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Explaining Ugandan intervention in Congo: evidence and interpretations

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ABSTRACT

This paper enquires into the reasons for Uganda's 1998 intervention in the recent Congo war, arguably the most important impediment to economic and political progress in sub-Saharan Africa. It examines a number of prominent arguments about the intervention, and determines that the Rwanda–Uganda alliance should be at the centre of a 'thick description' of the intervention. That is, the Uganda–Rwanda alliance was the key to President Museveni's initial decision in 1998, but other explanations contribute to our understanding of the intervention by providing information about its context, justification and permissive causes. Further, the paper suggests that Uganda's initial reasons for entering Congo differ from its reasons for remaining there after having failed to realise its initial goals.

INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan Africa is currently witnessing an epic struggle for control of the Democratic Republic of Congo that bears directly on the prospects for peace, freedom, and development over a large portion of the continent. While some African states may make progress towards their national goals with the latest Congo crisis unresolved, a large number in the central, eastern and southern parts of the continent will necessarily remain distracted from other goals until the outcome of the war is determined. Only when the war is resolved can Congo come at last to serve as the engine for economic growth and development that its size has long promised.

The war has brought in at least seven different African states on opposite sides. Of course, a number of the same states had recently

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intervened in Congo during the 1996–97 war that displaced the long-ruling Mobutu Sese Seko from power. In that war, however, all of the African interveners were united in their goal of assisting the insurgents to dislodge Mobutu (McNulty 1999: 76–7). The second Congo war threatens to undermine peace and prosperity in Africa for far longer, since one group of external interveners (Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi) has supported various insurgent groups, while another group (Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Chad) has intervened on behalf of President Laurent Kabila. The war has thus pitted groups of African states against one another in a fashion not seen since the Cold War, threatening to engulf half the continent in inter-state war. This paper explores the intervention of one of the crucial anti-Kabila interveners in the Congo war, Uganda.

Unfortunately, to explain the intervention of one state into the affairs of another is rarely simple or uncontroversial. Most analysts begin, of course, with fundamental prejudices about the mainsprings of action in the social world. To maintain objectivity in the face of confusing and contradictory evidence is particularly difficult; it is far easier to allow ideological or methodological preferences to organise the data than to engage in the demanding processes of objectively compiling and analysing a mass of information. Moreover, the results are likely to be tentative, partial and complex, and therefore less than totally satisfying. One is more likely to end with a 'thick description' of a complex episode than a 'scientific' explanation of a discrete social event.[1] Yet it is better to devise a good *argument*, even one that cannot possibly be the final word, than conclude with a false, and sterile, 'scientific explanation'.

All of these methodological caveats apply to Uganda's intervention in the second Congo war. To understand the complex origins of this event, one must take account of the nature of the regime that engaged in the intervention, the context in which it took place and the proximate causes that sparked it. Further, one must ask whether the explanations for the Uganda People's Defence Force's (UPDF's) original intervention in the Congo are the same as those for its continued occupation of eastern and northern Congo.

To understand Uganda's recent intervention is largely a matter of understanding the motives of the person, President Yoweri Museveni, who ordered the UPDF into Congo. According to a number of highly placed sources, the decision to intervene was made by the president himself, after consultation with only a few close military advisers. Apparently, neither important civilian advisers nor the parliament

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were consulted before the decision was taken, as is required by the constitution. There is little evidence that societal interest groups, bureaucratic constituencies, or even Museveni's own Cabinet had much influence on the decision (confidential interviews, 1999). Unlike in more institutionalised settings, the will of the President himself is indisputably the key to foreign-policy decision-making in Uganda. In estimating Museveni's motivations, however, one can never be completely confident about what these were, and even the principal himself may not have been certain which considerations stimulated his bold move.

Despite the difficulties of explanation, however, one can meaningfully sort through the various claims about the reasons for Uganda's latest foreign intervention. Some of them are transparently inspired by political or ethnic motives in the absence of supporting evidence. Others are much more plausible, but contain important logical flaws or face considerable counter evidence. While they provide us with partial explanations or important contextual clues about the nature of the intervention, they are peripheral to the core problem, that of President Museveni's main concerns at the time of the intervention. This study finds the Rwanda–Uganda alliance at the core of a thick description of Uganda's initial entry into Congo in 1998, but it does not claim that this alliance was *the* cause of the intervention. Nor does this analysis consider the alliance to be the main cause of Uganda's continuing presence in Congo, which would fly in the face of contradictory evidence.

DOMESTIC POLITICS, 'IDEOLOGY' AND REGIONAL RELATIONS UNDER MUSEVENI

Any understanding of Uganda's intervention in Congo must necessarily begin with some background on the domestic politics of the intervening state. No aspect of this background is without controversy, least of all the nature of the Museveni regime and the ideology of the president. One's reading of the record of Museveni's government and its foreign policy to 1997 inevitably conditions one's interpretation of Uganda's intervention in the second Congo war.

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Domestic politics and ideology

Many Ugandans, ordinary and intellectual, perceive President Museveni to be a virtual saviour of his country, a Rousseau-style 'founding legislator'. Museveni's long struggle in the bush between 1981 and 1986, leading to his seizure of power in Kampala, is now a legend in Uganda's history, and has been lovingly documented by the president himself (Museveni 1997). During the struggle Museveni repeatedly demonstrated personal courage, self-sacrifice and steely determination. Compared to the behaviour of former President Milton Obote's army, that of Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) guerrilla force was a model of discipline and probity. The fact that his military forces restored a large measure of order to public life in many areas of Uganda during the late 1980s earned Museveni the admiration of a sizable fraction of the population, and at least the grudging acceptance of the vast majority. Although Museveni's government has carefully orchestrated all of the elections in the country since 1986 to assure victory for the president and his ruling National Resistance Movement (now, simply, the 'Movement'), there is little doubt that he could win genuinely free elections in Uganda, despite growing opposition from the intelligentsia and urban classes. Indeed, the results of the June 2000 referendum on 'systems' in Uganda, despite its flaws, testify to this claim.

