdings in the DRC. These

western companies have “developed elite networks of key political, military and business elites to plunder the Congo’s natural resources” (Harris). Not only are these companies illegally exploiting the Congo, but they are also contributing to the DRC’s reliance on the performance of the western economy. In other words, if the stock market plummets, the DRC’s economy could collapse even more than it already has. (American Mineral Fields is one of the companies involved in the exploitation of the DRC and was formerly headquartered in Former President Clinton’s hometown of Hope, Arkansas; in addition, at one point, the Barrick Gold Corporation of Canada, another participant, had President Bush Junior on its international advisory board (Walsh).)

Numerous sources suggest that the war has not only spurred, but has also been purposefully prolonged by, commercial interests. In a way, a “business of war” has been created by various governments and rebel groups who are prolonging the war in order to rob the Congo of its resources and spend the money on arms, pay their allies and/or just feed themselves (Harden). Hartung et al state, “in the DRC, governments, rebels, and militia forces on both sides of the conflict have been auctioning off the nation’s rich mineral resources as a way to finance their ongoing participation in the conflict and line the pockets of key military and political leaders in the process.” In 1999 and 2000 alone, the Rwandan Army stole \$250 million in natural resources (Hochschild). According to the Power and Interest News Report, “Rwanda and Uganda simultaneously helped to ignite ethnic rivalries; Rwanda and Uganda pillaged the resources of the region and fought a proxy war against each other” (Harris).

Last but not least, since King Leopold’s ownership of the DRC, the DRC has suffered a long and mounting national debt. The DRC currently claims a debt of about



14 billion U.S. dollars, most of which it owes to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund - both organizations which the DRC has not reimbursed in 10 years (*Congo (DRC)*). Right now, 14 billion dollars is about 280% of the DRC's GDP. The national deficit is about 15% of the GDP, which means the DRC is consuming considerably more than it is producing (*Congo (DRC)*). It is said that "it is likely that the country will receive debt relief from its creditors, assuming it can achieve a measure of political and economic stability" (*Congo (DRC)*).

### Social

Even before violent conflict erupted in the DRC in the 1990's, the DRC was socially and infrastructurally weak and vulnerable. Since the pillaging of the DRC's resources, the killings and torturing of thousands of citizens, and the depletion of foreign aid due to hundreds of thousands of refugees pouring in to the country, its social infrastructure has reached a dismal state. Since 1994, 333,000 refugees have fled into the eastern Congo where particularly heated ethnic conflict persists to this day (Oxfam). As a result, "serious ecological degradation and the channeling of foreign aid away from Congolese villagers" has ensued (Harden). Furthermore, the displacement of these refugees, and of the Congolese who have been displaced due to invasions, has led to over 2.25 million malnutrition-related deaths.

Since the 1998 invasion of the DRC, there has been a collapse of educational and employment opportunities and a huge decline in the standard of living. Poor economic conditions and extreme poverty have led to abuses in mine camps where prostitution, disease (TB and gonorrhea especially) and starvation/malnutrition thrive (Harden). People live in the DRC with very limited access to education, health services and

adequate sanitation. Government spending on children's programs is nearly nonexistent. Primary school education is not compulsory, free, or universal (Oxfam). To enroll their children in public school, parents are formally required to pay a small fee, in addition to being informally expected to pay teachers' salaries. Even if parents are able to pay, according to Oxfam in 2000, "the majority of schools are no longer operational, leaving an entire generation of schoolchildren basically illiterate." And even if they have the resources to help, humanitarian agencies are unable to do their job amid overwhelming and wide-spread deadly violence.

Oppressive leadership has also contributed to the disintegration of the DRC's social sector. For example, Laurent Kabila's government "materially supported Mai Mai and Hutu armed groups, which, according to credible reports, repeatedly killed unarmed as well as armed Tutsis in areas militarily dominated by antigovernment forces" (1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices). At one point, he even called upon the Congolese people to make their own weapons and kill Tutsi or else, according to Kabila, "they [the Tutsi] will make us their slaves" (Brittain). During his regime, Mobutu helped to fuel ethnic rivalries and was in alliance with the Rwandan government while they organizing and carrying out the Rwandan genocide (Shah).

