

AN INTRODUCTION TO EVENTS SURROUNDING THE BATTLE OF JADOTVILLE

IRISH SOLDIERS IN COMBAT IN THE CONGO 1961

By

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‘There should not be any hesitation, because we are at a turn of the road where our attitude will be of decisive significance, I believe, not only for the future of the United Nations Organisation but also for the future of Africa. And Africa may well in present circumstances mean the world.’

MR DAG HAMMARSKJOLD, UN Secretary General, addressing the Security Council, 22 July 1960¹

Background to Mission and Lead up to Operation Morthor.

‘In the United Nations lies the only hope for the future of all nations. We should all of us, therefore, be most careful not to do anything which impairs its authority.’

PRESIDENT KWAME NKRUMAH of Ghana, 17 August 1960²

On the 1 of July 1960 following nationalist riots against their Belgian rulers the people of the Congo declared an Independent Republic. The Congo had already been granted independence and given only five months to prepare itself for handover. It was found to be lacking in established native political or military leaders (all of the commissioned officers in the 30,000 strong army were white). Belgium sent troops to her former colony to protect her nationals who were being attacked refusing to remove her soldiers until their safety could be guaranteed (this was not the only interest she was protecting).³ A few days later the mineral rich province of Katanga threatened to cede from the republic. President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba emerged from the chaos as the two dominant figures. Lumumba was later deposed by Kasavubu in February 1961. Lumumba, was a volatile character who threatened to call on assistance from the USSR to remove the Belgians. Unfortunately he was unable to unite the country and within a few short days the army mutinied and Katanga declared its independence. This led to civil war between those in favour of secession, led by Moïse Tshombe and the pro-

Lumumba side. It was into this maelstrom that a U.N. force of many nationalities was delivered.

Prime Minister Lumumba appealed to the United Nations for help and as a result the Security Council directed Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld to recruit a military force to restore order and the integrity of the country. There was a prevailing fear that the Congo would become a Cold War battleground.

Ireland was asked by the U.N. to contribute troops and in July 1960 the first Irish peacekeeping force of the 32nd Irish Battalion prepared to serve outside the state since its foundation.⁴ Ireland had only been a part of the United Nations for a mere five years when the government passed the required legislation in the Dail on 19 July, it marked the beginning of a four year watershed in which the Irish Defence Forces came of age and took its place on the international stage, committing almost 6,000 of her troops to the mission.⁵

Katanga and Union Miniere

After Belgian troops were compelled to withdraw from northern and eastern Congo, they had been covertly reorganising themselves in the south around the *Union Miniere* mines at Kolwezi, at the Kamina airbase and along the road and rail routes that linked the mines with export points to Portuguese Angola and Northern Rhodesia.⁶ The Anglo-Belgian *Union Miniere du Haut Katanga* supplied much of the world's copper, cobalt and large quantities of uranium and was a vital asset to western interests. The uranium from this area was used in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs. It was closely tied to the Belgian government and military as it was to French and other interests. Using company money, Belgian officers recruited, trained and equipped a large private army for the *Union Miniere* and the Katangan gendarmerie, using it to protect its uninterrupted production and to enforce order in south Katanga.⁷ All during the country's strife the clandestine covert cartel was working to insure the continuance of its monopoly.⁸ As the anti-foreign policies and weakness of the premier and government became clear *Union Miniere* realised it had to protect its own interests. It set about detaching the provinces of Katanga and area of diamond-rich Kasai from the rest of the nation. Using Belgian military and intelligence services it organised independent separatist claims, which rested on an assortment of ambitious tribal leaders, local politicians and remaining European settlers.⁹ Moïse Tshombe, leader of the CONAKAT party, declared Katanga an independent nation on 11 July 1960 and made himself head of government. The two provinces expected little opposition as they supplied almost all revenue collected by the central government.¹⁰ Tshombe was to hire mercenaries to lead his army in defence of the secession. But as Katanga was the mineral rich and wealthiest province, the Congo could not afford for it to cede from the larger entity.