While a great deal of weight has been put on Museveni's 'ideology', the content of the Ugandan president's political philosophy is far from clear. Like most other African leaders, Museveni claims to stand for national unity, 'democracy', self-reliance, development and intra-African cooperation, and against corruption, tribalism and dictatorship, but such platitudes hardly constitute a political programme. Museveni's tertiary education in Tanzania during the 1970s was at the hands of legendary leftists such as Walter Rodney, and Museveni was still using the language of the 1960s left in his recent autobiography (1997: 42–4). Such language both ingratiates Museveni with his own people and allows him to avoid responsibility for the short-comings of his own regime, its successes notwithstanding. In practice, however, Museveni abandoned his own 'Marxist' convictions, as well as the state-led development schemes of the 1960s, and warmly embraced the neo-liberal strategies of the World Bank and IMF (the International Financial Institutions, or IFIs) many years ago (Kiyaga-Nsubuga 1997). In domestic politics, Museveni has famously rejected multi-partyism as inappropriate for Africa's fragmented polities, and

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constructed a no-party, 'movement' system of government, which effectively functions like a one-party state (Kasfir 2000). Conveniently for Museveni and the Ugandan 'political class', the no-party doctrine has both served to keep Museveni in power and simultaneously to satisfy Western donors (Hauser 1999). Recently, however, Western human rights organisations have begun to emphasise the extent to which the state's repressive apparatus stifles dissent in Uganda (Human Rights Watch 1999).

The overall results of Museveni's domestic policies have been decidedly mixed. On the one hand, his forthright cooperation with the IFIs has yielded rather impressive macro-economic results. Economic growth per annum averaged over 8 per cent between 1994 and 1998, while the index of manufacturing output increased five-fold between 1986 and 1998 (EIU 2000: 5). Consumer price increases have not exceeded 10 per cent per annum during the second half of the 1990s. Meanwhile, Uganda has just been forgiven a significant part of the debt that it has accumulated through the generosity of Western donors since 1986 under the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) programme. One should bear in mind, however, that Uganda's economy was starting from a very low base in 1986, and has only recently exceeded the level of GDP per capita prevailing in 1970. Nor have Museveni's economic policy successes translated into rapid or impressive decreases in overall poverty in Uganda (Jamal 1998). Moreover, the Western world has begun to take note that the levels of corruption in Uganda remain high, and have recently increased (*Economist* 1 May 1998: 41).

More importantly, the NRM government has failed to capture the imagination or win the support of large swathes of the population in the northern sections of the country. Notably, the Acholi in the north, who supported Obote during his two stints in power, have remained unreconciled to Museveni's rule. The inability of the NRM government and the UPDF to defeat the rebellion of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the North, active since the late 1980s, has left a significant portion of the population embittered towards the NRM regime (Behrend 1998; Doom & Vlassenroot 1999). This bitterness is increased by the abuses of the UPDF against the local population in the area. Since 1996, moreover, the NRM government has faced a new threat in the west, the rebellion of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). In this region, too, frustration is growing among the civilian population, due to the government's inability to staunch a destructive rebellion which has little popular support. Since Museveni stakes his legitimacy largely

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on having re-established public order in the country, the insecurity in the north and west presents a major challenge to his regime. Rhetoric not withstanding, Museveni has not yet conceived the formula that provides genuine national unity in Uganda.

Domestic politics and regional relations

Turning to Uganda's pre-1998 relations with its neighbours, these seem to have far more to do with domestic politics than with the 'ideology' of the Museveni regime. At Dar es Salaam University, Museveni was imbued with the rhetoric of pan-Africanism and revolutionary anti-imperialism. Nonetheless, Uganda has been embroiled in serious disputes with four of its five neighbours since Museveni took power. These disputes have been driven primarily by mutual threats to security and the domestic politics of Museveni's and his neighbours' personalistic regimes. For instance, the Kenyan government of Daniel arap Moi was initially suspicious of the new Museveni regime due to its alleged support for Kenyan dissent groups. These suspicions led to a rupture in diplomatic relations and a non-violent military stand-off on the Kenya–Uganda border in late 1987, a dispute which was not entirely resolved until 1990 (Gakwandi 1999: 84).

Far more serious has been the NRM government's long politico-military confrontation with Sudan, which dates at least to 1988. Ugandan political refugees had begun seeking shelter in Sudan during the Amin and Obote II (1980–85) periods, well before Museveni's rise to power. After Museveni's rise, however, some of these refugees were recruited into the West Nile Bank Front, and later the LRA, two groups that have challenged NRM rule. In turn, the anti-government Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has recruited from among Sudanese refugees in Uganda. Not surprisingly, the governments of Uganda and Sudan have accused each other of assisting and providing sanctuary to anti-government rebel groups operating from the other's territory. These mutual suspicions and accusations led in 1995 to a break in diplomatic relations that has thus far not been healed (Gakwandi 1999: 82). Because of the security threat that it represents, the Movement has long viewed Sudan as the most significant foreign threat to its rule and the security of Uganda. In fact, the animosity that the Ugandan and American governments hold towards that in Khartoum has been one important basis for the *de facto* US–Uganda alliance (Clark 1998).

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Uganda has also had volatile relations with its neighbour to the south, Rwanda, particularly owing to the presence of very large numbers of Rwandan (largely Tutsi) refugees in the country since the early 1960s. In response to Rwanda's 'Hutu revolution' of 1959–61, some 78,000 'official' refugees were in Uganda by late 1964, and their numbers had probably increased by over 50 per cent by 1990 (Prunier 1995: 62–3). But the importance of the Rwandan population in Uganda goes far beyond the mere presence of refugees: as a result of persecution under Obote, some 3,000 (mostly Tutsi) Rwandan soldiers joined Museveni's 14,000-strong NRA by 1986. By 1990, as the size of the NRA itself increased dramatically, the number of Rwandans in the NRA had increased to about 8,000. Being resented by many of Uganda's various ethnic peoples and aspiring politicians, these Rwandan elements had become a domestic political liability for Museveni by this time (Prunier 1995: 70–1).

With Museveni's discreet support, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) began an invasion of Rwanda from their base in Uganda on 1 October 1990. President Museveni allowed them to operate from Ugandan soil, and turned a blind eye as their former comrades in the NRA transferred arms to them (Prunier 1995: 118–19). Since a majority of politically active Rwandan Tutsi in Uganda joined this effort, Museveni's domestic political problem was thus resolved. After nearly four years of sporadic warfare, the RPA took power in Kigali in the midst of the genocide organised by an extremist Hutu faction of the former ruling regime. The RPA's political wing, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Major General Paul Kagame, organised a Tutsi-dominated government that remains in power in Rwanda. As a former deputy chief of intelligence in the NRA, Kagame was a trusted friend of President Museveni until the recent clashes of the Rwandan and Ugandan armies in Kisangani, Congo.

