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Zaire

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

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Armed Forces

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Zaire

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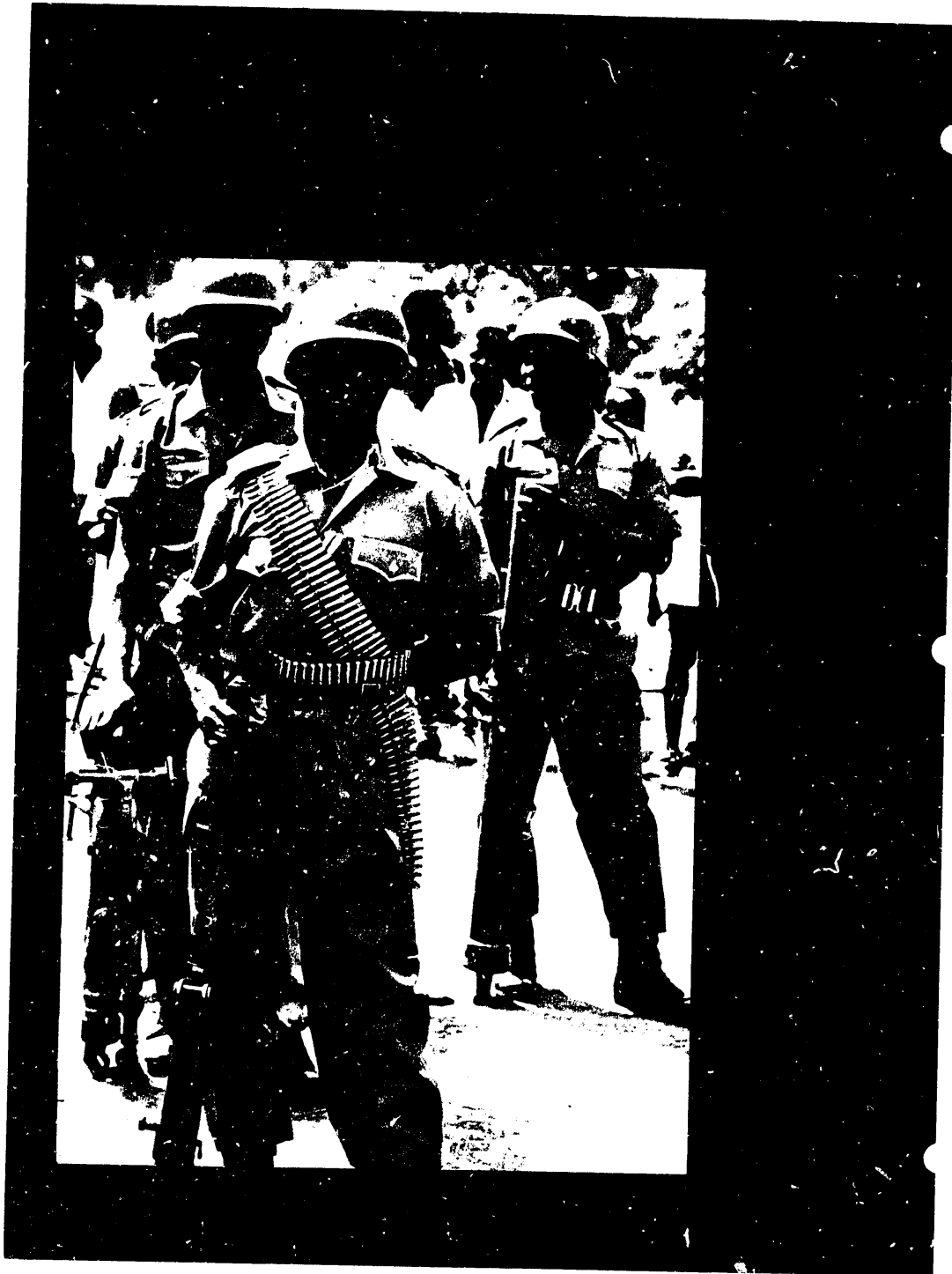
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Armed Forces

A. Defense establishment (C)

The Zairian Armed Forces consist of an army with a very small air arm plus a gendarmerie and a miniscule coast guard-type naval force. Collectively they are sometimes referred to as the *Forces Armees Zairoises*, or FAZ, a name that also is often used for the ground forces alone. The coast guard became operational in March 1972, and 4 months later a major reorganization of the army took place that, among other changes, established the National Gendarmerie. Of the components, the ground forces are the largest and by far the dominant service and are the power base of the Mobutu regime. Overall, capabilities and discipline are poor, and the army is feared and distrusted by the civil populace. Total armed forces personnel strength is about 66,000 men. The Zairian Army numbers about 35,000 and is basically a light infantry force of 39 battalions. The air arm, called the Zairian Air Force, has about 760 men and 60 aircraft; it is drastically short of pilots and, of necessity, relies on foreigners for maintenance and logistics. The National Gendarmerie has about 30,000 men. Formed in July 1972, it incorporates the six gendarme battalions from the army and the former National Police, and, partly because of its ex-army units, it has more military capability than its name might imply. The Zairian Coast, River, and Lake Guard (CRLG) has about 200 men and a few small craft, most of which are on Lake Tanganyika; it is a new service, and most personnel have been trained in the United States. The armed forces are larger than those of any of Zaire's many contiguous neighbors (the strengths of which range between Sudan's 33,000 and the Central African Republic's 2,000) except Angola, where Portugal maintains some 65,000 troops. By any reasonable, modern standard, the armed forces are deficient; nonetheless, in spite of many major shortcomings, their size, equipment, and foreign aid make Zaire a significant power in central Africa.

The mission of the armed forces is to defend the territory of Zaire and maintain internal security. Because of the chaotic state of the country in earlier years, the second responsibility had taken virtually all the energies of the armed forces, which still are deployed primarily for internal security rather than strategic considerations. Generally, army units are spread throughout the country, but there is a concentration near Lake Tanganyika to deal with the very limited insurgency or banditry that still occurs in the area. The air force is based at two airfields, one near Kinshasa and one near Kamina; however, some tactical aircraft and helicopters are rotated to Kalemie to support the counterinsurgency operations. Most of the CRLG is based at Kalemie, to support the counterinsurgency operations, and the remaining elements are at Banana and Kinshasa. A major factor influencing the armed forces is the fact that they have to depend on foreign sources for military materiel, training, and advice. Except in the air force, where they are managed chiefly by foreigners, the logistics and maintenance systems are inefficient, unreliable, and often corrupt and are among the armed forces' greatest weaknesses. Overall military capabilities continue to be seriously undercut by tribal and regional loyalties, by poor discipline, and by the hostility of the civilian populace.