U.N. Action and the Political situation

Tshombe would agree to the terms of one painstakingly crafted agreement after another, only to denounce them when the agreements were made public hoping the delays were working in his favour. When he agreed to disband his mercenaries in public, he would

later secretly rehire them. Lumumba was always suspicious of the U.N. and accused the Secretary-General of secretly backing Tshombe and the breakaway province against the Congolese government. President Kasavubu sacked Lumumba as Prime minister who in turn sacked Kasavubu as President even though both stayed in office. To compound the situation the army Chief of Staff Joseph Mobutu dissolved the government and appointed a college of commissioners to run affairs with himself as kingmaker. All of this combined to establish the breakdown of law and order in the country. The U.N. continued to recognise Kasavubu and Lumumba adding to the confusion. This was the type of scenario that O.N.U.C. operated under and without any clear mandate.

On 21 February 1961 the Security Council approved a resolution to take all appropriate measures to prevent the occurrence of civil war in the Congo with use of force if necessary. Paragraph A.2 of that resolution from the report of the officer in charge of the United Nations operations in the Congo to the Secretary-General relating to the implementation of paragraph A.2 of the Security-Council resolution of the same date reads,

‘...urges that measures be taken for the immediate withdrawal and evacuation from the Congo of all Belgian and other foreign military and paramilitary personnel and political advisers not under the United Nations command, and mercenaries.’¹¹

About 500 personnel described in the resolution were still administrating to the Katangese army.

On 24 August 1961 the President of the Republic of the Congo enacted Ordinance No.70, which provided for the expulsion of all non- Congolese officers and mercenaries serving in the Katangese forces, not under a contract with the central government. The Prime Minister requested the U.N.’s assistance and with Ordinance No.70 it received the legal rights to carry out its mission using force.¹²

The U.N.’s demands, centred on the removal of foreign forces and equipment from the Congo and especially Katanga. The Secretary-General’s Irish deputy in Katanga, Conor Cruise O’Brien, was ordered to enforce the new mandate. As a result of growing pressure from U.N. commanders on the ground and his own broad understanding of instructions, O’Brien and his staff put together a plan to neutralize the foreign leadership of the Katangan military. The plan was codenamed Operation *Rumpunch* and went into effect on the morning of 28 August. U.N. forces captured military posts through the province seizing the radio station, telephone exchange and gendarmerie headquarters in Elizabethville while disarming Katangan gendarmes and repatriating mercenaries. Many of those repatriated found their way back to the Congo through places like Rhodesia. These foreign personnel gradually took control of the Katangan gendarmerie and organised resistance to the U.N.¹³ O’Brien by this stage had put together a new plan codenamed operation *Morthor*, Hindu for “smash.” This plan called for the same objectives as before but on a larger scale and would also seek to capture Tshombe and his ministers but Katangan forces resisted long enough for Tshombe to escape and launch further attacks on the U.N.

At the funerals of the Niemba Ambush victims in Glasnevin cemetery in Dublin there was a wreath sent by Tshombe. Less than a year later he was directing his forces to kill Irish U.N. soldiers and capture the coy at Jadotville.

Operation Morthor and the Irish Action at Jadotville.

‘by sending troops to the Congo in 1960, the United Nations averted, or helped the major powers to avert, an occasion of international war’

CONOR CRUISE O’BRIEN, Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General to Katanga¹⁴

Operation Morthor (13 – 21 September 1961)

Katanga was the primary stumbling block to complete Congolese independence. Ordinance 70 gave the U.N. powers to expel foreign elements and as a result of Operation *Rumpunch* anti U.N. feelings resurfaced especially within the gendarmerie forces.