Among the joint projects undertaken together by Vice-President (now President) Kagame and President Museveni was the ousting of Zaire's long-serving ruler, Mobutu Sese Seko, in 1997. The main grievances of Kagame and Museveni with Mobutu dated to 1996, though Museveni had expressed scorn for the rule of Mobutu for many years. Kagame's grievances with Mobutu related mainly to the presence on Zairean soil of former soldiers and militiamen from the previous regime in Rwanda, some of whom were implicated in the 1994 genocide. These soldiers and militiamen were in virtual control of the Rwandan refugee camps, just across the border in Zaire, and Kagame regarded them as a mortal threat. The spark in the powder keg,

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however, was Mobutu's decision in September 1996 to expel some 300,000 Zaireans of Tutsi ethnicity (the 'Banyamulenge') from Zairean territory (see Kennes *et al*. 2000). Within weeks of this announcement, a full-fledged civil war between the Banyamulenge and the Hutu refugees was under way, with the Zairean national army backing the latter. Rwandan advisers, and then regular troops, were soon crossing the border to come to the aid of the Banyamulenge, and other anti-Mobutu elements. All of the forces fighting against Mobutu joined together under an umbrella party calling itself the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL), eventually headed by Laurent Kabila. Uganda joined its ally in this effort, dispatching an unknown number of advisers from the Ugandan army. Over the course of the next six months, the AFDL, in conjunction with its Rwandan and Ugandan allies, defeated the Zairean national army in battle after battle until it finally took Kinshasa in May 1997.

The second Congo rebellion, that against President Kabila beginning in August 1998, caught many outside observers off guard. After Kabila had seized power, his international alliance with Rwanda and Uganda was initially quite strong. An influential cadre of Tutsi (both Rwandan and Congolese) stayed on in Kinshasa to serve the Kabila regime as military officers and political advisers after the withdrawal of the Ugandan and Rwandan armies to eastern Congo. Unfortunately for Kabila, however, the presence of so many prominent Tutsi and Banyamulenge in his regime did not sit well with most Congolese citizens, who regarded them as foreign occupiers. As a result, Kabila began efforts to marginalise these elements in his government which in turn led them to conspire against his rule. The tensions between Kabila and his Tutsi/Banyamulenge advisers soon spilled over into tension between Kabila and his foreign backers in Kigali and Kampala. By mid-1998 Kabila was complaining that the Ugandans and Rwandans were illegally taking resources from eastern Congo (*EA* 1–7.6.1998).

One symbol of the new tension was the failure of Museveni and Kagame to appear in Kinshasa for Kabila's celebration of his first year in power. At the beginning of August 1998, a number of prominent Banyamulenge/Tutsi officials and army officers suddenly defected from Kabila's government and began another rebellion, under the name *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD). These forces very nearly took Kinshasa and overthrew Kabila at the very start of the war, and would have done so were it not for the intervention of the Angolan national army on Kabila's behalf. Rwanda's army was prominent in this invasion from the beginning, and it soon became apparent that the

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UPDF was as well, despite initial denials from the Ugandan government. Thus, by mid-August 1998, Rwanda and Uganda were again deeply implicated in an effort to overthrow the new government of Congo. Given that the two countries were largely responsible for Kabila's rise the previous year, their forceful support for his removal begs for explanation.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Among the various explanations that have been offered for Uganda's intervention, two are so lacking in empirical foundation that they can rightly be termed 'conspiracy theories'. Nonetheless each has wide enough currency to merit discussion. The first is that President Museveni is seeking to build an ethnic, BaHima–Tutsi empire in the Great Lakes region; the second is that Museveni is acting at the behest of 'Anglo-Saxon' masters who are bent on displacing French influence from Africa. While both of these theories can be discarded as central to Museveni's decision to go into Congo, each is *marginally* significant in building up a 'thick description' of Uganda's latest venture in Congo.

The theory that Museveni is seeking to erect a 'Nilotic' empire has its basis in the relatively close ethnic relationship between the Banyarwanda and the Banyankole people of southwestern Uganda.[2] The Banyankole, like the Banyarwanda, are composed of two 'castes' (or classes), the Bahima and the Bairu, a distinction that is based on traditional socioeconomic roles rather than physical differentiation. Museveni is from the Bahima upper caste, which is historically linked with Rwanda's Tutsi. Many Africans have long assumed, albeit without specific evidence, that Museveni sympathises particularly strongly with Rwanda's Tutsi due to these 'blood ties' (Weiss 2000: 2).

In fact, Museveni's alliance with Rwandan Tutsi in exile was much more a matter of convenience than it was one of primordial ethnic fealty. During the early 1980s, Museveni and the Rwandan Tutsi in exile had a common enemy, Obote, whom both parties sought to overthrow. As for Museveni's support for the RPA at the time of their invasion of Rwanda in 1990, this was based more on his desire to remove them from the Ugandan political scene than blood loyalty. Of course, Museveni continued to support Kagame after the RPF's seizure of power in Kigali, but his actions could as easily be attributed to post-genocide guilt, political expediency, and mutual interests as to a hidden desire to build a Bahima–Tutsi empire in central Africa. For leadership of Congo, Museveni has supported (in turn) Laurent Kabila, Wamba

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dia Wamba, and more recently Jean Pierre Bemba, none of whom is a Munyamulenge or Tutsi. These actions all undermine the idea that Museveni believes that ethnic-based cooperation among two or three leaders in the Great Lakes will lead to stable rule, deeper integration, or even international sanction.

A second conspiracy theory is that Museveni is acting at the behest of Anglo-American interests in the Great Lakes to help realise a grand design of anglicising the entire region, and side-lining French as a language of intra-region communication.[3] Such a theory was evoked in Paris in some circles at the time of the campaign against the Habyarimana regime in Rwanda and the genocidal rump government that followed it (Prunier 1995: 104–6). More generally, some French statesmen have been suspicious of the motives of British and American diplomats in the region before and after the Rwandan genocide (Huliaras 1998).

But if Britain and the United States have been supportive of Uganda with the IFIs, as well as bilaterally, it is also true that Museveni frequently condemns them as being part of the 'imperialist camp' when speaking to his own people. Moreover, the United States has shown its genuine displeasure with Museveni's adventure in Congo by suspending all military aid, a hard step to take given that the US had hoped to make Uganda the centrepiece of the African Crisis Response Initiative (Omach 2000). As a result, relations between Uganda and the United States became strained, because of US worries that the Congo adventure would (a) stimulate political instability inside Uganda, and (b) shake Uganda's growing but fragile economy, undermining its argument that cooperation with the IFIs can deliver real economic benefits (confidential interview 2000). Even if Uganda, Britain, and the US shared Museveni's disappointment in the Kabila regime, they were ambivalent about how to deal with him. Despite their ambivalence, the Western powers placed their faith, perhaps naively, in the Lusaka Agreements, while Museveni's emphasis remained on deposing Kabila.[4]

Nor did the Western powers have any demonstrable motives for urging Museveni to invade Congo. They had absolutely no incentive to urge Museveni into such a misguided course as the Congo war, which is likely to become 'Uganda's Vietnam'. If Uganda were to become bogged down in an unwinnable war that wasted precious national resources, divided the society, and remilitarised the state, it would certainly not fulfill the goals that the US and Britain had in mind for it. Nor is there any reason to believe that Museveni would do the

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bidding of the 'Anglo-Saxon' West if he were commanded to serve as its proxy. Despite their limitations in explaining Uganda's intervention, however, each of these conspiracy theories does contribute to a 'thick description' of the intervention, as we shall see below.

