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Rethinking the Resource Curse: Natural Resources and Polywar in the Ituri District, Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Rethinking the Resource Curse: 
Natural Resources and Polywar in the Ituri District, 
Democratic Republic of the Congo

By

Dan Fahey

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the 
requirements for the degree of 
Doctor of Philosophy 
in Environmental Science, Policy and Management 
in the Graduate Division 
of the University of California, Berkeley

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Prof. Nancy Peluso, Chair  
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Abstract

Rethinking the Resource Curse: Natural Resources and Polywar in the Ituri District, Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Science, Policy and Management

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Nancy Peluso, Chair

This dissertation examines the people, events and processes that contributed to the onset and duration of war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a focus on armed conflict in northeast Congo’s Ituri district. Building upon theories about the typology of war and critically engaging literature that depicts Congo’s wars as civil wars, I argue that war in Congo was a polywar of numerous internal and international conflicts taking place in the same geographic area. The concept of polywar helps to make sense of how several disparate armed conflicts coalesced in 1996 to produce a regional war that absorbed pre-existing conflicts and spawned new wars. One such new war started in June 1999, when a relatively minor dispute in Ituri escalated into a major war that killed 60,000 people before it ended in November 2007.

Two natural resources – gold and land – figured prominently in war in Ituri, although in ways anomalous to conceptions of the resource curse equating resource abundance with increased risk of civil war. I argue that Ugandan interests in Ituri’s gold were more important than internal Congolese interests in explaining the onset of the second Congo war in 1998, while land disputes were tangential to the local struggles for political and economic power that produced the brutal inter-communal “war within the war” in 1999 in Ituri. This dissertation provides new insights into how local, regional, and international interests in natural resources can contribute to the onset and duration of war.

This dissertation demonstrates how historical patterns of governance over people, territory, and mineral resources intersected with more recent struggles for political and economic power to produce war. The interaction of space, natural resources, and power helped to launch and to sustain war in Congo and in Ituri, but these links also provide insights into ways to transform conflict to produce peace and security for the Iturian and Congolese people.
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACL—Cultural Association for the Liberation of the Oppressed and Rejected of Ituri (Association culturelle Libération des Opprimes et Rejetés de l’Ituri (LORI))

ADB—American Diamond Buyers

ADF—Allied Democratic Front

ADP—The Democratic Alliance of Peoples (L’Alliance Démocratique des Peuples)

AFDL—Alliance of Democratic Forces for Liberation (Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération (Congo-Zaïre))

AFFIMET—Refining of Metals (Affinage des Métaux)

AFRICOM—U.S. Africa Command

AGA—AngloGold Ashanti

AIM—Africa Inland Mission

ALC—Army of Liberation of Congo, armed wing of MLC (Armée de Libération du Congo)

ANC—National Congolese Army (Armée nationale congolaise); RCD-G’s army

ALiR—Army of Liberation of Rwanda (Armée de libération du Rwanda)

AMF—American Mineral Fields

APC—Congolese Popular Army, armed wing of the RCD-ML (Armée Populaire Congolaise)

AZADHO—Association of Defense of Human Rights in Congo/Kinshasa (Association de Défense des Droits de l’Homme au Congo/Kinshasa)

CBI—Cross-Border Initiative
CEEC—Center of Evaluation, Expertise and Certification (Centre d’Évaluation, d’Expertise et de Certification)

CH—Collier and Hoeffler

CNDD—National Council for the Defense of Democracy (Conseil national pour la défense de la Démocratie)

CNDP—National Congress for the Defense of People (Congrès national pour la défense du peuple)

CNRED—The National Council of Resistance for Democracy (Le Conseil National de Résistance pour la Démocratie)

COW—Correlates of War project

DFID—UK Department for International Development

DRC—Democratic Republic of the Congo

EM—Immanuel Mission

EURCOM—U.S. European Command

FAB—Burundian Armed Forces (Forces Armées Burundais)

FAC—Congolese Armed Forces (Forces Armées Congolais)

FAPC—Armed Forces of the Congolese People (Forces armées du peuple congolais)

FAR—Rwandan Armed Forces (Forces Armées Rwandais)

FARDC—Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo

FAZ—Forces Armées Zaïroises

FDD—Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie

FFU—Fanya Fujo Uone

FIPI—Front pour l’intégration et la paix en Ituri,
FLC—Front de libération du Congo

FNI—Nationalist and Integrationist Front (Front Nationaliste Intégrationniste)

FPDC—Popular Force for Democracy in Congo (Force Populaire pour la Démocratie du Congo)

FPJC—Front Populaire pour le Justice au Congo

FRPI—Forces of Patriotic Resistance of Ituri (Forces de Résistance Patriotique d’Ituri)

GDP—Gross Domestic Product

HAM—Heart of Africa Mission

ICC—International Criminal Court

ICD—Inter-Congolese Dialogue

ICJ—International Court of Justice

IEMF—Interim Emergency Multinational Force

IMF—International Monetary Fund

IPC—Ituri Pacification Commission

JTF—Joint Task Force

Kg—kilogram

LORI—Libération des Opprimes et Rejetés de l’Ituri

LRA—Lord’s Resistance Army

MDG—Millennium Development Goals

MIBA—Société Minières de Bakwanga

MLC—Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo

MONUC—United Nations Organization Mission in Congo

MONUSCO—United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in Congo
MRC—*Mouvement des Révolutionnaires Congolais*

MRLZ—*Le Mouvement Révolutionnaire pour la Libération du Zaire*

MSF—*Médecins sans Frontières*

NALU—National Army for the Liberation of Uganda

NGO—non-governmental organization

OAU—Organization of African Unity

ODA—Official Development Assistance

OECD—Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OKIMO—*Office des Mines d’Or de Kilo-Moto*

PLC—*Parti de la Libération Congolais*

PLW—*Parti de Libération des Walendu*

PPU—Presidential Protection Unit

PRA—People’s Redemption Army

PRIO—Peace Research Institute Oslo

PRP—*Le Parti de la Révolution Populaire*

PUSIC—Party for the Unity and Protection of the Integrity of Congo (*Parti pour l’unite et la sauvegarde de l’integrite du Congo*)

RCD-G—*Rassamlement Congolais pour la Démocratie – Goma*

RCD-ML—*Rassamlement Congolais pour la Démocratie – Mouvement de Libération*

RCD-N—*Rassamlement Congolais pour la Démocratie – National*

RCD—*Rassamlement Congolais pour la Démocratie*

RPA—Rwandan People’s Army

RPF—Rwandan Patriotic Force
SADC—Southern Africa Development Community
SIPRI—Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SITC—Standard International Trade Classification
SNIP—Service National d’Intelligence et de Protection
SOKIMO—Society of Gold Mines of Kilo-Moto (Société des Mines d’Or de Kilo-Moto)
SPLA—Southern People’s Liberation Army
UAE—United Arab Emirates
UCDP—The Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UCI—Uganda Commercial Impex
UFERI—L’Union des Fédéralistes et Républicains Indépendants
UN—United Nations
UNDP—United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR—United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNITA—National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (União Nacional pela Independência Total de Angola)
UNSC—United Nations Security Council
UPC—Union of Patriotic Congolese (Union des patriotes congolais)
UPDF—Ugandan People’s Defense Force
URC—Union for the Congolese Revolution (Union pour la Révolution Congolaise)
USAID—U.S. Agency for International Development
WNBF—West Nile Bank Front
Preface

When I tell people my dissertation is about war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I usually get one of a few reactions. Most commonly, people equate Congo with brutal, atavistic war, characterized by widespread sexual violence. Many people reference Joseph Conrad’s book “The Heart of Darkness,” and some also mention Hochschild’s “King Leopold’s Ghost” and Kingsolver’s “Poisonwood Bible.” These literary references are telling, as they also describe a Congo full of bloodshed, brutality, and colonialism. Smaller numbers of people refer to mountain gorillas and “conflict minerals;” the latter a reference to a recent social movement equating Congo’s natural resources with war and rape. Other associations – the magnificent Congo River, the wonderful rhythms of Congolese music, and numerous tourist attractions – are seldom mentioned.

I still do not have a good way of responding to peoples’ perceptions of the Congo. Certainly Congo has experienced massive violence and war since European contact in the fifteenth century, but its history is not easily reduced to a few vague notions of barbarism and resource wars. The recent wars in Congo have been devastating, but within Congo there is hope and halting progress, and there are good people trying to create a new era of peace and prosperity.

This dissertation could therefore be read as a response to the simple conceptions and questions posed by students, friends, family, and strangers. I started out trying to understand the cause and conduct of what is now often described as “the deadliest conflict since World War II” (Autesserre 2010, 231). As I moved from literature reviews to field research, I came to appreciate—and at times feel overwhelmed by—the complexities of war in Congo, or rather, of the wars in Congo, since there was no singular war but a series of overlapping, intersecting conflicts. I started to understand the importance of history and historical memory, and to see how power struggles at a variety of levels affected the onset and duration of war. Geography was also a key factor, with conflict concentrated in peripheral areas of eastern Congo, near porous borders with predatory and troubled countries. Geopolitics played a role, as international powers abandoned Mobutu after the Cold War and embraced the “new breed” of African leaders in Rwanda and Uganda, who started and helped to sustain the Congo wars. I also saw a complex image of natural resources, often cited as a cause (or the cause) of Congo’s wars.

This dissertation is the culmination of more than six years of dedicated study, research, and writing. Numerous funders have generously enabled my work, including the University of California (through the Berkeley Fellowship), Berkeley’s Center for African Studies (through Rocca fellowships), Berkeley’s Institute for International Studies (through the Simpson fellowship), and the U.S. Institute of Peace (through the Jennings Randolph Peace Scholar Fellowship). In addition, several consultancies provided me with opportunities for Congo-related research and funding for my graduate
studies. On the ground in Congo, several contacts at the United Nations enabled me to fly on MONUC helicopters and planes, which greatly enabled my research.

I could not have completed this dissertation without the assistance and insights of several Congolese colleagues, particularly Pascal Ngona Busu, Abbé Alfred Buju, Jean Paul Lonema, and Abbé Dzaringa Rogatien. Asante sana!

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Introduction

During the first six months of 1997, something amazing happened in Uganda. Between January and June 1997, Uganda exported 6,591 kilograms of gold, an astounding volume considering that two years before, in 1995, Uganda exported only one kilogram of gold (Bank of Uganda 1999, 81). Yet this rise in gold exports was only half the story. What made the increase all the more astounding was that during 1997, mines in Uganda produced a total of six kilograms of gold (Fahey 2008, 383; UMEMD 2005). Where did the excess gold come from? How did it end up in Uganda to be exported?

The puzzle of Uganda’s extraordinary increase in gold exports has a seemingly simple explanation: it was the result of the Ugandan government’s role in war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (hereafter DRC or Congo). In 1996, the Ugandan government helped the government of Rwanda to assemble an army that invaded Congo. The invasion’s primary objectives were to topple the regime of long-time dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, and to destroy the armed forces that had committed genocide in 1994 in Rwanda and were now in eastern Congo. Although many scholars classify this war as a civil war between Congolese rebels and the Congolese government (Sambanis 2004; Gleditsch 2004; Collier and Hoeffler 2004), others have rejected the application of this description of the war in Congo, highlighting instead the importance of international actors in what they have called a “regional war” (Stearns 2011, 54; Reyntjens 2009, 45-58).

Between October 1996 and May 1997, a Rwandan-led army swept through eastern and southern Congo, capturing most of Congo’s rich gold and diamond mines, before moving west and taking the capital, Kinshasa. This invasion and war took place with the blessing of the United States and the support of a coalition of African governments (Prunier 2008, 67-68; Reyntjens 2009, 65-79; cf. Stearns 2011, 54-55). One of the invading army’s biggest prizes resulted from the capture, in December 1996, of the gold mines around the town of Mongbwalu in northeast Congo’s Ituri district. These mines had been known as “Mobutu’s gold mine” (Tomlinson 1997).

The Rwandan-led force shared some of the resource wealth it captured with the governments that provided key military, logistical, and financial support (Le Potentiel 1997). Uganda’s compensation came during the first half of 1997 in the form of thousands of kilograms of gold (Mwenda 1997). This transfer not only boosted Uganda’s overall exports, thereby improving its macroeconomic profile, it also attracted private Ugandan interests in Ituri’s gold. During 1998, relations between the governments of Uganda and Congo soured in part because the Congolese government thwarted Ugandan business interests in Congo’s gold and markets. This deterioration of relations contributed to the start of the second Congo war, which became a polywar of international and internal conflicts, some of which continue in 2011.

This dissertation examines the connections between natural resources and war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In particular, it analyzes the case of armed conflict in
Congo’s Ituri district, where a mix of local, national, and international wars took place between 1996 and 2007. The abundance of gold in Ituri has led some observers to cite it as an example of an area “cursed” by valuable natural resources (HRW 2005), because this richesse has rendered it vulnerable to civil war (Ross 2004; Collier 2000; Collier et al 2007).

I begin my exploration of war in Ituri with this question: how did local and international interests in Ituri’s natural resources influence the onset and duration of Ituri’s and the Congo’s wars?

In answering this puzzle, my dissertation rethinks notions of the “resource curse” that uncritically equate resource abundance with civil war. My analysis is guided by the insights of political ecology; especially its tenet that environmental issues cannot be understood in isolation from the political and economic contexts in which they are created (Bryant and Bailey 1997). With respect to Ituri, where political and economic interests in gold and land have historically produced conflict and violence, I examine the “repertoires of control” by hegemonic forces (local elites, states, corporations) and the “repertoires of resistance” to those hegemonic forces (cf. Watts and Peet 2004, 22; Peluso 1992). I pay particular attention to how the interaction of socio-political, economic, and military interests can cause or prolong armed conflict (Peluso and Watts 2001).

Overall, I argue that internal and international interests in Ituri’s natural resources shaped the form and function of war in Ituri and Congo. Ugandan interests in Ituri’s gold interacted with regional and international political interests to produce war, but once that war began, local and international actors utilized Ituri’s resources to sustain war and create new conflicts. To describe this phenomenon of multiple conflicts in the same geographic region, I introduce the term polywar. In this dissertation, polywar refers to the interrelated but at times separable conflicts in Ituri and eastern Congo involving local and international actors, which eventually merged into a larger regional war. I argue that this polywar had an important geopolitical dimension because of the political and financial support Western governments and international institutions provided to the governments of Rwanda and Uganda while the latter invaded, occupied, plundered, and sustained war in Congo.

The remainder of this Introduction provides a brief description and analysis of war in Congo, followed by an account of my main objectives in this dissertation. I conclude with an explanation of the main points of each chapter.

War in Congo: An overview
This dissertation focuses on war since 1996 in Congo, with a focus on war in northeast Congo’s Ituri district. War did not suddenly materialize in 1996: it had roots in the history of Congo and central and eastern Africa. Violence was part of life in pre-colonial Congo, but the level of violence and its various direct and structural forms vastly increased after 1885, when Congo became the personal property of Belgium’s King Leopold. Leopold’s rule (1885-1908), and the Belgian colonial rule which followed
(1908-1960), caused the deaths of millions of people—perhaps more than ten million—in a quest to exploit Congo’s natural resources (Hochschild 1998).

Leopold’s initial interest in ivory expanded into a drive for rubber, but as Leopold’s agents (and later Belgian colonial officials) acquired these resources—often through brutal means—they also discovered a large quantity and variety of mineral resources. Slavery and forced labor slowly transformed during the colonial era into a system of exploitation. Colonial rule ended in 1960, but left legacies including a “tradition of” authoritarian rule and violence, exploitation of natural resources in ways that provided little benefit to local populations, and manipulation of ethnicity that created and hardened differences among groups and calcified animosities still visible today. These legacies in turn contributed to the development of polywar in Congo during the 1990s.

After independence, Congo was the site of numerous conflicts that helped lay the path to recent and current wars. Local and regional struggles for power at the time of independence merged with international (esp. Belgian) interests in Congo’s minerals and Cold War politics to produce a period of instability (1960-65). With assistance from the United States and other governments, Congolese general Mobutu Sese Seko took power in 1965, and suppressed several rebellions during his reign. Mobutu established a patrimonial system of governance that relied heavily upon exploitation of Congo’s valuable natural resources and financial assistance from Western backers. Mobutu and his networks badly mismanaged the economy, which, when combined with fluctuations in international prices for copper and other commodities, led to serious economic decline and a shift from industrial to artisanal exploitation of natural resources. International political and financial support for Mobutu virtually disappeared after the end of the Cold War, and Mobutu’s rule became more precarious. He simultaneously exploited and tried to contain internal conflicts (e.g. in eastern Congo’s Kivu provinces) and to exploit external conflicts (e.g. by supporting anti-Uganda and anti-Rwanda rebels), but without external support and significant resource revenues, he was unable to maintain his hold on power.

Mobutu’s decades of “destabilizing rule” (in the ironic words of then U.S. State Department official Susan Rice) came to an end in 1997 as a result of the first Congo war. Although many scholars describe the first Congo war as a “civil war” pitting a rebel group (AFDL) against the Zairian government, there is copious evidence that this was primarily an international war planned and waged by the Rwandan government. The start of the war was both a continuation of the Rwandan civil war on Congolese territory, and part of an internationally designed plan to topple Mobutu and install a new government in Zaire/Congo. In strict political science jargon, the start of the war had two main elements: an extra-systemic war (Rwanda against the génocidaires) and an inter-state war (Rwanda and others against Zaire). Once the war started, it incorporated other conflicts, with Uganda fighting against two rebel groups along the Congo border, and Angola eventually intervening in part to fight against UNITA rebels. Burundi also briefly entered Congo to fight against rebels. Uganda and Rwanda created the AFDL rebel group, which was nominally the “rebel army” leading the war, but as the war progressed,
the “internal” conflict between AFDL forces and the Zairian government became more pronounced.

The complex mixture of conflicts that played out in 1996 and 1997 on the territory of the Congo was not a civil war, as some have stated, or a strictly international war, but a combination of internal and international conflicts. This is why I have chosen to use the term, “polywar.” The term, which describes two or more conflicts that overlap, intersect, or merge in time and space, is also applicable to other wars of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. In polywar, the relative importance and scale of the intertwined conflicts may vary, but the concept captures the fact that the initiation or escalation of one conflict influences—and is influenced by—apparently separate conflicts in the same country or adjacent territories. In the case of the Congo, the first Congo war included conflicts that were international (involving a crossing of borders), national (Congolese rebel groups fighting against their own government), and local (Congolese groups fighting each other for control of territory or power). The first Congo war was a polywar in which international conflicts were dominant, with strictly internal conflicts being of less importance for both the onset and duration of the war. On this basis, I oppose the use of the term “civil war” to describe what has gone on in Congo during this period.

The important political interests at the heart of the first Congo war have obscured the significant economic dimension. A complex web of local, regional, and international interests in Congo’s natural resources— including minerals and land—emerged during the war and became more evident in the interbellum period during the second half of 1996 and the first half of 1997. At the same time, foreign governments—particularly Uganda—sought to take advantage of regime change in Congo to increase their access to eastern Congo’s commercial markets and natural resources. However, the new Congolese government, headed by Laurent Kabila, thwarted these interests, contributing to the deterioration of relations between Congo and Rwanda and Uganda, which led to the resumption of war in August 1998.

The second Congo war (1998-2003) was also a polywar. Like the first war, the second war started as an international conflict and developed into a war with entangled international-internal dimensions. As I show in chapter 3, copious evidence implicates the Rwandan government—and to a lesser extent the Ugandan government—in starting the war, with a rebel coalition emerging only after the war had started. From the start, economic interests figured prominently in the war, including local, regional, and international interests in exploiting natural resources and markets. Although international diplomatic efforts produced a series of peace negotiations, the polywar made it extremely complicated to resolve. Further complicating peace efforts was the strong support accorded by the United States and other major Western powers to the governments of Rwanda and Uganda during the latters’ occupation of large parts of Congo.

During the second polywar, several “wars within the war” developed. These were connected to local dynamics and conflicts and also involved Rwandan and/or Ugandan armies and Congolese armed groups. In this dissertation, I focus on the start and evolution of one of these wars—the war in the Ituri district of Orientale province—while
recognizing that other local wars took place in the Kivu provinces. The war in Ituri started nearly a year into the second Congo war, but developed rapidly due to various dynamics, including ethnic mobilizations, Congolese and Ugandan interests in natural resources, and the failure of the government to address and contain the conflict.

The war in Ituri demonstrates how polywars can give birth to new wars, which exacerbate other existing conflicts and complicate conflict resolution. War in Ituri started in 1999, escalated after the second Congo war ended in 2003, and did not itself terminate until 2007. What started as small-scale fighting at a few agricultural concessions in one corner of Ituri expanded to cover nearly the entire Ituri District, and involved military engagement by a European Union force, the United Nations’ forces in Congo, and the Congolese national army. Complicating the resolution of war in Ituri was the involvement of the Ugandan government, which continued after 2003 to support certain Congolese rebel groups as a means of maintaining the commercial interests of Ugandan President Museveni’s network. International pressure on the Ugandan government to end its involvement in Ituri was belated and inconsistent. As a result, Uganda continued through 2005 to sponsor war in Congo with impunity.

The polywar concept clearly describes a basic fact of war in Congo since 1996, that various local, national, and international conflicts have taken place on the territory of the Congo. Although some scholars tend to simplify the wars in Congo by applying the label of “civil war,” they do so at the expense of clarity, and thereby obscure a clear understanding of why the wars have persisted and been so costly in social and environmental terms.

**Objectives**

This dissertation has three main objectives that fill gaps in research on the connections between natural resources and war, and on the causes and effects of war in Congo and Ituri.

First, through a thick description of war in Congo and Ituri, I analyze how various individuals and groups used natural resources to initiate and sustain war. I aim to “rethink the resource curse,” as the title of my dissertation suggests, by challenging the notion that a territory well endowed with natural resources is automatically susceptible to civil war. I focus on two resources – gold and land – that are important for understanding war in Ituri. I argue the assumptions inherent in the “resource curse” argument are conceptually flawed on several accounts, including confusion over the concepts of civil war and natural resources, as well as a narrow focus on national dynamics that ignores the regional dimensions of conflict. I evaluate the potential for internal and international actors to utilize natural resources to cause or sustain war through a consideration of six variables: resource location, market location, commercial value of the resource, symbolic value of the resource, mode of production, and international acquiescence.

Second, I introduce the concept of polywar, which I argue helps to explain the complex wars in Congo, and which can be applied to complex wars with internal and international conflict dimensions in other countries and regions. In a recent book about war in Congo,
Jason Stearns wrote: “The conflict is a conceptual mess that eludes simple definition, with many interlocking narrative strands” (Stearns 2011, 5). During my literature reviews and field work, I sometimes became lost in this mess, bound by these various narrative strands, trying to understand how and why conflict in one part of Congo caused or interacted with different conflicts in other parts of Congo and neighboring countries. In 2006, debate about war in Iraq – had it become a civil war, or was it still an international war? – helped me to think about war in Congo in a new way. I argue that war in Congo was not one war but a series of overlapping conflicts taking place simultaneously in the same geographic region. A polywar may attract pre-existing conflicts (e.g., al Qaeda came to Iraq to battle American forces after the U.S. invasion) and facilitate the onset of new wars (e.g., the start of the war in Ituri during the second Congo war). I argue war in Congo is best understood as a mix of internal and international conflicts, and assert that the war in Ituri was both its own polywar and one war within the larger polywar that engulfed all of Congo.

Third, I tell the story of war in Congo’s Ituri district. In order to relate this story, I also explain the broader causes of Congo’s wars. In the chapters that follow, I place war in Ituri within its proper historical context, and analyze how local, national, regional, and international actors and processes contributed to the onset, duration, and termination of war. Building upon other recent accounts of war in Congo (cf. Prunier 2009; Reyntjens 2009; Autesserre 2010; Stearns 2011), I trace the processes and evaluate the conditions that caused and sustained Ituri’s war. I argue that outside agents (both Congolese and foreign forces) brought war to Ituri, first in 1996 and then again in 1998, but that the importation of war created conditions that enabled the 1999 onset of a “war within the war” in Ituri. War in Ituri was both independent of and intimately tied to the other wars taking place in Congo.

Road Map

Chapter one, “Theorizing War and Natural Resources,” lays out the theoretical frameworks through which I analyze war in Ituri. I survey various classifications of war and introduce the concept of polywar to explain the complex series of overlapping and intersecting conflicts in Congo. I also assess theoretical frameworks for understanding the relationships between war, natural resources, ethnicity and international assistance. My analysis incorporates theoretical insights from political ecology, political economy, and international relations.

The second chapter, “Historical Roots of Congo’s Polywar,” describes and analyzes the history of the Congo with a focus on the history of northeast Congo’s Ituri district. The time frame covers the pre-colonial era through the start of the first Congo war in October 1996. I focus on the major events and processes that shaped the contemporary political economy of Congo and the Ituri District, which provide a context for interpreting the subsequent chapters. I argue that in order to understand contemporary conflict in Congo and Ituri, it is necessary to understand what happened in the past. Specifically, I highlight how colonial authorities organized territory and people in Ituri in ways that created inequality and conflict among Ituri’s ethnic groups. This colonial legacy continued
during the post-independence era, and became an important element in 1999, when the war within the war started in Ituri.

The third chapter, “The Start of Congo’s Polywar,” charts the proximate events and processes that led to the start of the first Congo war, and describes the conduct of a war that planted the seeds of persistent strife and misery. In this chapter, I make three arguments. First, I argue that the first Congo war was not a civil war, as many have described it, but a polywar of international and internal conflicts that played out in Congo (then called Zaire). Second, I argue that the reasons for the first Congo polywar were both political and economic, but that the Rwandan government’s security concerns and the Ugandan government’s desire for regional hegemony were most important in the decision by Rwanda and Uganda to start the war. Third, I argue that international and internal interests in Congo’s natural resources emerged during the first war, creating competition for access to those resources during the post-war period that contributed to the start of the second war.

The fourth chapter, “Golden Dreams, Golden Realities,” covers the interbellum and second Congo war, with a focus on Ituri. I highlight important events and processes that contributed to the onset and duration of the war, especially how gold fit into the political economy of war in Ituri. I argue that the Rwandan government started the second war, but that the Ugandan government immediately entered the war on Rwanda’s side in order to take control of gold mines in Ituri and other parts of eastern Congo, and to enable Ugandan businessmen and military officers to profit from the production and trade of gold. That is, Rwanda’s invasion of Congo was a strong pull on the Museveni regime, but Ugandan interests in gold constituted a discernable push. Further, the speed with which the Ugandan army seized the important Kilo and Moto goldfields in northeastern Congo and established trade networks with Congolese businessmen/rebels demonstrates that the Ugandan government entered the war with the intention to acquire gold. Thus, specific international interests in Congo’s gold were more important than the local interests of Congolese rebel groups for understanding how and why war came to Ituri. This helps make my third point, which is that the second Congo war was not a civil war, as some conflict theorists assert, but a polywar: a mélange of international and internal conflicts, in which the international conflicts were most important in determining the onset and duration of war. The classification of this war as a civil war is thus highly questionable and problematic, particularly in regard to how its classification has affected comprehension of war in Congo and arguments about the “resource curse.”

The fifth chapter, “What Caused the War in Ituri? A Reassessment of Received Wisdom,” analyzes the events in early 1999 that led to the outbreak of the Ituri district’s war. I argue there is no one, simple cause of the war in Ituri. I first review the five major theories about the start of war in Ituri that appear in academic and policy literature. I then provide a new description and assessment of the events that produced violence in June 1999, and analyze how this violence escalated during the remainder of the year and calcified into a conflict that lasted until 2007. Central to my discussion is an analysis of how local struggles for political and economic power incorporated land in ways that produced violence. Myriad factors were important, including historical memory, politics,
identity, perception, financial interests, and governance (or lack thereof). The start of the war in Ituri was rooted in local histories and triggered by a series of events tied to power struggles among local elites. The context in which the war in Ituri started also affected how a few small incidents in Walendu Pitsi escalated into a major war. The story of the origins of the war in Ituri shows how social histories and political and economic agendas can interact with land disputes and poor governance to produce armed conflict. This chapter also demonstrates that polywars not only incorporate pre-existing conflicts, but can also give birth to new wars.