On 5 of September 1961 O’Brien informed Tshombe that the application of the new resolution would be imperative if his actions were not stopped forthwith.¹⁵ Operation *Morthor* was an extension of the previous plan to finally end the activities of Tshombe’s faction, evict the mercenaries and pave the way to Congolese independence. It began on 13 September but A’ coy had already observed groups of white mercenaries organising Africans in the Jadotville area.¹⁶ That night Katangese forces positioned themselves around Elizabethville in readiness for the U.N. They occupied strategic points within the city. At 20:00hrs on 12 September orders for Operation *Morthor* were issued to the 35th Irish Bn to sieze, hold and control the radio station and other locations.¹⁷ By 04:00 hrs on the next day all the objectives of the Irish Bn were taken against strong resistance.¹⁸ This was the first time in forty years that Irish troops found themselves under fire and in sustained combat environments. The operation continued for eight days.¹⁹

The Battle of Jadotville (13 - 17 September 1961)

A few days previous to the commencement of Operation *Morthor* A’ Coy of the 35TH Irish Infantry Battalion, drawn mostly from Custume barracks in the Athlone and Western command area consisting of approximately 150 men and commanded by Comdt Pat Quinlan was posted to the area of Katanga known as Jadotville. This caused controversy as they were replacing another U.N. force twice its size, which had been withdrawn. The Jadotville position was not ideal defensively as it was located just outside the town and about ninety miles from the Irish headquarters and in the vicinity of *Union Miniere*. It was also an area very hostile to the U.N. and the gendarmerie had been reinforcing and preparing itself.²⁰ The peacekeepers however had orders to protect the white population but found them hostile to their presence.²¹ The coy began to prepare defences while reporting to headquarters the situation at hand.²² They were ordered to stay.

At approximately 07:00 on Wednesday 13 September they received a radio message from Bn HQ informing them that Operation *Morthor* was a success. This was the first indication A’ Coy had of any operation planned to take place in Elizabethville.²³ Soon

after a group of about thirty gendarmerie soldiers rushed the forward Irish positions on foot and in jeeps firing their weapons, while A' coy were at Mass. But they were surprised to find troops at the defensive positions.²⁴ A firefight ensued and after about ten minutes the gendarmerie broke off and fled.

This was the beginning of the ordeal known as the 'Battle of Jadotville' and during the following six days they were constantly harassed with machinegun and mortar fire by the opposing force.²⁵ They were also continually attacked in mass waves of hundreds of enemy soldiers, mercenary's and local whites. Later in the week they were bombed and strafed by a Fouga jet aircraft flown by a Belgian mercenary and soon after their food and water began to run short after the water supply was turned off.²⁶ A helicopter flew in some badly needed water, which was found to be contaminated. The aircraft was knocked out while on the ground. During the fighting the surrounded company could see the unsuccessful relief columns trying to get through but they had no contact with them whatsoever.²⁷ At the beginning the Irish company observed the Gendarmerie massing their troops and they could have inflicted heavy casualties but refrained in order to save lives.²⁸ At the end of the battle the Irish commander negotiated a ceasefire with the enemy all the while hoping for the relief to get through and guidance from headquarters. In the end, after defeating a far superior force and realising that he could not hope to hold out indefinitely without relief, Quinlan surrendered in order to save his men.²⁹

Enemy Strength and Casualties

The opposing forces strength was approx 2-3000 soldiers containing many whites. Some of the whites (mercenaries) were in uniform and some in civilian attire. It was reported later that many white people from the town took up arms and attacked the Irish position. During the cease-fire, Comdt Quinlan, was informed by a white advisor to the gendarmerie, that the enemy had lost over 150 killed including seven (7) whites. This was later denied but the estimated figure was later put at 250-300 dead with many more injured. Fifty coffins had been brought up and the Irish troops thought they were destined to fill them. They were in fact for the white mercenary officers killed during the battle. The Irish had five (5) injured with no other casualties.³⁰

Relief Attempts and Action at the Lufira Bridge

Two relief attempts were mounted to reach A' Coy at Jadotville. The first occurred on 13/14 and the second on 16 September. A hastily organised force was put together and withdrawn from action in the city. It contained a mixture of Irish and Swedish troops with A.P.C.s.³¹ The first relief force found the Lufira Bridge heavily defended and after attempting to negotiate the obstacles under enemy fire on more than one occasion returned to base.³² The second attempt, Force Kane, did not fare much better and after breaking off contact with the enemy it was attacked by the same jet. The column was later ambushed and received casualties while returning to base.³³

Aftermath.