Because the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China encouraged disruption and surreptitiously gave aid to antigovernment forces in the 1960's, the Zairian Government became very distrustful of those countries and today continues to be anti-Communist, although there is evidence of new cordiality. President Mobutu's fear of "Communist encirclement" has had considerable influence on defense policies in the past.

In May 1968, Zaire and Chad agreed to cooperate in mutual defense and military training and exchange military intelligence. Actual commitment of Zairian military elements outside the country occurred in May 1972, when a reinforced airborne company, two jet

aircraft, and some ammunition were sent to Burundi in response to a request from the President of that country. The company was used for guard duty in Bujumbura, the aircraft for reconnaissance, and the ammunition in quelling disorders in southern Burundi.

Since Mobutu assumed power in November 1965, the armed forces have remained his base of power, but, by the same token, they also represent the most serious potential threat to his regime. Probably aiming to develop a counterbalance to the all-powerful military, Mobutu directed in October 1971 that all senior regional officials of the armed forces and police be incorporated into the Popular Revolutionary Movement (MPR). As the MPR grows in influence and prestige and becomes increasingly the "supreme institution" in Zaire, it becomes less and less palatable to the pampered armed forces. Military leaders are also upset because the President no longer relies on their counsel to the extent he used to.

1. Military history

The armed forces were formed from elements of the *Force Publique*, the reliable, Belgian-led ground force that had been used to maintain order in the colony from 1886 onwards. From its beginnings of some 200 men in 1887 the *Force Publique* had grown to an organized force of 15,000 men by the turn of the century. Officers and most noncommissioned officers were Belgians, and the ranks were filled with Congolese drawn from most of the tribes.

During World War I, the basic military organizational structure of the *Force Publique* changed when troops of the Belgian Metropolitan Army, along with more modern weapons and equipment, were introduced. The *Force Publique* companies were used in making up infantry regiments that were reinforced with artillery and special troops in order to form suitable units for large-scale operations. These units then went on to serve creditably with the French forces in the Cameroons and with the British forces in German East Africa (now Tanzania). Following the war, the *Force Publique* was divided into two components—the Garrison Troops component for general military-type duties and the Territorial Service Troops component for constabulary-type duties. In World War II Congolese units again served creditably—this time in Ethiopia, Egypt, and Nigeria. In the *Force Publique*, as in the present-day armed forces, the general language of daily business was Lingala (a "trade language" developed in the 1880's), and official communications were written in French.

At the time Belgium granted the Congo its independence in 1960, all of the army officers (about

1,000) and most of the noncommissioned officers (total corps, all races, about 7,650) still were Belgian nationals. Virtually the entire *Force Publique* system was carried over into the army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congolese National Army (ANC). However, almost immediately the African troops mutinied. They demanded higher pay, the elevation of Congolese to commissioned officer rank, and the removal of the Belgian commanding general. Though the Belgian officers had been asked to remain as advisers, all of them were replaced by Africans, after which discipline and control rapidly deteriorated, the ANC lost its cohesiveness and split into regional and tribal groups, and months of bloody chaos followed. At the request of the central government, the United Nations intervened in July 1960 and sent troops to try to deal with the situation. By the end of October 1960 the U.N. force in the Congo was over 18,000 men, representing 29 U.N. member states.

During 1961 and 1962, three separate areas of the Congo, each with its own army, challenged the authority of the central government and hindered the U.N. force in carrying out its mission of restoring order. The areas in secession were Katanga Province (now Shaba Region), a rich mining area under the leadership of Moise Tshombe; the Stanleyville (now Kisangani) area under the domination of a Lumumbist faction; and the area of southern Kasai, loyal to Albert Kalonji, the Luba leader. By 1963, the U.N. forces had ended the Katangan secession, and the government had gained the upper hand in the other areas. At the end of June 1964 the U.N. troops were withdrawn.

The departure of the U.N. force was quickly followed by the highly disruptive "Simba" rebellion in which much of the eastern part of the country was caught up in tribal uprisings and a leftist revolt that was clandestinely supported by the Soviet Union and China through neighboring African countries. Starvation and disease became widespread, thousands of civilians died, and around 100,000 fled the country. These disorders were a severe test for the poorly trained, poorly disciplined armed forces, but by 1965 (with the help of Belgian advisers, significant Belgian and U.S. materiel assistance, and a few hundred white mercenaries), order had been restored, and many rebels scattered into the mountainous, heavily forested area west of Lake Tanganyika. In field operations during the uprisings the performance of Congolese army units was poor, and the troops were frequently lacking in aggressiveness—on several occasions units were routed even though they had superiority in both numbers and firepower. Even at the highest level, staff

coordination and implementation of plans frequently broke down.

In July 1966, during counterinsurgency operations, a regimental force of about 3,000 former gendarmes from Katanga mutinied in protest over what they considered discriminatory treatment by higher army echelons. The mutineers captured Stanleyville and demanded more promotions and redress of assorted grievances. There they were besieged by loyal government troops and in September were routed. The five mutinying battalions were disbanded, and their senior officers and a few other leaders were tried by a military court and executed or sentenced to long prison terms. Subsequently most of the remaining mutineers were absorbed into other army battalions.

In July 1967 another rebellion erupted, this one led by 150 white mercenaries, who were later joined by an estimated 750 to 1,000 Katangan gendarmes. By August they had seized the city of Bukavu, which they held until early November. A U.S. Air Force task force airlifted troops and materiel in support of the central government's military operations. The mercenary-led forces tried but failed to secure significant outside support. Running low on ammunition, they finally fled into Rwanda, where they surrendered and were interned. In November the rebellion ended. Conflicts over the disposition of these rebels caused Zaire and Rwanda to sever diplomatic relations, but these were restored in February 1969. Since the 1967 rebellion, the government has not employed mercenaries, though it still makes extensive use of foreign military advisers and technical contract personnel.

Since the late 1960's the armed forces have carried on a series of counterinsurgency operations ("Operation South," "Operation Eagle," and *Secteur Tanganyika*) in the area west of Lake Tanganyika against the surviving remnants of the 1965 Simba rebellion. The *Secteur Tanganyika* operation keeps some 9 battalions engaged in the lake area, where the threat posed by these bandits/rebels does not seem worth the effort being expended. In the 1960's the insurgents received outside support, but since 1970 there has been little evidence of any substantial assistance from any source. The country's continual state of internal upheaval since independence has provided years of combat experience for the armed forces, but this has brought little noticeable improvement in military capabilities. And on top of this, the heavyhanded tactics of the army have fostered considerable hostility toward the military on the part of the civilian populace.