THE OFFICIAL EXPLANATIONS

The official explanations of Uganda's decision to re-enter the Congo are much more worthy of serious consideration. When the fighting between the RCD forces and the army of the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) actually began in early August 1998, both Ugandan and Rwandan troops were already present in the country. President Museveni and Vice-President Kagame had secured President Kabila's permission to enter the country in pursuit of rebels who threatened their countries from Congolese territory, and former *génocidaires* who were implicated in Rwanda's 1994 government-sponsored killings. They even secured a legal document authorising these sweeps. In Uganda's case, the ADF rebels based in Congo across the border from the districts of Bundibugyo, Kabarole, Kasese, Bushenyi, Rukungiri and Kisoro in the southwest conducted raids into Ugandan national territory both before and after Mobutu's ouster from power. These raids typically involved the theft of local property, the abduction of young men and women, who were forced to act as concubines, porters, or rebels themselves, and random killings, especially of those believed to be involved with the government (Human Rights Watch 1999: 124). Most outrageous to Ugandan sensibilities was the ADF raid against the Kichwamba Technical School in Kasese district in June 1998, in which some eighty students were burned alive inside their locked dormitories (*EA* 15–21.6.1998: 1–2).

Rwanda's main public grievance against the Kabila government after July 1998 was that the regime was allowing a 'new genocide' against the Banyamulenge populations of eastern Congo. While charges of massacres of some Banyamulenge are hardly implausible, it was Kabila's expulsion of all Tutsi troops in July that was the original basis of Rwanda's sudden hostility towards Kabila. In addition to its security concerns about its western border, as vividly illustrated by the Kichwamba School massacre, Uganda also proclaimed that a second reason for intervention in Congo along with Rwanda was to stop the renewed 'genocide' against the Banyamulenge (*New Vision*, 26 & 28.8.1998).

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In Uganda's initial charge against Kabila, that he failed to provide security along the border, it was unclear whether Uganda was accusing him of outright support for the ADF, or merely incompetence in failing to prevent it from operating from the national territory of the DRC (Weiss 2000: 10). Once the Ugandans had occupied large swathes of DRC territory, however, they claim to have found a 'smoking gun' demonstrating Kabila's full knowledge and approval of ADF activities along the Ugandan border. Specifically, Ugandan military forces revealed in the local press evidence of a large-scale Sudanese presence in eastern Congo in support of the ADF, a claim accepted by many observers (*ibid.*). The ADF allegedly received supplies and training from Sudanese officers in eastern Congo, using materials that were flown into the territory by the Sudanese army. Given their military occupation of eastern Congo, such claims cannot be independently verified. When asked what Kabila's motive was in allowing parts of his territory to be controlled by a foreign power, Ugandan officials aver that Kabila was desperate for allies from any quarter who would help him build up and train his own chaotic army (confidential interviews 1999).

That Ugandan authorities including President Museveni were concerned about infiltration along Uganda's western border is beyond argument. In pursuing ADF rebels on both sides of the Uganda–Congo frontier, the NRM government was also responding to the genuine outrage of the Ugandan people, particularly those living in the western districts. Yet the nature of Uganda's intervention suggests that pursuit of the NRM was not President Museveni's main goal. As noted by Prunier (1999: 44), the fact that the UPDF is deployed 'more than 1,000 kilometres from its eastern frontier' is *prima facie* evidence that Museveni and his government have other goals. Indeed, in its support of the rebellion of Jean-Pierre Bemba (the MLC), the UPDF is deployed far to the west of Kisangani in Equateur region. Meanwhile, the ADF continues its activities vigorously along Uganda's border. For instance, on 10 December 1999 the ADF invaded the major town of Fort Portal, took over a prison, and abducted a large number of prisoners. The numerical strength of the UPDF in the area was insufficient for an immediate response, much to the consternation of local residents (*Monitor* 10.12.1999).

Another problem with the official explanation of Uganda's intervention in the DRC was that the UPDF was already allowed in Congolese territory under the terms of DRC–Uganda security agreements. The first was a 'Memorandum of Understanding' signed

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between the DRC and Uganda shortly after Kabila's rise to power, providing for joint operations of the UPDF and the Forces Armées Congolaises (FAC) (*New Vision* 13.9.1998). The second was a treaty of mutual security signed on 26 April 1998, on the eve of the fall-out between Kinshasa and Kampala. The UPDF could certainly have crossed the Congo–Uganda frontier in pursuit of rebels under the terms of these agreements without engaging in all-out war against Kabila.

Naturally, Ugandan authorities respond to such arguments by contending that the only way to achieve real security along the border was to get to the root of the problem, i.e., to remove from power Laurent Kabila (confidential interview 8.11.1999). Yet if one believes that the removal of Kabila would improve the security situation along Uganda's border with Congo, one would have to make two assumptions: first, that Kabila's successor would be sufficiently friendly towards Uganda that s/he would desire to safeguard Uganda's security; and second, that s/he would have the capacity to do so. But such assumptions are unjustified. It is extremely doubtful whether any successor to Kabila would be able to exercise effective control over the country's eastern reaches, and it is quite possible that s/he would have little sympathy for Uganda's security concerns. Necessarily, any new leader of Congo would worry about his or her own security, and about the political sensibilities of the politically relevant Congolese public. This constituency can hardly tolerate the perception that the strings of leadership in Kinshasa are being pulled from Kampala or Kigali. Moreover, it is doubtful in the extreme that the current leaders of the Movement government, especially the savvy Museveni, could have suffered from such illusory assumptions. If Museveni were primarily concerned about the threat of cross-border attacks of the ADF, he would certainly have deployed his army immediately across the border.

IDEOLOGY AS A SPUR TO INTERVENTION

Another explanation for Museveni's active intervention in Congo in support of anti-Kabila rebels centres on ideology. According to Prunier (1999: 44), Museveni has long been a 'revolutionary' and 'nationalist reformer', for whom 'certain essential ideals' guide his action. In explaining Museveni's support for the rebels in the 1996–97 Congo war, Prunier insists that the Mobutu regime was virtually the 'systematic opposite' of everything for which Museveni stands. Similarly, Prunier implies, Museveni has sought the ouster of Kabila

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for essentially the same reason: because Kabila's rule has relied so much on political oppression, corruption, and patronage, and has accomplished so little in terms of national development in the process.