‘Ireland supporting ONUC helped reduce international friction. This was no minor achievement for the outbreak of Soviet-American hostilities anywhere during the Cold War even in the Congo could have set off a nuclear exchange everywhere’

CONOR CRIUSE O’BRIEN, Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General to Katanga³⁴

Captivity of A Coy (19 September – 25 October 1961)

This was a defining moment of the first phase of this U.N. mission and when the troops were taken prisoner the U.N. was also held to ransom for almost a month as they couldn’t act until they had secured their freedom.

After the surrender, A’ Coy prisoners were held in the *Hotel d’ Eli Europe* in Jadotville for the first few weeks of their captivity. During the early period they witnessed the removal of hundreds of enemy bodies from the battlefield and the enemy threatened to cut off their genitals and sow them into their mouths.³⁵ They also threatened to kill them and eat their bodies. Parts of the Congo were still known for cannibalism at the time. For the first few weeks they were guarded by paratroopers and treated well. However gendarmerie soon took over and their treatment began to deteriorate. On the 23 September more prisoners captured at Elizabethville arrived were amazed to see A’ Coy still alive as it was believed most had been killed.³⁶

Earlier the media had reported that fifty-seven (57) Irish soldiers had been killed causing anxiety in Ireland.³⁷ The Taoiseach, Sean Lemass, sent the Minister for External Affairs Frank Aiken to the Congo on a fact-finding mission.³⁸

On the 11th October the prisoners were transported to Kolwezi. This was a journey, which subjected them to physical abuse and threats from hundreds of soldiers and their women and children and was a recurrent theme to their captivity. On Wednesday 25 October after almost five weeks in captivity all prisoners were released at 17:00hrs and marched into Irish Battalion HQ at Prince Leopold Farm in Elizabethville. Had this handover not taken place they had planned a breakout.³⁹

Ireland had tried on numerous occasions to gain entry to the U.N.⁴⁰ On its eventual entry it had prepared legislation to allow its soldiers to take part in the first U.N. peacekeeping mission U.N.E.F.⁴¹ Although this did not happen it shows Ireland was hungry to take part in world affairs.⁴² Ireland’s participation in world affairs through representation and a leading role at the U.N. was a source of pride and led to a feeling of national confidence in the work of the government and the country’s enhanced image abroad.⁴³ The outpouring of pride was overwhelming at the departure of Irish troops for peacekeeping service in the Congo. Ireland was taking its place among the nations of the world, something the 1916 leaders proclaimed.⁴⁴ The outpouring of pride soon turned to grief at the repatriation of the Niamba Ambush victims in December 1960. But this did not interrupt government support of the U.N. and commitment to its foreign policy. Its

dogma was to portray Ireland as the pathfinders for peace and constructive international relations. The U.N. was Ireland's tool in international affairs whereas before it was relatively insignificant. The Irish people were stirred up with nationalistic rhetoric in support of its soldiers. But Ireland's role as seen from the government's view point was to end the secession of Katanga, support the transition to democracy through the U.N.'s impartial umbrella.⁴⁵ But the U.N.'s role became clouded, it seemed to lose its way and choose sides. Ireland as a result was seen the same way, its soldiers were fighting and dying for something other than what the government said it would. It was becoming involved and attracted criticism.⁴⁶