An air arm, subordinate to the army but called an "air force," was activated in 1961. Because the

country is underdeveloped technologically, the early history of the air force has been dominated by Europeans. In May 1964, Italian Air Force advisers came to supplement the Belgian air advisers and white mercenary pilots already there. During the 1960's the air force consisted of a tactical unit manned by two groups of foreign pilots, an airlift unit of Belgian Air Force personnel, two units of Congolese flying trainers and transport aircraft, and a unit of Congolese working with the Italian advisers. As a result of the "mercenaries rebellion" in 1967-68, the government expelled the foreign contract pilots and the Belgian Air Advisory Group. The air force managed to continue in operation, however, thanks to the loan of Ethiopian Air Force pilots and four North American F-86 Sabre jet fighter aircraft and seven Ghanaian Air Force pilots. This break in dependence on foreign technicians began something of a trend toward Zairianization of the air force that is slowly continuing.

In 1968 the air force was reorganized along the lines recommended by the Italians. It still is dependent on a private aircraft maintenance organization, although the Italian advisory group is performing maintenance on its instructional aircraft. Through concentrated efforts on training and the acquisition of new aircraft, Zaire now boasts one of the most sophisticated air forces in central Africa.

Zaire has no navy. Even though during its first 10 years of independence army personnel operated some 10 to 15 patrol boats on the country's enormous expanse of waterways, the Coast, River and Lake Guard was not established until November 1971 and did not become operational until March 1972.

2. Command structure

In July 1972 the armed forces underwent a reorganization that has strong political overtones and considerable military implications. Nevertheless, in Zaire factors such as personal power and tribal pressure that bear scant relation to government or military structure often override formal organization and procedure. In addition, the fact that President Mobutu also holds the defense post and by Department of Defense orders reserves the exclusive right to assign operational missions tends to confuse the situation and perhaps obscure formal theoretical structure.

Under the new command structure, about which full information is not yet available, the President is the Supreme Commander of the armed forces, which

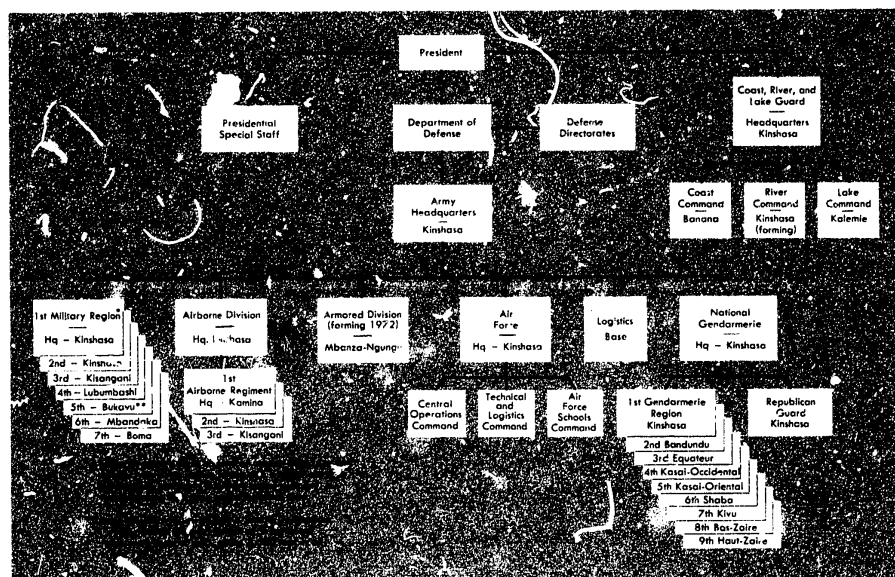


FIGURE 1. Armed Forces Organization (C)

he controls as head of the Department of Defense (Figure 1). President Mobutu also holds the portfolios of Plan and Veterans Affairs. Within the Department of Defense is the Chief of Cabinet (presently a brigadier general), who coordinates military matters through "Defense Directorates," one each for personnel, organization and training, logistics, transportation, medical services, budget, intelligence and military security, and supply. This organization is counterbalanced by the Presidential Special Staff, which was formed in July 1972. Very little is known about the actual functioning of this staff, but it seems to have considerable power over the military purse strings. Its organization includes sections for the army, air force, CRLG, security, gendarmerie, presidential aides, and legal matters. The Coast, River and Lake Guard (CRLG) is subordinate to the President. Although each of the above mentioned staff organizations is powerful in its respective capacity to advise the President and although the CRLG has some power, the real chain of command (where combat troops are involved) flows from the President to the Captain General of the army. (Captain General, according to the 1972 organization announcement,

is the title to be given to the army commander during peacetime, while in the event of hostilities he is to be designated Commander in Chief. President Mobutu remains the Supreme Commander at all times.)

As the senior service, the army is commanded by a major general (Captain General's equivalent rank) and has its headquarters in Kinshasa. Subordinate to army headquarters are seven military regions and their troop units, an airborne division, an armored division (forming and reportedly approaching brigade size), the National Gendarmerie, a logistics unit, and the air force.

B. Joint activities (C)

1. Military manpower

As of July 1972, it is estimated that Zaire had about 5,715,000 males between the ages of 15 and 49 years and that some 2,745,000 of them were fit for military service. In the period from 1972 through 1976 it is expected that an average of about 240,000 will be reaching military age (16) each year. At past and present recruiting levels, this is far in excess of the

military's needs. By 5-year age groupings, the numbers of males from age 15 to 49 are estimated as follows:

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF MALES	MAXIMUM NUMBER FIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE
15-19	1,183,000	650,000
20-24	1,036,000	530,000
25-29	912,000	455,000
30-34	739,000	380,000
35-39	693,000	305,000
40-44	593,000	240,000
45-49	499,000	185,000
Total, 15-49	5,715,000	2,745,000

A token number of women serve in the armed forces in such fields as administration and nursing. Some of them are airborne qualified and are assigned to the airborne division.

The ranks of the armed forces are filled with volunteers. In spite of the widespread hostility against the army, enough men volunteer because of the advantages and preferential status that military personnel enjoy. Initial enlistment is for 7 years, and at the end of that term soldiers may be discharged or may reenlist for successive 3-year periods. In the event that a sufficient number of recruits should not be obtained, the constitution provides for conscription. In June 1971, when students at Lovanium University (now Zaire National University), near Kinshasa, demonstrated in commemoration of the deaths of a dozen students killed 2 years before in another demonstration, President Mobutu had all male Lovanium students inducted into the army for 2 years; after they had undergone 3 months of basic training, however, the President relented and permitted them to return to the university but required them to take part in regular military drill in newly formed campus army units.

Recruiting is usually based on regional quotas. Since 1971 President Mobutu has been stressing the need for tribal balance in the armed forces, since the population is made up of over 200 tribes. (However, in the changes Mobutu made in the top military leadership in the summer of 1972, two of the most important appointees—the army commander and the Airborne Division commander—are both of Mobutu's tribe, the Ngbandi.) Requirements for enlistment differ slightly among the services—the air force requires men with more education and mechanical aptitude than do the ground forces—but the general rule is that a recruit must be a physically fit, unmarried Zairian citizen between 16 and 22 years of age, must have completed at least 6 years of schooling, and must never before have served in the armed forces. The last is a vestigial requirement from the chaotic

1960's, when it was instituted to keep out mutineers and deserters. Officer candidates come from among university and secondary school graduates.