Amid the killing, corruption, run down health and education sectors, disease and malnutrition, various rebel groups and militias have committed countless, not to mention deliberate and systematic, human rights violations. During the past decade, the following conditions have been reported by the UN, UNICEF and Amnesty International (2004): unbearable prison conditions, a manipulated judicial system, killings and torture of Tutsi non-combatants, phone tapping, abuse, intimidation and imprisoning of journalists

coinciding with the burning down broadcast stations. Human rights defenders themselves have been killed. As of 1999, no legal protection of assembly and severe restrictions on political activity existed. The incidence of rape is so high that neighborhoods have instituted their own night-watch systems. There is a very high domestic violence rate against women. According to a 2004 press release from Amnesty International: “Tens of thousands of women, girls, children and even babies, as well as men have been systematically raped and tortured in eastern DRC where over twenty armed groups have been fighting for control of the land and its resources. Some of the victims have suffered multiple rapes and other forms of sexual violence on two or three separate occasions during the war by different forces. Others have been raped by up to twenty-five combatants or used for months or years as sex slaves.”

Human rights violations have also been committed for economic purposes. Congolese civilians have been killed during military operations to secure resource rich lands (Amnesty International 2003). Rwanda and Uganda have promoted interethnic conflict and mass killings as a means to secure mining zones, and many rebel groups have killed miners and traders for their money and mine sites (Essick; Amnesty International 2003). These acts relate to the previously mentioned notion of the “business of war” in the DRC.

#### International/Arms Trade

Although not as publicized or recognized as a major source of violent conflict, the arms trade contributes heavily to the existence, increasing intensity, and perpetuation of conflicts such as those in the DRC (Hartung *et al*). As of 2000, the top five exporters of arms to Central Africa were the U.S., France, Russia, China and the UK (Hartung *et al*).

Ironically, all five countries were and still are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (Hartung *et al*). According to the World Policy Institute, the U.S. alone “has helped build the arsenals of eight of the nine governments directly involved in the Congo War” (Hartung *et al*). Throughout the Cold War (1950-1989), the US delivered over \$1.5 billion in weaponry to Africa, to countries that have turned out to be the most conflicted in the world in the 1990’s (Hartung *et al*). In 1992 and 1998 alone, the Clinton Administration committed over 227 million dollars in arms and military training to Africa (Hartung *et al*). During his period of office, President Mobutu received over \$300 million in weapons and \$100 million in military training from the U.S. which he used to oppress his own people (Hartung *et al*). Perhaps more startlingly, the Rwandan government was importing U.S. weapons as late as 1993, one year before it carried out the Rwandan genocide (Hartung *et al*).

As a final indicator of the U.S.’ negligent behavior concerning Africa, according to the United Nations, “While the U.S. ranks number one in global weapons exports, it falls dead last among industrialized nations in providing non-military foreign aid to the developing world” (Hartung *et al*). (see Appendix A)

### **Past Attempts at Peace**

The conflict in the Congo includes a number of countries, all of which have hefty demands for peace. Over the past few decades, Central Africa has received an enormous amount of aid and several attempts at peace have been made. One of the first and longest lasting, the Lusaka accord, was signed in July 10, 1999. The countries included in the talks leading up to the signing were Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, and

the DRC. The plan rests on several elements described in an analysis by the International Crisis group. It includes:

...immediate cessation of hostilities; the establishment of a Joint Military Commission...to work out mechanisms to disarm the identified militias...the deployment of a UN chapter 7 force tasked with disarming the armed groups, collecting weapons from civilians and providing humanitarian assistance and protection to the displaced persons and refugees (Weiss 21).