The sixth chapter, “Guns and Butter: Uganda and Ituri, 2003-2009”, reviews events and processes in Ituri between 2003 and 2009. The period 2003-2009 in Ituri is a case study in how and why an extremely violent and multifaceted conflict can shift into a fragile post-conflict phase. I examine political, military, and economic dynamics during this period through a focus on the actions of Ituri rebel groups, the Ugandan government, and the United Nations force in Congo. I argue the United Nations played the key role in helping Ituri transition from war to peace through robust (albeit delayed) military action combined with sustained political engagement with local groups and the Ugandan government. I further argue Uganda played a major role in sustaining conflict in Ituri, and only shifted its policy of support for Ituri’s armed groups when UN operations succeeded and it became clear peace would be better than war for Uganda’s commercial interests in Ituri. Finally, I demonstrate the war in Ituri was not a simple civil war, but a polywar of internal conflicts that were both sustained by and terminated by the actions of international actors.

The conclusion, “Rethinking the Resource Curse”, ties together the themes and lessons that emerge from the study of war in Congo and Ituri. I utilize the framework for analyzing the connections between resources and war proposed in chapter two to analyze the connections between war in Ituri and the resources of gold and land. I also propose directions for future research on war in Ituri, polywar, and the connections between natural resources and war.
Source: OCHA, DRC.
Map 2. The Ituri District, DRC.

Source: MONUC.
Chapter 1. Theorizing War and Natural Resources

War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC or Congo) is often cited as an example of the “resource curse” (Global Witness 2005, 8; Lujala et al 2005; HRW 2005; Enough 2009; cf. Ross 2004a). This theory builds upon the notion of “Dutch Disease”, which posits that countries with an abundance of exportable natural resources experience less economic innovation and slower economic growth than countries less dependent on resource exports (Sachs and Warner 2001; de Soysa 2000, 120-122). Other studies link resource abundance with high levels of corruption and poor governance (Karl 1997; LeBillon 2005, 12). In this dissertation, I focus on another aspect of resource curse theory: the notion that countries with an abundance of exportable natural resources are at greater risk of civil war, started by rebels who seek to take over the government or secede (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; cf. Ross 2004).

On the surface, the resource curse theory might seem to explain war between 1996 and 2007 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Congo has abundant, valuable resources, including gold, which had been exploited first by Belgian colonialists working closely with international corporate interests, and then by Congo’s long-time dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, also in cooperation with international companies. Particularly under Mobutu’s rule (1965-1997), the Congo experienced economic decline and poor governance, which contributed to several conflicts in eastern Congo over land and identity (Vlassenroot 2002, 507-508; Reyntjens 2009, 10-15; cf. Malengana 2000). After war started in 1996 in eastern Congo, the leader of the rebel coalition, Laurent Désiré Kabila, sold mineral rights (Stearns 2011, 287-288; cf. DRC 2007; DRC 2007a) and shared mineral wealth with the foreign governments that backed him (Le Potentiel 1997; Mwenda 1997).

However, I argue that the resource curse ultimately fails to explain the different ways in which internal and international interests in Congo’s resources influenced the onset and duration of war. Whereas resource curse theory posits that rebel groups start war in order to gain access to resource wealth (Collier and Hoeffler 1998), I argue the first and second Congo wars were started by foreign governments, mainly Rwanda and Uganda, who then created rebel groups to mask what were primarily interstate wars. Moreover, I assert the connections between natural resources and war in Congo varied across space and time. While economic interests were less important than political and security considerations in the start of the first Congo war, the economic agendas of the Ugandan and Rwandan governments more heavily influenced the onset and duration of the second Congo war, and in the continuation of war after 2003. During and after the second Congo war, internal and international interests in minerals produced by artisanal methods (such as gold, diamonds, and coltan), and therefore able to be produced by labor without significant inputs of capital, sustained the numerous conflicts taking place.

The case of war in northeast Congo’s Ituri district further demonstrates the complex relationships between natural resources and war. The Rwandan-led rebel force brought war to Ituri in 1996; i.e. rebel groups in Ituri did not start war to acquire wealth from
Ituri’s gold mines or land. Similarly, Ugandan interests in Ituri’s gold more heavily influenced the start of the second Congo war than any internal rebel interest. The Ugandan government occupied Ituri for nearly five years, during which time a “war within the war” started when a few minor land disputes escalated to produce widespread, ethnically targeted violence. The Ugandan government was able to occupy and plunder Ituri, and later to act as a spoiler to the peace process, in large part due to strong, consistent political and economic support from the United States and other foreign governments and institutions.

This chapter provides theoretical frameworks that help to analyze the resource curse and explain the onset and duration of war in Ituri. Overall, I seek to understand how and why different actors and different resources influenced the onset and duration of war in Ituri. In this chapter, I first describe the political ecology approach that informs my analysis. I evaluate types of armed conflict, and assess the connections between war and natural resources, ethnicity, and international assistance. I conclude with a summary of salient points.

**POLITICAL ECOLOGY**

Political ecology is an evolving field of study connecting politics, economics, and the environment. It examines how politics and economics affect and are affected by environmental issues at a variety of levels (e.g. household, village, national, international) and across time. A central theme in political ecology is that environmental issues cannot be understood in isolation from the political and economic contexts in which they are created (Bryant and Bailey 1997, 28).

In its early incarnation in the 1970s and 1980s, political ecology examined “questions of access and control over resources and how this related to degradation and prospects for sustainable alternatives” (Watts and Peet 2004, 6). This approach included place-based analyses of actual environmental effects (e.g. soil degradation, deforestation) and non-place-based analyses of the relations of production contributing to or causing those effects (Blaikie 1985, 5). Escobar describes early political ecology as the “infusion of cultural and human ecology with considerations of political economy” (Escobar 1999, 2).

Scholarship broadly included within the political ecology framework challenged discourses, policies, and practices that tended to separate environmental and social changes from the historical, political, and economic contexts that produced them. The focus of early political ecology was on the causes and effects of “the Third World’s environmental crisis,” with particular attention to the impacts of colonialism, capitalism, and post-World War II development interventions (Bryant and Bailey 1997, 196).

Political ecology expanded in the 1990s to more explicitly focus on the political economies of development and natural resource management, with perhaps less explicit consideration of ecology. As described by Peter Walker, political ecology “increasingly turned attention to local-level studies of environmental movements, discursive and symbolic politics, and the institutional nexus of power, knowledge, and practice” (Walker 2005, 75). Paul Robbins described the four themes of contemporary political ecology as:
1) degradation and marginalization; 2) environmental conflict; 3) conservation and control; and 4) environmental identity and social movements (Robbins 2004, 14). Although most political literature to date has focused on land issues in South America, Africa, and parts of Asia, scholars have called for future research to examine other issues, including: air and water issues; urban issues; the organizational attributes of actors; environmental health; global issues (Bryant 1998, 86); protected areas; geospatial technologies and knowledges (Zimmerer and Bassett 2004); changing conceptions of “ecology”; the plurality of perceptions and definitions; and civil society growth and consideration of local knowledges (Watts and Peet 2004, 15).

Political ecology has helped to illuminate the complex and dynamic relationship between humans and the environment. It has directly confronted discourses about environmental change that place sole responsibility for degradation or destruction of natural resources on people living in poverty (Blaikie 1985, 4-5). It has charted the “repertoires of control” by hegemonic forces (within households, communities, states, corporations, and multilateral institutions) and the “repertoires of resistance” to those hegemonic forces (cf. Watts and Peet 2004, 22; Peluso 1992). Political ecology has exposed the political and economic forces behind the production of knowledge about the environment, as well as how this knowledge is used in ways that exploit the environment and harm local livelihoods (Goldman 2005). It has also demonstrated the social constructedness of nature and shown that “what we perceive as natural is also cultural and social” (Escobar et al 1999, 2).

The significance of political ecology to a study of war in Congo lies in its focus on the causes and consequences of environmental change across space and time. There is a wide range of scholarship described as political ecology, but in general political ecology identifies the actors and explains the processes that are the ultimate causes of environmental change, while also considering how environmental change in turn produces social, political, and economic changes. Political ecology places environmental change in an historical, political, and economic context, thereby leading to greater understanding of environmental issues and possible ways to address them. Political ecology also pays attention to how problems are defined, by whom they are defined, how and by whom solutions are developed, and who benefits from the proposed solutions. It exposes the unequal power relations among different actors and evaluates how those unequal relations produce different social, political, economic, and environmental outcomes.

WHAT IS WAR?
In order to evaluate the connections between natural resources and war, it is necessary to clearly define what is meant by the terms “war” and “armed conflict”, which I use interchangeably. In its simplest form, without adjectives to describe intent or geographic reach, war is large-scale organized violence between two or more groups of people (cf. LeBillon 2001, 562, n. 1). In this section, I explore concepts of violence and war, and differentiate different types of war. I also introduce the concept of polywar, which provides the framework through which I will analyze war in Ituri.
Violence
Violence is a part every human society, and part of our collective history, but interpersonal violence is much more common than war. Indeed, although war necessarily implies violence, violence does not necessarily imply war. Violence takes place in many forms, for many reasons, every day in every society, but most societies do not experience war, even if they are not fully at peace.¹

Some philosophers and other scholars posit that war is simply part of the human condition. This concept is rooted in Hobbesian notions of competition, anarchy, and perceptions of the inherently violent aspect of human nature (Cramer 2006, 42; Waltz 1988, 43). According to this line of thought, war is simply interpersonal competition writ large. As stated by Carl Von Clausewitz: “War is nothing but a duel on an extensive scale…[It] is an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfill our will” (Von Clausewitz 1982 (1832), 101). Historians Will and Ariel Durant similarly asserted: “The causes of war are the same as the causes of competition among individuals: acquisitiveness, pugnacity, and pride; the desire for food, land, materials, fuels, mastery. The state has our instincts without our restraints” (Durant 1968, 81).

The notions that humans are inherently violent, and that war is therefore an unpleasant but predictable part of our world, are truth claims enmeshed in discourses about power and politics. Indeed, in the same way that Hobbes’ dark depictions of the state of nature provided a convenient justification for absolute monarchial sovereignty (Cramer 2006, 42), realist theories rooted in cynical views of human nature have justified large military expenditures and nuclear weapons as necessary to secure peace during the Cold War (cf. Waltz 1988). People in positions of power – be it political, economic, or intellectual – may therefore employ narratives about the immutably violent nature of humans to justify actions and processes disproportionate to or disconnected from any valid threat. Global theories about war based on humans’ presumed violent nature are normative, feeding into socially constructed identities and beliefs, and supporting the efforts of power elites to forge docile subjects (cf. Peluso and Watts 2001, 6; Nordstrom 2004, 234). In this sense, such global explanations of violence and war are also reductionist, universalistic, coercive, and even totalitarian (cf. Peet 1999, 32).

Aside from explaining away war and violence, theories based on presumed notions about human nature ignore the numerous categories of violence² used by political and economic actors to acquire or retain power. There is a difference between direct violence, such as the murder that accompanies war, and structural violence, which is characterized by systematic oppression that reduces quality and length of life. In distinguishing between direct and structural violence, Johan Galtung contrasts “violence that kills slowly and

¹ For 2009, there were 36 armed conflicts active in 27 locations worldwide (Harbom and Wallensteen 2010, 501).
² Zimmerman (1983, 13) identifies: violence against persons v. violence against nonhuman objects; direct v. indirect violence; physical v. psychological violence; individual v. collective violence; organized v. spontaneous violence; criminal v. political violence; personal v. structural violence; legal v. illegal violence and legitimate v. illegitimate violence; and institutionalized v. non-institutionalized violence.
violence that kills quickly, violence that is anonymous and violence that has an author” (Galtung and Höivic 1971, 73). Paul Farmer defines structural violence as “violence exerted systematically—that is, indirectly—by everyone who belongs to a certain social order” (Farmer 2004, 307). Both forms of violence can and do exist in times of peace and war. In an armed conflict, the direct violence of combat may cause or be the cause of a structural violence of inequality, indignity, and injustice (Cf. Ho-Won Jeong 2000, 20-22).

Nancy Peluso and Michael Watts similarly place violence within a broad spectrum of “physical, symbolic, cultural, and emotional” harms to humans. For Peluso and Watts, violence includes war, sporadic unorganized violence, and “the reproduction of memories, rhetorics, and experiences of physical and symbolic violence.” The perpetrators can be states or other institutions that use coercion, terror, and other forms of direct violence to cause both physical harm and psychosocial impacts (Peluso and Watts 2001, 26-27).

**Linking violence and war**

While violence is part of war, it is not restricted to war. Thinking broadly about violence, rather than just about “the deliberate infliction of harm on people” (Kalyvas 2006, 19), creates an opportunity to analyze how different forms of violence contribute to the onset, intensity, and duration of war. Aside from killing, the violence inherent in structures of political and economic exclusion and in the production and reproduction of memories of violence are key to providing a holistic view of war, including war in Ituri.

The stripped-down definition of war given above – large-scale organized violence between groups – neglects an element commonly identified as being an essential part of war: political intentions. In a common articulation of the definition of war, Stewart and Fitzgerald state war is “systematic physical violence and killing conducted for political purposes—that is, to gain or sustain political power” (Stewart and Fitzgerald 2001, 3). Levy similarly defines war as large-scale organized violence between political units (Levy 1998, 141). The view of war as a process of political violence (i.e. violence with political intentions) that takes place between various actors within a political system includes actions taken by rebels against the state and actions taken by the state against its citizens (Zimmerman 1983, 9); however, it also covers actions taken by citizens against each other when there is a political connection or implication. The inclusion of the “political” seeks to differentiate war from interpersonal conflict or simple criminal activity by suggesting that the fighting forces and the violence they perpetrate are organized by political structures such as a government or non-state armed group.

The conception of violence between political units with political intentions (even if they also pursue economic agendas) forms the basis for the system of classification of war that has become popular in recent decades. In the post-Cold War era, debates about war have generally accepted that there are essentially two types of wars: wars between states (interstate wars), and wars within states (civil wars). Scholars and analysts have sought to predict and explain contemporary conflicts by classifying many wars as civil wars, defined as wars between a rebel group and a government (Newman 2004; Kalyvas 2006,
The notion that civil war has become the dominant form of warfare in the post-Cold War era has been bolstered by the widespread use of conflict lists by scholars engaged in econometric analyses (cf. Fearon and Laitin 2003, 75; Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 563; Blattman and Miguel 2009; Cramer 2006, 1-3, 61-86).

The Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) and Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), both in Norway, individually and jointly generate the most influential and widely used lists of conflicts. Overall, UCDP defines an armed conflict as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government or territory or both, where the use of armed force by two parties (one of which must be a government) results in at least 25 battle deaths in a year” (Harbom and Wallensteen 2010, 508). A “minor armed conflict” has between 25 and 1,000 battle deaths a year, while a “war” has more than 1,000 battle deaths in a year (Harbom and Wallensteen 2010, 508).

Starting with this general definition, UCDP scholars classify four types of war on the basis of location and principal actors (Harbom and Wallensteen 2010, 508; cf. UCDP and PRIO 2008, 7):

1. **Extrastystemic war** occurs between a state and a non-state group outside its own territory.
2. **Interstate war** occurs between two or more states.
3. **Internal war** (or civil war) occurs between a government and one or more internal opposition groups without external involvement.
4. **Internationalized internal armed conflict** occurs between a government and one or more internal opposition groups with intervention from other states in the form of troops.

Within these four categories, three types of conflict started as civil wars: internal, extrastystemic, and internationalized internal conflicts. The definitions account for the fact that some civil wars become international through either a shift in fighting to another country (extrastystemic conflict), or the intervention of troops from a neighboring country (internationalized internal conflict). Thus, the list above identifies one strictly civil war and three international wars, two of which started as civil wars.

There are two important distinctions between internal and international wars in these four classifications. The first distinction is geographic: an internal conflict necessarily starts within one country, while an international war involves two or more countries, even if the fighting takes place in only one country. In a strictly internal conflict (civil war), all forces and fighting originate from and are contained within one country, while in an international conflict (extrastystemic, interstate, internationalized internal conflict) fighting involves the crossing of an international border and/or the involvement of armed forces from two or more countries. The UCDP-PRIO definitions are therefore claims about the national origins of the groups starting the war, the relative importance of the actors in starting the war, and the location of the fighting.

The second difference between internal and international conflicts, as defined by UCDP and PRIO, is agency. For a civil war, either a government or an internal opposition group starts the war. Similarly, in an internationalized internal armed conflict, the internal
conflict necessarily started first and the international involvement came later; i.e. a pre-existing internal conflict became internationalized. An extrasystemic conflict necessarily started as an internal conflict – started by a government or rebel group from one country – and became internationalized when the fighting moved to one or more other countries. In an interstate conflict, a government necessarily started the war, according to UCDP/PRIO guidelines.

The UCDP/PRIO definitions are useful conceptually, but have several problems. First, the four types of war fail to account for violence between non-state groups, either within one country or across borders. Second, there is no accounting for a situation in which a non-state group gets involved in a civil war in a neighboring country; this is excluded from UCDP’s definition of an internationalized armed conflict. Third, there is no accounting for the occurrence of “wars within wars”, or the co-existence of two or more types of conflict within the same country at the same time (discussed further below). A fourth problem relates to the application of these definitions, and more specifically, the misapplication of the term “civil war” to describe conflicts that are international. For example, UCDP and PRIO group a wide range of conflicts under the banner of “civil war”, ranging from the (Soviet) war in Afghanistan to the United States government’s “War on Terror” against Al Qaeda (PRIO 2006, 15, 59).

The wide use of the term “civil war” to describe a range of modern conflicts appears to be directly related to the popularity of conflict lists and the quantitative studies that use them (cf. Kalyvas 2006, 16). There have been several efforts to create detailed definitions of civil war, stemming from the classification developed by James Fearon and David Laitin (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 76; cf. Sambanis 2004, 829-830):

1. They involved fighting between agents of (or claimants to) a state and organized, nonstate groups who sought either to take control of a government, to take power in a region, or to use violence to change government policies.
2. The conflict killed at least 1,000 over its course, with a yearly average of at least 100.
3. At least 100 were killed on both sides (including civilians attacked by rebels). The last condition is intended to rule out massacres where there is no organized or effective opposition.

Fearon and Laitin used additional criteria, such as a requirement that 100 people be killed in the first year of the war. They also code as civil wars conflicts that involve foreign troops, as long as the other requirements are met (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 76, n. 4); in this sense the Fearon and Laitin definition covers the UCDP/PRIO categories of civil war and internationalized internal armed conflict. By coding as civil wars conflicts in which foreign involvement may be responsible for the creation of rebel groups, rather than a result of rebel group formation – such as the first and second Congo wars – Fearon and Laitin may conflate cause with effect.

Stathis Kalyvas has made an important contribution to the study of violence and war, although his definition of civil war is problematic. Kalyvas distinguishes several forms of “mass political violence” depending on the number of actors and their intent to govern the population they target with violence (Kalyvas 2006, 28-31). Three forms of mass
political violence are state terror (unilaterally produced, intent to govern), genocide and mass deportation (unilaterally produced, no intent to govern), and reciprocal extermination (bilaterally or multilaterally produced, no intent to govern).

Kalyvas focuses his influential book *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* on the fourth category of mass political violence, which he calls civil war. He defines civil war as “armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities” (Kalyvas 2006, 5). Kalyvas states civil war is a condition when two or more actors perpetrate violence against a population they intend to govern.

Without explicitly acknowledging it, Kalyvas’ definition covers four very different types of conflicts, which may be either primarily internal or mainly international in nature. The most straightforward interpretation of his definition is consistent with the traditional definition of civil war; i.e. a war between a rebel group and a government within the state that is home to both the rebels and the government. Kalyvas’ definition also includes inter-communal conflicts that do not involve government armies; there is no condition in his definition that one of the parties must be the “common authority” to which both parties are subject. Thus, two very different types of conflicts – rebel v. government, and rebel v. rebel – are included within Kalyvas’ definition of civil war, which may complicate efforts to understand the transition from conflict to violence to war.

Kalyvas’ definition also includes two types of international wars. It includes extraterritorial conflicts, in which a civil war (rebel v. state) that starts in one country migrates to a second (or third country). So long as both parties were subject to a common authority at the start, and as long as the combat takes place “within the boundaries of a sovereign entity,” it is covered by Kalyvas’ definition, even if the combat is taking place in a country different from the one where it started. This is the case of the current (as of mid-2011) war between the Ugandan army and the Ugandan-rebel group the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), which is taking place in Congo, Sudan, and the Central African Republic. The war started in one country but now takes place in three countries different from where it started; the UCDP/PRIO definition of this type of conflict as an extraterritorial conflict is more clear and more precise than calling it a civil war.

Moreover, his definition can also cover wars against occupying powers. In cases where a government army is occupying part or all of another country, whether because it invaded the other country (interstate war) or because it is aiding a rebel group in another country (internationalized internal armed conflict), that government army becomes the “sovereign entity” against which non-state groups may fight (cf. ICJ 2005, § 172-180). Therefore, if an occupying power starts a war against a particular community or group, or if a group forms to resist the occupying power, that would be considered a civil war under Kalyvas’ definition. This last case – occupying power v. rebel – is evident in the cases Kalyvas cites in his book; e.g. war in Napoleon-occupied Italy (4), resistance to U.S. occupation of the Philippines (101), and resistance to U.S. occupation in Iraq (133).
While using a term that commonly suggests a strictly or predominantly internal war, Kalyvas subtly constructed a definition that is broad enough to apply to conflict within one “sovereign entity” that has a significant or even dominant international character. His definition includes four fundamentally different types of conflict: rebel v. government in the country where the war started; rebel v. rebel in the country where the war started; rebel v. government in a country different from where the war started; and rebel v. occupying power. The conceptual confusion inherent in Kalyvas’ definition supports my decision to use the UCDP/PRIO definitions of war, which enable greater attention to the subtle differences in the forms of contemporary conflicts.

Despite the problems with his definition of civil war, Kalyvas’ study makes several contributions that inform this dissertation and help to explain war in Ituri. Kalyvas focuses on the roles of individuals as subjects rather than just objects of violence (Kalyvas 2006, 390):

[1] It is incorrect to explain the behavior of individuals by reference only to the actions of elites or vague “groups.” The relation between individuals and elites is variable in time and space. It follows that theories of civil war must incorporate a multilevel analysis, simultaneously accounting for the interaction between rival elites, between elites and the population, and among individuals (Kalyvas 2006, 391).

Indeed, the tendency to attribute violence to entire ethnic groups or nations (e.g. Hutus in the Rwandan genocide, Germans in World War II) may obscure how individuals among both elites and the grassroots use violence to pursue individual and collective goals during the course of a war.

Kalyvas also highlights the importance of multi-level analysis in understanding how different types of conflicts may produce different forms and intensities of violence. More specifically, Kalyvas notes that civil war “often transforms local and personal grievances into lethal violence; once it occurs, this violence becomes endowed with a political meaning that may be quickly naturalized into new and enduring identities” (Kalyvas 2006, 389). Flowing from this observation is a second one on the transformative nature of war: “The advent of war transforms individual preferences, choices, behavior, and identities – and the main way in which civil war exercises its transformative function is through violence” (Kalyvas 2006, 389).

Although not explicitly acknowledged by Kalyvas, his observations about the transformative effects of war on individuals also apply to the transformative nature of war on itself. That is, the nature of violence can transform the very type and form of war by spurring the creation of new conflicts, alliances, cleavages, and rebel groups. One historical example of this effect is the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648). This war was “a complicated event, part civil war and part international war…divided into phases fought by different belligerents, each element having its own causes” (Gutman 1988, 180). The Thirty Years’ War could be described “as not one but three wars, with six or more principal parties” (Parker 1997, 138; Gutman 1988, 181). The individual conflicts took

\footnote{The parties included France, Spain, Netherlands, Prussia/Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and Poland. Other parties included Russia, England, Savoy, Transylvania, and the Papacy.}
place during a thirty-year time frame over a contiguous area, involving numerous parties who fought in alliances that changed over time.

The phenomenon of transformative conflicts in the same geographic area is also evident among post-Cold War conflicts. The wars of the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia “were both civil wars within a disintegrating Yugoslavia and interstate wars between Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia” (Levy 2007, 19). The U.S. war in Afghanistan began as both an interstate war and an internationalized internal armed conflict but has transformed into a series of internal and international conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan involving numerous state and non-state actors (Their 2006, 494-495; ICG 2006, 8-13; Levy 2007, 33). The U.S. war in Iraq began as an interstate conflict but morphed into a complex set of conflicts including conflicts among Iraqi non-state armed groups and internationalized internal armed conflicts.4

The phenomenon I am describing is similar in some respects to the concept of “regional conflict complexes,” defined as “transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other throughout a region, making for more protracted and obdurate conflicts” (Pugh and Cooper 2004, 24-25). According to Pugh and Cooper, these complexes originate with civil wars:

The eruption of initially localized hostilities can generate sub-state movements and territorial claims that are fueled transnationally, sustained by the proceeds of regional trade, interconnected with other regional conflicts, or as in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), directly spill over into neighboring states and embroil regional actors (Pugh and Cooper 2004, 25). Several conditions may give rise to regional conflict complexes, including: a prevailing economic order that permits conflict trade; economic marginalization of border areas from formal state economies; absence of functioning regional security organizations; and economic dynamics that sustain the regionalization of the conflict such as shadow economies and predation (Pugh and Cooper 2004, 36-38).

While the idea of regional conflict complexes helps to put modern conflicts in perspective, it lacks conceptual clarity. For example, by limiting this concept to conflict complexes started as a result of strictly internal wars, it ignores how interstate wars may initiate such complexes, as in the case of the first and second wars in Congo. It also fails to explicitly acknowledge the geopolitics by talking only about the presence (or absence) of regional security organizations without acknowledging the roles of major world powers in providing political and economic support to belligerents (discussed below), the role of corporate interests in sustaining war, or the manner in which the United Nations either sustains or prevents development of regional conflict complexes.

Building upon concepts of the transformative nature of conflicts and the existence of regional conflict complexes, I introduce the concept of polywar. Polywar describes a situation in which two or more armed conflicts intersect and overlap in time, space, and actors. The defining feature is that multiple conflicts occur simultaneously or

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4 By 2006 there was a lively debate over whether the war in Iraq had become a civil war; see, e.g. Krauthammer 2006.
sequentially to produce a larger war—a polywar—within one or more contiguous countries. The concept of polywar describes the confluence of individual armed conflicts that have their own origins, actors, and purposes. Polywar does not refer to a solitary conflict (e.g. a civil war) that attracts additional internal or external actors after it has started; rather, the polywar concept describes a situation in which one or more conflicts generates or merges with an additional one or more conflicts to create a larger conflagration. These wars may happen between non-state armed groups and the state, between states, and between non-state armed groups. They may start as strictly internal conflicts, interstate conflicts, or some combination of internal and international wars.

The polywar concept has several implications for theory and policy. Polywars include multiple conflicts that may be internal and international, so analyzing them requires an understanding of social histories and political economies at the local, national, and regional/international levels. Polywars may be particularly difficult to resolve due to the number of parties and their respective political and economic interests. Conflict mediators need to identify the type of conflict and the nature of the issues involved in order to design conflict mediation strategies (Bercovitch and Houston 2000, 177-179); in polywars this may require recognizing and understanding multiple conflicts and the interests of all combat and supporting actors. Understanding polywars also compels analysis of power relations within a country, as well as power relations between countries. In polywars, both internal and external actors may seek profit from the production and trade of valuable natural resources, in contrast to popular conceptions of the “resource curse” that look narrowly at the internal dimensions of states experiencing conflict and the “greed” of rebel groups (Collier 2000; Collier et al 2007). Polywars require multi-scalar and multidimensional analysis in order to design effective conflict prevention and conflict resolution policies.

**Summary**

The strengths and the shortcomings of conceptions of violence and war provide a basis for constructing an analytical framework that will inform my analysis of war in Ituri. Building upon the concepts of Galtung, Peluso and Watts, Kalyvas and others, I argue that direct and structural violence can be causes of war, but also be transformed once a war begins in ways that can both enable and prevent conflict resolution. The case of the war in Ituri – in which direct and structural violence were factors in both the onset and duration of conflict – provides an excellent example of this concept.