The Irish government had at the time a relatively high profile at the U.N. General Assembly by mitigating Cold War tensions, promoting decolonisation throughout Africa and Asia and defending human rights. It had also spearheaded initiatives on the withdrawal of troops from Central Europe and a peace plan for the Middle East. During these high profile actions Ireland's contribution was rewarded by the appointment of some of its diplomats to important positions involving one to the presidency of the General Assembly in 1960 and another to represent the Secretary General in Katanga.⁴⁷ During the Congo crisis a senior Irish officer was appointed as military commander of U.N. forces. Ireland was also elected to the Security Council, the Committee on South West Africa and the Congo Advisory Committee. The U.N. and the Congo was a major part of Ireland's foreign policy. Ireland remained true to the principals of U.N. policy even though Lemass's government had a slight wavering to the west on Cold War issues.⁴⁸ Ireland's peacekeeping role during the period is evidence for its support. ONUC's aim was to aid the Congo's transition to self rule and Frank Aiken wanted Ireland to lead the way in calming international tensions by preventing the transformation of Central Africa into a Cold War battle field.⁴⁹ The peacekeeping role, especially, was the area where Irish foreign policy was effective in pursuing limited tangible aims in its own security issues to that of the U.N. and its efficiency in international relations.

When Irish men died at Niemba and at Elizabethville they were heroes for Ireland and the U.N.'s fight for peace sentiments. But the action at Jadotville was embarrassing because of the damage inflicted by the soldiers of a 'so called' impartial, neutral state. Their surrender made it worse because of the hostage situation that developed.⁵⁰ These aspects diminished Ireland's prominence in the U.N. and the events in Katanga had a sobering effect on the Irish presence in the assembly.⁵¹ After the inaccurate media reports of the deaths of fifty-seven Irish soldiers in Jadotville and the fighting in Katanga, Frank Aiken was despatched to the Congo.⁵² He concluded that Ireland had taken on too much responsibility and should therefore reduce its workload in New York. He decided that Irish diplomats would no longer accept any committee chairmanships at the assembly.⁵³ One must remember the Irish government's original reasons for joining O.N.U.C. and its promise of not permitting its troops to become embroiled in the internal affairs of the Congo.⁵⁴

A blame game erupted in the United Nations camp as to who was responsible for the fiasco following the operation, which left the U.N. in an embarrassing hostage predicament.⁵⁵

Operations *Rumpunch* and *Morthor* had received little in terms of their political aims to remove the mercenary elements and bring about an end to the secession of Katanga but from a military standing they were very successful. Although using inferior equipment

and the lack of aircraft the U.N. forces succeeded in taking their objectives during the fighting in Elizabethville as well as other sites held by the gendarmerie in Albertville and elsewhere in Katanga.

Mr Khiary replaced Mr Hammerskjold as the chief negotiator after the Secretary-General was killed in an aircraft crash on 17 September 1961, while on his way to meet Tshombe and attempt to stop the fighting. Khiary later signed a cease-fire agreement with Tshombe on 13 October 1961.⁵⁶ The protocol included.

1. The exchange of all prisoners
2. The creation of a joint commission with full freedom of movement to verify compliance with the agreement.
3. The withdrawal of U.N. troops from positions in Elizabeth, which were secured in Operation *Morthor* on condition that the provisional government would not engage in inflammatory propaganda against the U.N.⁵⁷

This meant that all the ground gained in the fighting had to be handed back. This in retrospect was wrong, because it was a sign of weakness and the same locations would have to be secured again in the fighting of the second with further casualties.⁵⁸

Tshombe however, treated this as a victory over the United Nations. He had placed the U.N. in a position in which they had to secure the release of the prisoners taken at Jadotville before they could continue operations in the province.