The technical capability of Zairian troops is very low, and this situation can be expected to continue well into the future. Morale ranges from high, among the airborne and commando personnel, to very low in most other units. There is a general lack of discipline, and officers and NCO's command little respect. There is no reserve system. Even if any widespread mobilization were attempted, the paucity of qualified officers and NCO's available to command the levies would be a highly limiting factor.

The Zairian officer corps was flawed at birth—it was born in mutiny. The officers generally fell into one of three categories. First were those who were NCO's in the old Belgian *Force Publique* and were commissioned in the wake of the July 1960 mutiny when the whole command structure was Africanized. Second were those commissioned and promoted later in the chaotic period of the 1960's; many were promoted beyond their training and capacities and now hold important posts without having ever made up their shortcomings in training and knowledge. The third category was composed of the younger officers who had been trained abroad (chiefly in Belgium); some of them even held advanced degrees from foreign schools. With the retirement of approximately nine of the army's senior officers in 1972, many of the officers in the first category have been eliminated from key leadership positions, thus reducing the number of individuals upon whom Mobutu considered he could always trust. In sum, the officer corps lacks homogeneity and is held together by pampering with privilege, promotion, and good and regular pay. Obviously it is not a body easy for Mobutu to keep in line.

2. Strength trends

At independence, the strength of the army was about 26,000 men. In the ensuing years accurate records were not maintained, but it appears that from 1960 to 1965 the strength fluctuated between 23,000 and 30,000. In 1966 it increased to about 34,000, but then in 1967 desertion and the elimination of the mercenaries reduced it to about 31,500. Beginning in 1968, armed forces strength grew steadily and by 1972 was almost 66,000, including the new National Gendarmerie. However, there are no plans to recruit more personnel during the calendar years of 1972 and 1973. Since the economy is in a period of readjustment, there may be a leveling-off of armed forces personnel strength for the next several years as

Mobutu gingerly works toward diminishing the strong role of the military without antagonizing its leaders to such a degree that they revolt.

3. Training

There are no joint armed forces schools, as such. The men and units of the army's gendarmerie battalions, lately transferred to the National Gendarmerie, were trained, of course, in the regular army training system. Men of the former National Police, the other part of the new National Gendarmerie, are being retrained in a military curriculum in the Army Training Center at Kitona. In addition, the four former National Police training facilities are to be converted to National Gendarmerie instruction. Being very new, the CRLG does not yet have a formal training establishment of its own, and at present all its training at home is on the job. Joint operations and an occasional joint exercise do afford further training.

When disorder broke out at Kinkuzi in the training camp that Zaire provides the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE), the army sent in an integrated aviation/ground force, and that force performed somewhat above the usual haphazard standard. It was made up of the air force and the army's 2d Reconnaissance Squadron, 3d Airborne Battalion, and 2d Airborne Battalion (in reserve). Other practical field training in 1972 has been acquired in *Secteur Tanganyika* in the joint operations there in which the CRLG has assisted the army. A formal "live-fire" exercise was staged in July 1972 just outside of Kinshasa under the supervision of the Israeli advisers. It included airborne personnel, jet fighter aircraft, and helicopters and was executed with skill.

4. Military budget

The military budget has regularly been one of the largest items in the national budget. It is prepared by the Department of Defense and submitted to the Department of Finance for analysis and inclusion in the consolidated central government budget. The total budget then goes for confirmation to the President, who presents it to parliament for debate. In practice few changes occur. Through the years of upheaval the need for large military budgets was painfully evident to all, and they were easy to justify. By the early 1970's, however, with both the internal and external threats greatly diminished and the state of the economy less than healthy, the top military planners (even Mobutu himself) have had a difficult time justifying large expenditures for new weapons and facilities for the armed forces. Published military

budgets for the years 1968 through 1972 in equivalent millions of U.S. dollars have been as follows:

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Military budget . . .	37.7	48.0	60.0	72.2	89.5
Military budget as a percent of national budget . . .	16.6	16.6	18.3	16.7	13.6
Military budget as a percent of estimated GNP	2.7	2.8	3.1	3.5	4.1

5. Logistics

In the past, Zaire has obtained virtually all of its military materiel and assistance from Western sources. The chief suppliers have been the United States, France, Belgium, and Italy. Other suppliers have been the United Kingdom, Portugal, South Africa, West Germany, Israel, and Ghana. Total value of foreign assistance is the equivalent of about US\$47 million; materiel from the Communist world consists of 60 jeep-type vehicles obtained from Romania in 1972 for the equivalent of about \$200,000. The United States has provided about \$48 million worth of assistance and materiel, of which over \$26 million was given as grant aid. U.S. materiel includes small arms and ammunition, communications equipment, vehicles, and trainer and transport aircraft. France has supplied machineguns, mortars, armored cars, trainer aircraft, helicopter ordnance, and training valued at almost \$24 million. Belgium has provided infantry weapons (Figure 2), ammunition, artillery, and armored cars valued at almost \$11 million. Up to 1966 most French and Belgian assistance was grant aid. Italy has supplied almost \$9 million worth of patrol boats, trainer aircraft, and training. The amounts of materiel from other countries have been much smaller, including about \$1.9 million from the United Kingdom.

For war mobilization the Zairian economy offers little. In military equipment it produces only a few quartermaster-type items such as shoes and some uniforms. Zaire's transportation infrastructure, which was fragmented even in the colonial period, was greatly damaged (both actively and through neglect) during the political troubles in the 1960's. Rejuvenation of the transportation network has been slow, and, other than air transport, mobilization would find the system highly inadequate.

The procurement of military materiel is accomplished at the Department of Defense level. The department's Directorate for Logistics formulates policy, verifies requirements, and issues instructions for guidance. Belgian advisers are involved in all logistics operations in the Department of Defense. The



FIGURE 2. Rifleman in training with the Belgian-made 7.62-mm FN/FAL rifle (C)

logistics system is based on the post-World War II Belgian system, modified somewhat by U.S. influence, and, though good in theory, in practice it suffers from poor planning, inept control, and outdated procedures, generally bordering on chaos. Heterogeneity of equipment gives rise to supply and maintenance problems, facilities for the movement and storage of supplies are inadequate, and accounting is haphazard. There is a serious shortage of skilled technicians at all echelons. Major servicing of all classes of equipment has to be done at the capital, where facilities are available.