The agreement focuses attention on the “neutral facilitator” who “will organize the internal dialogue” (Weiss 21) and the UN which is supposed to deploy peacekeeping forces to ensure safety in the region, as well as the implementation of the agreement. The accord was supported by the UN, the African Union and later by the EU.

The Lusaka accord consists of six main elements (Weiss 3). The first is the clarification of the DRC’s borders as agreed upon by all those involved. During and after the Rwandan genocide, both Hutus and Tutsis sought refuge in the DRC. The flood of refugees led to the virtual disappearance of the Congo’s national borders, leaving it vulnerable to attack and exploitation. In addition to the refugees, as a result of the Congolese government protecting Hutu officials, Tutsi rebels attacked Congolese cities, such as Bukavu. The second element is to “establish a new political order” (3) for all countries involved. One of the causes of the upheaval in the area is severe political instability, especially in the Congo. For example, riots in the DRC began when Laurent Kabila took over the government in 1997. He was later assassinated by rebels. The third element is that each country will have its security problems considered and dealt with. The fourth and one of the most important elements of the Lusaka Accord is the disarmament of militia groups in the DRC. One of the main sources of conflict stems

from rebel and militia groups threatening the government and killing civilians.

Disarmament could significantly reduce the violence currently taking place. The fifth element is withdrawal of foreign forces other than the UN and the sixth is that UN peacekeeping forces implement and enforce the accord. It would be their job to enforce the course of action set up by the accord.

With its main goals of disarmament, cease-fire, dialogue, sovereignty, and cooperation, the Lusaka Accord aims at resolution that addresses the “deep-rooted sources of conflict” (Miall et al. 21). It aims to establish conditions in which conflict transformation – a renovation of the institutions that define the often unjust nature of relationships in a society - is possible in the region (Miall et al. 21). The Lusaka Accord calls for conciliation on the part of the “neutral facilitator,” Quett Masire, who will provide structure for the dialogue so as to inspire negotiation (Weiss, Part II; Miall et al. 22). While the Lusaka Accord relies strongly on these negotiations occurring peacefully, it also relies on the UN for peace-enforcement, defined by the enforcement of a “settlement” by a “powerful third party” (Weiss, Part II; Miall et al. 22). The UN is considered powerful because of its access to thousands of troops and many financial and other resources (Weiss, Part II). In the past, the UN has practiced peacekeeping in Africa, using its international armed forces to intervene in armed conflict and to separate its perpetrators.

One of the major problems with the accord is that it did not address the problems occurring in neighboring countries. It only addressed inter-Congolese conflict on Congolese soil, which of course did not please the five other countries signing the treaty. Another hindrance in the move towards peace is that the timeline set up by the accord has

not been upheld, mainly as a result of the United Nations and its failure to follow through on its peacekeeping mission.

The second phase of the Lusaka accords is called the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD). The ICD had three goals to fulfill through a series of large meetings. As stated in an article by Henri Boshoff and Martin Rupiya:

First the ICD was expected to agree on a transitional government to oversee national elections...includ[ing] Congo's unarmed political actors. Second, the ICD was expected to develop a draft constitution to guide the country as it prepares for free and fair elections. Finally, it was also hoped that the dialogue would agree...establishing a new national defense force. (30)

The point of these talks was to make sure that certain parts of the Lusaka Accord were being upheld and continuing to stabilize and unify the Congo.

The first ICD meeting occurred in 2001, and 305 delegates attended. This assembly's focus was to set up transitional authority in DRC. The second meeting took place in Addis-Ababa. This conference was specifically geared towards coordination between rebel groups from all nations. One of the ICD talks took place in Pretoria in 2001. The main purpose of these talks was to implement peace keeping in Burundi. The countries that were present at these talks were Burundi, Gabon, DRC, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa. At this conference South Africa, being the most stable country and the only one not involved in the conflict, was a key player in the peace building efforts. One of the conclusions that the countries came to was that more international aid is needed to advance the progress of peace in Africa. One of the other topics discussed was setting up a transitional government in Burundi, with all 19 political parties represented. One of the programs that Southern Africa presented was the South Africa Development Community. They presented the five problems that need to be addressed in order to begin to build

peace. The problems are economic, social, infrastructure, environmental, and special programs.