There are quite a number of problems with putting Museveni's ideology at the centre of an explanation for Uganda's involvement in Congo, as Prunier does. First, as argued above, the 'ideology' of the Museveni regime is difficult to discern in the assemblage of the rhetoric and actions of the regime. While the Museveni regime may have performed much better than a rather dismal African average, its props are not so different from those of many other African regimes. At the centre of power in Uganda one finds a very high concentration of Banyankole elements, and a fair number of the family members of either Yoweri or Janet Museveni themselves, notably the president's brother Salim Saleh, and Janet Museveni's relatives, Brigadier James Kazini and former Minister Sam Kutesa. One sees generous patronage being paid out to supporters of the regime, particularly prominent multi-partyists who 'defect' to the Movement. One observes a casual attitude towards the rule of law, as in Museveni's despatch of the UPDF to Congo without an enabling law from the parliament, as specified in the Constitution.[5] In Uganda today, it is actually the military High Command that takes real decisions related to security, and not the cabinet of President Museveni.[6]

Second, if ideology were Museveni's main motive for action, one may ask why he did not take action against Mobutu in, say, 1988, 1992 or 1994. In fact, Museveni avoided confrontation with Mobutu, and found a *modus vivendi* with him between 1986 and 1996. It was not until Rwanda's Vice-President Kagame engaged him in direct confrontation in 1996 that Museveni joined the fray. Moreover, the regime of Daniel arap Moi in Kenya is only marginally less corrupt, repressive, and arbitrary than that of Mobutu, and yet Museveni manages to get on quite well with President Moi. If Museveni is in fact a 'revolutionary,' he is generally cautious about attempting to stimulate parallel 'revolutions' abroad.

Third, if President Museveni were primarily motivated by ideology to overthrow Mobutu in Zaire, he would presumably have insisted on putting someone more competent and national-minded in power than Laurent Kabila. Ugandan officials have objected that the Uganda government did not try to select Congo's leaders for them in 1996–97, but were only supporting an indigenously generated revolutionary movement.[7] This may or may not be the case. Nonetheless, the fact that Museveni collaborated with Rwanda to help Kabila achieve power in

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Kinshasa contradicts the ideology thesis. It was widely appreciated in the Great Lakes region in 1996 that Laurent Kabila had a long history as a local warlord, who relied primarily on violence, intimidation and illegal mineral extraction (Schatzberg 1997). Certainly, senior Ugandan officials must have been aware of Kabila's miserable pre-rulership record in 1996. There was no evidence at that time to suggest that Kabila was destined to be an effective, principled, or statesmanlike leader.

ECONOMIC MOTIVATIONS

Another, and more plausible, set of motives for Uganda's second intervention in the DRC has to do with the exploitation of the country's material resources. The fact that the volume of highly valuable commodities flowing out of Congo via Uganda increased dramatically after late 1996 is quite beyond dispute, but the meaning of this fact hardly speaks for itself. That specific Ugandans have certainly sought to profit by involving themselves in legal and illegal trade from Congo is unremarkable in itself. Rather, their involvement in the market for Congo's natural resources only raises specific questions about the relationship between the original motivation for Uganda's intervention and the UPDF's continuing presence in Congo, about Uganda's ultimate purposes in Congo, and about the extent to which President Museveni has been truly in control of the Ugandan national army.

There are three distinguishable arguments about Uganda's economic motives in Congo, but only two are relevant to the initial intervention. The third is dealt with in the subsequent section. The first is that officials of the Ugandan government purposively planned and executed Uganda's invasion in order to further the economic interests of the state. As argued by William Reno (2000: 6), the invasion and occupation of eastern Congo could plausibly be part of a long-term, rational process of state-building. This scholar observes that, historically, 'A key strategy for consolidating domestic political bargains has been to steal from outside a state's territory.' Other theorists, seeking primarily to explain wars in the peripheral areas of the world, have attributed such wars to the state-building process (Ayoob 1998). Such views coincide well with the domestic dimension of the 'ideology' that some scholars have imputed to Museveni.

To the extent that the Ugandan president was using his country's Congo booty for the purposes of building up the national economy, and expanding the reach of the state in the society, this argument may have some basis in fact. Indeed, the extraction and export of Congolese

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natural resources, including timber, coffee, gold, diamonds and other commodities, via Uganda has in some regards had a salutary effect on Uganda's national economy. Specifically, the revenues from such trade may have helped to ease the burden of Uganda's growing current account deficits. In 1997, for instance, gold and gold compounds were Uganda's second largest source of export earnings, after coffee. These amounted to some $81 million, or 12 per cent of all export revenues (EIU 1999: 5). Ugandan businessmen have also been able to increase the quantity of manufactures that they sell in Congo since the beginning of 1997. Ugandan trucks loaded with such products as soap, metal roof sheeting, plastic goods, and canned foods now ply the roads to Congo, bearing the fruits of Ugandan light industry to be traded for local goods.

A closely related argument emphasises Museveni's desire to integrate Uganda economically with the other states of East and Central Africa. Museveni's enthusiasm for East African Cooperation, including the integration treaty signed in late 1999, is apparent. Despite the challenge that Uganda's nascent industries would experience from Kenyan competition, Museveni genuinely believes that integration serves Uganda's economic interests. Thus, the prominent Ugandan journalist Charles Onyango-Obbo averred that the unforgivable sin that Kabila committed against Museveni was his decision to take Congo into the SADC regional trade bloc in early 1998 (interview with the author, 8.12.1999). According to Onyango-Obbo, this decision made Congo the object of South African capital, rather than that of Kenya and Uganda. This view accords well with the view that Museveni is pursuing regional integration in East and Central Africa or even that he seeks to build an 'empire' in these regions.

There are two major problems with this argument. First, it is far from clear from the evidence that Uganda has experienced a net economic gain from its involvement in the DRC. There are considerable costs, as well as benefits, associated with Uganda's intervention there. Most notably, the Ugandan defence budget increased by some 91 billion Ug. Shillings, or 89 per cent, for the fiscal year ending 30 June 1999 over the previous fiscal year (Uganda Ministry of Finance 1999).[8] These figures do not include significant off-budget expenditures of the UPDF, which many knowledgeable Ugandans assume to exist. A number of very significant secondary economic costs have also accrued to Uganda from its Congo war. These include the loss of productivity of soldiers serving abroad, increases in health costs for the long-term disabled, and the loss of revenues in

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Uganda's troubled regions due to increasing insecurity there. Second, it is highly problematic that Uganda's profits from Congo will increase because of the war. Despite the reality of much petty theft by rogue elements of the UPDF, the main economic gains of Uganda in Congo are achieved through quasi-legitimate business. In other words, most of the Ugandan officers engaged in commerce in Congo are trading products for the commodities that they are receiving. Thus, the question is whether Uganda as a state would profit more from peace-time commerce with Congo, or through war-induced economic disarray. The fact that Ugandan gold exports plummeted to only $19 million in 1998 from four times that level the previous year suggests that war may not, after all, be good for business or for Uganda's trade figures (EIU 2000: 5). And, far from satisfying the IFIs with positive economic data generated by Congo loot, the donors are now highly perturbed with the Ugandan government for damaging its national budget.