Tensions rose and Tshombe reneged and revelled in his fame as the defeater of the United Nations. Mercenaries were given jobs in the provincial government and many more were re-engaged with the gendarmerie. They used aircraft to bomb the U.N. but the latter had learnt from their experiences in Jadotville and Elizabethville and managed to acquire ten fighter jets and five bombers to support the troops on the ground.⁵⁹ On 24 November the U.N. Security Council authorised O.N.U.C. through a new resolution to use requisite measures of force to apprehend prohibited mercenaries and political advisors.⁶⁰

The U.N. had decided to end the Katanga problem and after the adoption of the resolution Tshombe again launched into inflammatory propaganda, which later turned into violence and atrocities by the gendarmerie.

The U.N. discovered that the gendarmerie was planning a massive campaign against them, which was to take place around the time that the Irish and Swedish battalions would be rotating and at their weakest on the ground. On this basis on the 5 December Operation U.N.O.K.A.T. was put into force as it was deemed necessary to subdue the enemy in order to gain freedom of movement and control Elizabethville.⁶¹ This was the first time that a clear political directive backed the U.N. operation on the ground. On the same day as the issuing of the directive a patrol including elements of A' Coy were ambushed on their way to clear a roadblock in the vicinity of Elizabethville airport. One Irish soldier was injured and marked the opening of hostilities in the second phase of fighting.

On the 7 December the 36th Irish Bn arrived in Elizabethville from Ireland.⁶² They had flown into their operational area in full knowledge of hostilities and one of the U.S.A.F. Globe masters carrying troops came under fire from the gendarmerie on landing at Elizabethville airport. The 36th Bn reinforced the U.N. positions and later they attacked and held a tunnel leading to Elizabethville, which was in the hands of the enemy and an

important logistical route, sustaining further casualties.⁶³ This operation became known as the “Battle of the Tunnel” and has become legend within the Irish Defence Forces. The 35th Bn rotated soon after and the 36th went on to fight in their own battles receiving ‘well deserved’ recognition for their bravery and service.

Conclusion

‘It is unbelievable that this glorious episode had been airbrushed out of Irish Military History. Unfortunately, many of these men have gone to their graves without their valour and bravery being recognised.’

MR DENIS NAUGHTEN, speaking to the Dail, 30 November 2004

The deployment of group *Mide* (initial deployment to Jadotville) was in response to the perceived danger to the white civilian population and before returning reported them quite hostile to the U.N. presence.⁶⁴ It would appear that some political pressure had been applied to the U.N. because this mission was not realistic in terms of the upcoming operation and the resources needed. This was borne out with the stationing of A’ Coy to Jadotville in a subsequent move, which was a tactical error. In fact Quinlan had sent a messenger to O’Brien, who was attending a function in Elizabethville, pointing out the flawed mission and his company’s predicament. Two other battalions were initially requested to commit troops to the area but this was denied, as troops were needed for the operation in Elizabethville.⁶⁵ The stationing of troops ninety miles from their Bn HQ was also tactically misjudged.

The breakdown in radio communications between A’ Coy and Bn HQ is obviously one factor in the events, which subsequently led to the overall situation. A’ Coy was not informed of Operation *Morthor* and this is a mystery, because this fact alone means that the events in Elizabethville, which were to have repercussions in Jadotville, should have been envisioned but were not.

The relief attempts did not maintain contact with the enemy at the Lufira Bridge. This permitted the gendarmerie to establish stronger defences after the first attempt and before the second. There was no chance the relief column would get through to Jadotville. The U.N. troops had revealed their intentions.

As for the decision to surrender by the commander of A’ Coy, it is obvious that the Irish troops totally won the confrontation and engagement. But it is also obvious that the same troops would have been annihilated if the hostilities continued. Whether the action was a ‘surrender’ or a ‘cease-fire’ is still in dispute in some circles but one has to remember that there were many promises made and broken during the negotiations. The U.N. negotiated a general cease-fire in the province and Quinlan had agreed to the same in Jadotville with certain conditions. But when he realised that no relief was forthcoming he knew he would have to make a decision when the ultimatum came. A’ Coy inflicted very heavy

casualties on a numerically superior force during the six-day battle and there were many acts of bravery by individual members of the coy. Yet no awards have ever been made in respect of this action despite the fact that the bravery of A' Coy soldiers was the subject of special recommendation for meritorious service by the coy commander.⁶⁶

The reason for the low casualty rate in the Irish coy was that they had constructed good defensive positions and trenches. This means that the Irish commander was being cautious and prepared for an expected attack.