One of the reasons why many of the attempts at peace have failed is due to resistance from Laurent Kabila's regime. Throughout all the meetings set up through the Lusaka accord, the Kabila regime was uncooperative, mainly due to its concerns about rebel groups and keeping its power centralized. These feelings were not limited to the Kabila regime. A major problem in this conflict and the peace talks that have taken place was the lack of international aid and support as well as the inconsistent participation of neutral facilitators. At one of the last ICD sessions, the facilitator, Sir Quett Ketumile Masire, former president from Botswana, called the ICD a circus and refused to continue. One of the reasons why he was not an effective facilitator is because, while Botswana was not directly involved in the conflict, Masire was largely unpopular among the other African countries involved as well as among other neutral parties.

How has the world attempted to build and maintain peace in a region such as the DRC? It is a difficult task that has been tackled in part by many actors, several of which we will address.

In mid-November of 1996, United States President Bill Clinton sent 4,000 troops to the DRC. At the time, the White House released a statement that said "The United States is increasingly concerned that the humanitarian situation in eastern Zaire is deteriorating"; within the same week, the Press Secretary was quoted as saying "We are not the world's superpoliceman to address each and every condition that exists anywhere in the world" (R.N.S. 2,1). It is evident that conflict existed over the possibility of getting involved in the conflict, but the world's superpower did find ways to become involved in



other ways. During the 1990s alone, the U.S. provided \$200 million in training and equipment to African armies, six of the seven of which were fighting on Congolese soil (Hochschild 10). Despite this, the United States is virtually blind to Africa, the “forgotten continent.” President Bush recently voted for the UN to increase its role in the DRC but declined to contribute troops for the effort (Hoschchild 9). And why should he? Africa as a whole plays an almost non-existent role in U.S. foreign policy, and its place on the minds of Americans and their governmental officials is slight, if present at all.

In the preamble of the United Nations Charter, it states that the organization is determined to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.” One might say that they have had trouble fulfilling this part of the charter; the 3 million deaths in the DRC from 1998 – 2002 constitute the deadliest war since the aforementioned World War II (Hoschchild 9). However, it is the UN Security Council, one faction of the UN, that is primarily in charge of “the maintenance of international peace and security” (UN Background).

In August of 1998, when the war started, the UN Security Council was quite preoccupied with sending troops to the war-torn areas of Yugoslavia and Kosovo. Because of the lack of action taken by the UN Security Council, and their ability to “determine the existence of any threat to peace...or determine that some act, somewhere, is an act of aggression...” (UN Background), the problem in the DRC essentially did not exist until it was publicly announced a month after the war had begun. It took this long despite the fact the DRC government and the UN Security Council met and conversed about the situation on numerous occasions. In this September 1998 statement, the UN

called for a withdrawal of foreign forces from the region and a ceasefire (see Appendix B).

This is similar to the way the Security Council will deal with the country for the years to come: there is a discussion of the issue (since September 1998, the DRC has been on the Council's agenda every month), expressing concern, asking for an "end to violence" and respect for the nation's borders. Words such as "stresses," "urges," "encourages," "calls," and "requests" litter its resolutions with a lack of force behind each one. There are a handful of moments, however, worth highlighting in which more action was taken:

- In April of 1999, Resolution 1234 was developed, 8 months after the war had started. It mentioned being "deeply concerned at the illicit flow of arms and military material in the Great lakes region." It was the first acknowledgement in writing that there was a threat to peace; the Council said they would wait for ceasefire before they would attempt conflict resolution (Hawkins 49).
- Resolution 1258 in August of 1999 approved the sending of 90 UN observers to the DRC, a typical action by the Security Council. At the end of the year, 500 "military" observers were sent out (Resolution 1279); like the personnel deployed in August, the lack of security present led the observers to be continuously threatened to the point that they could not observe. The Secretary General did not expect that an armed force would be necessary to accompany them, revealing how unaware he and the UN were about the gravity of the situation at that point (Hawkins 49).