The armed forces logistics system and the army logistics system are one and the same. The system's headquarters (termed "Logistical Base") is at Kinshasa, and subordinate elements are at military region level. Desired stock levels are a 2-year level at the Logistical Base and a 1-year level at the military region level. At the latter echelon, however, stock levels range very widely—all the way from a 1-day level in some items to a 1-year level. Bases stock all classes of supplies except petroleum products, which are procured from local distributors on a contract basis. Except for some canned goods, foodstuffs are also purchased locally. Storage of supplies is generally poorly planned, and packaging for shipment is almost unknown. Any means of transportation available, civilian or military, may be used to transport materiel. Frequently, costly air transportation is resorted to to make up for lack of prior planning, a habit that is a

carryover from the 1964-68 period of rebellions when the United States provided air support. Technical assistance is provided by several countries—to the ground forces by Belgium, to the airborne division by Israel, to the air force by Italy, and to the engineers by the United Kingdom; also, the United States gives some logistics support in communications, transportation, and ordnance.

C. Ground forces (C)

The Zairian Army (or FAZ—the same name is often used to refer to the Zairian Armed Forces as a whole) is primarily a light infantry force. By far its chief importance has been in providing internal security, and it remains of first importance in national politics, constituting the mainstay of the Mobutu regime. Mobutu himself is a lieutenant general, on leave from the army. After the Nigerian Army, it is the second largest army in sub-Saharan Africa and for that reason inspires some caution among Zaire's immediate neighbors. The mission of the army is to be prepared to defend the country against attack and to assist in maintaining internal security.

Though the army has had a great deal of field combat experience through the chaotic history of Zaire, except for its airborne units it has advanced only slightly in its capabilities, effectiveness, tactics, and doctrine. It could defend the country against the African forces of its neighbors, but against an

effective, modern force, even one much smaller, the army could not stand. It still remains as dependent on foreign assistance as it was years ago. Leadership is weak and inept, and discipline, though somewhat better than it was in the 1960's, is still poor. Other major weaknesses include an ineffective and corrupt logistics system, a chronic shortage of qualified technicians, and personnel with little or no formal education and a record of license and crime that gives the army an invidious reputation with the populace. The army is still pretty much "a law unto itself."

1. Organization

The organization of the army is essentially the same as that of the armed forces, which is described above under "Command structure." Army Headquarters is co-located with Armed Forces Headquarters at Kinshasa.

The army is composed of its headquarters, seven military regions, one airborne (parachute) division, an armored division (still being formed, thus is below brigade strength), the National Gendarmerie, the Logistics Base, and the air force (Figure 1). The military region system has replaced the old *groupement* system in the 1972 reorganization and closely resembles it. A military region is a territorial command whose components consist of a varying number of infantry and other troop units, combat support units, service support units, and a logistical base and is usually commanded by a brigadier general. The military regions are numbered, and the locations of the headquarters are as follows: 1st Military Region, Kananga; 2d, Kinshasa; 3d, Kisangani; 4th, Lubumbashi; 5th, Bukavu; 6th, Mbandaka; and 7th, Boma. The Airborne Division, the elite force of the army, consists of three regiments; headquarters are at the capital, and the commanding officer is a brigadier general. Having the mobility that airlift affords, the division serves as the army's quick-reaction reserve force, ready to deal with emergencies for which units on the scene may be inadequate (Figure 3). An armored division has been activated and was still forming at Mbanza-Ngungu out of units transferred to it from others, as of late 1972. It is somewhere between battalion and brigade in size and is using the new Panhard armored cars and personnel carriers from France. *Secteur Tanganyika*, the special tactical command that has succeeded "Operation Eagle" in the lingering counterinsurgency effort against the few remaining insurgents, is under the 5th Military Region. *Secteur Tanganyika's* commander is usually a lieutenant colonel, his headquarters is at Kalemie, and the command's area of operation is a



FIGURE 3. A jumpmaster of the Airborne Division (C)

triangle based on the lake with its points at Kalemie, Lulimba, and Uvira. The air force is a very small arm whose chief importance is as an air transport agency for carrying troops and for logistics.

It is planned to further reorganize the army. Because of Zaire's present economic difficulties, developments in this direction have been slow. The plans call for replacing the seven military regions with four infantry divisions—three regional and one at Kinshasa. It is doubtful that this step will be taken anytime in the near future. When it is, however, each division is to be supported by airborne and armored units, probably of brigade size. A logistics brigade with subordinate battalions is to replace the present logistical bases. Significant steps towards reorganization have begun. The armored division forming at Mbanza-Ngungu is one. No full-tracked vehicles have yet been ordered, but Panhard armored cars (Figure 4) were bought from France in 1970; by mid-1972 about 115 had been received. It is also planned that each infantry division will be supported by a gendarmerie brigade, and the formation of the National Gendarmerie may well be the first step in this direction. The establishment of the third airborne regimental headquarters, done in 1972, completed the plan for that division. The reorganization plan calls for a "navy" which, like the air force, will be subordinate to the army.

2. Strength, composition, and disposition¹

Personnel strength of the ground forces is about 35,000 men—1,000 officers, 1,500 warrant officers, and 32,500 enlisted men. The army has 39 battalions—14 infantry, eight guard, five airborne (parachute), three commando, one armored (called a division), and eight service. The six gendarmerie battalions (trained as infantry) have been transferred to the new National Gendarmerie. They, like the infantry, guard, airborne and commando battalions, are trained, equipped, and used as infantry. (The airborne battalions, like the commando battalions, are parachute trained.) Thus, 30 of the 38 battalions are infantry units. The battalion is the army's primary tactical unit. The armored battalion is new, formed in 1972 and still growing. There are three reconnaissance squadrons, one each with the 3d, 4th, and 7th military regions. A military region command is generally composed of a signal company, a transportation company, an engineer company, a military police company, a supply/maintenance unit (called the "Logistical Base"), and miscellaneous combat units that vary from region to region.

The Airborne Division is made up of the five airborne battalions and the three commando battalions. It serves as a reserve as well as a quick-reaction force. Zaire's poor and deteriorating transportation system gives this unit particular importance. The division's headquarters is in Kinshasa, and its three organic regiments are in Kinshasa, Kamina, and Kisangani. The 3d Regiment at Kisangani was formed in 1972 and at the end of that year could not yet be considered operational. Battalions of the airborne regiments are territorially dispersed, as are the units of the military regions. Since the acquisition of three C-130 aircraft in 1971, the army can lift the assault elements of one airborne battalion to any area of the country within hours. *Secteur Tanganyika* has had a fluctuating strength of some nine battalions (infantry, guard, airborne, and gendarmerie) that engage the rag-tag and disunited remnants of the Simba rebellion.