As discussed above, there are numerous definitions of war that are either conceptually confused or are misapplied to cover numerous forms of conflict within the category of civil war. In this dissertation, I use the definitions of the four types of conflict used by UCDP and PRIO because of the way in which they both capture the geographic location of a conflict and define the primary actors that started the war. In the case of war in Congo, all four types of conflict took place within Congolese territory at the same time: civil war, inter-state war, internationalized internal armed conflict, and extrasystemic war. However, I made clarification to the UCDP/PRIO definitions: internationalized internal armed conflicts can include non-state armed groups from neighboring countries, and inter-communal violence by non-state armed groups can also constitute war.
Kalyvas’ emphasis on the importance of a multilevel analysis of violence and war provides an essential frame through which to analyze war in Congo, including war in Ituri. Kalyvas highlights the roles of individuals in causing violence and war, but communities, non-state armed groups, government armies, and corporations all merit attention for their roles in starting or sustaining war. In addition, the cases of war in Congo and Ituri highlight the importance of evaluating the geopolitics, or the roles played by powerful governments and institutions in supporting actors engaged in war. I argue that international political and financial assistance to the Ugandan government was an important factor that enabled Uganda to occupy and plunder Ituri.

Another important theme emanating from Kalyvas’ work is that the transformative effect of war on individuals and the violence they commit may also exert changes on the character of the war. For example, what starts as a civil war may morph into an internationalized internal conflict or multiple conflicts involving state and non-state actors. That is, the transformative nature of war may spawn new wars or spur the creation of wars within wars.

Finally, I argue that the case of war in Congo exemplifies a phenomenon I call polywar. A polywar is the coalescence of numerous interrelated but separate conflicts into a larger regional war. The very transformative effects of war create a situation in which numerous overlapping conflicts occur within the same geographic region. The examples described above of the Thirty Years War, 1990s wars in the former Yugoslavia, and U.S.-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are all examples of polywar. The concept of polywar allows me to utilize Kalyvas’ notions of multi-scaled, multi-leveled analysis of violence and war, and the roles of individual agency in causing violence and war, in arguing that war in Congo, and in particular in Ituri, was not a simple civil war, but a mix of local, national, and international wars.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND WAR
This section analyzes the connections between natural resources and war. Many conflict theorists use inadequate definitions of natural resources, which confuse rather than clarify efforts to identify the connections between resources and war. I evaluate theories about the relationships between natural resources and war, and provide my own framework for analyzing these connections in the context of war in Ituri.

Defining natural resources
The term “natural resources” seems self-explanatory, which is perhaps why so many studies of violence and war fail to define it. In his widely cited article on natural resources and armed conflict, Michael Ross simply lists examples of natural resources (“oil, gas, non-fuel minerals, gemstones, narcotics, timber, and agricultural products”) without defining the term (Ross 2004, 337). This important because it lacks precision, and simply refers to resources that acquire value through extraction and production by human labor. Moreover, he limits the term to parts of the natural environment that are cultivated, harvested, mined, and exploited; i.e. the products are produced by human
labor and transportable once extracted or produced. Other natural resources such as water, land, and air are excluded from Ross’s use of the term, even though these and countless other resources may have economic and symbolic value, or spark conflict and violence if people destroy, deface, pollute, poison, or deny people’s access to them. Ross even attributes agency to natural resources through his use of phrases such as: “The natural resources that cause these problems are…” and “Sometimes other types of resources are also at fault” (Ross 2003, 17). Through such casual use of language, Ross suggests that resources cause the problems associated with the so-called “resource curse”, including war, rather than the humans who seek to control and exploit these resources.

Many scholars have defined “natural resources” as primary commodities such as agricultural and mining products. The reason for this narrow conception appears to be that primary commodities can be measured, providing numbers for scholars who build theories by analyzing statistics. Perhaps the most famous proponent of the primary commodities definition is economist Paul Collier, who borrowed it from a study by Sachs and Warner (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 566). Collier and fellow Oxford economist Anke Hoeffler created a model of civil war onset (the Collier-Hoeffler model or CH model), which uses primary commodities per Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a proxy for natural resource abundance. The Collier-Hoeffler model is discussed further below, but its use of primary commodities to measure resource abundance merits further analysis.

The term “primary commodities” has a very specific, technical definition based on the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) system maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division. This system classifies commodities to facilitate the collection and analysis of trade statistics (UNSD 2006, v). The United Nations updated SITC (Revision 4) in 2008, but the Collier-Hoeffler model and many other quantitative studies are based on the earlier Revision 3 (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 573). Under SITC Revision 3, primary commodity exports covered “fuels” (category 3) and “non-fuels” (categories 0, 1, 2, 4 and 68).

Significantly, primary commodities include neither precious gems such as diamonds, which are listed under nonmetallic mineral manufactures (SITC 66), nor contraband narcotics, which are not coded. As discussed further below, the publications by Collier and Hoeffler repeatedly invoke diamonds and illicit drugs in their discussions of natural resources and primary commodities (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 565; Collier et al 2003, 62-63), yet the data they use in their model notably excludes these resources. This is important because Collier has explicitly claimed connections – “Diamonds are the guerilla’s best friend” (quoted in Fearon 2005, 484) – that are not supported by his analysis. Despite this major oversight, the Collier-Hoeffler model “has had a major impact on both public debate and social science research on contemporary civil wars” (Fearon 2005, 483).

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6 These SITC categories cover: food and live animals (SITC 0); beverages and tobacco (SITC 1); crude materials, inedible, except fuels (less groups 233, 244, 266, 267) (SITC 2); mineral fuels, lubricants, and related materials (SITC 3); animal and vegetable oils, fats, and waxes (SITC 4); and nonferrous metals (SITC 68); plus titanium oxides (item 522.56).
Some studies of “natural resources” differentiate between types of resources, without clearly defining the term. In his influential studies on “environmental scarcity” (discussed below), Thomas Homer-Dixon (1994, 1999) notably divides natural resources into renewable and non-renewable resources. Like Ross, Homer-Dixon does not offer a definition of the terms he uses, but, rather, lists examples of what he means: “Resources can be roughly divided into two groups: non-renewables, like oil and iron ore, and renewables, like fresh water, forests, fertile soils, and the earth’s ozone layer.”  

Indra de Soysa similarly gives examples of renewable and nonrenewable resources without providing a coherent definition: “[N]atural resources, defined as the stocks of both renewable resources—such as cropland, pasture, and forests—and non-renewables (all known mineral deposits)” (de Soysa 2000, 125). This division of renewable and non-renewable resources is useful for conceiving of the availability and regenerative capacity of resources, but it nonetheless lacks specificity.

Another definition places natural resources into the broader category of “environment.” Nancy Peluso and Michael Watts argue the connections between violence and the environment are myriad and diverse, going far beyond simple struggles for natural resources such as oil, gems, or drugs. Peluso and Watts conceive of resources as having unique biological and ecological properties and characteristics “aside from their strategic or economic value” (Peluso and Watts 2001, 26). They have a broad definition of environment that includes “uses and forms of extraction, conservation, and rehabilitation.” This definition highlights the importance of social forces in understanding how and why resources are used, and for whose benefit.

The World Bank defines natural resources as “the stock of natural capital” as the “entire environmental patrimony of a country.” Similarly, in this dissertation I define natural resources as the biotic and abiotic components of a given area. Biotic resources (organisms and their products) and abiotic resources (non-living objects) may have use for humans (social, political, economic) and ecosystems (i.e. in relation to other biotic and abiotic resources). Natural resources are not simply exportable, valuable products, but all elements of the natural environment, including land and water. A holistic view of nature challenges the utilitarian discourse used by “states” and scholars, which “replaces the term ‘nature’ with the term ‘natural resources,’ focusing on those aspects of nature that can be appropriated for human use” (Scott 1998, 13).

The war in Ituri shows that the symbolic and/or the economic values of resources are critical in initiating and complicating war. Natural resources can have important social and cultural values that defy quantification, commoditization, and export. Groups of people may resort to violence not only to procure wealth from valuable minerals and other resources, but also to defend or acquire territory that has symbolic importance. In addition, the case of war in Ituri shows that local struggles for political and economic

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7 “The latter category includes renewable ‘goods’ such as fisheries and timber, and renewable ‘services’ such as regional hydrological cycles and a benign climate” (Homer-Dixon 1994, 8; cf. Homer-Dixon 1999, 8-9).
8 Quoted in de Soysa 2000, 122.
power incorporate resources such as land or territory into narratives that justify violent acts against a perceived enemy. People may incite violence over both the commercial and/or symbolic importance of natural resources.

In the case of war in Ituri, I argue that Ugandan interests in Ituri’s gold were important for both the onset and duration of Uganda’s military occupation, but also note that control of gold mines conferred important political benefits to rebel groups and their commanders (see Chapter 6). Similarly, the commercial and symbolic value of land in Ituri’s Walendu Pitsi collectivity influenced how and why the war within the war started in 1999 in Ituri (see Chapter 5). War in Ituri shows that resources such as gold and land influence the start and course of wars that are national and international, not simply civil wars. Moreover, the importance of the economic and symbolic values of natural resources in understanding war shows why analyzing only “primary commodities” or “non-renewables” does not capture the nuances of the ways in which society interacts with nature.

**Resource scarcity and abundance**

Consideration of how the environment influenced the likelihood of armed conflict emerged in the 1980s (Westing 1986), but greatly expanded in the mid- to late-1990s (Gleditsch 1998; Rønnfeldt 1997). There have been two distinct but related fields of inquiry. The one that emerged first focused on environmental degradation and resource scarcity as a source of conflict (Homer-Dixon 1994). Partially in response to criticisms of environmental scarcity narratives, the second field focused on resource abundance as a cause of conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; cf. LeBillon 2001). The growth of research and debate about the role of the environment in causing armed conflict is related to several factors, including: the end of the Cold War and superpower patronage for armed groups (governments and rebels); rapid economic globalization; and the growth of environmentalism. In addition, this field was stimulated in the late 1990s and early 2000s by a major research effort funded by the World Bank and a parallel study by the International Peace Academy. While research on environmental scarcity and abundance has illuminated actual and potential conflict-environment linkages, it has also suffered empirical and theoretical shortcomings that undermine the strength of its conclusions.

**Environmental scarcity**

The contemporary argument that resource (aka. environmental) scarcity causes armed conflict originated with a group of researchers led by Thomas Homer-Dixon, known as the Toronto Group. Homer-Dixon defined “environmental scarcity” as the scarcity of renewable resources, such as agricultural land, forests, water, and fish (Homer-Dixon 1994, 8). He posited three sources of environmental scarcity: *decreased supply* of the resource due to depletion or degradation; *increased demand* due to local population growth; and *unequal resource distribution*. Homer-Dixon argued that there would be an increase in the frequency of civil war during the next few decades in “environmentally sensitive regions,” which he confined to less developed or rapidly developing areas. According to his reasoning, scarcity alone does not produce conflict; it always interacts with other political, economic, and social forces (Homer-Dixon 1999, 178).
Homer-Dixon argues environmental scarcity is more likely to be linked to civil war than to interstate war. He claims scarcity contributes to “diffuse, persistent, subnational violence, such as ethnic clashes and insurgencies.” Homer-Dixon notes that there have been several interstate wars partly over control of nonrenewable resources like oil and minerals, but he says interstate wars over renewable resources are unlikely for two reasons. First, states cannot readily convert renewable resources into usable assets, and second, the countries most dependent on renewable resources tend to be poor, with less capacity to seize resources from their neighbors (Homer-Dixon 1999, 179). Following upon the work of Homer-Dixon, Indra de Soysa used an econometric analysis to conclude an abundance of renewable resources is not an important predictor of civil war, whereas subsoil, nonrenewable (mineral) wealth is causally linked to civil war (de Soysa 2000, 123-127). Other research inspired by Homer-Dixon sought to expand the scope of independent variables considered in his model and examine cooperation (as opposed to conflict) produced by environmental scarcity (cf. Rønnfeldt 1997).

Homer-Dixon’s theories became popular in policy circles during the 1990s after being promoted by Robert Kaplan in his (in)famous 1994 article, “The Coming Anarchy.” Criticisms emerged during the 1990s, however, that challenged the notion of “environmental scarcity” as a cause of conflict. Peluso and Watts produced a comprehensive critique based on case studies, arguing that Homer-Dixon oversimplified the social and political-economic causes of conflict, failed to fully account for conflicts involving non-renewable resources, and ignored environment-related conflict in developed countries (Peluso and Watts 2001). Also limiting the significance of Homer-Dixon’s work and other examinations of environmental scarcity is the lack of reliable data (Gleditsch 1998).

Resource abundance
By the late 1990s, the analytic emphasis on the study of environment-war links “shifted from a consideration of deprivation and scarcity to an examination of the conflict-promoting aspects of resource abundance” (Ballentine and Sherman 2003, 1). Central to this shift was the concept of the “resource curse”; i.e. the notion that natural resource abundance results in economic underperformance and governance failure, potentially leading to conflict. In accordance with this belief, Michael Klare predicted, “resource wars”—wars revolving around control of valuable natural resources—“will be become, in the years ahead, the most distinctive feature of the global security environment” (Klare 2001, ix).

Oxford economist Paul Collier, who led a multi-year research project for the World Bank, placed the potential link between natural resource abundance and armed conflict within a theoretical framework. As noted above, the Collier-Hoeffler model (or CH model) of civil war onset is an econometric model that compares independent variables (such as resource abundance) against a dependent variable (presence of civil war) (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Collier and Hoeffler 2001; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Collier and Hoeffler changed the CH model over time, but maintained the model’s core assumption that only rebel groups initiate civil war in resource abundant countries.
The CH model has inspired myriad econometric studies looking at the connections between natural resources and civil war, but includes conceptual and methodological flaws that undermine its conclusions and call to question its related policy prescriptions.

One major problem in terms of identifying the links between natural resources and war is that the CH model (and many other quantitative studies) selects on the dependent variable. That is, the CH model creates lists of “civil wars” as the dependent variable and then looks at independent variables, including natural resource abundance, to analyze the relationship. This approach does not look at resource rich countries to determine the prevalence of various types of war in those countries, but rather looks only at countries that have experienced “civil war.” This potentially sets up a false connection between resource abundance and a country’s potential to experience war. Indeed, “selecting cases on the dependent variable entails a high probability of getting the wrong answer” (Geddes 1990, 149).

In the CH model, natural resource abundance is an independent variable supposedly measuring the availability of financing for rebel groups (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 564; Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 565, 588). One problem with the natural resource variable is that the CH model fails to differentiate between the role of natural resources in causing or sustaining civil war. The value for primary commodity exports (used as a proxy for natural resources) covers a five-year period (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 565), with no differentiation for changes before, during, or after a conflict that took place during that period. The CH model simply asserts that the measure of natural resources represents the likelihood of civil war onset without explaining why the proxy might not alternatively represent the incorporation of resources into the conflict after it began.

A second problem with the natural resource variable is that its proxy (primary commodity exports per GDP) does not validly measure abundance of resources, types of conflict-inducing resources, or opportunity for predation. Valid measurement is achieved when the values for the proxy “meaningfully capture the ideas contained in the corresponding concept” (Adcock and Collier 2001, 530). In this case, the value of primary commodity exports to GDP over a five-year period fails to approximate the variable of exploitable natural resources that may induce conflict. The proxy does not differentiate “lootable” primary commodities, such as diamonds or gold, from agricultural crops such as coffee or rice. In addition, the value of primary commodities may fluctuate widely depending on international markets; such variations may distort the CH model’s interpretation of resource abundance over the course of five-year intervals (Sambanis 2005, 310). The proxy also does not evaluate the “patterns of resource distribution, and hence inequality, within countries and between individuals and groups,” which has been particularly important in some conflicted countries such as the DRC (Pugh and Cooper 2004, 19; cf. Ndikumana and Emizet 2005, 80). War may also lead to diminished manufacturing and relatively greater primary commodity exports, as in Angola, reversing the CH model’s presumed causal arrow (Ross 2004, 338).

The measurement validity of the proxy is further undercut by the data for “primary commodity exports” used by Collier and Hoeffler. The statistics on these exports come
from the World Bank (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 595), but as noted above, the Bank’s measure does not include gems such as diamonds or contraband narcotics. Collier and Hoeffler have inexplicably overlooked this gap and repeatedly identified diamonds as an example of a primary commodity export that can lead to conflict and needs to be controlled (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 565; Collier et al 2003, 9, 42-47, 62-63). Qualitative research has found that gems and drugs may be sources of rebel funding (Chernick 2005; Kandeh 2005), but the CH model does not measure them and is therefore incapable of evaluating their roles in causing or sustaining conflict.

The CH model changed over time, focusing first on rebel-motivated “greed”, then on the “opportunity” for rebellion, and most recently on the “feasibility” of rebel-induced civil war. An early version of the CH model found that “increased natural resources increase the risk of war,” but at a high level, natural resources decrease the risk of war (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 571). Collier and Hoeffler interpreted the latter finding as suggesting that governments with increased revenue from natural resources invested more in their militaries, and were thus better able to defend themselves from the predations of rebel groups (Collier and Hoeffler 1998, 571). They do not cite any evidence for this assumption; they just postulate it is true and assume its validity.

Collier took his initial theory further in an article in which he argued the actual objective of rebellion was the predation of natural resources (Collier 2000). Collier defended the “rebellion-as-crime” assumption popular in economics and criticized the “rebellion-as-justice seeking” theory popular in other social science literature. Collier’s simple model assumed that greedy rebels prey upon natural resources, leading the government to defend the resources, and thus sparking violent conflict. Collier further argued that greedy rebels may incite grievances to obtain start-up revenue for their rebellion; however, greed sustains the rebel group after it has become a viable predator of natural resources (Collier 2000, 852). Collier omits consideration of the conflict-inducing role that greedy governments, corporations, or individuals may play in creating conditions that incite a rebellion.

Building upon their earlier work, in 2001 Collier and Hoeffler introduced the concept of opportunity. They argued the opportunity for a rebellion to take place was directly related to the availability of finance in the form of extortion of primary commodity exports (Collier and Hoeffler 2001, 16). Collier and Hoeffler discounted the explanatory power of political or social grievances as causes of civil war: “the grievances that motivate rebels may be substantially disconnected from the large social concerns of inequality, political rights, and ethnic or religious identity” (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 589; Collier and Hoeffler 2001, 17). The economists claimed that economic motives are primarily responsible for war, which is consistent with rational choice theories of conflict that view individuals and groups as “monolithic maximizing agents” (Cramer 2002, 1846).

The 2007 incarnation of the CH model focuses on the feasibility of rebellion. In this version of their model, Collier and Hoeffler re-orient their analysis in response to findings from other (mainly) quantitative studies, but still repeat their past mistakes.
They continue to discuss diamonds as a conflict-inducing natural resource (Collier et al 2007, 15), even though gems are not included in the primary commodity export statistics Collier and Hoeffler use in their model. Their paper also analyzes the first and second Congo wars as simple “civil wars.” Despite these recurrent flaws, the paper arrives at a new finding: feasibility and not motivation (greed or grievance) is the key reason why rebels start civil wars. “[W]here rebellion is feasible it will occur,” is the latest insight from the CH model (Collier et al 2007, 26).

Paul Collier and others have used the assumptions and findings of the CH model to make policy recommendations. In the widely cited book, Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy, Collier et al claim, “the key root cause of conflict is the failure of economic development” (Collier et al 2003, 53). To prevent conflict in “at-risk” countries, Collier et al call for directing international development assistance to raise economic growth and diversify economies away from primary commodity exports; to end conflict, the international community must cut rebel finances and market access. Two obvious problems with this approach concern the definition of primary commodity exports (discussed above) and the authors’ apparent ignorance of the roles of governments and corporations in causing and sustaining war (in addition to the role of rebel groups).

The CH model has become the point of reference for subsequent quantitative studies of civil war onset, duration, and termination. A study by de Soysa argued that abundant mineral wealth makes countries unstable and vulnerable to conflict, while a scarcity of renewable resources is not associated with civil war (de Soysa 2002). Also using a quantitative methodology, de Soysa and Neumayer similarly argued that wealth in energy resources (i.e. fossil fuels) increases the risk for civil war (de Soysa and Neumayer 2007). Other quantitative studies have examined the location of resources in comparison to the location of conflict, arguing there is a correlation between the location of civil war and the presence of certain valuable natural resources (cf. Buhaug et al 2009; Lujala 2009). Notably, James Fearon critiqued the CH model and pointed out that Collier and Hoeffler wrongly analyze gemstones and illicit drugs as primary commodities (Fearon 2005, 486). Using the same quantitative methodology as Collier and Hoeffler, Fearon concluded there is not a robust association between primary commodity exports and civil war onset. The one exception is oil, which Fearon argued is correlated with a weak state, thus making state or secessionist capture more likely (Fearon 2005, 503-504).

Three problems with quantitative studies

The quantitative studies of conflict referenced above include three assumptions that arguably undermine the internal validity of these models as well as their results. These assumptions reflect theoretical perspectives about the nature of modern wars, the appropriate unit of analysis, and what constitutes a natural resource. The quantitative studies employ a set of theories I call civil war theory, island theory, and natural resources theory. I argue these sub-theories infect quantitative models and produce flawed outcomes.
The civil war theory ascribes civil war status to most of the varied and complex conflicts that have taken place during the last two decades. This theory posits that civil war is much more common since the end of the Cold War than interstate wars (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1997; cf. Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 563). This theory is based upon lists of civil wars created by scholars at the Correlates of War (COW) project, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO), the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), and others. There are differences among the various lists, which Sambanis ascribes to three factors: different thresholds of violence for civil war; different starting and ending dates for civil wars; and different understandings of interstate, intrastate, extrastate wars (Sambanis 2004, 815).

The civil war theory provides the foundation for many quantitative studies of armed conflict. Starting from the assumption that most wars today are civil wars, scholars use the lists of civil wars created the various groups listed above as the foundation for models of the onset, duration, and intensity of war. As noted above, the occurrence and duration of war become the dependent variables against which various independent variables (including natural resource abundance) are evaluated.

Numerous popular and widely cited studies include the first and second Congo wars in their lists of civil wars (Tables 3 and 9). As I argue later in this dissertation, both the first and second Congo wars were polywars of international and internal armed conflicts, with the international dimensions arguably more important than the internal conflicts in the onset and duration of the wars. Can studies analyzing the wars in Congo as simple civil wars produce credible interpretations of the reasons for the start and length of wars in the Congo? I argue the answer to this question is no: any study that exclusively ascribes civil war status to the wars in Congo is fundamentally flawed.

A second, unstated theory underpinning quantitative models of armed conflict is what I call island theory. Quantitative studies assume that studying statistical information about one country can explain why wars start and persist. The nation state is treated as an island, with no consideration of how the politics or economics of neighboring states or more distant polities affect the state in question (Pugh and Cooper 2004, 23). The nation state also becomes ahistorical; only statistics reflecting recent or current realities within that state are examined when determining the likelihood of war, the role of natural resources in armed conflict, the ethnic dimensions of war, and other issues. The assumption that the conflicts being studied are civil wars necessitates the assumption that studying the nation state in isolation is sufficient for understanding why wars happen. In the modern world where conflicts are characterized by the cross-border flows of arms and natural resources, the use of island theory appears dangerously naïve.

A third assumption underpinning many quantitative theories concerns the definition and measurement of “natural resources”. The theory of natural resources as used by Collier and Hoeffler, Fearon and many other scholars includes two questionable assumptions. One problem with this theory is its focus on exports. Across the board, quantitative theorists focus on export statistics while ignoring internal trading in natural resources and how this may affect armed conflict. This theory assumes only resources having some
value to foreign consumers are important as sources of funding for armed groups. While exportable resources may generate the largest incomes for various armed groups, the effects of locally traded resources such as food crops, drugs, and timber has been under-examined and inadequately theorized.

Table 1. Quantitative Indicators for the CH Model of Civil War Onset

<table>
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<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>PROXY</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE FOR WAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extortion of (abundant) natural resources</td>
<td>Primary commodity exports/GDP</td>
<td>Highly significant (peaks at 32% of GDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations from diasporas</td>
<td>Ratio of nationals living in United States compared to national population</td>
<td>Significant risk of conflict renewal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subventions from national governments</td>
<td>End of the Cold War</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foregone income for individuals who join a rebel force</td>
<td>Mean income per capita (GDP per capita)</td>
<td>Highly significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male secondary schooling (% in school)</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Growth rate of the economy (GDP per capita average for previous 5 years)</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of financing for rebels</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atypically low cost of rebellion</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict-specific capital is cheap</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrain favorable to rebels</td>
<td>Forest cover (%)</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mountainous terrain (%)</td>
<td>Weak significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic population dispersion</td>
<td>Gini coefficient of dispersion</td>
<td>Significant (high concentration-low risk of conflict)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low population density</td>
<td>Inhabitants per km²</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanization</td>
<td>Population in urban areas (%)</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic fractionalization / Social cohesion (ethnic and religious diversity)</td>
<td>Combined measure of ethnonymic fractionalization and religious fractionalization</td>
<td>Insignificant (high fractionalization, low conflict risk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of a multi-ethnic or multi-religious society</td>
<td>Mathematical measure of combined ethnic and religious polarization</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political repression</td>
<td>Index of political rights</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political exclusion</td>
<td>Binary measure (0 or 1) based on if the largest ethnic group in a country constitutes 45 to 90 percent of the population</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic inequality</td>
<td>Gini coefficient and ratio of top-to-bottom quintiles of income</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset (land) inequality</td>
<td>Gini coefficient of land ownership</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Size</td>
<td>Population size</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table compiled from Collier et al 2005; Collier and Hoeffler 2001.
Another problem with natural resources theory is that it excludes non-export resources such as land or water. Both land and water are natural resources of vital importance to every country on earth, and history is replete with examples of wars fought over control of territory and water (Gleick 1993, 85-89; Peluso and Harwell 2001; Peters 2004). Collier and Hoeffler use a value of asset (land) inequality as a proxy for economic inequality within a country that may provoke grievances, but find the effect of such inequality insignificant for civil war onset (Table 1). Collier and Hoeffler notably do not consider or analyze land as a natural resource.

As discussed above, the assumption that natural resources are limited to exportable, valuable products also excludes consideration of the symbolic importance of resources, such as land. Natural resources can have important social and cultural values that defy quantification, commoditization, and export. Groups of people may resort to violence not only to procure wealth from valuable minerals and other resources, but also to defend or acquire territory that has symbolic importance. Conversely, local struggles for political and economic power may incorporate historical grievances or contemporary disputes over land rights into narratives that justify violent acts against a perceived enemy. There are numerous potential links between natural resources and armed conflicts that are excluded by the narrow theoretical assumptions built into quantitative studies of armed conflict.

Other scholars examining the resource-conflict link through case studies have also repeated the same mistakes as the quantitative theorists. For example, Michael Ross analyzed a small sample of “civil wars” in several influential papers on the role of natural resources in armed conflict. Ross tested various hypotheses and concluded that natural resource wealth is causally linked to civil war (Ross 2004a, 61). Overall Ross found that among natural resources, only oil appears to contribute to the onset of conflict, but many other resources may contribute the duration of a war (Ross 2004, 352). Ross argues gemstones and drugs are not causally linked to the onset of civil war, but may contribute to its duration.

Ross’s (2004, 2004a) findings are unfortunately clouded by conceptual problems he shares with Collier and Hoeffler and other quantitative scholars. Like Collier and Hoeffler, Ross applies civil war theory in his work, and includes the first and second Congo wars on his list of civil wars. Ross generally adheres to the island theory in his analysis, but where he does break from it, he confuses cause with effect. Ross cites the second Congo war as evidence that “resource wealth may increase the danger that a foreign state will intervene on behalf of a nascent rebel movement” (Ross 2004a, 63), when in fact foreign intervention (by Rwanda and Uganda) was responsible for the creation of rebel groups in the first and second Congo war, not its effect. Ross also applies natural resource theory in that he only considers valuable exportable resource commodities in his analysis. Where Ross does consider land, for example, it is only in relation to the expropriation of lands containing valuable exportable resource commodities for which communities do not receive adequate compensation, thus creating a grievance (Ross 2004a, 41, 51, 62). Ross does not consider other mechanisms, such as how colonial and post-colonial distributions of land may affect the potential for conflict,
or how expropriation of farming and grazing lands may influence the onset of armed conflict.

Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis edited two volumes of case studies to test the CH model, but the case studies largely affirmed the model’s conceptual and methodological weaknesses. In the case study on the DRC, the authors mistakenly analyze the first and second Congo wars as civil wars, in which Rwanda and Uganda simply helped pre-existing Congolese rebellions. Nonetheless, the authors conclude that the CH model leaves out important risk factors for the 1990s wars in Congo, including the influx of Rwandan refugees into eastern Congo that exacerbated ethnic tensions and land disputes, the military activity of Rwandan militias in eastern Congo, and the Congolese nationality laws that targeted Congolese of Rwandan origin (Ndikumana and Emizet 2005, 82-84). The DRC case study also acknowledges the important roles of Rwanda and Uganda in the exploitation and trade of valuable, exportable resources from Congo. The authors highlight the geographic distribution of resources as a risk factor for conflict in Congo, and note this is excluded from the CH model.

The DRC case study and others in the Collier and Sambanis volumes neither corroborate nor fully refute the CH model. In the Conclusion to the volumes, Sambanis noted the case studies generally affirm the correlation between economic development and civil war onset, but indicated the CH model does a poor job explaining these correlations (Sambanis 2005, 308). Sambanis also noted several problems with the resource predation hypothesis at the heart of the CH model, including confusion about resource predation as a motive for violence, and the failure of primary commodity export statistics to validly measure natural resource abundance (Sambanis 2005, 308-309). Cramer has convincingly argued the latter point, asserting that many proxies (including primary commodity exports) in quantitative models do not validly measure either the variables or the concepts they are supposed to represent (Cramer 2002, 1850-1854).

Sambanis argued case studies combined with quantitative studies can produce better theory and better empirical results about civil war. Despite acknowledging the many shortcomings in the CH model, Sambanis nonetheless affirms econometric analysis as a valid tool to evaluate the causes of civil war. He does not see the method as flawed, but rather calls for refining the concepts and variables used in that method.

The numerous problems with quantitative studies of war raise some important questions. First, how does the misapplication of the label “civil war” to complex conflicts like the wars in Congo affect the conclusions of these studies? Second, in a globalized world where government armies, rebel groups, guns, and natural resources flow across borders, does the application of island theory in econometric analyses obscure international processes that are essential for understanding the onset and duration of conflict? Third, is it not the case that econometric analyses can be manipulated through changes in variables and proxies to affirm virtually any hypothesis? For example, by changing the five-year period of analysis in the CH model to a one-year period of analysis, Fearon found the apparent impact of primary commodity imports on civil war onset evaporated (Fearon 2005, 485). There is a tendency among econometric scholars to point out the flaws in
each other’s models, but then to repeat the same assumptions and errors by creating a new flawed model. The conclusions of quantitative studies are often questioned, but there should be greater focus on the quantitative methods that produce those conclusions, especially because public policy is often based on the proclamations of scholars using econometric analyses (cf. Fearon 2005, 483-484).

**Qualitative studies**

Qualitative studies provide more nuanced understandings of the roles of natural resources in armed conflict, but pose challenges for generalizing. Qualitative research has highlighted the importance of the interaction of social, ethnic, political, economic, and military factors in causing or prolonging armed conflict (Peluso and Watts 2001). In general, qualitative studies have avoided the conceptual traps inherent in quantitative studies through consideration of the full range of historical and contemporary influences on the onset and duration of war.

There are many qualitative accounts that provide thick explanations of the political economy of armed conflict at the local, national, and regional scales. Philippe Le Billon has noted differences in conflict risk based on the characteristics of the resource, its location, and its mode of exploitation (LeBillon 2005). LeBillon differentiates types of armed conflicts that may be linked to different geographies of resources distribution (Table 2). Point resources are geographically clustered, while diffuse resources are spread over a large area. Proximate resources are close to the government capital, while distant resources are far from the center of state power. While he links resource distribution to four types of internal conflicts, LeBillon further argues that a fifth type of conflict—foreign intervention—may occur in the four other types of armed conflict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource characteristics</th>
<th>Point</th>
<th>Diffuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximate</td>
<td>State control/coup d’état</td>
<td>Peasant/mass rebellion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distant</td>
<td>Secession</td>
<td>Warlordism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LeBillon 2005, 36.

In other literature, Michael Pugh and Neil Cooper highlighted the importance of international networks facilitating the exploitation of natural resources and the need for stronger governmental institutions for resource management (Pugh and Cooper 2004, 220). Cynthia Arnson has argued that qualitative accounts of conflict demonstrate that grievances and identities are central to understanding the roots and objectives of war (Arnson 2005, 12). Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman highlighted the need to understand the conflict-promoting economic behavior of state actors, in addition to rebel groups. They also critiqued econometric analyses, noting: “while statistical methods are a useful way of identifying key variables across a class of cases, at best they generate broad correlations that illuminate only part of the picture” (Ballentine and Sherman 2003, 5). In contrast to quantitative literature that assumes greedy rebel groups start wars, Michael Watts has highlighted the role of state actors and globalized trade networks in causing conflict (Watts 2005, 278).
Summary
A central purpose of my dissertation is to analyze the relationships between natural resources and armed conflict. The case of war in Ituri shows the importance of considering portable resources such as gold, and static resources, such as land, when analyzing how people integrate resources into war. The war in Ituri also highlights the significance of considering the economic and symbolic values of resources. Moreover, I argue the war in Ituri shows how power struggles and interests in natural resources at a variety of levels (local, national, and international) by the entire range of modern actors (including corporations) can produce or sustain violent conflict.

ETHNICITY AND WAR
Starting in 1999, war in Ituri took on a significant ethnic dimension. As I will detail in a later chapter, during 1999, small-scale violence at a few sites in Ituri’s Walendu Pitsi territory escalated into a brutal inter-communal conflict. Over time, fighting in Walendu Pitsi spread to other areas of Ituri and incorporated multiple ethnic groups. Armed groups formed along ethnic lines and often targeted civilian populations based on their ethnic affiliation. External forces were also involved, including the Ugandan army and later the United Nations’ mission in Congo. I will later argue that ethnicity was tangential to political and economic causes of violence in Walendu Pitsi; however, because of the importance of ethnicity in the war in Ituri, here I provide a framework for analyzing the ethnic dimension of the conflict.

Ashutosh Varney differentiates two distinct ways in which ethnicity is interpreted (Varney 2001, 364-365). In the narrow sense, the term “ethnic” refers to racial or linguistic groups. In a broader sense, ethnicity refers to “ascriptive group identities—race, language, religion, tribe or cast” (Varney 2001, 365). Other scholars add additional elements to the concept of ethnicity. Stuart Kaufman defines an ethnic group as having “a collective name, myth of common decent, shared history and culture, territorial association, and a sense of solidarity” (Kaufman 1996, 150). Nicholas Sambanis uses a definition that also includes skin color, language, and religion; and covers tribes, races, nationalities and castes (Sambanis 2001, 261).

While there is no one, clear definition of ethnicity, it is evident that individuals can have more than one ethnic identity or affiliation. An individual is born with certain traits and under particular conditions that may signal an ethnic identity, such as skin color, location of birth, and the geographic or cultural identities of her parents. A person’s environment may lead to the development of other ethnic identities, for example by religion, language, location of residence, and nationality. In this dissertation, I accept that individuals can have multiple identities and hybrid identities based on personal, social, or cultural factors such as skin color, place of origin, identities of the parents and/or caregivers, language(s), religion, place of residence, and nationality. Moreover, I believe that ethnicity is not fixed or genetic, but may change over time as a result of individual decisions and societal pressures or opportunities.
When ethnicity appears to be a driving aspect of violent conflict, scholars refer to a situation of “ethnic war.” Kaufman defines ethnic war as “large-scale, sustained, organized violence in which the groups and the values at stake are defined in ethnic terms” (Kaufman 1996, 150; cf. Kaufman 2006, 46). Sambanis offers a slightly different definition, which includes the state as an actor. According to Sambanis, ethnic war is “war among communities (ethnicities) that are in conflict over the power relationship that exists between those communities and the state” (Sambanis 2001, 261). These definitions fail to consider how struggles for political and economic power may mobilize ethnicity in ways that lead to violence; i.e. Kaufman and Sambanis may be confusing cause with effect. In this dissertation, I define ethnic conflict as a state of violent conflict within or between ethnic groups where one or more aspects of ethnic identity are a core element in the cause of the conflict or the conflict’s duration.

One explanation of how ethnic identity contributes to violence and war focuses on “mass preferences” and posits members of an ethnic group are incited to violence on the basis of cultural differences and historical enmity. This explanation is closely tied to claims of “ancient ethnic hatreds” and the “clash of civilizations,” and has few pure adherents (Roe 2005, 26-27). Kaufman describes how mass preferences may be tied to other socio-economic issues, but manifest in pressure on ethnic leaders for extremist policies that can lead to violence and ultimately ethnic war (Kaufman 1996, 153).

Another theory focuses on the role of elites in mobilizing and manipulating ethnic identity, leading to war. This kind of mobilization took place in several conflicts in eastern Congo and was a factor in the creation of polywar, including the war in Ituri. This theory of ethnic conflict, called symbolic-politics theory, describes how elites may construct or use myths to incite violence:

[T]he critical causes of extreme ethnic violence are group myths that justify hostility, fears of group extinction, and a symbolic politics of chauvinist mobilization. The hostile myths, in this view, produce emotion-laden symbols that make mass hostility easy for chauvinist elites to provoke and make extremist policies popular (Kaufman 2006, 47).

Ethnic leaders may use organizational power bases, such as control of the media, to “create feelings of fear and hostility by harping on the imaginary or exaggerated threat of the other group” (Kaufman 1996, 155). Elites may invoke symbols of ethnic identity, mobilize armed groups, and destroy alternatives to violence (such as negotiation). Kaufman notes that some degree of hyper-nationalism (belief that one’s group deserves dominance) and militarism (belief in the acceptability of using violence to achieve dominance) are necessary for war to take place, but elite manipulation of these concepts can trigger violence and ensure its escalation to war (Kaufman 1996, 157).

While Kaufman’s theory provides an explanation for how elites may manipulate populations along ethnic lines to produce violence, it fails to fully articulate what is meant by the term “myth.” Indeed, myths may include historically accurate depictions of civic or political exclusion, massacres, or violations of social and economic rights. At the same time, they may omit contradictory information and present one-sided and biased accounts of historical events and processes.
Varshney notes elites may more easily mobilize populations when there are weak or non-existent interethnic ties:

Vigorous associational life, if interethnic, acts as a serious constraint on politicians, even when ethnic polarization is in their political interest. The more the associational networks cut across ethnic boundaries, the harder it is for politicians to polarize communities (Varshney 2001, 363).

In explaining this mechanism, Varshney notes:

Because they build bridges and manage tensions, interethnic networks are agents of peace, but if communities are organized only along intraethnic lines and the interconnections with other communities are very weak or even nonexistent, then ethnic violence is quite likely (Varshney 2001, 363).

The existence of interethnic networks may make it more difficult for the myths described by Kaufman to take root and morph into tools that elites can use to incite ethnic violence.

Another theory of ethnic conflict based on rational choice models focuses on the structure of the domestic political system. This theory suggests the lack of a functional state will lead to a security dilemma between competing ethnic groups. The conception of the security dilemma, rooted in realist international relations theory, posits: “what one does to enhance one’s own security causes reactions that, in the end, can make one less secure” (Posen 1993, 28). That is, in an international system that is anarchic (as realists assume) an action by one group may be perceived by its neighbor as threatening, leading to a countervailing action and escalating hostility that results in violence or war (Kaufman 1996, 150-151). Barry Posen highlights structural security dilemmas (the result of anarchy in the state system) and perceptual security dilemmas (the result of elite/state misperceptions of security needs and the intentions of other groups/states) in his explanation of ethnic conflicts (Posen 1993, 28-29; cf. Kaufman 1996, 151), but Paul Roe and others have criticized Posen for excessive reliance on the realist concept of anarchy, which rarely if ever exists within states (Roe 2005, 37-40).

Even if anarchy does not exist within state systems, political institutions may not function in a way that reduces or prevents the potential for ethnic conflict. Varshney notes: “In any ethnically plural society that allows free expression of political demands, some ethnic conflict is more or less inevitable, but it may not necessarily lead to violence…The real issue is whether ethnic conflict is violent or waged via the polity’s institutionalized channels” (Varshney 2001, 365-366).

In some cases, elite action and state structure may combine to lead to ethnic war. In the case of war in eastern Congo, political actors referred to ethnic identity and ethnic belonging to recruit combatants and mobilize populations because ethnicity “offered a fruitful and easy mobilizing force due to its structural roots, themselves the result of a political evolution” (Vlassenroot 2000, 285). Vlassenroot argues that the onset of ethnic violence in Congo’s South Kivu province was not the result of economic competition, “but of a political manipulation of social and economic marginalization” (Vlassenroot
As I argue in later chapters, the incorporation of ethnicity into local struggles for political and economic power combined with lack of functioning state institutions that could manage and prevent conflict were significant factors in the development of ethnically-targeted violence and a situation of ethnic war.

A study of pre-1990s ethnic conflict in Burundi further informs analysis of the ethnic dimensions of conflict in Ituri. In his landmark study of conflict in Burundi, LeMarchand highlighted history, elite and state manipulation of ethnicity, and perception within ethnic groups as important causal factors. LeMarchand noted ethnic antagonisms did not just spontaneously emerge, but were “nurtured, encouraged, and institutionalized through specific moves on the part of specific individuals” (LeMarchand 1990, 91). LeMarchand cautioned against seeing ethnicity as historically fixed, and urges scholars “to recognize the determining role played by specific events and circumstances in molding the perceptions that each group gained of the other” (LeMarchand 1990, 94). Historical memory played an important role in ethnic violence in Burundi, and “the past will continue to haunt the country’s future, shaping its destinies in ways that are as yet impossible to predict” (LeMarchand 1990, 101-102, 109). This last observation is important for Ituri, where the memory of ethnically-targeted violence during the recent war is very much alive, and susceptible to elite manipulation in a district that still does not have effective policies and institutions in place to peacefully address land disputes and other issues that have a significant ethnic dimension.

In a study on post-Cold War conflict in the former Soviet Union, Monica Duffy Toft advances a theory of indivisible territory involving states and elites to explain why intrastate war occurs. She argues the likelihood of civil war depends on “how actors in a dispute view the territory at stake and how they represent their interests over that territory” (Toft 2003, 17). In this scenario, an ethnic group may seek to control territory it considers to be its homeland, while the state may see the same territory as indivisible. States may resort to violence to prevent the indivisibility of territory out of a concern that allowing one ethnic group to achieve territorial sovereignty will set a precedent that encourages others to rebel (Toft 2003, 26). According to Toft, “To resort to violence, both states and ethnic groups must calculate that they need to control the same piece of territory to guarantee their survival” (Toft 2003, 32). She also highlights the important roles played by elites who may make particular elements of national or ethnic identity salient when asserting their leadership; however, elites may become captive to their own rhetoric, and enter a classic security dilemma via ethnic or nationalist politics (Toft 2003, 140). Toft’s observations have relevance for understanding how political and business elites mobilized ethnicity to assert customary rights to territory in Ituri.

While not specifically concerned with ethnic conflict, a study about human rights and civil war found that social and economic marginalization are less important as triggers for war than violations of civic and political rights: “[V]iolations of civil and political rights are more obviously linked to conflict than abuses of economic and social rights. Discrimination and violations of social and economic rights function as underlying causes, creating the grievances and group identities that may, in some circumstances, contribute to violence. Violations of civil and political rights, by contrast, are more clearly identifiable as direct conflict triggers. When populations are unsettled by long-standing inequalities in access to basic needs and political participation, government repression may push some opposition groups over the brink” (Thom and Rons 2007, 704).
The previous discussion has focused on qualitative accounts of the relationship between ethnicity and war, but scholars using econometric methods have also examined this topic. Sambanis analyzed “ethnic heterogeneity” using two different variables (measured by ethno-linguistic data and racial-linguistic-religious data); he found it “significantly and positively” correlated with ethnic civil war onset (Sambanis 2001, 269, 280). Collier and Hoeffler looked at “ethnic or religious hatred” (measured by ethno-linguistic data and religious data) and “ethnic dominance” (measured by ethno-linguistic data), but found neither factor significant in civil war onset (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Fearon and Latin examined “ethnic fractionalization” (measured by ethno-linguistic data, ethnic dominance data, linguistic data, and religious data), and found it had no connection to civil war onset (Fearon and Latin 2003). Other studies similarly analyze ethnicity’s connection to civil war using ethno-linguistic data (Fearon et al 2007).

Quantitative studies examining the role of ethnicity in war use analytic concepts that are flawed, thereby limiting their credibility and salience. First, reducing ethnicity to a numeric value essentializes and solidifies what are in fact complex and changing identities and affinities. Turning ethnicity into a number has a normative effect that obscures the roles ethnic identity may play in peoples’ political views, social relationships, economic interests, and potential to support violence against other ethnic groups. Second, the numerification of ethnicity fails to differentiate the role of elites or extremists within ethnic groups in manipulating ethnic tension and instigating violence; it effectively treats everyone in a particular group as having the same interests and inclinations. Third, quantitative studies make highly questionable assumptions about the role of ethnicity in societies. For example, Collier and Hoeffler use a numeric value for ethnic polarization as a proxy for ethnic hatred, without justifying this connection. Fourth, all of the aforementioned studies look at the role of ethnicity in “civil war”; however, many of the wars listed were not simple civil wars but polywars of international and internal conflicts (see infra.).

Summary
This discussion provides a framework for analyzing the ethnic dimensions of war in Ituri. As I show in later chapters, ethnic identity was a core element in the start and duration of war in Ituri, although the relative importance of ethnicity in producing violence changed over time. Theories about mass preferences have little relevance for explaining war in Ituri because of the long history of peaceful, if unequal, ethnic relations, particularly in the Walendu Pitsi area where war started in 1999. Theories about elite manipulation and political structure have greater relevance for understanding war in Ituri, but I will also consider a fourth element missing from debates about ethnic conflict: foreign intervention. Foreign actors can include government armed forces occupying a territory; diaspora groups providing political and financial support; religious entities; or armed forces deployed for multinational peace operations (e.g. United Nations, African Union). As I will argue in later chapters, the actions of the occupying Ugandan army played a major role in the development of ethnic conflict in Ituri.
A final issue highlighted by the review above is that territory and place can function as ethnic symbols and become integrated into discourses leading to ethnic conflict. Examples of such ethnic symbols include: a burial ground, an initiation site, a legendary battlefield, a contested boundary, or a concession. Ethnicity can interact with natural resources, struggles for political and economic power, and historical narratives in processes that can lead to war. In Ituri, the connections between ethnic identity and other potential sources of conflict may increase the risk for the production of violence and war.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE
War in Ituri had a significant and arguably dominant international dimension. Rwanda and Uganda initiated the first Congo war (1996-97), but the major international player in Ituri during and after the second Congo war (1998-2003) was the Ugandan government. At the same time the Ugandan army was occupying and plundering Ituri, the World Bank and others praised Uganda as a “success story” of post-conflict state building and recovery (Collier and Reinikka 2001, 15; Dijkstra 2001; Weinstein 2005, 18). The fact that Uganda intervened in Congo so thoroughly and for so long attests to the Ugandan government’s ability to ensure a stable flow of international assistance in the forms of financial aid, political backing, and military support. In this way, international assistance became a resource that Uganda used to wage war. After defining international assistance, I will review the relationships between international assistance and war.

Defining international assistance
In this dissertation, I use the term international assistance to refer to economic, political, and military assistance provided by donors to recipients. Donors may include governments, multilateral institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Recipients include governments and non-governmental organizations.

Donors provide economic assistance to recipients in a variety of forms, for a variety of reasons. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) states “the words ‘aid’ and ‘assistance’ refer to flows which qualify as Official Development Assistance (ODA)” (OECD n.d.). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) defines ODA as:

Flows of official financing administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective, and which are concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25 percent (using a fixed 10 percent rate of discount). By convention, ODA flows comprise contributions of donor government agencies, at all levels, to developing countries (“bilateral ODA”) and to multilateral institutions. ODA receipts comprise disbursements by bilateral donors and multilateral institutions. Lending by export credit agencies—with the pure purpose of export promotion—is excluded (IMF 2003, 263).

International economic assistance may cover categories such as grants, loans, humanitarian aid, and food aid. For the period 1996-2007, both Uganda and Zaire/Congo were on OECD’s “List of Aid Recipients” under the category “Least Developed Countries” (OECD n.d.(a)).
Governments have different motivations for giving assistance to recipients. As noted by Zoe Marriage: “Governments may be moved to give assistance by the general tenet that the rich should help the poor, lobbying by domestic constituencies, foreign policy interests, international agreements, or some combinations of these” (Marriage 2006, 4). Additional motivations include colonial ties, and growing Western concern about security threats from underdeveloped countries (Michailof et al 2002, 7). Governments often provide assistance through international NGOs, which represent ideological or religious interests and may mobilize around particular issues or disasters (Marriage 2006, 4).

International assistance may also refer to political assistance. This concept is less well defined than economic aid, but has several connotations. Kumar describes political assistance to post-conflict governments as encompassing support for political reforms and development. Kumar’s definition includes financial support for political aims, including institutional capacity building, elections, human rights monitoring and promotion, judicial reform, demobilization and rehabilitation of combatants, and security sector reform (Kumar 1997). Related to political assistance is support for social welfare and development, including resettling refugees and internally displaced persons, improving education and health services, and addressing the needs of war-affected children and women.

Another form of political assistance involves the policies and practices by powerful countries and institutions toward governments of less developed nations. This version of political assistance may take a variety of forms. For example, a donor nation may consider the human rights situation in a recipient country when determining economic assistance, but give human rights considerations less emphasis in decision making than economic and strategic interests (Apodaca and Stohl 1999, 193-194). A donor nation may also put political pressure on multilateral institutions to allocate economic assistance based on the donor nation’s economic and strategic interests (Fleck and Kilby 2006). Another form of political assistance relevant to my dissertation is the use of political power by members of the United Nations Security Council to influence the imposition (or lack thereof) of sanctions (cf. Chesterman and Pouligny 2003; Caron 1993).

Finally, international assistance can refer to military assistance. Military assistance can come in various forms, including provision of funding to armed forces, transfer of military equipment and technologies, and military education and training (cf. USAID 2008, v). One government may provide military advisers to participate in military operations with a recipient government’s army. A government may also share military intelligence with a foreign military or non-state armed group.

**Aiding war?**

Rhetoric about the noble purposes of international assistance has often been at odd with complex realities. Contemporary literature on this subject suggests that during the Cold War, aid furthered the political and economic agendas of donor nations, whereas since the Cold War, aid is generally well intentioned and designed to help the population of the recipient nation. In the post-Cold War era, governments and multi-lateral agencies praise
their good works and develop high-minded projects, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to achieve goals such as ending poverty, promoting development, and preventing war. As I will argue later in this dissertation, contemporary international assistance may have positive effects in the recipient country, but it can also enable governments to wage international war and negatively affect peace and development in neighboring countries, particularly when the recipient country is a donor darling. This was the case with international assistance to Uganda during 1996-2005, which I argue enabled Uganda to wage war in Congo.

During the Cold War, international assistance often served to prop up dictators and support armed conflict in Africa. For example, a World Bank publication notes:

> During the Cold War, foreign intervention often fueled [conflicts in Africa]. East and West competed for spheres of influence, waged war by proxy, and supported client states through financial, political, and military assistance, and sometimes with mercenary forces (Michailof et al 2002, 2).

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) has similarly noted the way in which Cold War-era international assistance propped up unpopular regimes in Africa:

> The withdrawal of East-West patronage, aid and military assistance [after the Cold War] created further instability as weak and over centralised states in Africa became more vulnerable to internal dissent. As weakened authoritarian regimes lost internal control and external support, a number of states collapsed (DFID 2004, 3).

While these two statements are remarkable for their candor, they are also notable for their lack of introspection. Indeed, the UK government and the World Bank—in addition to governments of the United States, Soviet Union, France, and other major powers—played a major role in propping up authoritarian regimes and fueling conflict in Africa through their international assistance. In many cases, international assistance was intended to ensure stability and access to natural resources at the cost of development, democracy, and human rights.

International assistance fueled conflict not only through the support of repressive regimes, but also through direct and indirect support of rebel forces. In their widely-cited quantitative model of civil war onset, Collier and Hoeffler include a “Cold War” variable to model rebel opportunity for finance, since “[d]uring the Cold War, each great power supported rebellions in countries allied to the opposing power” (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 568-569). Collier and Hoeffler do not evaluate the conflict-inducing effects of international assistance to governments, but their focus is part of their larger bias and assumption that rebel groups start civil wars, and that wars such as those in Congo were civil wars started by rebel groups. They also fail to acknowledge that the “great powers” supported rebel groups in Africa in part by supporting African governments, such as U.S. and South African support for the Angolan rebel group UNITA via Mobutu’s Zaire. Nonetheless, the important point is that international assistance during the Cold War played a role in the initiation and duration of armed conflict through support of both governments and rebel groups.
If there is now widespread acceptance of the relationship between international assistance and armed conflict in Africa during the Cold War, there is less acknowledgment of this relationship in the post-Cold War era. Nicholas Staines argues that while overall aid declined during the 1990s (particularly to sub-Saharan Africa), “the role played by the international community in the 1990s was less encumbered by geopolitical considerations and moved toward being less supportive of conflict in favor of being more supportive of the postconflict recovery effort” (Staines 2004, 158). While this statement may be true, it ignores how support of governments engaged in postconflict recovery efforts contributed to a continuation of conflict; e.g. support to Uganda and Rwanda may have enabled their invasions and occupations of eastern Congo.

Bilateral and multilateral donors clearly present themselves as moral agents of positive change. For example, DFID does not describe itself as an agent of British foreign policy, but as a neutral agency dedicated to “fighting world poverty” (DFID n.d.). Similarly, the World Bank describes its mission in humanitarian terms rather than as the pursuit of economic or political agendas of the Bank’s major supporters:

[T]o fight poverty with passion and professionalism for lasting results and to help people help themselves and their environment by providing resources, sharing knowledge, building capacity and forging partnerships in the public and private sectors (World Bank n.d.).

Although DFID and the World Bank present themselves as politically neutral, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) explicitly acknowledges its political agenda in addition to stressing its moral mission: “U.S. foreign assistance has always had the twofold purpose of furthering America’s foreign policy interests in expanding democracy and free markets while improving the lives of the citizens of the developing world” (USAID n.d.). No international donor describes its mission as enabling governments to wage war in neighboring countries, yet in some cases, I argue that is exactly what international assistance does.

Zoe Marriage analyzes the post-Cold War phenomena of international assistance to countries engaged in war. Marriage makes the case that contemporary international assistance to countries at war serves the donors’ political agendas while adhering to universalist claims about the purpose of aid. International assistance is often characterized by a “political morality”, which according to Marriage is: “the administration of a morality that is inconstant and used for political purposes” (Marriage 2006, 176). The political morality of international assistance is an element of power that appears moral but serves the donors’ political agenda. Donors’ invoke moral claims to “mask selective implementation,” and confer assistance “unevenly while maintaining universalist claims” (Marriage 2006, 177, 225). Assistance focuses on inputs—e.g. dollars and sacks of food—and is “assessed and justified by intentions, not accomplishments” (Marriage 2006, 212-213). In the post-Cold War era of neoliberal development agendas, assistance has had a normative agenda in that it has been “given to people who substantiate the dominant ideology by stoking its moral credibility” (Marriage 2006, 177).
Marriage highlights the importance of donors’ agendas in international assistance, but she incompletely assesses the importance of outputs in justifying aid. For example, international assistance often focuses on quantitative indicators to justify “success stories.” Aggregate indicators suggesting economic growth and reductions in poverty may suggest overall progress, and therefore provide the moral cover for aid that is allocated based on the politics of the donor while hiding unpleasant realities about unequal distribution of economic and social benefits within the recipient country.