- February of 2000 brought to light Resolution 1291 in which 5,537 grey-area peacekeepers were released into the DRC. Unfortunately, grey-area peacekeeping only works in a place where peace has already been established; its members are very lightly armed and by no means capable of establishing peace. (Hawkins 49).
- In December of 2002, Resolution 1445 increased the United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) to a force of 8,700 (Hawkins 50).
- Resolution 1493 in July of 2003 (set to expire in July of 2004) officially transformed the mission from one of observation to one of peacebuilding with blue helmet peacekeepers, authorized to use force. Only here did a ban towards selling arms toward parties in the conflict go into effect, a full five years after the war started (Hawkins 51).

October of 2004 saw Resolution 1565, in which blue helmet peacekeepers are currently under mandate to stay until the end of March 2005; 17,000 have been authorized to go, but about 10,800 currently are deployed there (Alusala 94). It is important to note that from 1960-64, the UN ordered 20,000 troops to the DRC in a mission called the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC). During these four years, 250 UN personnel died (Ginifer 127); the conflict now is no less serious, nor are there fewer borders that need supporting, but could the past have led to such hesitation in the eyes of the Council?

Unfortunately, the UN has become a political body whose “actions generally reflect a convergence of the national interests of its powerful members rather than genuine humanitarian interest” (Hawkins 52). The sole size and complexity of the

conflict are reasons enough to ignore it for as long as possible. The UN's reluctance to really intervene – and to, instead, sidestep intervening through small actions in an attempt to pacify the small part of the international community that were initially watching – is thought to be because there is a lack of economic benefits for stopping the conflict. The Military Staff Committee is a specific section of the UN chartered to help assist it in making decisions. Did the committee's members not know from their previous experiences in Somalia, Bosnia and Sierra Leone that grey peacekeepers are not effective? In addition, such troops are usually from poorer third world nations; in this situation, a multinational effort could be started by a larger Western nation. Their inability to impose sanctions as well – which differ from resolutions in the sense that they also require the involvement of the powerful member states to comply with the order – continues to help the Western countries shirk any feeling of responsibility. Many resolutions were not adhered to due to the lack of reparations:

In all 20 of the Council's resolutions on the DRC it expressed its firm commitment to preserving the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the DRC. Moreover, no less than 11 resolutions demanded that uninvited forces be withdrawn. The Council also demanded that states cease their support for armed groups in the DRC in 9 resolutions. Unfortunately, there were no consequences for non-compliance in either instance" (Hawkins 51).

The African Union was initially called the Organization of African Unity, and its new and charter came into existence in 2001. By 2010, its goal is to have, for each of the five regions of Africa, a "rapid-reaction" force that can be deployed sooner than UN troops are – which often arrive three to six months after a conflict starts, if at all. However, at this point, the group cannot financially afford the large peacekeeping operations it wishes to provide. Its funds are a result of its members paying fees to be part

of the union; however, of the 53 countries involved, only 16 paid their membership in full in 2002 (“Coping” 10). Unfortunately, the members who aren’t able to pay are usually those that would benefit most from the forces of the AU; when they don’t pay, they lose the right to speak and vote at meetings. Regardless, the Union allocated an estimated \$6 million a year for the forces; the UN, however, spends \$1.3 billion a year on peacekeeping in Africa with mixed results (“Coping” 10). Many wonder if the AU could make its dream a reality; after the Rwandan genocide, the UN relied on it to compose a peace accord and supply troops, but it was not close to being capable of such an endeavor (Berman 97). If its troops were built around the most efficient national armies in the continent, of Nigeria and South Africa, many say it would get off to a good start and possibly evolve to become an actor to which the UN could delegate responsibility.

