

## Congo Crisis Article Comparison

I reviewed two articles focusing on the Congo Crisis; *The Congo Crisis: A Reexamination* by William Mountz for the Journal of the Middle East and Africa, and *Fighting for White Rule in Africa: The Central African Federation, Katanga, and the Congo Crisis, 1958-1965* by Matthew Hughes for the International History Review. Both articles offer a unique look at the international approach towards the Congo Crisis. While Mountz focuses on the United States, Hughes examines more so the United Nations response. While many of the details and topics of the articles are shared the lens by which they are seen gives a grander contrast to the affair. Mountz's thesis can be seen early on; that new evidences shed better light and evidence to the decision-making process of the Kennedy administration. Focused on the internal politics of the Congo at the time of the crisis he describes how the administration succeeded in some areas and failed in others. Hughes' thesis is equally as effective; the Central African Federation played a significant and integral role in shaping the Congo Crisis. Supporting this is large history of the Central African Federation and the African Treaty Organization played out against the Congo Crisis. It would be an understatement to say that any two given articles on the Congo Crisis would share the same focus, especially given the daunting complexity of the topic. As such between the two only tangential are shared, but both address the different perspectives and narratives toward their shared goal of helping better asses the Congo Crisis. To draw direct comparisons of the two would lead only to failure, so instead the comparisons will be made in technique, and overarching narrative.

Mountz's article gives most of its attention to the role of the United States. It examines the almost paradoxical support of a right-wing dictator by the United States against the backdrop of the complex politics the Congo Crisis is defined by. To start, Mountz states the significance the Congo played within the United States international goals, a failure here would be a possible communist subversion within the whole region. Mountz then argues that a re-examination of the Kennedy Administration's response and policies especially in face of new evidences. Mountz segues into the first section "Kennedy and Africa" as he picks up from where the Eisenhower administration left off regarding the Congo. The goal of the Kennedy administration is stated to be "nation-building" and is slated as the solution to the problems poised by de-colonization. Contrasting the diplomacy of Kennedy with Eisenhower, he states the differences between the vision of opportunity within de-colonization among the two Presidents. He concludes the section with a strong quote, "What we want from Africa is what Africans want for themselves." from the assistant secretary of state for African affairs. Mountz continues his investigation looking at the lack of changes made to the actual policies addressing the Congo Crisis in "Staying the Course of the Eisenhower Administration". The utilization of the UN against Communist subversion internationally, and supporting a unified Congo for containment, all began during the Eisenhower administration and continued through the Kennedy administration. He brings attention the administrations treatment of Lumumba as a leftist threat, again like the Eisenhower policies. He recalls that this continuation affected the situation negatively toward Western interests, and political assassinations in the region prompted the United States to push the United Nations toward resolution to "prevent the occurrence of civil war in the Congo." In the following section "Electing Adoula" Mountz plays out the election of Cyrille Adoula. Identified by the state department as the most likely candidate to hold the Congo together, the United States threw

its weight behind the potential candidate. Within the United Nations, a similar sentiment was held, hopeful for a stable Congo led by Secretary-General Dan Hammarskjold. Mountz continues the narrative describing the United States funds and CIA assistance sent to help solidify Adoula's potential within Congolese politics. Taking a dive into the Congolese politics Mountz gives accounts of the struggle to convince the internal government of Congo to give full support to Adoula. Eventually the combined might of the United States and United Nations efforts bore fruit, and Adoula was named Prime Minister. This served as a hollow victory, as Mountz identifies the growing credibility gap between Adoula, his election and the Congolese people. Mountz begins the next section "The Double-Edged Sword of American Support" giving evidence to the intertwined nature of the Adoula government and the United States. The next few paragraphs cover the Katanga Succession, and the threats it served to both the United States, and Adoula's government. Adoula seeking to end the succession and strengthen his political legitimacy argued for a swift and military based solution. In contrast, Kennedy desired a more political and peaceful solution. Mountz continues the section with the growing reliance of the Adoula government on the United States, and the effects this created for the Congolese people's perspective on their supposedly "independent" government. The following paragraphs detail the fall of the Adoula government due to the economic losses sustained during the Katanga succession and the following destabilization of the region, leading to the United States eventually supporting a dictatorship to stabilize and control the region. Mountz concludes his article with a short summary of the optimism of the American foreign policy goals, their subsequent failure and the shift to *realpolitik*.

Hughes' writing reflects a more intimately regional analysis of the Congo Crisis. Choosing instead to focus on the Central African Federation and the role its members and history played in shaping the Congo Crisis. To start, Hughes' gives the more commonly researched topics regarding the Congo Crisis, mostly relating the Belgian rule over the region. He states that simply put "Missing from this corpus, however, is an in-depth analysis of the role played by the neighboring Central African Federation." Hughes gives a short history of the Central African Federation and establishes its precedent for being involved in the Congo region by way of the Katanga mineral riches. The section then shows the effects of decolonization on the Central African Federation. This de-stabilized the Central African Federation forcing them towards a defensive alliance. The Central African Federation led efforts to create the African Treaty Organization. The African Treaty Organization failed to secure the support of the United States and United Kingdom pushing them to ally with other powers. Hughes examines how the Organization sought out membership from Portuguese Africa, and even looked toward Katanga as an ally. When the Congo achieved independence the response from the Central African Federation was less than enthusiastic. Facing a possibly African-controlled Congo, Hughes states that the Central African Federation ramped up their negotiations with Katanga. Hughes enters his next section with a question "Why did a political union between the Federation and Katanga never materialize?" Hughes answers with "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" This effectively neutered the efforts of the Central African Federation to create an ally of the Katanga region. Additionally, Hughes states that the concern of the immediate political situation called far more attention and resources to the detriment of the African Treaty Organizations potential. When the Katanga region declared independence under Tshombe, the