International assistance to Rwanda since 1994 provides an example of Marriage’s political morality in play. After the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the United States, World Bank, and other donors provided copious financial assistance to the new Rwandan government, all the while effectively ignoring the new government’s human rights abuses in Rwanda and involvement in conflict in Congo (after 1996). In 1999, Reyntjens noted: Almost five years after the genocide, for some it is apparently still politically incorrect to denounce the abuses committed by the RPF [Rwandan Patriotic Front] which continues to exploit the “genocide credit” to the full in order to cover its own crimes. This impunity of course leads to ever increasing human rights violations, both within and outside Rwanda (Reyntjens 1999, 121).

In 2010, donors’ continued to heap praise upon the Rwandan government for creating stability and economic growth, while effectively ignoring the government’s increasingly dictatorial actions within its borders. As one Rwandan dissident put it: “This government’s record is dreadful. It’s only you, the international community, who is showering them with flowering praise” (Gettleman 2010).

In the post-Cold War era, international assistance also reflects the donors’ changing geopolitical interests. As I describe in Chapter 2, in the early 1990s, the U.S. and U.K. governments shifted political, financial, and military support in the Great Lakes region of Africa from Mobutu’s Zaire to Museveni’s Uganda and Kagame’s Rwanda. As I will argue later in this dissertation, international assistance is not only directed toward domestic transformations, but also to create regional transitions of power.

Power transition theory helps to put the Congo wars in their proper perspective. This theory, a form of hegemonic theory (Levy 1998, 148), states that wars can result from fundamental changes in the international system (Gilpin 1988, 16). Most applications of power/hegemonic transition theory focus on global power and wealth (Levy 1998, 148), but regional transitions of political and economic power can also produce war. The potential for onset of a major war is greatest at the point when a rising challenger seeks to overtake the declining leader (Levy 1998, 148; cf. Gilpin 1988, 25-26). Either the challenger initiates a war to create a new international system or the declining power starts a war to block the aspirations of the rising power (Levy 1998, 148). I argue that in the Great Lakes region, the challengers (Rwanda and Uganda) initiated war, with the support of powerful Western and African governments, to create a new regional system of power.
Summary
In many ways, international assistance in the post-Cold War era is not so different from Cold War aid. Donors allocate assistance based on their political and economic interests while presenting their aid as aimed at achieving moral objectives. Donors provide assistance to recipients who embrace the donors’ economic and political policies. Donors also are willing to overlook the recipient state’s involvement in armed conflict and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, provided the recipient state adheres to the donors’ ideological positions (e.g. embrace of the neoliberal agenda) and/or help the donors to achieve their geopolitical goals. Donors prize stability in the recipient country, but may overlook the recipients’ destabilizing influence in neighboring countries.

THEORIZING WAR IN ITURI
This chapter provides a theoretical framework for understanding the causes and nature of war in Congo’s Ituri District. My reviews of political ecology, the concept of war, and the connections between war and natural resources, ethnicity, and international assistance bring me to make the following arguments. First, war in the Congo was a polywar of local, national, and international conflicts. The political economy of polywar stitches together a patchwork of actors with varied interests and motivations, and has ties to transnational flows of weapons and finance. Polywars result from the merging of multiple international and internal conflicts in time and space, and can spawn new “wars within the war.” Polywar in Congo also demonstrates that international assistance can be a political and financial resource that enables recipient governments to wage war.

Second, war in Congo, and particularly in Ituri, shows that natural resources are multidimensional. That is, various factors including geographical considerations, resource values, mode of production and geopolitics influence how and why natural resources are incorporated into struggles for political and economic power that produce war. The roles of resources in war cannot be adequately understood and analyzed if natural resources are narrowly considered as “primary commodity exports” or other simple quantifiable conceptions. Moreover, a wide range of actors may seek to exploit natural resources to start or sustain war. These actors may include greedy rebels as well as greedy governments.

A new framework
Through the course of researching and writing this dissertation, I have identified six variables, or factors, which enable an assessment of why and how people – government officials, rebel leaders, local political and economic elites – may incorporate natural resources into their war strategies. Two geographical factors are the location of the resource, and the location of the market for that resource. Two factors related to resource characteristics are the commercial and symbolic values of the resource. One factor—the mode of production—combines a consideration of labor and resource characteristics. The final factor relates to international political and economic power: international acquiescence of aggression and violence that incorporates natural resource extraction.
These variables interact with each other in ways that help to explain why a particular actor incorporates natural resources into his war strategy at a particular time and in a particular place. None of the variables are fixed; all are dynamic. Centers of power, trade routes, market locations, commercial and symbolic values, modes of production, international acquiescence—all change over time. These variables therefore need to be assessed in relation to historical and contemporary political economies in order to interpret how a particular resource influences the onset or duration of war. In chapter seven, I use these variables to assess the roles of gold and land in war in Ituri.

The first variable is resource location. LeBillon (2005) theorizes the importance of location in two ways (see Table 2). First, he asserts that proximity or distance of the resource from the center of power in a country influences the type of war that may take place. Second, he claims the geographic distribution of the resource (point or diffuse) can determine the type of war.

LeBillon’s classifications provide a starting point for analyzing the relationship between location of resources and conflict in Congo and Ituri, but are incomplete. LeBillon seems to be applying “island theory” in his framework by only considering proximity to the host-nation center of power. In addition, his concepts of point and diffuse resources lack precision; e.g. gold in Ituri is both point and diffuse, depending on how you define those terms.

I argue that consideration of “resource location” must include proximity to host-nation center of power, plus proximity to a national border, international trade route, or center of power of a neighboring, predatory state. This opens up the consideration of location to account for internal and international interests in a particular country’s natural resources. Like LeBillon, I acknowledge that concentration of a resource must also be considered within the variable of resource location, but unlike LeBillon, I argue concentration must be clearly defined in relation to the spatial distribution, mode of production, and value of the resource.

The second variable is market location. The market for resources may be local, regional, or international (global). The market location may affect the ease with which belligerents (governments, rebel groups, local businesses) exploit and export natural resources. If the market is local or regional, it may be easier for armed groups and complicit authorities both to quickly convert resources into tools of war, and to conduct business with minimal interference or inquiry. If the market is global, there may be a greater likelihood of exploitation due to demand and value, but also a greater chance that advocacy groups, governments, or United Nations agencies may act to sever resource-conflict connections.

The third variable is commercial value. The commercial value of a natural resource depends upon a variety of factors including its state or condition (quality), its magnitude (supply), and the market for the product (demand). Governments may engage in armed conflict to protect resources in their territory with a high commercial value, or to acquire resources with a high value from another country or disputed territory. Similarly, rebel
groups may fight to acquire or protect control of valuable natural resources and trade routes. Commercial value is therefore an important factor to consider when evaluating why and how people incorporate natural resources into their reasons for waging war and resisting peace.

The fourth variable is symbolic value. The symbolic value of a resource may relate to its significance as a site or object of cultural or religious history, making the resource of such great importance that people will kill other people to control it. Resources may also have symbolic significance for politicians, who may incorporate the symbolic significance of a piece of land (e.g. Jerusalem, the Falkland Islands, the Ruhr) into political and economic power struggles in ways that contribute to violence and war.

The fifth variable is mode of production. The mode of production of natural resources and its relationship to armed conflict has been inadequately investigated and under theorized. The mode of production may vary from a process that is nearly totally mechanized (requiring large capital inputs but low labor requirements), to a process virtually absent of modern technology (requiring low capital input but high labor needs), with many grades in between. In conflict zones, the mode of production of a resource at the time a war begins will influence how that resource is exploited. Industrial production may produce greater quantities than artisanal production methods, but be more vulnerable to disruption during a war. The size of the force required for security and coercive capacity will vary according to location and value considerations, as well as labor requirements for the production process.

The sixth variable is international acquiescence. International acquiescence is an important variable in understanding how and why governments and rebel groups exploit natural resources during armed conflict, yet has also been understudied and undertheorized. By “international acquiescence,” I specifically mean the extent to which powerful governments and international organizations tolerate or facilitate the exploitation of natural resources in ways that cause or sustain violent conflict. Acquiescence can be direct, for example in the case of bilateral or multilateral budgetary assistance to a government that is occupying and plundering the natural resources of a neighboring country. Acquiescence can also be indirect and oblique, for example by preventing imposition of United Nations Security Council sanctions against a government engaged in illegal resource exploitation in a neighboring country.

I argue these six variables enable a salient analysis of how people incorporate exploitation of natural resources into violent acts including war. Moreover, I argue these variables should be collectively analyzed with respect to particular resources (e.g. gold, land), rather than to broad concepts of natural resources as primary commodity exports. The interaction of these variables can help to determine the likelihood of conflict, as well as enable identification of ways to prevent or resolve conflict. For example, the existence of a high-value, portable resource (such as gold) close to the border of a predatory state that has strong backing from major international powers may increase the likelihood of an international war. Alternatively, during a state of war (internal or international), resources with a high symbolic and/or commercial value may increase the duration of
conflict as combatants fight to retain control over access to the resource, or spawn new conflicts, leading to a polywar. This may particularly be the case when a foreign occupying power that has strong geopolitical support is controlling areas of artisanal production where a portable, valuable resource (such as gold) is being artisanally produced, and can be easily and furtively transported to markets in the occupying power’s country. I discuss the interaction of variables further in chapter 7.
Chapter 2. Historical Roots of Congo’s Polywar

This chapter describes and analyzes the history of the Congo, with a focus on the history of the Ituri District in northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The time frame covers roughly the 16th Century until the start of the first Congo war in October 1996. I focus on the major events and processes that shaped the contemporary political economy of the Ituri District, and which provide a context for the subsequent chapters. The history of Ituri contains numerous themes that help to explain the 1999-2007 war. Some of these themes start in pre-colonial times, some emerged during the colonial era, and others developed under the rule of Mobutu Sese Seko.

There are seven major historical themes relevant to understanding the onset, duration, and character of polywar in Ituri:

1. A history of foreign intrusion to exploit Ituri’s natural resources and people
2. A history of collaboration and resistance among Ituri’s tribes with varied foreign intruders
3. A history of colonial manipulation of different ethnic groups and tribes in Ituri to support colonial exploitation of Ituri’s natural resources
4. A history of sporadic Hema-Lendu violence during the colonial period and Mobutu era
5. A history of Hema dominance over Lendu in politics, religion, and business
6. A history of declining industrial gold production and increasing artisanal gold production during Mobutu’s rule
7. A history of increased commercial ties with Uganda during the late Mobutu era

This chapter illustrates these themes, although it does not extensively discuss their ties to war in Ituri, which will be the subject of subsequent chapters.

In writing this chapter, I drew upon interviews conducted in the Ituri District, primary and secondary source literature, and statistical information on gold production and foreign aid. I place greater emphasis on the history of the Ituri District’s Djugu Territory, since this is the region containing Ituri’s largest gold mines and the place where the war in Ituri started. I also focus on two ethnic groups in Ituri—the Hema and the Lendu—because of the large role the leadership of these groups played in the onset and duration of conflict in Ituri. I broadly use the term “Congo” and “Congolese” to refer to the country and its people, although for some of the time periods I am describing there was not a Congo nation or Congolese identity among the population. I also use “Zaire” to describe the Congo during the Mobutu era.

**GEOGRAPHY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Ituri District takes its name from the Ituri River, which runs south and then west through the heart of the district and empties into the Congo River. The Congo’s vast equatorial forest reaches its northeastern boundary in Ituri, where the landscape becomes savanna. The highest elevations are found in eastern Ituri in the Blue Mountains, which form a natural barrier between the rest of Ituri and Lake Albert. These mountains rise to
over 5,000 feet, with the highest peak being 8,020 feet at Aboro Mountain, to the southeast of Kpandroma.

The Ituri District is well endowed with natural resources. The land is fertile and conducive to various agricultural activities; the region’s inhabitants were engaged in farming and cattle raising prior to the late-nineteenth century arrival of Afro-Arab slave traders and Belgian colonialists. Colonialists introduced crops including coffee and tobacco that are still produced and exported from Ituri today. The large, though receding, Ituri forest is a source of timber, especially for markets in Uganda. Ituri also contains megafauna including the Okapi and elephants; the latter were largely hunted to extinction in Ituri by the early twentieth century by ivory poachers supplying world markets (Bakonzi 1982, 356). Ituri contains large gold deposits in the Kilo gold belt (discussed further below), as well as petroleum deposits around Lake Albert. Lake Albert also supports a substantial fish industry, which operates mainly from Kasenyi and Tschomia at the southwestern corner of the lake.

The borders of the Ituri District have changed over time (Meesen 1951, 7-9; Martelli 1962, 147), but presently the northern tip of Ituri borders Sudan, while the eastern face borders Uganda. The southern and western borders abut North Kivu province and Haut-Uélé district (Orientale province), respectively. Administratively, Ituri is within Orientale Province; the capital of Ituri is Bunia. Ituri contains five Territories, each of which has numerous Collectivities.

THE PEOPLE
The present-day Ituri District encompasses an area that includes people from numerous ethnic groups. According to linguistic classifications, the populations of Ituri fall under either the Bantu group (Benue-Congo language family) or the Central Sudanic and Eastern Sudanic groups (Chari-Nile language family). The Bantu populations include the Hema, Bira, and Banyali. Later, during the colonial era, members of another Bantu group—the Nande—came to Ituri from North Kivu; these Nande were mainly businessmen engaged in the trade of agricultural crops and gold (MacGaffey 1987, 144-145). The Central Sudanic groups include the Lendu, Okebo, Logo, and Lugbara. The Eastern Sudanic groups include the Alur and Kakwa. The Mbuti pygmies inhabiting the Ituri forest—who are considered the original inhabitants of the region (Meesen 1951, 172-173; Southall 1953, 23, 222)—spoke Bantu and Sudanic languages at the time of colonial intrusion, depending on their proximity to groups speaking those languages (cf. Hart and Hart 1986, 29-55).

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1 For greater detail about the geography, climate, and natural resources of the Ituri District, see Meesen 1951.
2 For more on petroleum, see Meesen 1951, 134-135; Johnson 2003.
3 Ituri was supposed to become its own province in 2009 but political disputes have prevented this from happening.
4 These are Aru, Mahagi, Djugu, Irumu, and Mambasa.
5 This paragraph is largely drawn from Bakonzi 1982, 34.
Among these populations, I will focus on those that played a major role in the war in Ituri. The two main groups for the purpose of my dissertation are the Hema and the Lendu, although other groups including the Bira, Banyali, and Alur also feature prominently the history of the war. In addition to the “indigenous” Ituri groups, later in my dissertation I will also discuss the role of the Nande, who arrived during the colonial era and whose “foreign” status became a point of contention during the war in Ituri.

Among the first groups to migrate into present-day Ituri after the Mbuti (pygmées) were the Banyali and the Bira, who both arrived in the early 16th Century. The Banyali arrived from the east, passing through the Semliki valley south of Lake Albert and settling in southern and central Ituri, in the present-day areas of Irumu territory and in mountains of the Kilo belt of western Djugu territory (Meesen 1951, 174-175). The Bira traveled around the same time and along the same route as the Banyali, settling in present-day Itumu and Djugu territories (Meesen 1951, 178).

Also during the 16th Century, the Lendu6 traveled south with other tribes from present-day southern Sudan and settled to the southwest, west, and northwest of Lake Albert.7 Some Lendu settled in an area that later became northern Ituri (in present-day Mahagi and Djugu territories), while others traveled farther south and settled in present-day Irumu territory near Gety; the former are called Lendu or Bbale, while the latter are known as Ngiti. Some pockets of northern Lendu ended up in Ugandan territory when the Congo-Uganda border became finalized in the early 1900s (Southall 1953, 152-153, 280-281). The Lendu were traditionally farmers, although they later acquired livestock from the Hema who moved into Lendu territory (Meesen 1951, 185).

During the 18th Century, two groups migrated into Ituri that came to dominate the Lendu.8 One group was the Hema, who traveled to Ituri from the Bunyoro kingdom in present-day Uganda (Meesen 1951, 179). Some Hema settled in present-day Djugu territory to the west of Lake Albert; these Hema became known as the Gegere, or northern Hema. The Gegere established political and economic dominance over the Lendu who were already present in this area (Meesen 1951, 181; Thiry 2004, 16, 27, 29, 109-113; Pottier 2008, 432), but this was a relationship more akin to servitude than slavery, and as a sign of their close relationship the Gegere adopted the Lendu language.9 The Gegere also married Lendu women, “had their dwellings built according to the Lendu model; practised agriculture learned from Lendu; and had adopted certain matriarchal principles from Lendu” (Pottier 2010, 37; cf. Pottier 2008, 429). The integration and peaceful co-existence of Hema and Lendu in northern Ituri prior to and

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6 “Lendu” is an Alur term for this tribe, which the Alur found when they arrived in Ituri. Although the Lendu have adopted this term and now commonly refer to themselves as Lendu, they also call themselves Bbale (northern Lendu) and Ngiti (southern Lendu). Cf. Southall 1953, 152.

7 Interviews with Lendu politicians, administrators, and teachers in Kpandroma, DRC, June 2009; Meesen 1951, 176.

8 Pottier (2010, 33) states the migration took place starting in the late 17th Century.

9 Pottier states: “To the north, in Djugu territory, Hema and Lendu developed relations of subservience, but Lendu imposed on Hema their language and made them adopt certain practices and values.” Pottier fails to explain why the Hema would dominate the Lendu politically and economically and yet let the Lendu dictate to the Hema what language they speak (Pottier 2008, 432).

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during the early colonial period are significant because in 1999 it was in this area where war started between Hema and Lendu communities.

In contrast to northern Ituri, relations between Hema and Lendu in southern Ituri were variable. Around the same time as Hema settlement in northern Ituri, other Hema settled in present-day Irumu territory, to the west and southwest of Lake Albert. Here too the Hema established dominance over the southern Lendu (called Ngiti), although the Hema retained their native language (Kihema or Nyoro). In general, the southern Hema were cattle herders who traded with farmers, but over time the Lendu acquired cattle and became major herders (Pottier 2010, 44-45); thus there was not a clear pastoral-agricultural divide among the population of southern Ituri. In addition, the Hema of southern Ituri were nomadic, with power decentralized among at least seven groups or clans (cf. Thiry 1996). By the time the Belgian colonial authorities established control in southern Ituri, Hema dominance had significantly diminished; Lendu were politically and economically independent of the Hema and other southern Ituri tribes (cf. Pottier 2010, 41-42).

The second group to migrate to Ituri in the 18th century was the Alur, who arrived amidst migrations of the Luo people from what is now southern Sudan. The Alur settled in the savannas to the northwest and north of Lake Albert, in an area that straddled both sides of the current Congo-Uganda border (Southall 1953, 5-6; Meesen 1951, 183). Like the Hema, the Alur established dominance over the Lendu in northern Ituri, in present-day Mahagi and northern Djugu territories (Southall 1953, 152-153, 199, 231). The Alur engaged in both cattle herding and agriculture (Southall 1953, 231).

**FOREIGN INTRUSIONS**

Ituri’s geographical position in the “heart of Africa” resulted in the relatively late arrival of foreigners seeking ivory, slaves, and power. As noted by historian David Northrup: “Beginning in the 1860s eastern Zaïre’s relatively peaceful isolation was disturbed, disrupted, and, in many cases destroyed by the intrusion of armed traders and conquerors from the Nile, Zanzibar, and Europe” (Northrup 1988, 21). The initial Afro-Arab invaders from Zanzibar and the Nile differed from prior movements of Africans (e.g. Zande and Mangbetu) into northeastern Congo because they had ties to foreign markets in ivory and slaves, while later invaders from Europe claimed an anti-slavery mission but came in pursuit of ivory and gold. The combined effect of these intrusions was a transformation of social relations and the political economy of Ituri. The events and processes that accompanied these intrusions have become incorporated into local narratives and grievances, and are frequently invoked in contemporary discourses to explain the causes and intensity of the recent war in Ituri.

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10 For a detailed discussion of the southern Hema, see Thiry 2004.
11 Thiry (1996, 10) notes that certain groups of Hema who lived along the edge of present day Djugu and Irumu territories spoke both the Lendu and Hema (Nyoro) languages.
The first arrival of foreign commercial forces arrived from the north into present-day Haut-Uélé District, to the northwest of Ituri. Starting in the 1820s, Arab and non-Arab Sudanese men traveled up the Nile River (to the south) from Khartoum to procure ivory and slaves.\textsuperscript{13} In 1865, one group of traders arrived in the Mangbetu kingdom north of the Uélé River, west of Ituri, and distributed guns to local chiefs who fought commercial wars to control ivory exploitation (Keim 1983, 17-19). These commercial invaders never directly entered Ituri, but in 1879 their presence in northern Congo prompted the Egyptian authorities running Sudan to send officials into northern Ituri (and northern Congo and northern Uganda) to control the slave and ivory trades (see discussion, below).

A second wave of armed forces seeking slaves and ivory entered Ituri from the west. These invaders, often described as Afro-Arab,\textsuperscript{14} consisted of Zanzibari bosses and their armies, which included men from Manyema who were captured by the Zanzibaris but became soldiers in the service of the Zanzibari traders (Northrup 1988, 26). As noted by Northrop: “The extension of the Zanzibari ivory trade west of lake Tanganyika appears to have been promoted by a rise of ivory prices in 1856-57 and facilitated by the shipment of unprecedented quantities of firearms inland from Zanzibar beginning in 1859-60” (Northrup 1988, 24). These traders slowly expanded their territory to the north, down the Congo River and up its tributaries. Around 1887, agents working for the (in)famous Zanzibari slave and ivory trader Tippu Tip travelled up the Aruwimi river into present-day Ituri; around the same time another group independent of Tippu Tip reportedly maimed and killed large numbers of people in the Ituri river valley during their pursuit of ivory and slaves (Northrup 1988, 26).

Explorers and colonialists working for Europeans were the third and ultimately most disruptive group to arrive in Ituri. Their initial intrusions were small and disparate, with a few explorers arriving and then leaving. But within a few decades of initial contact, Belgian colonialists were radically transforming local social relations and creating a new political economy of Ituri. In the name of eradicating slavery they created a new and brutal system of forced labor, which was used to extract not only ivory but also gold and other natural resources.

The first Europeans to set foot in Ituri came up the Nile from Sudan. In March 1864, British explorer Samuel Baker followed the Nile to (and named) Lake Albert (Meesen 1951, 14-18), but his route took him through what is today northern Uganda and not into present-day Ituri or Congo (Moorehead 2000, 81-105). A decade later, in 1874, Charles Gordon—a British soldier and administrator then in the employ of the Egyptian government—created the Sudanese province of Equatoria, which included parts of northern Ituri in what was known as the Lado District (later called the Lado Enclave) (Southall 1953, 280). One of Gordon’s officers—Italian soldier Romolo Gessi—was

\textsuperscript{13} Although these traders sought ivory from the beginning, Keim (1983, 1, 18) reports the slave-trading period lasted only from 1873-1882.

\textsuperscript{14} Hochschild (1998, 28) notes that although Europeans usually described these slave traders as Arab, they are more accurately described as Afro-Arab since many hailed from coastal Kenya and Tanzania. “Many had adopted Arab dress and Islam, but only some of them were of even partly Arab descent.”
probably the first European to set foot in Ituri during March-April 1876, when he
circumnavigated Lake Albert (Moorehead 2000, 188-189). In June 1877, another of
Gordon’s officers—American soldier A.M. Mason—made a more detailed examination
of Lake Albert, during which he stopped at several villages on the Ituri shoreline (Mason-
Bey and Baker 1877-1878, 225-229).

In 1878, the Egyptian government appointed a German physician known as Emin Pasha
to be governor of Sudan’s Equatoria province. In 1879 he traveled to northern Ituri (in
present-day Mahagi Territory) and met with Alur chiefs (Southall 1953, 280). After
1885, when a native Sudanese army under the Mahdi defeated Gordon and captured
Khartoum, Emin Pasha became cut off from Egyptian/British support. He occupied
Wadelai, in present-day Uganda at the northern tip of Lake Albert, and stole cattle and
other provisions from local tribes. Southall states: “In his desperate straits Emin had little
choice but to provision himself and his forces by raiding Alur cattle and granaries,
preferably attacking the more distant populations with the assistance of the nearer chiefs,
with whom he shared some of his booty” (Southall 1953, 280).

COLONIALISM

While Emin Pasha was stealing cattle in one corner of the Congo, Belgium’s King
Leopold II was stealing the entire country. Leopold was interested in acquiring an
overseas colony, but by the 1880s, only the underexplored center of the African continent
lay unclaimed. In 1876 he created the International African Association, which
ostensibly had a philanthropic mission to end the slave trade (Hochschild 1998, 42-46),
but really served Leopold’s interest in finding an African territory to claim as his own.
Leopold narrowed his interest to Congo after Henry Morton Stanley’s famous 1874-1877
voyage across Africa and down the Congo River (Martelli 1962, 20-22). When Stanley
returned to Europe in 1878, King Leopold moved swiftly to secure his employment for
another expedition to Congo. Leopold was particularly interested in Congo’s ivory,
which Stanley had found to be plentiful during his voyage (Hochschild 1998, 63-64).

Between 1879 and 1885, King Leopold firmly established his claim to Congo and its still
ill defined riches. In 1879, Leopold sent Stanley back to Congo to establish a
transportation route up the Congo River. Also in 1879, Leopold created the International
Association of the Congo as a successor to the defunct Africa association. Leopold’s
interests in Congo were still officially philanthropic so as not to arouse concern among
the French, Germans, British and Portuguese who were all encroaching on the Congo
from different directions. In a coup for Leopold, in April 1884 the United States of
America became the first country to recognize Leopold’s claim to the Congo; the
American action was tied to both Leopold’s “anti-slavery” mission and domestic racial
politics in the United States (Hochschild 1998, 75-82). America’s recognition created
political momentum for Leopold, which he skillfully took advantage of, maneuvering
among various European powers to formally acquire Congo during the 1885 Berlin
Conference (Martelli 1962, 87-127).
King Leopold controlled the new Congo Free State through the International Association for the Congo, but there were limitations on his power. The Berlin agreement included free trade provisions for Congo that established a free trade area known as the “conventional basin” covering most of present-day Congo, and prohibited import duties (Northrup 1988, 40; Martelli 1962, 100-101). Leopold accepted these conditions as necessary to secure the consent of France, England, Germany and other countries, but over time Leopold usurped total power over the people, natural resources, and economy of Congo (discussed further below). On 29 May 1885, King Leopold changed the name of the Africa association supposedly controlling Congo to the *Etat Indépendant du Congo*, or the Congo Free State.

The Berlin agreement did not have an immediate effect in Ituri. The part of Ituri to the immediate west of Lake Albert and up along the present-day border with Uganda were still nominally under the control of Emin Pasha (Meesen 1951, 24), but in reality, the vast area of northeastern Congo, northern Uganda and southern Sudan were not under the effective control of any colonial powers. Leopold sought control of this region in order to have access to the Nile River, and therefore a “back door” to the Congo (Martelli 1962, 144-145). Ironically, the Mahdist victory in 1885 over General Gordon in Khartoum opened the door for Leopold to gain entry to northeastern Congo, through a relief expedition to rescue Emin Pasha.

In 1887 and 1888, Leopold’s agent Henry Morton Stanley led the “Emin Pasha Relief Expedition” to rescue the stranded administrator, who was camped just north of Lake Albert. In this privately funded expedition, prompted by British public concern over the fate of Emin Pasha, Stanley arrived in Ituri by traveling up the Congo River to the Aruwimi River, and then up the Ituri River to the southwestern corner of Lake Albert, near present-day Kasenyi (Stanley 2001, 312-350). Stanley brought extra porters on this trip to carry out some of the 75 tons of ivory that Emin Pasha had accumulated during his isolation (Meesen 1951, 32). Stanley fought his way through Ituri, killing and plundering on his way to Emin Pasha, in a journey Hochschild describes as “brutal” and “a disaster for almost everyone involved” (Hochschild 1998, 98; Meesen 1951, 31-38).