In article after article, writers about the Democratic Republic of Congo state the importance of the grass-roots movement in greatly aiding the country while the UN has slacked in many ways and areas. There is not a lack of organizations that have become involved. On the contrary, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was formed in 1998 in an attempt to coordinate efforts, avoid duplication or gaps in aid, and maximize efficiency among the various NGOs becoming involved in the conflicted areas of the world.

Medicins Sans Frontieres is an organization that sends qualified doctors, nurses and specialists out into more than 80 countries worldwide, most of them in Africa. They attempt to give humanitarian aid, which is based on “the principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality” in comparison to relief aid, which has been the banner politicians have held over the war in Iraq. “We define ourselves as confronting power,

not becoming part of it. Our aim is to save lives threatened by political interests that leave little room for considering people in need for what they really are: human beings. Our role is to cast ourselves against a reality which ignores this simple idea” (Rostrup 22).

They recognize that their effects may be small in terms of those that they are able to reach. Operational Director Kenny Gluck writes that

the insignificance of our actions in terms of the fate of the Congo is only counterbalanced by the effect we have on individuals and communities...the scale of the problems that we neglect and the number of victims who will not be reached will endlessly frustrate MSF in DRC. But this makes the care for individuals we do reach - with real assistance and real humanity - all the more meaningful and significant” (Rostrup 24).

Amnesty International, an organization run by regional networks of members all over the world, has not done much specifically for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but has included it in relevant campaigns related to children soldiers, rape of women, clean diamonds, refugees, and the International Arms Trade. Oxfam International is another group made up of twelve offices based in different countries that has aided the country through similar campaigns.

These groups all publish reports with suggestions, filled with statistics of the people in need of healthcare, water, shelter, food, involving descriptive accounts of the situation, often urging the UN Security Council to send more troops, in addition to calling other facets of the UN to act. Many go and speak directly with the UN Commission for Human Rights (UNHCR), a facet of the UN dealing with displaced persons, which is increasingly coordinating its efforts with NGOs like the International Rescue Committee, CARE and Catholic Relief (Carey 172). Such organizations frequently help establish restrictions on the use of environmentally damaging material, in addition to the formation of the International Criminal Court, which, as a evolving judicial body, could eventually

lead to more successfully holding individuals responsible for war crimes in the DRC (Gutto 128).

However, NGOs pose many problems that typically go unmentioned or perceived by the general public. There is a broad variety of NGOs that exist; not all dedicate themselves solely to humanitarian aid and efforts. “Conflict-resolution NGOs pursue short-term peace settlements while human rights NGOs demand that individual leaders be held legally accountable...[while] humanitarian NGOs focus on providing relief and social services” rather than addressing conflict (Carey 175). Many attempt to stop things like murder and genocide, which is incredibly difficult to do without the help and necessary continuous reassertion of UN sanctions. Furthermore, many end up compromising their values when reaching the country they hope to help, needing to make deals with rebel troops or corrupt governments in order to survive in the areas where conflicts are quite real and unfolding. “Warlords and state elites can misdirect aid to their benefit” (Casey 174). In addition, NGOs are sometimes guilty of giving help without knowing details of who or what they should be helping or doing. They can become political while attempting to be neutral, and support their own agenda while attempting to help others. And of course, there is always the problem of people following up what they start; many groups put “chefs de quartiers” in charge of distributing cards tradable for food and shelter, but often, these are sold for a high price before they can reach those that need them.

Despite these downfalls, NGOs have numerous merits. They offer an increasing number of diverse ways at approaching peace, and create a checks and balance system; this prevents no one group from utterly exploiting a country due to their ulterior motives

and interests. NGOs tend to address facets that are outside of UN jurisdiction (or are not affectively addressed by their jurisdiction) - such as hunger, disease, poverty, rape - issues which contribute to conflict just as much as arms, rebel groups and corrupt governments. Most importantly, NGOs connect with the people in the way officials in Kinshasa and the UN Headquarters cannot; both would be wise to utilize their presence in the Eastern Congo for contacting and hearing the people's voices.