A second argument about Uganda's intervention in DRC derives from the general observation that foreign policy in most African states can be explained by reference to the concept of 'regime security'.[9] That is, the extraction of resources from Congo might simply be part of a programme to keep Museveni in power, rather than one of genuine state-building. Perhaps the most common (and accurate) observation about the practice of African politics is that rulers patronise their key supporters in the military and government in order to stay in power (van de Walle 1994). This argument shares with the previous one the assumption that the UPDF is acting with the blessing of President Museveni, but it suggests that the UPDF is actually engaged in criminal activity that does not benefit the Ugandan state or people at large. One illuminating analysis of the UPDF has described the army's officers as being 'entrepreneurs of insecurity', who acquire gains from conflict both within Uganda and outside, in Congo (Perrot 1999). The means of achieving such gains are variable. At the petty level, soldiers in Uganda's troubled regions often conspire with local rebels to steal money and property from local residents. On a grander scale, senior officers, most notoriously including the president's own brother, Salim Saleh, profit by selling (often defective) arms to the government at inflated prices. Other officers are well known for stealing the pay of ordinary soldiers, who are often victims themselves of their own venal commanders (*ibid.*: 66–67). Despite Museveni's image of political probity in the Anglophone West, the Movement regime actually relies on a small core of Banyankole officers and extended family members

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who profit from Museveni's rule. This argument suggests that their loyalty is rewarded and reinforced by the free hand that Museveni gives them to plunder.

Both of these arguments face some contradictory evidence in that the UPDF was not initially enthusiastic about the war. One senior Ugandan military official told the International Crisis Group that Museveni actually had to convince a reluctant High Command to go along with the invasion. They quote the officer as saying that, 'We felt that the Rwandese started the war and it was their duty to go ahead and finish the job, but our President took time and convinced us that we had a stake in what is going on in Congo' (ICG 2000). This statement suggests that, while certain Ugandan officers may be engaged in profitable business in Congo now, such opportunities were not necessarily on their minds in August 1998. Instead, they may have been considering their own lives, those of their soldiers, and the damage to its prestige that the UPDF would suffer in losing a war.

ALLIANCE DYNAMICS

One arrives at the most plausible explanation for Uganda's participation in the Congo war by putting the Rwanda–Uganda alliance at the centre of the argument. Specifically, a number of developments inside Congo, and between Congo and Rwanda, had put the regime of Paul Kagame at risk by late 1998. In turn, for Museveni to see Kagame fall from power in Kigali would have presented him with extremely difficult domestic and foreign security problems. However, only if one focuses resolutely on the original intentions of the main interveners in the Congo war, rather than the secondary, even conflicting, motivations for *staying in*, does this view hold up. As discussed below, the reasons for Uganda's continuing presence in Congo may be different from Museveni's original motivation for sending in his army.

The initial intervention

To understand Museveni's dilemma in August 1998, one must start with the evolution of relations between his ally, Kagame, and Kabila in the previous year. Paul Kagame and the largely Tutsi leadership of the RPF regime in Kigali had good reasons for coming to fear Kabila during this time. The main problem for Kabila in early 1998 was that his regime lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the Congolese people, particularly because it included so many Tutsi and Banyamulenge

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elements in the highest reaches of the government and army. These cadres were distrusted and disliked because they were regarded by many Congolese as 'foreigners'. The public attacks on ordinary Rwandan Tutsi and Congolese Banyamulenge in the streets of Kinshasa in August 1998 are testimony to the unpopularity of such groups with most Congolese. Thus, Kabila was forced to marginalise the Tutsi/Banyamulenge members of his administration if he was ever to achieve a modicum of domestic legitimacy. In the event, he actually *did* acquire a measure of nationalist legitimacy by playing on the ethnic prejudices of his countrymen.

It was not surprising that these figures in Kabila's government resented their marginalisation and that they reacted by beginning a rebellion against his regime. From there, it is only a short logical step to understand why Kabila almost simultaneously began cooperation with members of the ex-Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) and *interahamwe*, who had remained scattered in the northeastern regions of Congo since the second half of 1997. Meanwhile, in Kivu, local Congolese political and military forces began to 'take revenge' on the local Banyamulenge for real or imagined crimes that they had committed since 1996.

In the light of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and the fragile security of the regime in Kigali, it is also unsurprising that the Kagame government came to the aid of the new group of Congolese rebels who had taken up arms against Kabila. This is not to say, however, that the turn against Kabila occurred completely out of the blue – the tensions had been building up during the early months of 1998. Apparently, both Kagame and Museveni had already become disenchanted with Kabila on a number of accounts, but mainly because of his failure to establish effective control over eastern Congo. There was apparently plotting from within Kabila's administration among high-ranking officers, including some Tutsi or Banyamulenge, to overthrow him. If such coup plots were real, they would have further encouraged Kabila to purge such figures from his regime. In any case, the split between Kabila, on the one hand, and Museveni and Kagame, on the other, had become public by May 1998, when the latter two leaders failed to appear in Kinshasa for the first anniversary of Kabila's ascent to power. Later the same month, Kabila's minister of economy and oil, Pierre Victor Mpoyo, accused 'top Ugandan officials' of smuggling timber, gold and diamonds from the eastern parts of the DRC, and accused 'some counterparts' of Kabila in the Great Lakes of slandering the Congolese president (*EA* 1–7 June 1998). According to Prunier

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(1999: 53), 'Although it is very difficult to know what actually passed at that moment between Kigali and Kampala, it is probable that in the spring of 1998 Major General Kagame managed to convince his Ugandan ally of the impossibility of treating with Kabila and of the necessity of overthrowing him. It [only] remains to know when and how.'

While the evidence generally supports this conclusion, it is still not clear that Museveni was prepared to use *force* to remove Kabila. There has been, of course, a high profile disagreement between Rwanda and Uganda on the appropriate means for displacing Kabila from power.[10] It seems that each of the two allied leaders sought to replicate his own experience in the Congo war to remove Kabila: Kagame wanted to send a professional, foreign-based army (with little popular support) to seize control of the capital, while Museveni wanted to assist disgruntled local segments of the population to engage in a slowly building rebellion against their own ruler.