Stanley’s expedition brought him in contact with the Hema and Lendu tribes in southern Ituri. In general, Stanley received cooperation and assistance from the Hema, but encountered resistance from the Lendu, who are known as Ngiti in southern Ituri. Stanley praised the Hema as “tall, finely-formed men, with almost European features,” and “true descendants of the Semitic tribes” who were one of the “dominating classes” in their region (Stanley 2001a, 340-343). Stanley further described the Hema as a “fine featured race” who are “amiable, quiet and friendly neighbors,” “with whom we have never exchanged angry words” (Stanley 2001a, 343). By contrast, Stanley described the Lendu as abrasive and violent. Stanley reported that in one incident in December 1887, a

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15 This area included the Congo River basin and its estuary and the Atlantic coast between the southern limit of Gabon and the northern limit of Angola (Martelli 1962, 100).
16 Stanley refers to the Hema as Wahuma; he calls the Lendu the Balegga. See also Thiry 2004.
17 Pottier (2010, 47) states: “It was to [the Hema] that [Stanley] owed the success of his Emin Pasha expedition.”
group of Lendu were “vociferating fiercely” and pouring “storms of abuse” upon
Stanley’s men and proxy forces when the latter cleared Lendu villages and stole the
Lendu’s cattle (Stanley 2001, 288). Stanley also remarks that in January 1889, a group of
Lendu assembled to attack Stanley’s expedition, but that Hema warriors helped to defend
Stanley and defeat the Lendu (Stanley 2001a, 114; cf. Meesen 1951, 43). Stanley and
Emin Pasha, who apparently did want rescue but just resupply, left Ituri in April 1889
and made their way to Zanzibar.

In 1891, just two years after he left with Stanley, Emin Pasha returned to Ituri. Emin had
turned down King Leopold’s offer to be administrator for northeastern Congo, but
accepted an offer from the German government to lead an expedition into that same area.
The expedition traveled north along the Ituri River, passing through present-day Irumu
and Djugu territories. In mid-September 1891, the expedition stopped at the village of
Nyalı chief Kr’lo, near where two geologists employed by the State would find later find
gold (Thiry 2002, 18). During their passage, the team noted widespread damage caused
by Congolese Manyema raiders (RGS 1892, 544), who sought ivory and slaves for
Zanzibari trade networks and sometimes took “captives who might be exchanged for
ivory” (Page 1974, 78-79).

Some Ituri tribes reportedly collaborated with the Manyema. According to Southall, “the
period immediately before the Belgian occupation was one of disorder and violence,”
influenced by “the coming of the [Arab] trade in slaves and arms, in which the Mambisa
[Alur] participated enthusiastically if briefly” (Southall 1953, 224). Thiry notes that
some Nyali, including Chief Kr’lo (discussed later), were friendly with the Manyema;
Kr’lo reportedly received three guns and ten slaves from the Manyema for his
cooperation with their efforts (Thiry 2002, 88).

As shown by the previous discussion, during the first decade of colonialism in Congo
there was no permanent colonial presence in Ituri, but there were two violent phases
linked to foreign intrusion. Stanley not only killed and plundered his way through Ituri
on his rescue expedition, but also was the first to characterize the Hema as noble and
cooperative and to describe the Lendu as belligerent and uncooperative. During
interviews with Lendu leaders in 2009, they repeatedly referred to the “ideology”
created by Stanley that successive authorities in Ituri and Congo have adopted. The
Lendu leaders claimed this ideology poisoned the minds of colonial authorities, leading
to policies and practices that discriminated against Lendu populations, for example by
excluding them from positions of political power and limiting their economic
opportunities. The other violent phase was the killing and plundering by the Manyema in
pursuit of ivory and slaves. The combination of foreign intervention and Congolese
involvement in armed conflict and resource plundering in Ituri during the first decade of
colonialism foreshadowed similar interventions during the recent war in Ituri.

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18 The Manyema raiders are also referred to as Wangwana. For more information, see Page (1974, 69-84).
19 These interviews with local politicians, administrators, buseinssmen and teachers took place during July
2009 in Kpandroma, Walendu Pitsi collectivite, Djugu territory, Ituri district.
The Congo Free State finally established a presence in Ituri around 1894. Leopold’s initial interests in Ituri were to procure ivory, of which there was still plenty in Ituri at that time, and to extend his authority through northeastern Congo to the Nile River. Military officers employed by King Leopold in the Force Publique were the first State agents to arrive in Ituri, in the area now known as Djugu territory, “to combat and disperse [those engaged in the slave trade] and establish posts of the [Congo Free] state.” In 1894, the State established small military outposts in the village of the Nyali chief Kr’lo (called Kilo by the Belgians) and at Mahagi (Meesen 1951, 55). The same year, King Leopold signed an agreement with Great Britain that gave him the Lado Enclave—a large swath of territory extending north into present-day southern Sudan—thus providing the colony with formal access to the Nile River (Meesen 1951, 55; cf. Northrop 1988, 12). The Congo Free State established a presence at Wadelai, on the west back of the Nile in present-day Uganda, and in 1896 dispatched troops to present-day Haut-Uélé district near the border with Sudan.

In 1897, a revolt within Force Publique disrupted Leopold’s plans to expand the colonial presence in Ituri (Thiry 2002, 18-19, 88-89; Hochschild 1999, 128-129). The revolt started in Haut-Uélé’s Adranga region, northwest of Ituri, when Batetela soldiers (from Kasai) rebelled against their Belgian officers, killing some and forcing others to flee. Baron Francis Dhanis, the military commander in the area, arrived in Kilo and evacuated the colonial force there, moving them west to the Ituri River to block the escape of the rebels. On 17 March 1897, a Force Publique detachment tried to stop the revolting soldiers from crossing the Ituri River at the village of Ekwanga (present-day Salambongo), but the rebels defeated the forces under Dhanis, who fled south to Irumu (Meesen 1951, 56-57). The rebels continued to move south, pursued by Leopold’s soldiers, and did not return to Ituri.

In 1899, the Force Publique reestablished its presence at Kilo after a nearly two-year absence. Yet by 1901, the colonialists had a presence in only three locations in Ituri: at Mahagi, near the present-day border with Uganda; at Kilo, where there were rumors of gold deposits; and at Irumu, a town in southern Ituri that enabled access to other settlements in eastern Congo (Northrup 1988, 92). During 1901, in another example of Congolese resistance to colonial intrusion, Alur chiefs directed attacks on colonial caravans traveling between Mahagi and Kilo (Meesen 1951, 58-59). During the next decade, colonial authorities increased their presence in Ituri and carved the region into administrative zones (Thiry 2004, 30), making legible in maps an authority it did not yet fully possess on the ground.

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20 Meesen (1951, 55) puts the date of first colonial occupation as 1894, but Southall (1953, 281) states the State established a presence in 1893 at Mahagi; Thiry (2002, 88) puts the first occupation in 1895.
21 The Force Publique was officially created on 5 August 1888 (Kaplan 1979, 255).
23 Hochschild (1999, 128-129) says the Batetela soldiers rebelled because they were treated poorly and subjected to harsh conditions, while Meesen (who worked for the Belgian government) says the Batetela were notorious for their indiscipline (Meesen 1951, 56).
Gold and the new Ituri

The colonial discovery of gold marked the beginning of a new era in Ituri. To exploit Ituri’s gold, the State vastly increased its presence in Ituri and established a brutal system of forced labor. The outright violence that characterized early colonial gold mining was slowly replaced by a system of structural violence and exploitation. The increased State presence also enabled non-native settlers to establish plantations and ranches in Ituri, thus further opening up the region to colonial presence and control.

The first colonial report of gold in Ituri dates to 1895, although exploitation did not begin until 1905. In 1895, a Belgian officer, then-Lt. Henry, conducted a geological survey in northeastern Congo and reported finding gold alluvium in Ituri. Historian Agayo Bakonzi argues that King Leopold did not take Henry’s report seriously, since Leopold did not further investigate Ituri’s gold until 1902, despite his desperate need for sources of funding for the State (Bakonzi 1982, 21). Two facts suggest a different interpretation. First, the Batetela revolt of 1897 and other resistance by Ituri groups through the first years of the 1900s—reportedly supported by slave and ivory traders from Sudan (Meesen 1951, 59; cf. Southall 1953, 281)—limited the State’s ability to explore for Ituri’s gold. Second, the State focus in the late 1890s was on exploiting rubber to meet growing world demands (Hochschild 1998, 158-166; Martelli 1962, 141-142); therefore the State devoted its limited resources to exploiting rubber from areas it controlled. A combination of political instability and limited colonial resources in Ituri are likely responsible for the delay in Leopold’s decision to follow-up the early report of gold.

Regardless of the exact reasons for the timing of the exploration, in 1902 King Leopold dispatched two geologists to Ituri to explore for gold. Earlier royal decrees in 1888 and 1893 had reserved all mineral resources for the state, thus theoretically establishing the government’s property rights over mining areas (Bakonzi 1982, 111). In January 1903, two Australian prospectors named Hannam and O’Brien arrived at Kilo and soon confirmed the presence of alluvial gold in the Agola River, which is a tributary of the Ituri River (Meesen 1951, 60; Bakonzi 1982, 22). In 1904 King Leopold sent Hannam back to Ituri to start mining for gold. Hannam used equipment that arrived at Mombasa, Kenya and traveled overland through Uganda on the recently completed Uganda railway, to Lake Albert and into Ituri. Also in 1904, Chief Kr’lo moved his village to the site on the Agola River where Hannam started his mining operations (Bakonzi 1982, 22); this site became known as Kilo (although it is now known as Vieux-Kilo) (cf. Meesen 1951, 55; Tourist Bureau 1951, 686; Thiry 2002, 89).

In July 1905, at the direction of King Leopold, Hannam started mining gold in Ituri near Kilo. The State had previously designated this area as part of the Domaine Privé (see Land Policy, below), which made commercial activity the exclusive right of the Congo Free State, but in 1906 the designation was changed to Fondation de la Couronne, which made it the personal property of King Leopold. In 1908, when King Leopold transferred the Congo Free State to the Government of Belgium, thus creating the Belgian

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24 After Henry defeated the Batetela rebels on 15 July 1897 at Lindi, he became known as Henry de la Lindi; he later became a General.
25 The area became a “Fondation de la Couronne” (Meesen 1951, 60).
Congo, the colonial government took control of the gold mines. In 1911, the State started
gold mining farther north in present-day Haut-Uélé district, in the valley of the Moto
River. The entire gold mining area in northeast Congo consequently became known as
Kilo-Moto.

Gold mining had a profound impact in Ituri and transformed local social relations and the
regional political economy in ways that continue to be felt today. The first colonial
transportation routes led to the Kilo goldfields, and “[t]he agricultural policy, labor
recruitment and economic decisions in the region were directly influenced by and
subordinated to the activities of the gold mines” (Bakonzi 1982, 16-17). The colonial
focus on gold mining in Ituri remained true at least through the 1930s, by which time the
colonial economy had diversified into coffee growing, cattle rearing, and timber
exploitation, thereby lessening the importance of gold.

Given the relatively small State presence in Ituri when gold mining began, one of the
first State projects was to create transportation routes to support the mines at Kilo. In the
early 1900s—as with today—commercial products arrived in Ituri from the east, through
Uganda and the port at Mombasa, Kenya; this was (and remains) a faster and easier route
to Ituri than overland from the west via the Congo River. Until 1908, supplies for the
Kilo mines traveled through Uganda to Lake Albert, from where they were loaded on
boats and transported to Mahagi port at the north end of the lake. From there, forced
laborers from various Ituri tribes pulled small carts (called Hamilcars) with loads up to
500 kg, and porters carried individual loads more than 140 miles from Mahagi port to the
Kilo mines (Bakonzi 1982, 129). Starting in 1910, transportation to Kilo went via
Masindi, Uganda to Lake Albert, then on boats to Kasenyi, at the southwestern part of the
lake, and then on chariots pulled by oxen and Iturian people to Kilo. After 1915, Boer
businessmen from South Africa handled the transport of merchandise to Kilo (Bakonzi
1982, 130). In 1917, the colonial administrator moved the headquarters of the Kilo mines
to the town of Bambu, southeast of Kilo,26 reportedly because there were fewer
mosquitoes at Bambu (Bakonzi 1982, 151).

From 1905 to 1999, colonial authorities increased gold production in the Kilo belt. As a
result, there were increased demands for both labor and food, the latter of which had to be
carried to the mines by porters.27 State authorities bribed and bullied chiefs in the Ituri
district to supply labor; colonial authorities also forced local farmers to both produce
extra food and carry it to the mines.28 In some years, the Kilo mines failed to procure
enough food to supply their workers (Bakonzi 1982, 134). Gold mining at this time was

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26 “The general management of Kilo-Moto was moved from Kilo in 1917 to Bambu. Bambu is an African
appellation of a Belgian name, ‘Van Boom’, who was a farmer settled in the region before Director
Manfroy moved his headquarters there. Kilo became known as ‘Vieux Kilo’, or Old Kilo, and Bambu has
been known as ‘Nouveau Kilo’, or New Kilo. Sometimes Bambu is called ‘Kilo-Mines’ or ‘Kilomines’. In
most official documents produced by Kilo-Moto, Kilomines is the name most used” (Bakonzi 1982, 31, fn. 21).
27 The first ox cart road to Kilo opened in 1908; however porters continued to play an important role in
supplying Kilo through the 1930s (Northrup 1988, 76, 199).
28 After 1916, the authorities at the Kilo mine stopped providing food directly to miners and instead gave a
small food allowance to workers to let them purchase their own food (Northrup 1988, 96, 99, 103).
focused on “skimming” gold from rivers and topsoil, involving physically demanding labor. The difficult working conditions in the Kilo belt were made tougher by the lack of food and adequate medical care, as well as the harsh treatment Congolese workers received from Belgian colonial authorities (Bakonzi 1982, 116-124, 154).

The Congo Free State’s actions to increase its social and political control in Ituri produced social tensions and resistance. An early example of this came in 1911, when the district commissioner (called Chef de Zone) appointed a Hema chief named Bomera to be Grand Chef for the populations of southern Ituri. Pottier (2010, 43) states the Chef de Zone established the chiefdom because he disliked the political fragmentation in the area; however, this claim is contradicted by the fact that the State had in May 1910 ordered district commissioners to establish chiefdoms as a form of indirect rule (Bakonzi 1982, 762-763). The action by the Chef de Zone was therefore simply in accordance with a directive from his superiors to more firmly establish control over local populations via local chief, paid a salary by the state, who would effectively act as a state agent. In addition, the appointment of Bomera in southern Ituri coincided with State efforts to clearly establish its boundaries with Uganda and Sudan (Bakonzi 1982, 763).

The State’s selection of Bomera was immediately controversial. After his arrival around 1900 in Ituri from western Uganda, Bomera had stolen cattle, stolen land, and killed people – particularly Lendu – thereby creating enemies and increasing tensions in the area (Thiry 1996, 223-228). Belgian authorities arrested Bomera in 1910 because of his actions; however, in search of a Grand Chef and on the recommendation of a Canadian missionary, the Belgian Chef de Zone appointed Bomera to be a state agent and local leader (Thiry 1996, 229).

Most Hema clans in southern Ituri reportedly resented Bomera (Pottier 2010, 43), but Bomera’s actions prompted a violent reaction from Lendu chiefs. After his appointment, Bomera exacted revenge upon Lendu villages with whom he had prior disputes, stealing more cattle, burning at least one village, and killing more people (Thiry 1996, 230-231). Lendu clans revolted and, on 4 December 1911, killed Bomera and 200 Hema villagers in a decisive battle. The colonial authorities reacted swiftly and brutally, and with the help of a Bira chief, stole cattle from Lendu populations that were then given to Hema people (Thiry 1996, 234-235). In 1914, the Belgian authorities abandoned the effort to establish one chief, creating instead nine multi-ethnic chieftaincies: six under Lendu chiefs and three under Hema chiefs (Thiry 1996, 237).

The appointment and death of Bomera is important because modern accounts of war in Ituri have cited it as an early example of Hema-Lendu violence. As described by Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2004, 390): “Already in 1911, the Lendu-Bindi in Irumu revolted against [Belgian-imposed] Hema dominance and killed the local Hema chief, Bomera, which led to a first conflict between the two communities.” Similarly, a 1999

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29 “The first dredger was ordered by Hannam in 1906 to exploit gold from the bed of the Shari River. He also ordered an installation of hydraulic mining. The upper works of the dredger was ordered from the WerfConrad Company in Holland. The hull had to be built locally in wood. But the upper works ordered in 1906 arrived in Kilo only in 1917, and started to work on the Shari River in 1919” (Bakonzi 1982, 115).
report on war in Ituri from the Congolese human rights groups ASADHO cited the assassination of Bomera as one of several incidents that took place during the colonial era as a result of Lendu resistance to Hema and colonial dominance (ASADHO 1999). The ASADHO report is notable because of its anti-Hema bias, evident in a sentence that precedes mention of the Bomera killing: “If the other ethnic groups of Ituri generally maintained peaceful enough relations, cohabitation with the Hema was always particularly difficult” (ASADHO 1999). Indeed, narratives presenting the rise and fall of Bomera as being a simple and quintessential example of Lendu resistance to Hema dominance fall into the trap, noted by Kalyvas (2006, 391), of explaining “the behavior of individuals by reference only to the actions of elites or vague ‘groups’.”

Even if some contemporary accounts exhibit an anti-Hema bias, older accounts were decidedly mixed. An account from 1912-1913 (quoted in Thiry 2004) describes the Lendu as “unruly and bellicose,” fighting amongst themselves and against the representatives of colonial authority.30 An article by the British explorer and elephant hunter Cuthbert Christy mentions a 1912-1913 incident in which the “warlike” southern Lendu, “who frequently try to assert their independence by raids on neighboring tribes and by defying the Government forces,” were threatening further attacks on colonial outposts (Christy 1915, 207). The Hema, who were generally favored by colonial authorities over the Lendu, were also criticized, as in this account from 1920: “It is only since the arrival of the European that the Bahema, always ambitious and deceitful, has tried to dominate the Walendu in order to better exploit him” (quoted in Pottier 2010, 43). Some colonial narratives also claimed the Hema had enslaved the Lendu, but Pottier (2010, 44) points out: “there is every possibility indeed that the persistent discourse of ‘slavery’ requiring ‘liberation’ was nothing but a pretext to intervene, separate, and domesticate the Lendu population.”

The Lendu were not alone in their resistance to the colonial authorities. The system of compulsory labor to support the gold mines in the Kilo belt was one reason for more widespread resistance:

During 1915-16 there were a series of separate rebellions among the Lendu, Lugbara, and Lese against the forced furnishing of foodstuffs, the Lendu even burning some mining camps. The latter revolt was suppressed with the aid of the new chief of Kilo, N’Goli (Goli), in a particularly bloody fashion that left a strong impression on the colonial administrators,31 and, one must imagine, on the Lendu (Northrup 1988, 102-103).

Another reason for resistance was the harsh working conditions at the Kilo mines. European managers received cash bonuses based on the productivity of their Congolese workers, which led to many abuses in the mining camps (Bakonzi 1982, 124). The colonial authorities contributed to these labor problems by pushing the European


managers at Kilo to increase gold production during World War I (Bakonzi 1982, 124), which “exhausted the known gold deposits as well as exhausting and alienating the miners” (Northrup 1988, 131).

In order to better control the local populations and protect the growing extraction of gold in the Kilo belt, the Belgian colonial authorities created new tribal and administrative units in Ituri.\(^{32}\) During 1917-1918, colonial authorities in Ituri started to organize the Lendu into several autonomous groups, thereby separating them from the Hema and Alur chiefs who previously ruled over them (Thiry 2004, 30-31; cf. Southall 1953, 152-153; Bakonzi 1982, 762-763). As a consequence of this colonial intervention, there were numerous conflicts among the Lendu, which the colonial authorities suppressed using the *Force Publique*, as well as increased tension between the Hema and Lendu (Thiry 2004, 31-32; Bakonzi 1982, 175-176).

By 1920, colonial authorities still had only loose administrative control in Ituri, which limited their ability to obtain forced labor to support mining and agriculture. Ituri had been more or less divided into two territories: Irumu covering southern and western Ituri, and Kilo covering the gold mining areas and northern Ituri. In 1920, State authorities divided Kilo into three territories: Kilo, Mahagi, and Djugu; it later created two other territories of Bunia and Gety, “in order to bring those areas under effective control and help [supply labor] to Kilo” (Bakonzi 1982, 706). In 1921, colonial authorities created in Djugu several *chefferies*, or chiefdoms, under the authority of Hema or Lendu chiefs (Thiry 2004, 32-34). As part of this effort, the State started to physically separate Hema and Lendu populations, believing this would quell conflict between the communities; this process continued into the 1930s (Pottier 2010, 38-39; Thiry 2004, 32). Despite this effort, many Hema and Lendu continued to live together in the same territories and villages, and intermarriage was common (UNSC 2004a, § 15).

Although State officials tried to better regulate and control the populations of Ituri, problems continued. At the end of 1921 the commissioner of Djugu territory proposed a stronger military presence in his region to suppress rebellions and ensure the extraction of gold (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1987, 33-34). Despite improvements in working conditions at the Kilo mines during the 1920s, continued colonial demands for labor and compulsory porterage caused thousands of Alur and Lendu to migrate to Uganda.\(^{33}\) As discussed below, State authorities started to achieve greater stability in their labor force and in Ituri more generally when they moved away from coercive systems of control.

As the State established its authority over the territory and population of Ituri, white settlers arrived and set up farms and businesses. The first settlers in Ituri, who arrived between roughly 1910 and 1920, were a mélange of British (from Kenya), Afrikkaners (from South Africa), Belgians, and Greeks, who variously raised cattle, grew food crops (for other white settlers and for gold miners), and planted coffee (Bakonzi 1982, 113,

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\(^{32}\) On 1 January 1920, the colonial government created a new administrative Territory called Nizi that was later renamed Djugu (Thiry 2004, 32).

\(^{33}\) Southall (1953, 319) notes that higher wages in Uganda, mainly for cotton production, also drew migrants away from Belgian Congo.
138, 178). In 1915, Indian traders arrived in Ituri from Uganda and established small shops at Dele, Kilo, and other locations (Bakonzi 1982, 113-114).

The 1910s were difficult years at the Kilo-Moto mines. There were chronic food shortages, extremely harsh working conditions that produced revolts and desertions, and overall poor management. The political situation in northeast Congo continued to be unpredictable, and in 1919 the Walese in the Moto goldfields and the Lugbara in Kibali-Ituri revolted (Bakonzi 1982, 173).

To help improve political stability and increase profitability, the Minister of Colonies decided to create a new company to manage the Kilo and Moto goldfields. A decree of 20 December 1919 created the Régie Industrielle des Mines de Kilo-Moto (Kilo-Moto) as an autonomous state corporation, with the entire profit of production belonging to the colonial treasury (Bakonzi 1982, 174). Up until 1920, production in the Kilo and Moto goldfields was artisanal and focused on surface alluvium; however, the new company undertook a process of industrialization and brought in better technology to enable underground reef mining. The new company also undertook increased exploration, particularly since known gold reserves were mainly exhausted during World War I (Bakonzi 1982, 174).

Also in 1919, the administrators at the Kilo mines also signed contracts with two farmers (one Greek, the other Belgian) to supply food to the mines; Kilo-Moto provided them with Congolese laborers (Bakonzi 1982, 138). In 1922, the colonial government started to encourage white settlement in Ituri to ensure the provision of food for the gold mines at Kilo; in addition the Kilo-Moto company created several farms in Ituri to grow crops and raise cattle for the mines (Bakonzi 1982, 213). Starting in 1924, some white farmers switched from growing food crops, which had a low profit margin, to growing coffee, which experienced increased international demand and rising prices (Bakonzi 1982, 218). These farmers took advantage of the improved transportation and communication networks created by colonial authorities for the gold mines to export coffee from Ituri to the Indian Ocean port at Mombasa via Uganda. In addition, starting in the late 1920s, white farmers switched to growing coffee and raising cattle after colonial authorities encouraged greater food production by Africans, who were paid less than Europeans for the same crops (Bakonzi 1982, 366, 375, 413).

By the mid-1920s, the State needed more revenue, particularly for transportation and infrastructure needs. In 1925, the Ministry of Colonies decided to raise money by transforming the Kilo-Moto mining enterprise from a solely State entity to a joint public-private venture (Bakonzi 1982, 262-264). In February 1926, the Belgians created the Société des Mines d’Or de Kilo-Moto (SOKIMO), which expanded operations and industrial mining. SOKIMO, or Kilo-Moto as it was popularly known, built housing, schools, and hospitals for the workers. Kilo-Moto also tightly controlled the mining areas, limiting access to workers and their families. Between 1935 and 1939, SOKIMO contributed 10 percent of the colonial budget to the colonial treasury, but Agayo Bakonzi notes: “The biggest contribution of the [Kilo-Moto] gold mines, however, remained above all its role as the cover of the Belgian and the Congolese francs” (Bakonzi 1982,
To more easily orient the region’s overall production to support gold mining, in 1928 the colonial government altered district boundaries to place the Kilo and Moto goldmines in one district, called Kibali-Ituri (Northrup 1988, 123). The colonial government also created new economic zones throughout Congo, which restricted African labor in Ituri for work in the mines (Bakonzi 1982, 267-269). At the same time, colonial authorities allowed for the allocation of lands for new European-run concessions to raise cattle and grow food crops (Bakonzi 1982, 411-412), leading to the creation of many concessions in Ituri during the 1930s and 1940s. Changes in the recruitment of labor and improvement in mining conditions during the 1930s led to a more permanent labor force in the Kilo mining area (Northrup 1988, 185; Bakonzi 1982, 416), as well as increased production of gold (Chart 1), although gold mining officials often clashed with white settlers in Ituri due to competition over labor and the tendency of settlers to overcharge the mines for food crops (Bakonzi 1982, 415-416, 686-690).

![Chart 1. Gold Production from Ituri's Kilo Belt, 1905-1960 (kg)](chart1)

This discussion has focused on how the State exercised its control over Ituri using a form of indirect rule that organized administrative districts under the control of ethnic chiefs. Racial stereotyping heavily influenced the function of colonial rule in Ituri by favoring the Hema over the Lendu, but it also forced the groups to physically separate, creating the notion that the Hema and Lendu could not live together. Although the separation was incomplete, particularly in rural areas (UNSC 2004a, § 15), it nonetheless exacerbated
historical inequalities between Hema and Lendu in Ituri (cf. Thiry 1996, 116-118, 245-247, 279-284). Pottier (2010, 49) has noted:

If negative stereotyping about Lendu continued throughout the colonial era, this had to do with the fact that Lendu, Lendu-Bindi [southern Ituri] especially, showed indifference, resistance and hostility toward the European occupier. It was hardly surprising…Facing ardent hostility, the convenient option for the colonizer was to create and perpetuate the myth of physical-cum-intellectual superiority that would put Hema in the ascendancy in matters of education, administration, and commerce. And on that myth the dominant discourse may have grafted another, that of Lendu subjugation since time immemorial.

The effectiveness of Belgian mythmaking is evident today. Leaders of the Hema community articulate Hema superiority over the belligerent and lazy Lendu,34 while Lendu leaders speak of victimhood and exclusion at the hands of greedy Hema.35 These stereotypes were also evident during the war in Ituri, discussed in later chapters.

Religion
During the entire colonial period, the colonial government was focused on extracting profit from Ituri, mainly through the gold mines in the Kilo belt. The State generally addressed social issues only as they related to its ability to maximize gold production, leaving functions such as health care and education largely in the hands of Catholic and Protestant missionaries. As discussed below, the relationship between the State and the missionaries was highly political, with implications for social relations among Ituri’s various groups.

European missionaries were present in Congo from the very beginnings of colonial presence to redeem and convert captives freed from Zanzibari traders and their Manyema allies (Northrup 1988, 35). Yet as the Congo Free State established itself and extracted ivory and rubber, Protestant missionaries were among the first to publicly express concern about the abuses and atrocities committed by State agents; this led King Leopold to favor Catholic missionaries, who were not as vocal about the plight of the Congolese (Bakonzi 1982, 687). One way the colonial state favored the Catholic Church was by restricting educational subsidies to Catholic missions until 1952 (Bakonzi 1982, 688). The State also only allowed Catholic missions within the Kilo belt, first at Kilo (1911) and later at Bambu and Mongbwalu. During the colonial era, the Catholic Church had a larger presence in Ituri than various Protestant denominations (Bakonzi 1982, 709-727).