### **Macro Solution**

“The biggest test of America’s moral values is whether we and our leaders find the courage to say that liberty for all means liberating ourselves from materialism before it drives us mad and makes us a target for the world’s next madman.” - Derrick Jackson, The Boston Globe (November 2004)

“The great renewal of the world will perhaps consist in this, that man and maid, freed of all false feelings and reluctances, will seek each other not as opposites, but as brother and sister, as neighbors, and will come together as human beings.” - Rainer Maria Rilke

We looked at a few different peace processes and realized that they covered a large range of problems. These haven't worked in the past. So we decided that we wanted to focus on one problem that would greatly affect and hopefully start to solve the other micro conflicts. The first thing that needs to happen is a ceasefire. We believe the conflict isn't ending due in part to the immense amount of arms transfers to this area which have led to the arming of not only governments, but also of various militias and rebel groups. One of the solutions to this is for the US congress to begin to more closely monitor *all* US arms transfers. Hartung *et al* state, “US policy has done so well in helping create a demand for weapons in the developing world, and the industry has been so eager to fill it, that the arms market is taking on a life of its own, largely outside



government regulations and civilian oversight.” Monitoring will not solve the problem, but may help to begin the process of disarmament and stopping the killing in the DRC and neighboring countries.

One of the questions we asked was what is the source of careless arms trading? One key factor contributing to careless arms trading is western consumption. The US makes money off of arms trading and conceivably, is not likely to give it up. For that reason, the global community needs to unite to challenge western consumption and promote awareness of how it severely encroaches on the DRC and central Africa. As Amnesty International affirms,

Revenues generated from commercial contracts involving national resources should contribute to the progressive realization of the inhabitants’ social and economic rights. The international community has a responsibility to link the quest for justice in the global campaign against impunity with global efforts for greater accountability regarding economic activities and their impact on human rights. (2003)

Part of the reduction of consumption requires ceasing the exploitation of the DRC’s natural resources. It is essential that the global community, the United States in particular, respect the DRC and Central Africa and its inhabitants. (see **Appendix C**)

### **Micro Solution**

*Can you have a stable government without a stable economy?*

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We think that a country needs a stable government before it can have economic stability because with no stable government in place, nothing effective can happen. If embargos

are placed on Coltan and diamonds, who will be there to enforce the embargos and stand up to the global community and/or the DRC's exploiters? Without a stable government in place, how will the DRC enforce its sovereignty or make international allies who are willing to help the DRC get back on its feet, economically and socially? If there is no strong government, who is to enforce the ceasefire and stop the violent warfare that is causing such environmental and human devastation, both of which are necessary to sustain an economy?

On the other hand, the issue underlying the Rwandan genocide and a lot of the unrest in the DRC is related to economic disparity, and extreme poverty. Perhaps because people are so impoverished they would put their trust in anyone who promised better days. But after what the DRC has been through in the last century, what Congolese would trust or put any faith in another leader enough to respect his/her policy or agreements with warring parties? Many thought Mobutu would "save the day" but he turned out to be one of the worst dictators the DRC has ever had. If people spend each day worrying if they will have food the next and doing anything in their power to get it, how could any government enforce a ceasefire or mining laws for instance?

How about the involvement of the UN? As of now, the DRC is in a stage of a transitional government led by Joseph Kabila. His government consists of members from the rebel groups, and he plans to hold elections in 2005. We think the elections should be postponed to a further date; this would give the United Nations adequate time to enter the region and establish a system of monitoring the use of natural resources, the illicit activities prevalent in mining camps and implement troops to intervene in any violent or deadly conflict. This means that members of the UN would be responsible for

monitoring the DRC's economic actions, including the importing and exporting of arms, as well as standardizing jobs within the region. During this time, UN officials would also work with government officials to ensure that the economic peace process would continue after elections, no matter who is elected to run the country.

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