A' Coy's few heavy weapons i.e. mortars and machinegun fire was very accurate and because the enemy was repelled at long ranges.

The surprising element was the rise in tensions in the immediate area. We already know that radio communication between A' Coy and Bn HQ was ok but the amazing fact is that the former was never informed of the impending Operation *Morthor*, a pre-planned operation, until 07:25hrs on the morning of Wednesday 13 September, the morning of the operation.⁶⁷ This was the catalyst that started the attacks on A' Coy and initiated the deterioration of events.

The Irish Government and the defence forces desired participation in peacekeeping operations. This is evident from the numerous applications to join the United Nations and the government's early preparation of legislation in the hope of it happening. But when the troops arrived in the Congo they were found to be unprepared in many ways. The mission was totally unexpected in the army's apprehension of its role. But it is a credit to the defence forces and these men that they were able improvise, adapt and overcome these obstacles to carry out their mission in the changing nature of O.N.U.C.'s mandate. For much of the time the force had no clear mandate from the Security-Council. The U.N. seemed unable to understand the role of a peacekeeping mission and a combat mission. What happened at Jadotville was to a certain extent embarrassing for Ireland, its government and to some in its defence forces because they were originally trying to support the U.N. in its endeavours to help the Congo's transition to central democratic governance and was seen to be doing something different. Remember that Ireland still stood firm on its own issues as regards the Northern Irish border counties. It also wanted to end Katanga's cessation as part of its leading role in world affairs through its foreign policy. In reality it was sometimes seen to be doing the opposite by taking sides. The fact that Irish soldiers were fighting and dying in Katanga, that they had killed up to 300 Katangese at Jadotville (in self defence) and then surrendered themselves and the U.N. into a hostage situation made Ireland's position worrying. This was evident by Aiken's swift despatch to the Congo.

These soldiers were indeed extensions of Ireland's foreign policy. To the U.N. and the Katangan Government war was an extension of politics by other means. The Irish soldiers at Jadotville and other places were sacrificing themselves for an honourable and just cause i.e. peacekeeping in a conflict that could have triggered a Third World War. The Irish Defence Forces role has and is remembered for its contribution, but the soldiers at Jadotville were for a long time dishonoured because until recently they were never properly recognised for their actions. Comdt Quinlan conducted his actions in a defensive manner. He did not use force until provoked and only in defence of his men and position. Although heavily outnumbered he held out in anticipation of orders from higher authority, which were not forthcoming. The Irish used their weapons in a superior fashion

to the Katangese because of their training and supervision inflicting very heavy casualties but refrained from imposing colossal damage on numerous occasions in the view to preserving lives. They did not act without honour and tried to limit the capability of the enemy to wage war. The men involved in Jadotville have to a great extent been castigated for this event throughout the past forty years. This story and the brave actions of other battalions should never be forgotten.

NOTES

¹ Georges Nzongola- Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, (2nd Ed), (New York, 2003), p. 153

² Ibid

³ *Union Miniere* was a mining company whose rights were owned by Belgian business interests as well as other countries like France, Britain and the U.S. who also had vested interests.