Protestant missionaries did not establish themselves in Ituri until 1912. Due to this late arrival, and the State policy of privileging Catholic missions, the Protestant missions set up in the more remote and rural areas of Ituri (Bakonzi 1982, 709). The three most important Protestant missions in Ituri were the Africa Inland Misison (AIM, established 1912 in Ituri), the Heart of Africa Mission (HAM, established 1913), and the Immanuel Mission (EM, established 1925);36 most of the missionaries for all three groups were

34 Interviews with Hema community leaders and academics, July 2009, Bunia.
35 Interviews with Lendu elders, politicians, administrators and teachers, June and July 2009, Kpandroma.
36 In 1946, AIM claimed 83,860 followers in Province Orientale; HAM had 3,743 followers; and IM had 1,942 followers (Bakonzi 1982, 711).
Americans (Bakonzi 1982, 713). AIM established its base at Rethy, where it ran a well-respected hospital and schools, but had other outposts in rural villages in Ituri including at Aru, Linga, Blukwa and Bogoro.

The Catholic and Protestant missions that sprung up throughout the Ituri District were the sole providers of health care and education to the Ituri population. In addition, they provided the same services in separate facilities for white communities (Bakonzi 1982, 709-728). The Catholic missionaries also required children in their schools to provide free labor to grow food crops for the mission’s consumption and cash crops, such as coffee, for sale at markets (Bakonzi 1982, 728).

The Catholic Church had a greater impact in Ituri than the Protestant missions, in part due to the fact that the Catholic Church controlled the majority of the schools, especially in the Kilo mining area (Bakonzi 1982, 733). Although the Catholic Church ministered to all of Ituri’s tribes, it tended to provide greater opportunities for certain tribes, such as Hema and Alur, and to marginalize some tribes like the Lendu. The Catholic Church in Bunia also participated in the colonial (and post-colonial) State policy of favoring people of the Hema group, and marginalizing people of the Lendu ethnic group. The Catholic Church therefore helped to solidify and magnify divisions between the Hema and Lendu; this helped to create a sense of superiority among some Hema and of inferiority among some Lendu. During the recent war in Ituri, Hema and Lendu leaders highlighted these histories and manipulated latent divisions in order to pursue their respective political and economic objectives.

Colonial land policy

Although King Leopold nominally acquired the territory of Congo as a result of the 1885 Berlin conference, the free trade provisions of the Berlin agreement initially limited his ability to fully control and exploit Congo’s resources. To address this problem, Leopold and the Congo Free State slowly issued decrees about land and resources that gave them greater control of natural resource exploitation, agricultural production, and trade. The Congo Free State and later the Belgian Congo created land and resource policies that ensured the profits of Congolese labor and resources would largely benefit the colonizers and flow out of the country.

King Leopold’s first land decree came on 29 May 1885, which was the day he changed the name of Congo’s governing body to the Congo Free State. On that day, Leopold issued a decree from Brussels that declared all “vacant” land to be property of the state, but without defining what constituted vacant land (Hochschild 1998, 117). Starting in 1891, Leopold issued a series of decrees that more formally established his hegemony over vast territories and the human, plant, and animal resources contained therein. In response to concerns about the free trade status of Congolese territory, in 1892 Leopold...
created a new land policy that reserved some “vacant” lands for the exclusive use of the State while allowing commercial companies to operate in other areas (Martelli 1962, 139-141). Leopold also “claimed as state property all wild plants and animals on these lands—notably elephants and wild rubber plants—and imposed a labor tax on the Congolese people to be paid in ivory and latex or in other labor services” (Northrup 1988, 40-41). Leopold legally prohibited the Congolese people from hunting elephant or harvesting rubber unless they gave the products to the State (Martelli 1962, 138-139).

In the areas under the control of the State, the profits from ivory and rubber exploitation and Iturian labor were used to defray public expenses. For example, a 28 November 1893 decree authorized the collection of taxes in Province Orientale (including Ituri) to cover the expenses of the “Arab wars;” these taxes were collected in the form of rubber, ivory, and porterage (Northrup 1988, 41). Leopold also established a commission structure that incentivized his agents to force Congolese to sell ivory at low prices, but Free State agents also sometimes simply stole ivory collected by others (Hochschild 1998, 118). The coercive measures used by colonial agents to collect taxes and exploit labor and resources caused tremendous suffering and death among the people of Congo (Martelli 1962, 140-141).

Colonial land policy continued to evolve, but followed the same general pattern of facilitating maximum benefits for the colonizers and marginalizing local populations. A 3 June 1906 decree formally recognized native lands as those that were inhabited, cultivated or exploited in any manner by native Congolese people. All land that was not “native land” or otherwise registered was considered vacant and therefore public land. The Belgian Congo promulgated regulations in 1910 and 1911 that enabled the colonial government to lease vacant (public) lands to private individuals or corporations; these lands were known as concessions (Geographical Section 1920, 287).

In Ituri, the State granted concessions for gold mining, plantations, forestry, and fishing; I focus here on gold mining and plantations due to their relationships to contemporary armed conflict. The various incarnations of the Kilo-Moto company had exclusive rights over the most productive gold fields in the entire Congo in the Ituri and Haut-Uélé. Kilo-Moto exercised these rights by obtaining at least a dozen concessions for individual mining sites in Ituri, which were scattered throughout present-day western Djugu territory. At least four other companies obtained concessions for gold mining in Ituri during the colonial era, although these mines produced only a fraction of the gold that

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40 In 1934 and 1935, colonial decrees prohibited Congolese from selling their land rights to private parties (cf. Office d’information 1959, 206).

41 Lands could only be considered vacant after an official inquiry, which by decree of 31 May 1934 included a two-year waiting period for public comment on the disposition of the land.

42 The colonial government also sold some public lands—known as registered lands or concessions—to private investors, either directly or after they had “improved” the land while operating a concession (Office d’information 1959, 209-212). By 1957, the colonial government had allocated 6.72 million acres in concessions and sold 4.86 million acres in cessions throughout Congo (Office d’information 1960, 64).

43 In 1968, the government of Zaire consolidated into Concession 40 the colonial concessions of Vieux-Kilo, Pili-Pili, N’zébi, Kanga, Mongbwalu, Tshuru, Loga, Lutchunga, Dzipwambu, Musoma, Nizi, Talolo, and Rusa (Bedidjo 2007, 5, 20).
came out of the Kilo belt (Bakonzi 1982, 6-8). The concessions could be increased with the permission of the State; for example, between 1926 and 1930 Kilo-Moto added 6,150 hectares to the Kilo belt’s concession area.\textsuperscript{44}

The State granted concessions for plantations in Ituri to the Kilo-Moto company, churches, and individual settlers (cf. Young and Turner 1985, 315-316). The State initially created agricultural concessions in Ituri for production of food crops to support mining in the Kilo belt. The first foreign producers were Belgians, British, Greeks, and Afrikaners (Northrup 1988, 145), but the Kilo mines more heavily relied upon crops grown by Congolese in Ituri and by the wives of the miners (Bakonzi 1982, 131-142). After Kilo-Moto experienced food shortages in the 1910s, the State in 1922 decided to encourage white settlement in Ituri to grow foodstuffs for Kilo-Moto (Bakonzi 1982, 213), and enabled Kilo-Moto to create its own farms and plantations. The problems persisted, and “[i]n 1924, a decrease in gold production in the mines of Kilo was caused by a drought which brought about the decrease in food supply and a subsequent decrease in African labor” (Bakonzi 1982, 188). The State allocated more concessions in Ituri, but many concessions grew coffee for export rather than food crops; by 1933, the State had allocated 15,366 hectares in Ituri to foreigners for 59 coffee plantations.\textsuperscript{45}

Summary

The Belgian colonial state transformed social relations between the Hema and Lendu (and other tribes) in Ituri as part of a process of extending its control over people and territory. The main objective of the State was to ensure the stability of labor, food, and transportation routes for Ituri’s gold mines. Although the State’s project was incomplete in many respects, it had two important results, achieved in concert with the Catholic Church and the various incarnations of the gold mining company. First, the trinity of power in Ituri tended to favor Hema over Lendu in education, administration, and business opportunities, thus contributing to the formation of a Hema elite. Second, the State in particular exacerbated inequalities and latent tensions between Hema and Lendu communities and created essentializing narratives that made largely artificial differences between the groups normative.

The United Nations Security Council’s report on war in Ituri (2004a, § 14) summarized the impacts of the colonial era in this way:

\textit{During the Belgian colonial era, some Hema were favoured, notably through access to either the religious hierarchy or the education system, and given much wider access to managerial functions, while the Lendu were overwhelmingly treated as manual labour. In fact, the colonial administration accentuated social inequalities between the ethnic groups in the region through its ethnic “favouritism” in almost all fields, including the administration and the Catholic clergy. As a result, some Hema remained as the elite in Ituri upon the collapse of the colonial State.}

These Hema were well placed to take advantage of the new opportunities afforded by the

\textsuperscript{44} The new concession areas in the Kilo belt were: Pili-Pili—2,350 ha; Pluto—1,000 ha; N’zebi—1,300; and Kanga—1,500 ha (Bakonzi 1982, 277, 343).

\textsuperscript{45} These concessions were allocated to 45 colonists, of whom 35 were Belgian (Bakonzi 1982, 632).
end of colonialism and the emergence of the patrimonial network established by Congo’s long-time dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko.

**ITURI DURING THE MOBUTU ERA**

Following Congo’s independence on 30 June 1960, several years of political instability ensued. The details of this period have been discussed elsewhere (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1987; Young and Turner 1985, 47-54; Wrong 2000, 63-82), but the violence that took place in many parts of Congo generally avoided Ituri. The instability did affect Kilo-Moto, however. After 1960, the European managers, engineers, and foremen who had run mining operations slowly left their jobs; few Congolese had been trained to take over or manage Kilo-Moto. This had several effects including degradation of the mines and mining equipment, diminishing mining yields, and exploitation of reserve areas due to declining research and prospecting (Bedidjo 2007, 1). During Mobutu’s reign (1965-1997), national processes interacted with local events to produce numerous changes in the Ituri district.

The November 1965 ascendancy of Mobutu Sese Seko to power in Congo/Zaire marked the beginning of significant changes for the entire country, including Ituri. Three significant events and processes under Mobutu re-shaped the political economy of the Ituri District. First, the political redistribution of concessions in Ituri’s Djugu territory—where conflict erupted in 1999—mainly benefited Hema businessmen. Second, Ituri underwent a general economic decline that included a reorientation of its commercial and financial ties away from Kinshasa in the west and towards Uganda in the east. Third, industrial gold mining in the Kilo belt underwent a slow decline that was matched by the steady increase in artisanal gold mining.

The redistribution of colonial-era concessions in Ituri was a two-stage process. On 7 June 1966, President Mobutu approved the so-called Bakajika Law, which annulled all land titles granted before independence and required prior titleholders to reapply to the Zairian government. While this law was part of the state’s effort to extent its political sovereignty into the economic realm (Young and Turner 1985, 281), it also served to create an inventory of lands and their current uses. Then, on 30 November 1973, President Mobutu unveiled his “Zairianization” plan, which nationalized “farms, ranches, plantations, concessions, commerce, and real estate agencies” (Young and Turner 1985, 326). Although some concessions in Ituri had since the mid-1960s been in the hands of Congolese businessmen, the Zairianization plan resulted in a reallocation of concessions and industries into the hands of those with political connections. Hema businessmen benefited in the re-allocation process, in no small part due to the fact that Mobutu had in 1969 appointed a Hema politician, Zbo Kalogi, to be Minister of Agriculture (UNSC 2004a, § 15). In the territory of Djugu, where the war started in 1999, Hema businessmen acquired many concessions, while others became the property of the state or were retained by churches.

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46 This was law 66-343 (Lumpingu 1985, 43-44).
As the economy of Zaire declined during the Mobutu era, the Ituri District became economically isolated from western Zaire. From the 1960s into the 1980s, agricultural products from Ituri were an important food supply for the capital Kinshasa. Businessmen from Ituri shipped crops such as beans, coffee, cattle and fish overland to Kisangani and then on barges down the Zaire River to Kinshasa (MacGaffey 1987, 151-153). This trade diminished as roads deteriorated, which increased shipping times, and overall economic activity eroded. After the end of Uganda’s civil war in 1986, trade between Uganda and Ituri slowly increased, and by the mid-1990s Uganda became the main destination of Ituri’s products as well as the primary source of its imports such as gasoline and manufactured goods.

**Gold production and trade**
The final legacy of Mobutu in Ituri was the growth of artisanal gold mining. The Kilo mines had been known as ‘Mobutu’s gold mine’, but Mobutu’s inept rule produced a decline in industrial gold mining, and therefore, revenue for Mobutu. European engineers who had run operations slowly left their jobs, and because of colonial limitations on education and employment in Congo, there were few qualified Congolese staff to take over and run the operation. In 1966, Mobutu nationalized the company controlling the gold mines in northeast Congo, which then became known as OKIMO. This move failed to halt the decline in industrial gold production, and during the 1970s, OKIMO suffered financial difficulties and enclavement of the mining areas due to degraded infrastructure (Bedidjo 2007, 1).

As industrial mining declined, many miners in the Kilo belt started to engage in artisanal mining. The decline of the state in Zaire also affected the Kilo belt, and local officials allowed artisanal mining in part because they could obtain money from taxes and fees. In 1981, Mobutu liberalized the mining sector, allowing artisanal mining in areas like the Kilo belt that were previously banned. This made artisanal and small-scale mining viable livelihood options at a time when the economy in Ituri, and in Zaire generally, was in decline. During the 1980s and early 1990s, increasing numbers of local people Congolese from other areas undertook artisanal mining in the Kilo-Moto concessions, driven by the lure of wealth, unemployment, and the erosion of OKIMO’s production and authority (CDC 2007, 3).

During the 1980s and early 1990s, OKIMO entered into agreements with foreign mining companies, but this failed to halt the decline of gold mining in Kilo-Moto (Bedidjo 2007, 2-3). Kilo-Moto’s overall production in 1960 was 5,945 kg/gold, but nearly every year thereafter, production declined. From 1991-95, the five years leading up to the start of the first Congo war (1996), Kilo-Moto’s official gold production averaged just 70 kg/gold per year (Chart 2).

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47 Office des Mines d’Or de Kilo-Moto (OKIMO).
48 The legislation was Decree No. 81-013 of 2 April 1981.
**Modes of artisanal and small-scale production**

Three types of artisanal and small-scale mining evolved during the 1980s and 1990s in Kilo belt: underground mining, open pit mining, and alluvial mining. These operations produce two types of gold: *l’or sec* and *amalgame*. *L’or sec* consists of flecks and small nuggets in unconsolidated mineral deposits in riverbeds or topsoil, is obtained through open pit mining and alluvial mining, and is approximately 90-95 per cent pure. Amalgame gold is extracted from rocks that are obtained through underground mining and open pit mining. Specialized transporters (*transporteurs/euse*) or the miners themselves take the rocks from a mining site to one of approximately 200 workshops where young men and women (*broyeurs/euse*) crush the rocks. Once the rocks are pulverized into a fine dust, the powder is processed to extract the gold. Amalgame gold produced in the Mongbwalu area is approximately 82-90 per cent pure. In Mongbwalu town, *l’or sec* commands a roughly ten per cent higher price than amalgame gold, depending on the supply and market prices (Fahey 2008, 362).

There are three underground mines near Mongbwalu that were constructed during the colonial era: Adidi, Senzere, and Makala. The largest and most productive of the three was the Adidi mine, located 4km northwest of Mongbwalu town. Inside the underground mines, *foreurs* (men using hammers and picks to break off rocks) worked in shifts to extract rocks (also known as quartz) containing gold ore. In addition to the *foreurs*, other people working inside the mine include site bosses, men who bring in charcoal for rock-softening fires, men who maintain the generators that pump water out of the mine, and male and female *transporteurs* who carry the rocks out of the mines. Working conditions

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*Chart 2. Kilo-Moto gold production, 1960-1996 (kg)*

in the underground mines are extremely dangerous and deaths from collapse and asphyxiation are common, though largely unrecorded.49

Gold was also mined in scores of pit-mining sites in the Kilo goldfields. The number of workers at each site varies from a few dozen to a few hundred. These sites are generally located in riparian areas, flood plains, or at tailings sites. There are semi-permanent camps adjacent to many pit mining sites that may contain anywhere from a few dozen to several hundred miners. Workers may discover l’or sec, or dig deep to extract quartz for processing.

Alluvial mining is the third type of gold mining in the Kilo belt. This mining takes place in rivers and riparian areas, where men, women, and children sift through mud and look for pieces of gold. Many rivers in the Mongbwalu area were diverted to create shallow mudflats where sifting can take place. In addition, some semi-industrial mining operations used *dragues*, or small watercraft that use powerful pumps to suck up sediment from the river bottom, which is then washed to procure gold nuggets and dust.

**Emergence of the gold trade**

The 1981 liberalization of the mining sector also provided local businessmen in eastern DRC with an opportunity to enter the gold trade. Whereas Kilo-Moto had controlled all the gold coming out of the Kilo belt, the growth of artisanal and small-scale mining and the erosion of government control in the mining areas enabled businessmen to buy and sell gold. Businessmen from Ituri and North Kivu started to purchase gold directly from eastern Congo’s artisanal mining areas and sell it in Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi (Raeymaekers 2004, 64-65). To guarantee purchasing rights, some businessmen invested in the tools and supplies needed by artisanal miners.50

By the early 1990s, the gold trade took on added significance as Zaire’s economy and the value of its currency—the Zaire—rapidly declined. After the end of the Cold War, Mobutu’s foreign patrons no longer overlooked his mismanagement and corruption, and significantly cut foreign aid to Zaire (Chart 3). Under pressure to maintain his patronage networks and to pay the army that kept in power, Mobutu resorted to printing large amounts of Zaire banknotes, which resulted in hyperinflation. From October 1990 to December 1995, the cumulative increase in prices was 6.3 billion percent (Akitoby 2004, 226). The value of the Zaire collapsed, trading for 110 million to one US dollar in 1993 (Reno 1998, 159). This hyperinflation and currency devaluation contributed to the dollarization of the economy (Akitoby 2004, 228), which continues today.

In the context of the economic decline and currency collapse, gold increased in importance. Gold provided regional businessmen with a “dependable hard currency” for their regional trade (cf. Nabeta et al 1997, 1-2). These businessmen took gold directly to Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda, where they traded it for consumer goods and other items they brought back to markets in eastern Congo.

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49 Interviews with gold miners and NGO officials, 2007-2010 in Mongbwalu and Bunia.
50 Interviews with gold miners and gold traders, November 2007, June 2010, Mongbwalu.
By the early 1990s, two factors—one a push, and one a pull—combined to make Kampala, Uganda the primary destination for Ituri’s gold. The push was civil war and political instability in Burundi and Rwanda (Reyntjens 2009, 23-44). Violent upheaval in those countries and across the border in Zaire’s Kivu region disrupted the southern trade route. Starting in the 1980s, Butembo trader Kambale Kisoni smuggled gold produced in the Kivus, Ituri, and Haut-Uélé to Bujumbura, Burundi (Raeymaekers 2007, 113).

Kisoni had established a strong business connection with Burundi-based Belgian businessman Antoine (Tony) Goetz, who has continued to trade in Congolese gold. In December 1992, Goetz and some others formed a comptoir in Bujumbura called Affinage des Métaux, or AFFIMET. On 3 February 1993 AFFIMET obtained a “free zone” certificate from the Burundi government, which exempted it from certain taxes and customs. Kisoni was a major supplier of gold to Goetz and AFFIMET, which prior to the war was exporting approximately 6.4 metric tons of Congolese gold each year from Burundi to Belgium (Africa Intelligence 1997). But in 1993 and during 1994—as war picked up in Burundi, Rwanda, and the Kivus—Kisoni started to shift his business toward Uganda. In addition, the Burundi government terminated Goetz’s free trade status in May 1995 (ICSID, 1999, § 15), further pushing Kisoni and other traders to migrate toward Uganda.

51 In August 1992, the Burundi government established a “free zone regime” allowing certain companies formed in Burundi “to benefit from a range of tax and customs exemptions.” (ICSID 1999, § 1).
The pull for Ituri’s gold to Kampala came from changes in Ugandan government policy. During the early 1990s, as Uganda’s economy started to recover from decades of misrule and conflict, Uganda liberalized its economy in accordance with prescriptions from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. In 1993, the Ugandan government embraced the externally-designed Cross-Border Initiative (CBI) to promote regional trade.52 With the assistance of international financial advice, the Ugandan government pursued export-driven economic growth (Collier and Reinikka 2001, 31-39), which both stimulated regional trade and made Uganda a major re-exporter of gold originating in Zaire (Fahey 2008, 374-377).

In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ugandan government completed a Mineral Development Project. As a result of this project, the Ugandan government abolished the Bank of Uganda’s monopoly on the purchase of gold, revoked the gold export tax of three to five percent, and relaxed administrative burdens imposed on trading companies (UNSC 2005b, § 84; cf. Mobbs 1997, QQ1). The effect of these changes is seen in Uganda’s gold export statistics. In the first quarter of 1995, Uganda exported only 1 kg of gold, but by the third quarter of 1996—up until the start of the first Congo war in late September—Uganda exported 1,099 kg (Chart 4). Uganda’s gold production is negligible (2 kg in 1995, 3 kg in 1996); the change in policy was intended to attract the trade in Congo’s gold to Kampala.

On the eve of the first Congo war, the production of gold in Ituri had become largely artisanal and semi-industrial. Tens of thousands of miners, rock-breakers, and processors produced thousands of kilograms each year.53 At the same time, individual businessmen largely controlled the gold trade. These traders smuggled gold out of Congo, and some businessmen used gold as a currency to purchase consumer goods in Uganda and other countries that they then sold to markets in eastern Congo. As Burundi, Rwanda, and the Kivus in Zaire became increasingly unstable in 1993-94, the trade in Ituri’s gold partly shifted to Kampala. Changes in Ugandan government policies increased profit margins for gold traders and helped to pull the gold trade to Kampala. This was the situation at the time of the first Congo war.

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52 "The Cross-Border Initiative (CBI) comprises a common policy framework developed by fourteen participating countries in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean, with the support of four co-sponsors; the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Union, and the African Development Bank. The participants are Burundi, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe; Mozambique has also indicated its intention to join. The policy framework aims to facilitate cross-border economic activity by eliminating barriers to the flow of goods, services, labor, and capital, and to help integrate markets by coordinating reform programs in several key structural areas, supported by appropriate macroeconomic policies. The initiative places the responsibility for determining how to implement the agreed policy measures at the national level" (Fajgenbaum et al 1999).

53 There are no reliable estimates for gold production during this period. The USGS has estimated that prior to the war, Congo produced approximately 10 metric tons of gold per year. Since the Kilo belt is one of the top few gold producing regions in Congo, it is reasonable to suggest that gold mining in Ituri produced several thousand kilograms per year.
Foreign patronage
The end of the Cold War signaled the end of US and other international support for the Mobutu regime (Huliaris 2004, 292). The sudden but near universal rejection of Mobutu and the embrace of Rwanda and Uganda is perhaps most starkly visible in the pattern of official development assistance between 1990-96 (Chart 5). Still, Mobutu was a survivor. By 1994 Belgium and France rekindled frosty relations with Mobutu, and in 1995 the United States sent a new ambassador to Zaire after leaving the post vacant for two years (Metz 1996, 19). President Mobutu regained some domestic and international status by 1996 due to his halting steps towards democratization and his facilitation of humanitarian efforts for the more than one million Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire (Metz 1996, 11-19). The outbreak of war in October 1996 would be the final test of support for Mobutu, however, and his fate was emblematic of the shifts in regional power and international patronage from Zaire towards Rwanda and Uganda.
Local Processes

The political and economic processes at the national level during the Mobutu era produced and interacted with local processes to exacerbate social and political tensions in Ituri. The first problem emerged in 1966 in Irumu territory between the southern Lendu (Ngiti) and southern Hema. The governor of Ituri, acting on earlier colonial-era decrees, placed several Lendu villages under the control of a Hema chief. This action effectively re-drew the boundary between the territories of Walendu Bindi and Bahema Sud. This change, which was taken without the knowledge or consent of the Lendu villagers, was partly a political power grab by Hema leaders and may have also been intended to prevent Ngiti fishermen from having access to Lake Albert (cf. Kabaga 2000, 4). The change in authority also enabled the chief of Bahema Sud collectivity, Chief Kahwa, to collect taxes from the Ngiti villagers. The Ngiti resisted this change of status, but the provincial authorities repressed the dissenters and killed several Lendu in the process (ASADHO 1999).

In the mid-1970s, Lendu political leaders became more active in expressing opposition to Hema dominance in Ituri. In 1974, a Lendu leader, M. Soma Mastaki, created the Parti de Libération des Walendu (PLW) to advance the political demands of the Lendu community, but the PLW degenerated into a militia that attacked Hema civilians and

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54 These decrees were issued by Ituri District Commissioner Mr. Demeur on 19 November 1940 (no. 227 (I)), and by Ituri District Commissioner A. Huys on 8 May 1959 (no. 21/40/1959).
55 The villages included Nombe, Lakwa, and Lagabo; the chefferie was called Bandyango.
56 His full name is Salathiel Kahwa Mugisa Amoti Muzora.
reportedly used poison against Hema youth (ASADHO 1999). Following several confrontations, the provincial governor organized talks that led to a pact of reconciliation between the Lendu and Hema communities, signed 5 August 1975 at Djugu.

Latent tensions between Lendu and Hema leaders re-emerged during the 1990s. One source of tension derived from groups created by Lendu and Hema leaders; specifically, the Lendu Association culturelle LORI (known locally as ACL and LORI\textsuperscript{57}) and the Hema Association culturelle ENTE. Hema leaders were suspicious of LORI and believed it had a secret, pro-Lendu political and economic agenda,\textsuperscript{58} but Lendu leaders similarly suspected that ENTE was promoting Hema political and economic interests to the detriment of Lendu people.\textsuperscript{59} Both sides may have been correct, but a 1995 report from the Zairian intelligence service (SNIP\textsuperscript{60}) ascribed a political agenda to LORI group in the Collectivity of Walendu Pitsi, where the war in Ituri erupted in June 1999. The intelligence report states, in part: “The tribal character of the Association is at the foundation of its member’s projects to expropriate the concessions and fields of non-Lendu, particularly of the Hema.”\textsuperscript{61}

Another source of tension emerged in 1992 in Irumu territory. On 13 December, authorities at a prison in Bogoro, in Bahema Sud collectivity, reportedly killed six Lendu inmates; this sparked violence between Hema and Ngiti people in the area (Kagaba 2000, 5). The Congolese army (FAZ\textsuperscript{62}) intervened, but the 412th battalion from Mont-Hawa (in Aru territory) targeted Ngiti warriors and killed Ngiti civilians at Gety, Songolo, and Bukiringi (ASADHO 1999). The provincial government undertook an inquiry into the conflict and facilitated a meeting at Nyakunde (Irumu), where the antagonists signed a peace agreement. As part of this process, in 1993 the villagers in the disputed areas along the Bahema Sud-Walendu Bindi border held a referendum and voted to re-join Walendu Bindi, but by 2000 the national government had taken no action; therefore the boundary issue remained a source of tension and sustained Lendu beliefs that the Hema were subjugating them (Kagaba 2000, 5-6).

REGIONAL ISSUES IN THE 1990s
Starting in the early 1990s, escalating violence in other parts of Zaire/Congo and in neighboring Sudan, Uganda, and Rwanda gradually encroached on the Ituri District.

Uganda and Ituri
Starting in 1986, Uganda increased its commercial ties with eastern Zaire and Ituri. That year, Uganda’s civil war ended and the new leader of Uganda (Yoweri Museveni) quickly liberalized Uganda’s economy in accordance with prescriptions from the World

\textsuperscript{57} Libération des Opprimes et Rejetés de l’Ituri (LORI).
\textsuperscript{58} Interview with Hema academics and community leaders, May and June 2009, Bunia; Communauté Hema de Bunia n.d.
\textsuperscript{59} Interview with Lendu politicians and community leaders, June 2009, Kpandroma; LORI 2002, 4.
\textsuperscript{60} Service National d’Intelligence et de Protection
\textsuperscript{61} “Le caractère tribal de l’Association est à la base de projets de ses membres à s’exproprier les concessions et champs de non LENDU, particulièrement des HEMA” (SNIP 1995).
\textsuperscript{62} Forces Armées Zaïroises.
Bank and International Monetary Fund. In 1993, the Ugandan government embraced the Cross-Border Initiative (CBI) to promote regional trade. With the assistance of international financial advice, the Ugandan government pursued export-driven economic growth (Collier and Reinikka 2001, 31-39), which both stimulated regional trade and made Uganda a major re-exporter of gold originating in Zaire (Fahey 2008, 374-377). By 1996, Rwanda and Zaire accounted for 13 percent of Uganda’s total exports (by value), up from seven percent in 1994 (Chart 6).^{63}

### Chart 6: Uganda, Percent of Total Exports by Value to Rwanda and Zaire, 1994-97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Zaire</th>
<th>Rwanda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UBOS, n.d.