Under its present organization, the army depends for artillery support almost entirely on some 525 mortars (they range from 60-mm through 120-mm but are chiefly 60-mm and 81-mm) (Figures 5 and 6). Even though excluding the Panhard's 90-mm antitank guns there are some 80 assorted pieces of artillery

¹For regularly updated information and detailed order of battle data, see the *Order of Battle Summary, Foreign Ground Forces*, and the *Military Intelligence Summary*, both published by the Defense Intelligence Agency.



FIGURE 4. Panhards. (Top) Equipped with a 90-mm cannon and a machinegun. (Middle) Equipped with a 60-mm mortar and machineguns. (Bottom) Personnel carrier (VTT), armed with machineguns. (C)

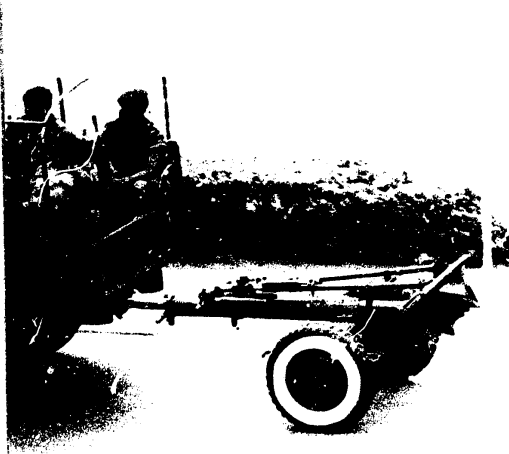


FIGURE 5. Mortarmen and their towed mortar (U/OU)



FIGURE 6. A mortar firing demonstration at the Training Center, Kitona (C)

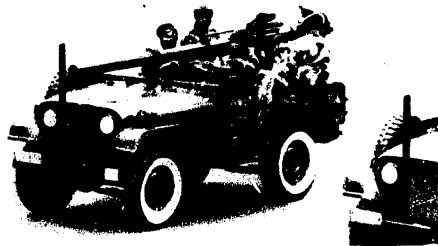


FIGURE 7. Jeep-mounted 106-mm recoilless rifle and crew. The gun uses a .50 caliber machinegun for spotting. (U/OU)

(20-mm through 75-mm) in the inventory, about half of the number are basically antiaircraft weapons. The antiamor capability, excluding the Panhard's 90-mm antitank guns, consists of about 250 recoilless rifles (75-mm and 106-mm) (Figure 7), the 90-mm cannon on some of the Panhards (Figure 4), and rocket launchers (83-mm). The effectiveness of the Zairian artilleryman with all of these weapons is probably low.

3. Training

In the past, Zaire has been extremely dependent on foreign military schools for the training of officers and technicians. Personnel have been trained primarily in Belgium but also in Israel, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Because men trained abroad are not readily accepted when they return from overseas training and those who attend long courses tend to lose touch with their country, increasing emphasis is being placed on military training in Zaire.

All military schools operate under the supervision of the Department of Defense's Directorate of Organization and Training. Basic training is carried out with Belgian assistance at the Training Center at Kitona (CEKI); in 1972 there were 34 Belgians on the staff. Recruits initially are put through a 10-month, five-phase, training course at Kitona. The first phase consists of 3 months instruction in tactics and individual weapons training (Figure 2). The second phase, also lasting 3 months, focuses on the various branches within the army. The third phase consists of 2 months of integrating individuals into actual army units. The fourth and fifth phases consist of 1 month of company and battalion instruction, respectively. Each year the center trains about 2,000 recruits. On completion of basic training, in most cases the men are assigned as individual replacements; in a few cases training battalions have become units in the regular army (e.g., the 1st and 3d Infantry Battalions). Since the 1972 reorganization CEKI has concentrated on retraining the National Police component of the new National Gendarmerie in basic military skills for its role in the new service.

An Officer Training School at Kananga has been training young men for military careers in a 2-year course and has been graduating classes of about 100 students per year. The school is scheduled to move to Kinshasa in 1973-74 and to become the "military academy." In a 6-month command course a Company Commanders School, also in Kananga, trains officers who have had 5 to 7 years experience. About 70 graduate each year from this school.

The two senior military schools in Zaire are the Battalion Commander's School (BCS) and the

Command and General Staff School (C&GSS), both in Kinshasa. Students at both are officers with 8 to 1 years' service. Those who are nominated for these schools must pass entrance examinations to be accepted for the 6-month BCS course or the 1-year C&GSS course. Both courses train about 35 students in each training cycle. All officers schools are staffed primarily with Belgian instructors.

Special training for the army is given at a number of schools in Zaire—at the Armor Training Center and the Engineer Training Center, at Mbanza-Ngungu; the Ordnance School, the Transportation School, and the Tailors and Shirtmakers School at Kinshasa; the military Justice School, at Kamina Base; the Signal School, the Military Construction School, and the Clerks and Accounts School, at Kananga; the Airborne Training Center, at Ndjili; and the Commando School, at Kota Koli. The Engineer Training Center may be moved from Mbanza-Ngungu to Likasi. In September 1971 the Airborne Company Commanders School was established at the Airborne School near Ndjili international airfield; it is staffed with Israeli instructors, and the first class had about 25 student officers. Since about 1967, the Israelis have been providing the final year of paratroop training for about 100 Zairian officers and NCO's a year. In October 1971, Zairian airborne units began the initial phases of night parachute qualification and airmobile training. Although these activities are still in an embryonic stage, they are evidence of an attempt to provide good, modern, realistic training.

The Zairian Army has not taken part in any multinational training exercises or maneuvers and has not participated in any joint maneuvers except with the new C.R.I.G. Under Israeli supervision, this air-ground live-fire exercise held near Kinshasa on 20 July 1972 was carried out skillfully. Army units have had considerable field experience with foreign troops—with U.N. troops from 1960 to 1964 and with small units of mercenaries in 1964 and 1965.

Training at all levels is hindered by the generally limited amount of formal education of the men, their inadequate knowledge of mechanical equipment, and the pervading disciplinary problems. Men are given no incentive to increase skills acquired in training. Officers returning from training overseas may initially be well trained and enthusiastic, but their keenness is soon dulled by the army's general apathy, poor discipline, and corruption.

Over 300 foreign military personnel were advising and assisting the army in early 1972—226 Belgians, 9 British, 9 Israelis, and 43 Americans. Each year some 250 army personnel are sent abroad for instruction.

Zaire (with the aid of Israeli advisers) has provided paratroop training for personnel from Chad and Burundi.