In keeping with his preferred strategy, Kagame mounted his now-famous effort to seize Kinshasa in August 1998 by airlifting troops to Kitona air base in Bas-Congo. Uganda does not appear to have coordinated this ploy with Rwanda, though the Ugandan leadership was belatedly made aware of the plan, and even provided some troops. Kagame's plan might well have succeeded were it not for the untimely and unexpected intervention of Zimbabwe, and then Angola, on Kabila's behalf. By the end of August, however, it was clear that Kagame's gamble had failed. Ugandan troops only entered Congo in force later in the month of August, and Ugandan authorities did not admit to their presence until September.

After Kagame's initial failure to remove Kabila, the Rwandan leader's regime was left in a highly vulnerable position. First, one should recall that the post-genocide Tutsi population inside Rwanda, even with the impressive in-flow of Tutsi from neighbouring countries since 1994, numbers only a few hundred thousand. In turn, the contemporary RPA relies overwhelmingly on Tutsi officers and troops, and thus the demographic basis for the RPA is quite small. Second, as of late August 1998, the RPA faced an impressive array of enemies: internal opponents, the Angolan and Zimbabwean expeditionary forces in Congo, the FAC itself, and the rump of Habyarimana's FAR and the *interahamwe*, which had escaped into Congo in 1994.[11] Third, a large part of the RPA's strength in 1998 derived from the continual training and equipping of the army by sympathetic outside forces, notably the United States military (*EA* 20–26 July 1998). This support

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was soon to be (officially) withdrawn when it was realised in Washington that Rwanda had engaged in a risky effort to overthrow a regime which Rwanda itself was largely responsible for installing in power. In short, it appeared very much in August 1998 as though Kagame had probably bitten off more than he could chew.

Museveni, however, could not afford to see his ally fall from power with equanimity. As noted, Uganda itself faces certain vulnerabilities associated with rebels operating from across international frontiers. If it also faced a hostile regime in the south, which any successor regime to Kagame would likely be, then it would be rendered even more vulnerable. Moreover, Museveni would naturally be loath to suffer the *political* blow to his prestige that would accompany Kagame's fall from power. Finally, if Kagame were to fall from power, Museveni would probably face yet another influx of Tutsi refugees from Rwanda. As a result of such considerations, it is logical that Museveni would have continued to support Kagame, a man with whom he also had a personal bond of friendship and a history of cooperation. Thus, though Rwanda almost certainly initiated the war against Kabila for its own ends, Museveni felt obligated to support the effort for political and personal reasons.

While it may seem unusual for the 'junior partner' in the Rwanda–Uganda alliance to drag in the 'dominant' member of the team, such events are scarcely unknown in international relations. It is now appreciated that Cuba had as much or more enthusiasm for the Soviet-Cuban counter-intervention in Angola in 1975 as did the Soviet Union itself, for instance. Both great powers and would-be regional hegemons sometimes feel compelled to support their allies for fear of losing credibility, as seems to have been the case for Uganda in 1998.

The continuing occupation

If this analysis is correct, it raises at least two important questions about Uganda's continuing presence and activities in Congo. First, what accounts for the clashes between the UPDF and RPA in August 1999 and again in April–May 2000, which demonstrated so vividly the grave difficulties in the Rwanda–Uganda alliance? The commerce and theft of the two armies certainly suggests mercenary objectives rather than the close cooperation of allies. Second, why did Uganda remain in Congo, despite the severe strain on the Uganda–Rwanda alliance and the failure to displace Kabila? While answering these questions is not the main purpose of this paper, proposing some tentative answers helps support the hypothesis just presented.

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To address both of these questions, let us turn to a third economic argument about the interventions, that referenced above. This argument acknowledges that the UPDF is engaged in plunder as well as legitimate business in Congo, but perceives the Ugandan army to be now only loosely under the control of its own commander. If this is the case, then President Museveni himself may not encourage or condone the commercial and criminal activities of the UPDF. This plausible scenario need not suppose, however, that President Museveni intended his troops to engage in such activities when he originally ordered them into Congo. Rather, officers of the UPDF likely began engaging in them spontaneously once they had begun their duties of occupation.

That Museveni could be unaware of the well-documented illegal business activities of his own brother, Salim Saleh, is beyond imagination. The only question is whether President Museveni encouraged such activities or only tolerated them. By way of an answer, one might note that Museveni's legendary discipline has not extended to members of his own immediate family, and that of his wife; Saleh has been given plum positions in the army, and allowed to take over Ugandan businesses, despite instances of indiscipline. It may even be the case that President Museveni 'negotiated with' his own army in some instances, rather than commanded it, as some evidence suggests.[12] If this is the case, Museveni may not have been able to extract his own forces from Congo, even if he wished to do so. Certainly, commanders who were deeply engaged in profitable businesses would be loathe to leave Congo, despite the evident military failure of the army to displace Kabila. Were President Museveni to order a withdrawal from the Congo against the will of his commanders, he could be inviting a coup against himself.

This view would also explain the clashes between the UPDF and the RPA in Kisangani in August 1999. In neither case did the two presidents seem to have ordered their commanders to attack the forces of their ally (ICG 2000). Indeed, there is no reasonable security issue that could have led to the clashes between the RPA and UPDF in Kisangani. Rather, most of the media have concluded that the first clashes were generated by the rivalry over access to resources by commanders in the two armies, and the second by the desire for revenge by UPDF commanders, whose forces suffered far more in the first round of fighting. Such a conclusion is more logical than the notion that the UPDF and RPA went to battle with one another 'due to persistent and serious differences over the objectives and strategies of the war in Congo' (ICG 2000).

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There are other plausible reasons for the UPDF's continuing presence in Congo, despite the UPDF's failure to realise its main goal of overthrowing Kabila. For one, Museveni had not given up on his goal of overthrowing Kabila, despite the signature of the Lusaka Peace accords in July 1999. On the contrary, Museveni may have seen the Lusaka Agreement as a way of displacing Kabila by political means: if the letter of the Accords were followed, then a national conference of all political forces in the country would eventually be held. If Kabila failed to live up to the political side of the Agreement, on the other hand, then Museveni would have a legitimate excuse to prosecute the war in Congo with renewed vigour. In the interim, the UPDF continued to recruit, train, and arm soldiers to fight in the two rebel groups that it supported (the RCD-Bunia and the MLC of Jean-Pierre Bemba). Given Museveni's contention that the success of the Congo war ultimately depended on the initiative of local leaders, and the political support that they could garner among ordinary Congolese citizens (as Museveni himself did between 1980–86), this strategy accords well with his own ideology and experience. Moreover, withdrawing from Congo, without having achieved the major goal of deposing Kabila, would be an admission of defeat that no political leader would willingly suffer.