Central African Federation immediately sought an alliance with him. Contrary to this the United Nations tied their hands and prevented any military aid to the region. Instead the Central African Federation served as a recruiting ground for mercenaries to support Tshombe's Katanga. The international community did not turn a blind eye as Hughes states, "Even British officials, some of whom felt sympathy with the whites of the Federation noted the willful nature of the Federation activities in Katanga." Hughes takes the next few paragraphs describing the various forms of support and indirect aid the Central African Federation offered Katanga, from military safe havens, airstrips, and logistical routes the Central African Federation held a key interest in supporting Katanga against Western desires. Even without the support of its mother nation the Central African Federation acted independently to support Katanga, and even show up the United Nations forces with a display of power. But the United Nations would prevail against the Katanga succession and end it through military force. The final pages of Hughes' work mostly recall the downfall of the various white-led regimes in central Africa, and continuing support for Tshombe.

Mountz's writing offers a concise recollection of the Kennedy administration's goals and intentions going into the Congo Crisis. Desiring to identify where the failures and success of the Kennedy administration's foreign policy aims, he keeps a focus on the "liberal ideology" influencing the decision-making process. But as Mountz develops, these desires never come to fruition as the region dives deeper into chaos. Effectively navigating the otherwise confusing state of Congolese politics and even more so the Crisis itself, Mountz manages to build a novel examination of the Kennedy administration. This examination reports well supported causes and reasons for the eventual fate of the Crisis leading, eventually to American support of dictators in the region. Two sections stand out for their effectiveness; first the section regarding the Kennedy

administration's opinions on the political actor Lumumba. He recounts the flip-flopping views of the government and places the context of his arrest against the supposed liberal ideology governing Kennedy's decisions. Even as Lumumba establishes that his movement is not "Communists, Catholics, or Socialists. We are African Nationalists" the administration moves forward with paradoxically against its liberal ideology to work against Lumumba and wrong identify him as a "rabble-rouser." Another effective example is found in overarching narrative behind the election of Adoula. The supposedly "what Africans want" guidance of foreign policy gave way to black mail, and heavy propaganda campaigns to elect Adoula. Overall Mountz's article reads well and does a very nice job of supporting its thesis and bringing to light the role of the United States within the crisis.

Hughes' article focuses instead on the Central African Federation, enveloping the paper in a more locally defined region. His thesis; the Central African Federation played a significant and pivotal role in shaping the conflict. As well, he frames the actions undertaken as an attempt at maintaining a "white government" within the central Africa. This secondary point is less stated than his first, and only become clear towards the end of the writing, but nonetheless it helps to better establish motives for the Central African Federation. Most of his argument is drawn from the efforts to establish the African Treaty Organization as a major force within central Africa. He effectively builds the case for the Central African Federation in the crisis through its direct influences over the war. Two sections stand out from the article first is the clear and direct staging of mercenaries in Central African Federation during the crisis. It shows a series of interesting points, first the Federation acted clearly against Western powers, something that serves as an interesting example of the Federation's commitment. As well it gives a clear and direct example to the effect of the thesis. The second section that stood out to me is identification

of a prior lying association between the Northern Rhodesia and Katanga region. Hughes states “The Belgian diplomats added how, for years, there had been close contacts between the white settlers of Katanga and Northern Rhodesia.” This gives more weight to the thesis, as well as prodding at the interesting factor Northern Rhodesia plays in the overall story of the region. Hughes’ article is broad and a lengthy read, but he establishes his thesis well and supports it strongly throughout.

An immediate comparison between the two articles is difficult. The two may share the same topic, but their thesis and methodology could not be more different. Shared between the two however is the paradoxical effects the Crisis brought onto the goals of the actors within. In Montz this is shown by the supposedly “liberal ideology” of the United States goals against the actual actions undertaken. For Hughes this is best shown in the Central African Federations defiance of the Western powers to secure its own desired alliance. In this sense the articles show exactly how confusing the Crisis can be to study and pin down. Between the two I find that Mountz’s writing style and evidence presentation is more effective and focused than that of Hughes. Throughout Hughes’ writing I found that I sometimes, could not place the effectiveness of information given within the context of the thesis. An example of this is the mention of the African Treaty Organization turning to Portuguese Africa for membership. While this gives way to the clear intent and goal of the Central African Federation’s desire to maintain white governments in the area, it serves little to the establishment of its interactions in the Crisis. Mountz weaknesses lay in that it may a little too focused on a purely American diplomacy standpoint. It offers little in the way of addressing Katanga itself, save a short and small reference. Instead it shifts most of its focus onto the internal affairs of the Congo and the attempts at establishing a democratic government there. While Mountz is focused on a series of

short and well contained events, Hughes offers a broader analysis. Neither strikes me as particularly effective compared against the other but, as stated Montz's focus seems a little less wandering than Hughes'. At large I preferred Montz's writing to Hughes', purely for its concentration of topic against Hughes' expansive overview.

Mountz's utilization of newly declassified information is extremely effective at giving way to new insights to the role of the Kennedy administrations international affairs and their ideological failings. Hughes' focus on the African Treaty Organization stands as an effective point of reference toward Central Africa Federation's role in the Congo Crisis. The two serve as grand additions to the help enlighten the complexity Congo Crisis.