4. Logistics

The army logistics system and the armed forces logistics system are the same. The center of the logistics system is the Logistical Base, Kinshasa, which has administrative, storage, and distribution facilities, as well as facilities for all levels of maintenance, including major overhaul of small arms, engineer equipment, communications equipment, and vehicles. In addition to this major center, the system includes with each military region headquarters a logistical base that is equipped for and performs minor maintenance. All or nearly all of these seven bases are headed by lieutenant colonels. Below military region logistical base level, the battalions themselves perform minor maintenance. If the logistics system laid out in military regulations was practiced, it would probably serve the army adequately, but, as it is actually functioning, it is grossly inefficient and is one of the salient weaknesses of the army. The liberal promotions of the chaotic 1960's gave rank to the unqualified, and the shortage of trained supply officers and NCO's continues unabated and pervading at all echelons in the army. By any modern standard, supply and maintenance are poor, recordkeeping is faulty, and accountability is weak; these, on top of poor discipline, have created a climate that takes poor performance and corruption for granted.

Both the storage and distribution of supplies and materiel are haphazard at best. Even at Logistical Base, Kinshasa, long delays occur in the processing of supply requisitions from the military regions, and, when requisitioned materiel finally does reach the requester, it is often of the wrong type, size, or quantity. The variety of vehicles in the inventory complicates spare parts supply. Another major weakness in the maintenance system and the supply system is the inadequate national transportation system.

D. Air force (C)

The Zairian Air Force is not a separate service but is the air component of the Zairian Army (Figure 1). It is called "the air force" and is accorded separate treatment in this study for clarity of coverage and the reader's convenience. This air arm is a very small component with some transport and reconnaissance capability and slight close air support and fighter capability. It continues to be seriously short of Zairian

pilots, technicians, and supply personnel and could not carry on operations without its European training and logistic cadres. The air force's mission is to support the army in both its national defense and internal security roles. Its specific tasks include providing close air support of ground forces, airlifting of troops and materiel, and making liaison and reconnaissance flights. The air force could provide close air support on only a minor scale and for only a short time, but in operations against any of Zaire's immediate neighbors it could perform its other tasks in any likely action. For close air support, appropriate aircraft are available, but by mid-1972 only nine of the air force's 55 Zairian pilots were considered qualified to perform this type of operation.

With the acquisition of three Lockheed C-130 transports in 1971, the air force's airlift capability increased markedly, especially when compared with that of other central African nations. Zaire's poor and deteriorating road system makes airlift capability particularly important. The services of the U.S. Air Force in the widespread operations of the chaotic 1960's acquainted the army with the convenience and speed of airlift; the habit of continuing to rely on aerial delivery instead of planning ahead and addressing the problem of developing an effective and orderly logistics system still prevails, despite the extravagance of this approach and the slim resources of the air force. The acquisition of additional air transport is planned.

To meet its logistics and training problems, the air force uses the expedient of foreign experts and resources. The flying personnel problem, however, cannot be evaded, and it is the greatest difficulty that the air force faces. Because of the sophisticated level of air force equipment and aviation technology, the low national educational level poses even greater problems for the air force than for the army. It is difficult to find qualified recruits to undertake training for most types of air force work. The washout rate for Zairian pilot trainees is extremely high. Even pilots who are considered trained generally display a lack of discipline and a careless disregard for equipment. This problem is of such magnitude that some fighter pilots have had to be grounded for retraining—transport pilots seem to be slightly more responsible, as well as slightly more proficient. Most aircraft maintenance is done not by the air force but by a private company and the air force's European advisers.

1. Organization

As a component of the army, the air force comes under Army Headquarters, and the air force

commander is subordinate to the army commander in the chain of command. In rank he is a lieutenant colonel. In October 1972 the air force was reorganized into a headquarters at Ndolo Airfield, Kinshasa and three "commands." The Central Operations Command (COC) is composed of the 11th Fighter Squadron, the 21st Logistics Transport Squadron, the 22d Tactical Transport Squadron, and the 31st Helicopter Squadron. All elements of the COC are located at Ndjili Airfield, near Kinshasa. The Air Force Schools Command (CEFA) has four subordinate schools. A flying school and a technical school for fixed wing aircraft are located at Kamina Base and two similar schools for rotary wing aircraft which are forming at Ndolo Airfield, Kinshasa. The third command is the Technical and Logistics Command (CGTEL), which controls the Workshop Group, two Depot Groups, and one Service Group based in Kinshasa but with elements located throughout the country.

Because of the vital importance of foreigners to all aspects of the air force, liaison is particularly significant. The CEFA has a liaison officer to coordinate activities between the Department of Defense's Directorate of Organization and Training and the Italian Air Force Training Mission. The private maintenance group based at Ndjili International Airfield that maintains air force aircraft works for the air force commander, but in addition to the formal channel through that officer, has direct liaison with the Department of Defense.

2. Strength, composition, and disposition²

The personnel strength of the air force is about 760. Included in the total in late 1972 are 55 pilots, 16 flight engineers, 10 radio operators, and 81 pilot trainees. Foreigners are no longer serving in the air force, although they remain an important part of the advisory and logistics cadres. Zaire modernized its air force in 1971 and 1972 with the delivery of C-130 transports from the United States, Macchi jets and SIAI Marchetti conventional trainers from Italy, Puma helicopters from France, and a British BN-2 Islander.

²For regularly updated information and order of battle data, see the *Military Intelligence Summary* and the *Free World Air Order of Battle*, both published by the Defense Intelligence Agency. The Zairian airfields system is briefly discussed in this General Survey under Transportation and Telecommunications.

The types and numbers of organizationally assigned aircraft, by command and the airfields at which they are based, are as follows:

ORGANIZATION	AIRFIELD	NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT
Central Operations Command	Ndjili	
11th Pursuit Attack Squadron	do ...	15 MB-326GB, 5 T-28
21st Logistical Transportation Squadron	do ...	2 C-54, 2 C-118, 3 C130A
22d Tactical Transportation Squadron	do ...	8 C-47
31st Helicopter Squadron	do ...	1 Alouette II, 3 Alouette III, 5 SA-330
Air Force Schools Command	Kamina Base	12 SF-260
Technical and Logistics Command	Ndjili	No assigned aircraft

In addition to Ndjili International Airfield, Ndola Airfield, and Kamina Base Airfield, the air force also uses at least 16 others that have service facilities for small, transient aircraft—Kisangani, Lisala, Kalemie, Kindu, Mbandaka, Kitona, Goma, Lubumbashi, Bunia, and Isiro.

The air force has no reserve. However, some 210 civil aircraft operated by the government airline, Air Zaire, afford some mobilization potential. Twenty-six of these are transports of over 20,000 pounds gross weight. The airline employs 85 pilots, 25 flight engineers, and more than 400 maintenance personnel, a large number of them being Europeans.

3. Training

Bringing Zairians up to the demanding standards required by aviation is a formidable task, and the air force continues to have great difficulty in that endeavor. Even though the air force has existed for over a decade and has put much effort into training Zairian airmen, the number really qualified as pilots and technicians remains not much more than token. In order for the air force to continue to carry on air operations, it has no alternative but to depend on foreigners for maintenance, for overseeing the logistics system, and for piloting some aircraft. There is still appreciably less than one Zairian pilot per aircraft.