CONCLUSION: THE UGANDA–RWANDA ALLIANCE AND OTHER HYPOTHESES

This study has argued that Uganda's alliance with Rwanda is at the centre of a 'thick description' of Uganda's second intervention in Congo/Zaire in 1998, but does not contend that all of the other hypotheses are irrelevant. Rather, it begins by asserting that the decision to intervene lay chiefly with President Museveni himself. It further argues that President Museveni's decision was mainly motivated by this key alliance, but it also acknowledges one that must take many other considerations into account to fully understand the intervention. Specifically, one has to understand the context of the decision and the nature of the alliance itself, to which several other hypotheses speak.

For instance, each of the conspiracy theories noted above points to some marginal elements in understanding the Ugandan intervention. For its part, the Anglo-Saxon conspiracy theory points to a 'permissive condition', rather than an 'efficient cause', of Uganda's adventure in Congo. For Museveni, his faith in the support of the US and Great

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Britain, barring some immensely imprudent move on his part, may have changed the calculus of his behaviour. Because of the good faith that Museveni had built up with sympathetic Anglophone Western powers, he was able to get away with a dangerous campaign of dubious legality in Congo. Their support may have *permitted*, but did not *cause*, Museveni's behaviour.

Focusing on the roots and origins of the Uganda–Rwanda alliance as it stood in 1998, reference to several of the same hypotheses is relevant. Essentially, pointing to this alliance as the main source of Uganda's intervention begs the question, 'What, then, is the source, or cause, of that alliance?' For the answer, one first needs to be fully cognisant of the history of close cooperation between Museveni and Kagame. Whether the two leaders felt closer to one another because each belonged to the 'upper caste' of his respective ethnic group cannot be reliably discerned. To the extent that they did, however, the Bahima/Tutsi Empire theory has some relevance to our discussion. On the other hand, both leaders share a reputation for effective and active leadership that some see as an 'ideology'. There were also parallels between the strategic interests of the two countries in eastern Congo, though the threat posed to Rwanda was far greater than that posed to Uganda. Accordingly, explanations that centre on ethnic fealty, ideology, and parallel strategic interests are all important in helping us understand the Uganda-Rwanda alliance, to which we have pointed consistently as the main explanatory variable.

The presence of the ADF and its nefarious activities in western Uganda also provides an important part of the context for the invasion. Public outrage over the Kichwamba School raid and other attacks was running high in Uganda in July and August 1998. This public outrage more or less assured Museveni the initial support of the Ugandan public in his calculations.[13] Finally, Kabila himself also made Museveni's decision easier by proving himself to be such a singularly ineffective, brutal and venal ruler of his country. Kabila's condoning of ethnic violence in the eastern Congo at the start of the war further strengthened the resolve of Kagame and Museveni, and gave Museveni's critics pause in condemning the Ugandan invasion. In this sense, Museveni's own 'ideology' provides part of the context for his decision to intervene.

Finally, the arguments about Uganda's economic motives for being in Congo are not persuasive as explanations for the original intervention. As we saw, however, they are much more useful in helping us understand why Uganda remained in Congo, and fought

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with its former ally there, having failed to bring about Kabila's downfall.

The timing and manner of Uganda's ultimate withdrawal from Congo will eventually reveal new perspectives on the original and continuing motivations for the intervention. Should Uganda accelerate its efforts to extricate itself from the Congo fiasco, following the troubles in the alliance between Rwanda and Uganda, then the emphasis on the Rwanda–Uganda alliance taken here would be justified. In no case can the Bahima/Tutsi conspiracy theory be confirmed, since none of the main Congolese rebel leaders vying to replace Kabila is a Tutsi or Muhima. If Uganda failed to withdraw from Congo, despite its obvious failure to achieve its major goals there (especially if senior officers continue to enrich themselves), then the notion that Museveni had lost control over his own forces would be supported. Only if, on the other hand, Museveni managed to dislodge Kabila from power and to eliminate the ADF from eastern Congo would his initial justification for the intervention be vindicated.

NOTES

1. On his notion of 'thick description,' see Geertz (1973), though the usage of the term here is somewhat different.

2. It should be noted that neither of these groups is classified as 'Nilotic' by mainstream African cultural anthropology. It should be further noted that there are historical patterns of conflict between the Tutsi and Bahima.

3. These two conspiracy theories are also raised, and both immediately dismissed, by Gerard Prunier in his examination of the Congo war (1999: 43–4).

4. The part of the Lusaka Agreement most emphasised by relevant Ugandan officials is the clause requiring Kabila to reach an internal entente with his domestic enemies. It seems likely to be the case that Museveni sees the Lusaka process as only useful as a means to that end, much as he saw the Nairobi power-sharing accords in 1985 (Museveni 1997: 169).

5. According to Article 210 of the constitution, 'Parliament shall make laws regulating the Uganda People's Defence Forces, in particular, providing for … (d) the deployment of troops outside Uganda.' No such law was in place at the time of the Congo deployment, and none has subsequently been passed.

6. This point was driven home to me by prominent Ugandan journalists, students and opposition politicians, and tacitly admitted by senior civilian officials in the regime. When one asks ordinary Ugandans who they think would become President in the event of Museveni's death, many name Eriya Kategaya, the first deputy prime minister, who is number two in the military command hierarchy. Very few believe Vice-President Specioza Kazibwe, who is constitutionally entitled to the post, would become president. On the militarism of the regime, also see Pinycwa (1999).

7. Confidential interview 2000. It should be recalled that Kabila and Museveni once shared both a Marxist ideology and exile in Tanzania, where the two were in sporadic contact.

8. The budget increase was some $61 million at 1999 exchange rates. The portion of spending for Defence in the overall Ugandan national budget rose from 12·5 per cent to 19 per cent.

9. On this concept, see Clark (2001).

10. Some observers have even suggested that this tactical difference is behind the clashes in Kisangani, though logic does not support the notion that two allies would go to war over such a dispute.

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11. Although these latter military forces were ravaged during the 1996–97 Congo war, they made up in hostility to Kagame and the Tutsi what they lacked in organisation and arms.

12. Apparently, some commanders in the army are virtual barons, whose troops are personally loyal to them. It appears to be the case that some units and their commanders seek deployment in specific areas in order to be able to engage in corruption and local commercial activities. See Reno (2000: 13). Most knowledgeable Ugandans flatly reject the notion that Museveni does not bring to book any commander who directly challenges his authority, however.

13. Similarly, outrage in US government circles over the Bwindi tourist massacres in March 1999 helped bolster flagging American support for Uganda at that time. See Prunier (1999: 54).

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