⁴ The Curragh Camp, Co Kildare, was used as a training and forming up facility for the troops

⁵ ONUC the Congo in *An Cosantoir; The Defence Forces Magazine, U.N. Anniversary Edition* (Dublin, 1995), pp 12-13

⁶ The Battle of Jadotville: Congo-1961 in *A Case Study by Students of the 50th Commanding Officers Course* 1993. DF Library

⁷ Raymond Smith, *The Fighting Irish in the Congo*, (Dublin, 1962), pp 71-83

⁸ C.C. O' Brien, *To Katanga and Back* (London, 1962), p. 213

⁹ C.C. O' Brien; also The Battle of Jadotville: Congo-1961 in *A Case Study by Students of the 50th Commanding Officers Course* 1993. DF Library

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ O' Brien, p. 340

¹² Ibid, for a list of resolutions on the Congo see pp 331-339

¹³ Con Cremin, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: An Irish Initiative 1961-1968 in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, published by the R.I.A. vol.1, no. 4, (Dublin, 1984) documents those individuals and their backgrounds who were mercenaries

¹⁴ Joseph, Morrison Skelly, *Irish Diplomacy at the United Nations 1945-1966: National Interests and the International Order* (Dublin, 1997), p. 276

¹⁵ 50th Commanding Officers Course

¹⁶ *Irish Times* 13 September 1961

¹⁷ 35th Irish Infantry Battalion Congo 1961, *Unit History 1961*

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ *Irish Times* 21 September 1961

²⁰ *Irish Times* 13 September 1961

²¹ Tom McGuire (ed.), *The Siege at Jadotville 1961*, RTE Radio 1, 20 January 2004

²² 35th Bn

²³ RTE Radio 1, 20 January 2004

²⁴ 35th Bn

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid, see also Raymond Smith,

³¹ RTE Radio 1, 20 January 2004

³² 35th Bn

³³ Ibid

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- ³⁴ Skelly, p. 276
- ³⁵ Author in interview with Congo veteran
- ³⁶ 35th Bn
- ³⁷ Smith, pp 164-169
- ³⁸ *Irish Times* 16 September 1961
- ³⁹ 35th Bn
- ⁴⁰ Skelly, p. 269
- ⁴¹ Ibid, pp 266-283 (UNEF) United Nations Emergency Force in the Suez Canal, this was the first major mission to be mounted by the U.N. before ONUC and used as an early template in the Congo
- ⁴² Ibid
- ⁴³ Article 29 of the Irish Constitution states; '(1) Ireland affirms its devotion to the ideal of peace and friendly cooperation amongst nations founded on international justice and morality; (2) Ireland affirms its adherence to the principal of the pacific settlement of international arbitration or judicial determination; (3) Ireland accepts the general recognised principals of international law as its rule of conduct in relation with other states'
- ⁴⁴ 1916 Proclamation 'Ireland takes its place among the nations of the earth'
- ⁴⁵ Ireland adopted a liberal interpretation of Article 2.7 of the Charter (which precluded U.N. interference in the domestic affairs of member states) so as to undermine any future, although unlikely, move to introduce partition. The Charter reads; 'Nothing contained in the charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter, but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.'
- Skelly, p. 22
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, 266-283
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, pp 5-7, 15-24
- ⁴⁸ Ibid, pp 266-283
- ⁴⁹ Ibid
- ⁵⁰ *The People* 9 May 2004
- ⁵¹ Skelly, pp 266-283
- ⁵² *Irish Times* 16 September 1961
- ⁵³ Skelly, pp 275-276
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, pp 266-277
- ⁵⁵ Some veterans hold the opinion that the Jadotville incident was made the scapegoat for the problems at the higher echelons of command. RTE Radio 1, 20 January 2004
- ⁵⁶ *Irish Times* 19 September 1961
- ⁵⁷ 50th Commanding Officers Course
- ⁵⁸ 36th Irish Infantry Battalion Congo 1961, *Unit History 1961*
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- ⁶⁰ Con Cremim, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: An Irish Initiative 1961-1968 in *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, published by the R.I.A. vol.1, no. 4, (Dublin, 1984), pp 79-84
- ⁶¹ 35th Bn
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