Training takes place both at home and abroad. The air force training center is at Kamina Base. An 80-man training mission from the Italian Air Force handles air force training, assisting in the selection of the men to be trained as pilots and conducting primary flight training at Kamina. Those cadets who complete the primary program are sent to Italy for further training.

It is difficult for these Zairians to meet the high Italian Air Force standards, so the washout rate is high—only about 50% of the Zairian cadets who begin flight training finish. In addition to the air force personnel instructed in Italy, a few others have been trained in the United States and France. Mobutu would like to have all flight training take place in Zaire, but this goal will not be reached in the near future.

After the years of training effort that have been invested in developing Zairian pilots, by late 1972 only nine are considered proficient enough to fly the Aermacchi MB-326GB jet aircraft in combat operations and two are qualified as aircraft commanders for the Lockheed C-130 transports. With only three or four Zairians serving as instructors in 1972, it is most likely that the air force will have to continue to depend on a foreign training staff for some years to come.

4. Logistics

As in training, the air force is almost totally dependent upon foreign support in logistics. The Italian Air Force training mission supervises Zairian mechanics in maintaining the Aermacchi (Figure 8) and Siai-Marchetti aircraft, and French Sud-Aviation specialists maintain the Puma SA-330 helicopters. The rest of the aircraft are maintained by a private company, the Zaire Maintenance Company (SODEMAZ). This company was formed in late 1969 because of the Zairian Government's displeasure over the operation of the World International Ground Maintenance Organization (WIGMO)—another private aircraft maintenance organization. SODEMAZ' predecessor, SODEMAZ', contract was written for 30 years, although in official circles it is now referred to as a "temporary" organization which is to be disestablished as soon as the air force achieves the necessary proficiency to maintain its aircraft. A Lockheed Aircraft Company team is training SODEMAZ mechanics to maintain the C-130 transports. About US\$1 million worth of C-130 parts have been ordered from the United States. Parts for some of the older aircraft, especially the C-47's, C-54's, and T-28's, are supplied by the United States under its military sales program.

Because of the large number of Europeans who supervise supply and maintenance procedures, the logistics system for the air force is more efficient than that of the army. Whenever the air force has to rely on the army for vehicles, rations, or engineer support, its capability suffers.

Stock levels for ammunition and parts are usually adequate. Sometimes a shortage of vehicles causes



FIGURE 8. One of the Fighter Squadron's Italian-built Aermacchi MB-326GB light attack aircraft (U/OU)

long delays in transporting aircrews to their aircraft when missions have been ordered. Aviation grade fuel is purchased from major oil companies in Kinshasa. In other areas, stocks are controlled by Air Zaire. Foreign assistance in air force logistics and maintenance will continue to be indispensable far into the future.

E. National Gendarmerie³ (C)

The National Gendarmerie is a new service, and many details are not yet known about it. In July 1972 the decision was made to withdraw from the army its six gendarmerie battalions and to merge them and the National Police to form a new armed forces component. The delicate political situation in the government, the reorganization of the armed forces, and the personalities of some of the military leaders are all among the factors leading to the move. The personnel strength of the National Gendarmerie is about 30,000 men, not far short of that of the army minus its gendarmerie battalions.

Organizationally the new component is subordinate to the Department of Defense and directly under the control of the Captain General of the army (Figure 1). The commander of the National Gendarmerie is a brigadier general with his headquarters in Kinshasa. Subordinate to National Gendarmerie Headquarters is the Republican Guard, which is commanded by a captain. Included in the Republican Guard is the Presidential Escort—a Belgian-trained mounted unit used for ceremonial purposes. For the gendarmerie, the country is not divided into the army's military regions but along the lines of the administrative regions, and the gendarmerie's subordinate unit headquarters are located in the respective regional capitals.

³For regularly updated information, see the *Military Intelligence Summary*, published by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

F. Coast guard⁴ (C)

Zaire has no navy but does have a very small navy-type force that is known as the Coast, River, and Lake Guard (CRLG). Organizationally it does not come under the Department of Defense but is directly subordinate to the President (Figure 1). Its commander is a "fleet captain" (equivalent to the army rank of colonel), and its headquarters is in Kinshasa. Most of the vessels are on Lake Tanganyika and are under the operational control of the CKLC's Lake Command, whose headquarters are at Kalemie.

In early 1970 there was no table of organization and equipment and no stated mission for a naval force, though there were about 25 army officers and 80 enlisted men assigned to coast guard-type duties. The inventory of watercraft consisted of two 50-foot Swift patrol craft, four 21-foot patrol boats, a converted fishing trawler, and two Italian patrol boats, each of the latter armed with a single .50 caliber machinegun and used for escorting the presidential yacht. The condition of these craft was poor, and because of a lack of funds and chronic maintenance difficulties, only one to four of them were operational at any given time. To try to rectify this situation, President Mobutu established the CRLG in November 1971, and Zaire purchased in the United States six 65-foot Swift patrol boats, each armed with an 81-mm mortar and two .50 caliber machineguns (Figure 9). Further, to man these boats, about 200 officers and enlisted men from the army were sent for training at the Naval Inshore Operations Training Center, Mare Island, California. The CRLG became operational in March 1972. Its mission is to maintain surveillance of territorial waters, to protect maritime traffic and fishing fleets, to provide search and rescue services and assistance for

⁴For regularly updated information, see the *Military Intelligence Summary*, published by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

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FIGURE 9. A Swift boat of the Coast, River, and Lake Guard (U/OU)



ships and aircraft, to assist the National Gendarmerie and customs in controlling smuggling and illegal entry into the country, and to provide assistance in hydrographic research. With present resources the CRLG cannot meet many of these responsibilities except in a token way.

There are plans for expanding the CRLG into a modest navy, but these are contingent on sufficient growth in Zaire's economy to continue supporting a military buildup. The army's reorganization plan calls for a navy that will be an arm of the army, as is the air force. Plans call for the formation of a "Naval Command" headquartered at the capital and with subordinate "Coast Command," "River Command," "Lake Command," "Training Command" components and a "Logistical Base." Development in this direction is proceeding slowly. The Lake Command is in operation at Kalemie, the Coast Command has

been set up at the port of Banana, and a River Command commander has been appointed. Further progress now probably depends on naval appropriations that will permit buying more craft and naval material, but prospects appear bleak.

G. Paramilitary (C)

Zaire has no force with a true paramilitary capability, although members of the Disciplinary Brigade (BD), a branch of the MPR's youth wing, have had some security training and could augment army manpower in the event of mobilization. The brigade's hard-core strength throughout the country is estimated at well over 10,000 and increasing. In large urban areas BD personnel, who are unarmed, have been given police surveillance roles and the authority to make arrests.

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