During the 1990s, two armed groups fighting against the Government of Uganda used Ituri as a rear base for their operations. The first group—the Allied Democratic Front/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF/NALU)—was a coalition that received training and supplies through Bunia, Ituri’s capital. The second group—WNBF—operated from bases on the Zaire side of the Zaire-Uganda border between Mahagi and Aru/Ariwara.

The ADF emerged from struggles within in the Muslim community in Uganda. During the early 1990s, precursor groups to the ADF^{64} created an armed wing and reportedly established ties with the Government of Sudan (de Veenkoop 2007, 80), which was then

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^{63} Not all of the growth in exports was due to trade liberalization: “Events in Rwanda…in 1993-94 provided enormous opportunities for Ugandan supplies of low-value foods to international relief agencies” (World Bank 1996, 46).

^{64} The precursor groups were the Tabliq Youth Movement, the Salaf Foundation, and Uganda Muslim Freedom Fighters/Uganda Muslim Liberation Army.
fighting a proxy war with Uganda. In February 1995, the Ugandan army (UPDF\textsuperscript{65}) overran the group’s training camp in western Uganda and killed many of its fighters. Fifty-two survivors traveled across Lake Edward to Kasenyi (Ituri), from where FAZ soldiers took them to Bunia (Tushabe 2001). With assistance from the Mobutu regime and Sudanese operatives, these remnants re-formed at Bunia as the Allied Democratic Forces (Tushabe 2001; cf. Prunier 2004, 370-373; Kayunga 2000, 116; de Temmerman 2007).

The National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) formed in the late 1980s after Museveni took power. Amon Bazira, a former vice-minister in the ousted government of Milton Obote and a former leader of the \textit{Rwenzururu} movement, formed NALU with the intent of overthrowing the Government of Uganda (Prunier 2004, 383). NALU gained some support among the Bakonjo who live in the Rwenzori mountains of Uganda, as well as support from the governments of Kenya and Zaire. In response to Zaire’s support of NALU, in 1986 Museveni helped form a rebel group at Kasindi, across the border from Mpondwe, to destabilize the Mobutu regime. Although the FAZ militarily defeated the \textit{Parti de la Libération Congolais} (PLC), PLC notably represented the first effort by Museveni to create an armed group on Zairian/Congolese soil. NALU launched an unsuccessful attack in 1992 on Kasese in western Uganda (de Veenkoop 2007, 80), but it remained an ineffectual fighting force until its alliance in June 1995 with the ADF.

In late 1995 and early 1996, ADF/NALU grew in size and military capacity thanks to support from the governments of Zaire and Sudan. The NALU base at Buhira, Zaire in the Rwenzori mountains became ADF/NALU’s main military base, although ADF/NALU combatants trained at bases in Bunia (Ituri) and Juba in Southern Sudan.\textsuperscript{66} The governments of Zaire and Sudan provided ADF/NALU with money, guns, and ammunition, but ADF/NALU also raised its own money from contacts in Uganda and through artisanal mining of gold, diamonds, and coltan (Tushabe 2001).

To the north of the Rwenzori Mountain region, Uganda was facing other challenges along its border with Ituri between Lake Albert and the border with Sudan. During the 1990s, war in northern Uganda was related to historical conflicts between inhabitants of northern and southern Uganda, and tied to the proxy war taking place between Uganda and Sudan (Barkan 2005, 8). In mid-September 1996, approximately 600 combatants with the West Nile Bank Liberation Front (WNBF),\textsuperscript{67} under the command of Col. Juma Oris,\textsuperscript{68} entered northern Uganda from Sudan (AFP 1996). After moving to bases in Ituri, during October and November the WNBF attacked roads, bridges, and refugee camps housing Sudanese refugees in the West Nile region. On 1 December 1996, the WNBF attacked two border posts near Arua, Uganda (AFP 1996d).

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\textsuperscript{65} Ugandan People’s Defense Force.

\textsuperscript{66} ADF/NALU also reportedly established “camps” at such far-flung locations as Goma, Kisangani, and Gbadolite, which had airports through which arms shipments could arrive.

\textsuperscript{67} The WNBLF (or WNBF) was composed of former soldiers from Idi Amin’s army who sought the overthrow of President Museveni and the restoration of Idi Amin, who was then living in exile in Saudi Arabia.

\textsuperscript{68} Col. Oris was Minister of Information in the government of Idi Amin.
The WNBF was coordinating its attacks in northern Uganda with the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA had been waging war against the government and people of Uganda since the late 1980s (Van Acker 2004, 335-357), but support from Sudan in the early 1990s helped revive the LRA and intensified their attacks in northern Uganda. While the LRA had its own religious and political objectives, the government of Sudan supported the LRA as part of its proxy war against Uganda, which was supporting the Southern People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) in its war against the government of Sudan (Prunier 2004, 359-383).

On 1 July 1996, the UPDF launched a major operation in Gulu district against the LRA. Museveni put his half-brother, Major General Salim Saleh, in charge of the operation; Saleh notably promised the war would be over by 1 October 1996 (Nduru 1996). In late November, however, approximately 800 LRA combatants were still operating in northern Uganda, carrying out attacks and abductions (AFP 1996b). The Ugandan government’s fight against the LRA continues in 2011 in Congo (Bas-Uélé and Haut-Uélé districts), Southern Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

Between 1986 and 1996, Uganda increased its economic and political ties to the population of the Ituri district. Uganda exported progressively more consumer goods to Ituri during this time, and imported increasing amounts of Iturian gold, particularly after 1994. Uganda was also facing several insurgencies along its borders with North Kivu and Ituri, as well as in northern Uganda. There was increasing interest among Ugandan businessmen (including government officials) in Ituri’s natural resources and markets, and mounting political pressure on Ugandan government officials to eliminate anti-Ugandan government rebel groups using Ituri as a base from which to launch attacks against the Ugandan population.

CONCLUSION
The history of the Ituri district resembles the history of the Congo, although with important differences in geography and timing of events. The Ituri district remained isolated from foreign intrusion until the late 19th Century. When European and Afro-Arab men with guns finally arrived in Ituri to exploit the region’s natural and human resources, some of Ituri’s tribes collaborated with the intruders, but others violently resisted. The collaboration and resistance continued during the colonial era, when Belgian colonial authorities organized the political economy of the Ituri District to support mining in the rich goldfields of Ituri’s Kilo belt. The Belgian colonial pursuit of gold in Ituri’s Kilo belt transformed local power relations and created regional political and economic structures that exacerbated inequalities among Ituri’s ethnic groups and tribes.

Post-Independence changes in the Zaire/Congo state exacerbated local rivalries for power and made Ituri vulnerable to foreign predation. During Mobutu’s rule, the decline of the state intensified power struggles among political and economic elites in Ituri, which also strained ethnic tensions. Of significance for future conflict, the government allocated most of the concessions in traditional Lendu areas to Hema businessmen; this was
particularly the case in Djugu Territory, where the war started in 1999. The slow death of industrial gold mining in the Kilo belt under Mobutu opened the area up to artisanal mining and unofficial gold trading, which later enabled various armed groups to easily control and profit from gold exploitation.

This brief history suggests that war in Ituri, including the war that started in 1999, was neither the inevitable result of historical processes nor the econometrically predictable outcome of a “resource curse.” As discussed in later chapters, outsiders brought war to Ituri in 1996 and 1998; i.e. war originated in the Kivus and moved north to Ituri. The war in Ituri that started in 1999, which was a war within the polywar then taking place in Congo, started in Djugu territory between northern Hema and northern Lendu, but most of the Hema-Lendu violence historically took place in Irumu territory between southern Lendu (Ngiti) and southern Hema. Using history as a guide, it would appear that war was more likely to break out in Irumu than in Djugu, but in fact numerous proximate events and processes interacted with historical trends to produce the start of war in 1999, which I will discuss in chapter 6. Similarly, the rich gold fields of Ituri’s Kilo belt would appear to be a perfect site for a rebel group to start a civil war, as theories about a “resource curse” suggest, but in fact the foreign invasion of the Ugandan army was the trigger that led Ugandan and Congolese groups to fight for Ituri’s gold.

As I will develop further in later chapters, the onset and duration of the war in Ituri is the product of the interactions between historical and proximate factors. The histories of foreign intervention, natural resource exploitation, and political and economic inequalities are not in themselves sufficient to explain how, why, where, and when the war in Ituri started. However, these histories feature prominently in local narratives about the war’s origins and aims; therefore they are necessary for understanding both the war in Ituri and the shortcomings of influential, ahistorical theories on the relationships between natural resources and armed conflict.
Chapter 3. The Start of Congo’s Polywar

In the fall of 1996, several local conflicts in eastern Congo’s Kivu provinces merged with several international conflicts to produce the first Congo war. The local conflicts had roots in ethnic politics and land disputes, but the international conflicts were the extraterritorial extension of civil wars from neighboring countries into eastern Congo. This constellation of conflicts provided cover for the start of an interstate war, launched by the governments of Rwanda and Uganda against the Mobutu regime in then-Zaire. The first Congo war represented the start of a series of overlapping conflicts involving numerous government armies and dozens of non-state armed groups, which continue in 2011 in parts of eastern Congo.

This chapter charts the proximate events and processes that led to the start of the first Congo war, and analyzes how the conduct of the war created political and economic dynamics that led to a continuation and expansion of armed conflict. I argue that the coalescence of conflicts in the same region, at the same time, is evidence of the phenomenon of polywar. My explanation differs from other accounts of the first Congo war, which either classify it as a civil war (see Table 3), or conceal its complexity by describing it as a regional conflict (cf. Stearns 2011, 54). I further argue that the economic agendas that emerged during the course of the war contributed to a short-lived peace and the start of the second Congo war. My analysis differs from other accounts of the first Congo war by providing greater attention to the development of interests in Congo’s markets and minerals, which provides empirical evidence with which to evaluate the connections between natural resources and war.

THE PATH TO WAR
This section focuses on the proximate events and processes that led to the outcome of war. By the mid-1990s, social strife, political instability, and economic decline were endemic in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. In Congo, Mobutu desperately held on to power after his international patrons had largely cut him off politically and financially. In Rwanda, civil war devolved into a horrific genocide, followed by instability in both Rwanda and eastern Congo. In Burundi, a 1993 coup derailed democratization efforts and launched a civil war that killed tens of thousands of people. Uganda was politically stable and economically growing, but nonetheless endured violent conflict along its borders with Congo and Sudan. Congo, or rather Mobutu, remained the dominant power in the region, but Western (especially U.S.) support for Paul Kagame in post-genocide Rwanda and Yoweri Museveni in Uganda was changing the political landscape.

1 For the remainder of the chapter, I will refer to Zaire as Congo.
Table 3. The First Congo War as Described in Major Conflict Lists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DATE/YEAR</th>
<th>TYPE OF CONFLICT</th>
<th>PARTIES</th>
<th>USED BY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 Nov 1996 – 10 Dec 1996</td>
<td>Interstate</td>
<td>Uganda v. rebels in Congo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 May 1997 – May 1997</td>
<td>Interstate</td>
<td>Angola with rebels v. Congo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table compiled by Dan Fahey from multiple sources.

<sup>2</sup> Internationalized internal armed conflict occurs between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s) with intervention from other states (secondary parties) on one or both sides.

<sup>3</sup> Version 3.0 of the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data collection compiled by the Correlates of War Project provides information about conflicts in which one or more states threaten, display, or use force against one or more other states between 1816 and 2001. [http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/MIDs/MID310.html](http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/MIDs/MID310.html), accessed 12 June 2008.

<sup>4</sup> They involved fighting between agents of (or claimants to) a state and organized, nonstate groups who sought either to take control of a government, to take power in a region, or to use violence to change government policies. (2) The conflict killed at least 1,000 over its course, with a yearly average of at least 100. (3) At least 100 were killed on both sides (including civilians attacked by rebels) (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 76).
The outbreak of the first Congo war was directly linked to the escalation of pre-existing ethnic violence in eastern Congo (HRW 1996; Mamdani 2001, 251-261; Winter 2004, 116-121). As Mobutu’s hold on power started to weaken significantly after 1990, political violence with ethnic overtones and national ties started in September 1992 in Katanga (then-Shaba) (Prunier 2009, 78-79), and began in March 1993 in North Kivu (AZADHO 1997; Reyntjens 2009, 14-16; Mararo 2005, 204-205; Mamdani 2001, 252-253). These growing problems coincided with increased violence following the influx of 1 million Rwandan Hutu refugees after the 1994 genocide. The path to war therefore included causes both internal to Congo and produced by external factors such as the extension of the Rwandan civil war into Congo. The mixing and merging of internal and international conflicts into the first Congo war demonstrates this was not a civil war, as many scholars proclaim, but a polywar of international and internal conflicts.

Thanks to French intervention, the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide had been able to escape from Rwanda to eastern Congo (Gourevitch and Kagame 1996, 171-174; Reed 1998, 137-138). During the end of 1994 and 1995, the génocidaires re-organized in refugee camps located along the Zairian borders with Burundi and Rwanda. The former Rwandan army (ex-FAR) and Rwandan militias (Interahamwe) had de facto control of the refugee camps and colluded with Zairian troops hired by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to protect the camps. Although many of the génocidaires brought weapons into the refugee camps, the Zairian government also helped to arm the ex-FAR and Interahamwe (UNDHA 1996b; UNHCR 2010, § 191), reportedly with the assistance of the French and South African governments (HRW 1995). The agencies running the camps, including UNHCR, expressed concern about the militarization of the camps but in the end they were either unwilling or unable to prevent the use of the camps for the training of militias and as bases for attacks on Rwandan territory (Pomfret 1997b; Winter 2004, 111-116; Mills 2004, 163-186).

The post-genocide flood of refugees exacerbated pre-existing ethnic tensions in eastern Congo (Vlassenroot 2002, 500-508). These tensions were present for decades in the Kivus, centering on power struggles, citizenship disputes and land conflicts (Mamdani 2001, 234-253; Vlassenroot 2004, 81-100), but they increased sharply in the early 1990s as Mobutu utilized local conflicts in the Kivus in his efforts to maintain power. The so-called “Masisi war”, which had started in April 1993, was characterized by Zairian government political, economic, social, and military repression against the ethnic Rwandese living in the Masisi area (Mararo 2005, 204-205; Mamdani 2001, 252-253). On 28 April 1995, the Zairian High Council of the Transitional Parliament passed a resolution to prevent Rwandan or Hutu refugees from obtaining Zairian citizenship. This resolution also treated Banyamulenge—Tutsis of Rwandan origin who had been living in South Kivu (Congo) for hundreds of years—as recent refugees (UNDHA 1996). The

5 There were already approximately 50,000 Hutu refugees from Burundi who fled to Congo in late 1993 and early 1994 (Mamdani 2001, 254).
6 The term Banyamulenge is a social construction; the term refers to people of Rwandan origin who lived in the vicinity of Mulenge, but this group was not considered a distinct tribe or ethnic group. See Willame 1997, 76-87.
increasing tensions of the mid-1990s led the Rwandan government in 1995 to actively recruit Banyamulenge youth in South Kivu for military training in Rwanda.\footnote{Some Banyamulenge had served in the Rwandan army (RPA) since the early 1990s (Vlassenroot 2002, 508).}

By early 1996, there were several conflicts brewing in eastern Congo (Adelman and Baxter 2004, 254-255). The Zairian government was helping to inflame conflicts in Masisi and South Kivu, dividing local communities by denying Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge communities of citizenship and political and economic power. Local conflicts over land, ethnicity, citizenship, and power had become increasingly violent and divisive, threatening to escalate into a formal civil war (Mamdani 2001,251-253; UNHCR 2010, §180-184). At the same time, Hutu génocidaires from Rwanda were attacking ethnic Tutsi in eastern Congo, and launching cross-border attacks into Rwanda. Incursions into Rwanda from the refugee camps in eastern Congo raised the possibility of a renewal of full-scale war in Rwanda and the onset of war between Rwanda and Congo.

In the six months prior to the start of the war in October 1996, Rwanda planned for the conflict as diplomatic efforts failed to resolve the problems surrounding the refugee camps and the plight of the Zairian Tutsis. Just months before Rwanda started the war, Paul Kagame, then-Vice President of Rwanda and Minister of Defense, presciently noted: Certainly the risk [of war] is there, and I imagine that if it happens, it will not just be a war for Rwanda—it may be a war that spills over into those countries where the infiltrations are coming from, especially when it becomes clear that those forces might be receiving support from the host country, Congo. Even if it doesn’t happen, we have to prepare for it (Gourevitch and Kagame 1996, 184).

In July 1996, the Rwandan government reportedly sent a delegation to South Kivu to inform the location population about preparations for a military operation to stop Zairian army attacks on the Banyamulenge (Vlassenroot 2002, 509).

While Rwanda was planning for war, Kagame traveled to Washington, DC. On 7 August 1996, Kagame met with senior Defense and State Department officials.\footnote{Kagame was to meet George Moose, the assistant secretary of state for African affairs; Defense Secretary William J. Perry; national security adviser Anthony Lake; among others (Boustany 1996).} Kagame reportedly asked them for solutions on how to dismantle the refugee camps in eastern Congo (Pomfret 1997a). Kagame later summarized his blunt message to the US officials: “I delivered a veiled warning: the failure of the international community to take action would mean Rwanda would take action” (Mamdani 1997).\footnote{In this article, Kagame describes his US trip as taking place in June 1996; however all indications suggest the meeting was actually in August 1996.} According to Kagame, US officials did not respond to his declarations, and he returned to Kigali believing war was inevitable (Pomfret 1997a). In July 1997, when Kagame finally admitted that Rwanda planned and directed the war, he denied American military support but commended the United States for “taking the right decisions to let it proceed” (Pomfret 1997a). When the war began, however, Rwanda (and Uganda) denied any role in planning or executing the war, asserting instead that the exploding conflict was simply a “civil war” amongst the Zairians.
Rwanda was the chief architect of the first Congo war, but Uganda played a pivotal role in both the planning and conduct of the war. After the war Ugandan President Museveni stated that he had supported the war for three reasons: to eliminate threats to Uganda posed by rebels in Congo; to eliminate threats to Rwanda posed by rebels in Congo; and “to see that Congo is not unstable such that we can do business” (Museveni and Aptidon 1997). The first reason appears valid given the presence of the WNBF and ADFNALU on Zairian territory and the apparent collusion between Mobutu, the Government of Sudan, and these rebel groups (Otunnu 2004, 45-46). Although Uganda may have been justified in taking limited cross-border action against those rebel groups, the threats to Uganda’s security were not so great that they justified an operation to topple the Mobutu regime. The second reason—supporting Rwanda—alludes to both Museveni’s close ties to the Rwandan regime (Mamdani 2001, 159-184), and Museveni’s realpolitik interest in preventing the failure of the Rwandan government, which could lead to instability within Uganda.

As noted by Museveni, Uganda also had a third interest in supporting the war—economics. As discussed above, during the early 1990s, the Ugandan government had adopted policy prescriptions from international financial institutions that were designed to increase Uganda’s role in regional trade, including the trade in Congolese gold. By 1996, Uganda exported more than $90 million to Rwanda and Congo (Tables 4 and 5), accounting for 13 percent of Uganda’s total exports (by value), up from seven percent in 1994 (see Chart 6, p. 68).10 Eastern Congo represented a huge market for Ugandan businessmen, and as events in the months following the war demonstrated, Museveni and many Ugandan businessmen (among them Museveni’s relatives and UPDF military officers) were keen to exploit the economic opportunities in Congo. Although Uganda had clear and growing economic interests in Congo, some commentators believe those interests were a contributory but not a decisive factor in Museveni’s support of Rwanda and the war (Otunnu 2004, 51).

The war also took place in the context of changing political and economic structures both globally and regionally. The end of the Cold War signaled the end of US and other international support for the Mobutu regime (Huliaris 2004, 292). The end of support for Mobutu and the embrace of Rwanda and Uganda is perhaps most starkly visible in the pattern of official development assistance per capita between 1990-96 (see Chart 5, p. 66). Still, Mobutu was a survivor. By 1994 Belgium and France rekindled frosty relations with Mobutu, and in 1995 the United States sent a new ambassador to Congo after leaving the post vacant for two years (Metz 1996, 19). President Mobutu regained some domestic and international status by 1996 due to his halting steps towards democratization and his facilitation of humanitarian efforts for the Rwandan refugees in eastern Congo (Metz 1996, 11-19). The outbreak of war would be the final test of support for Mobutu, however, and his fate was emblematic of the shifts in regional power and international patronage from Congo towards Rwanda and Uganda.

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10 Not all of the growth in exports was due to trade liberalization: “Events in Rwanda…in 1993-94 provided enormous opportunities for Ugandan supplies of low-value foods to international relief agencies” (World Bank 1996, 46).
## Table 4. Uganda, Exports by Value to Rwanda, 1994-98 (US$, current year $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,077</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesame Seeds</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20,482</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Precious Metals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52,299</td>
<td>52,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>34,414</td>
<td>1,491</td>
<td>15,551</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>3,634</td>
<td>55,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Current</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>77,643</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>77,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55,688</td>
<td>22,620</td>
<td>78,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hides and Skins</td>
<td>36,852</td>
<td>54,540</td>
<td>1,012</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>92,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground-nuts</td>
<td>42,046</td>
<td>43,487</td>
<td>8,545</td>
<td>21,064</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>115,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Animals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10,888</td>
<td>86,753</td>
<td>18,276</td>
<td>18,827</td>
<td>134,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish and Fish Products</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,149</td>
<td>159,795</td>
<td>33,751</td>
<td>86,499</td>
<td>282,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum Products</td>
<td>14,628</td>
<td>266,912</td>
<td>16,258</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50,640</td>
<td>348,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>75,809</td>
<td>300,637</td>
<td>55,216</td>
<td>39,095</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>470,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap</td>
<td>115,607</td>
<td>308,203</td>
<td>79,586</td>
<td>60,379</td>
<td>159,161</td>
<td>682,936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>64,156</td>
<td>88,343</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,468</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>156,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoes and Hand Tools</td>
<td>5,509,713</td>
<td>5,072,811</td>
<td>9,134,087</td>
<td>9,741,342</td>
<td>1,660,416</td>
<td>31,118,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans and Other Legumes</td>
<td>11,526,528</td>
<td>4,698,308</td>
<td>4,784,228</td>
<td>10,984,652</td>
<td>7,724,630</td>
<td>39,718,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>2,932,006</td>
<td>12,531,094</td>
<td>36,460,699</td>
<td>19,57,690</td>
<td>17,669,639</td>
<td>87,551,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td><strong>20,653,616</strong></td>
<td><strong>24,671,879</strong></td>
<td><strong>51,463,230</strong></td>
<td><strong>39,715,667</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,517,390</strong></td>
<td><strong>164,021,782</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UBOS, n.d.

## Table 5. Uganda, Exports by Value to Congo/Congo, 1994-98 (US$, current year $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ground-nuts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,177,525</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,177,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>64,156</td>
<td>88,343</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,468</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>156,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans and Other Legumes</td>
<td>1,811,795</td>
<td>8,913,686</td>
<td>5,071,050</td>
<td>695,076</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>16,491,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Animals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,124</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,645</td>
<td>5769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoes and Hand Tools</td>
<td>147,417</td>
<td>137,789</td>
<td>70,277</td>
<td>97,811</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>455,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum Products</td>
<td>14,675</td>
<td>135,440</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,515</td>
<td>155,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>6,734,072</td>
<td>17,471,997</td>
<td>12,443,507</td>
<td>885,692</td>
<td>109,566</td>
<td>37,644,834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish and Fish Products</td>
<td>386,891</td>
<td>316,455</td>
<td>463,299</td>
<td>22,932</td>
<td>186,208</td>
<td>1,375,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap</td>
<td>1,374,661</td>
<td>1,693,129</td>
<td>1,453,405</td>
<td>1,720,744</td>
<td>191,767</td>
<td>6,433,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>685,829</td>
<td>421,470</td>
<td>1,107,299</td>
<td>2,208,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,581,761</td>
<td>7,284,553</td>
<td>20,979,543</td>
<td>5,186,182</td>
<td>9,238,721</td>
<td>45,088,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td><strong>13,115,428</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,223,041</strong></td>
<td><strong>40,300,971</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,298,901</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,155,752</strong></td>
<td><strong>111,094,093</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UBOS, n.d.
**THE FIRST CONGO WAR**

The first Congo war was a polywar of numerous international and internal armed conflicts. What many political scientists have classified as a simple civil war was in fact a complex mix of conflicts, all playing out in the territory of Congo. The Rwandan government led the war to topple Mobutu, but also fought to eliminate the ex-FAR/Interahamwe. The Ugandan government helped the Rwandans, but also fought its own battles against ADF/NALU and WNBF rebels. Angola provided key participation to the Rwandan-led war against Mobutu, but also fought against UNITA rebels. Burundi also fought with the Rwandans, but also against FDD rebels just over the border in Congo. In addition to these external interventions and extrasystemic conflicts, ethnic Tutsi militias and a coalition of Congolese dissidents and armed groups known as the AFDL fought internal wars against the Zairian government. In all, eight different, overlapping conflicts played out in Congo during the first Congo war, (Table 6) involving dozens of combat and supporting actors (Tables 7, 8).

Political interests and security concerns were behind the war’s start, although economic interests emerged during the war. The war passed through Ituri, but Ituri’s gold played little role in the cause of the war or its duration. However, the story of the polywar in Congo highlights the increase in Ugandan interests in Ituri’s gold and markets that would feature prominently in the second Congo war.

Although the Rwandan and Zairian armies had a cross-border exchange of fire on 22 September 1996 (Willame 1997, 95), the formal start to the war was an attack early on the morning of 6 October 1996 by Banyamulenge militia at Lemera, about mid-way between Bukavu and Uvira in South Kivu. The Banyamulenge fighters had traveled from Rwanda into Congo to launch their attack. Lemera was reportedly a headquarters for the armed wing (Forces de Défense de la Démocratie, FDD) of a Hutu rebel group from Burundi (Conseil national pour la de Défense de la Démocratie, CNDD) (Reyntjens 1999, 68, n. 140), which had ties to Rwandan Hutu groups (Braeckman 1998, 65-89; cf. Tomlinson 1996). The Banyamulenge fighters attacked a FAZ base, the local hospital, and a Catholic missionary station (Pomfret 1997). The Burundian army reportedly crossed into the area after the Banyamulenge attack to fight the FDD rebels (Reyntjens 1999, 68, n. 140; Amnesty International 1998, 9).

The Lemera attack was significant for several reasons. First, the fact that Banyamulenge militia carried out the attack made this appear to be a civil conflict; i.e. initiated by a group of Zairians against the Zairian state. Second, the success of the attack gave the Banyamulenge a psychological advantage, the importance of which became evident in subsequent battles when many demoralized and unpaid FAZ soldiers fled under fire. Finally, Lemera nominally became the birthplace of the Zairian rebel coalition that would fight the war, the AFDL. On 18 November, barely two weeks after the attack, the AFDL—the Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération (Congo-Zaïre)—

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11 União Nacional pela Independência Total de Angola.
12 Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie.
announced both its existence and agenda with a proclamation supposedly signed at Lemera.13

Table 6. The Conflicts of the First Congo War (1996-97)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONFLICT AND PARTIES</th>
<th>TYPE OF CONFLICT</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>LOCATIONS</th>
<th>MAIN INTERESTS OF PARTIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banyamulenge v. Congo</td>
<td>Internationalized internal armed conflict</td>
<td>Oct-Nov 1996</td>
<td>South Kivu</td>
<td>Banyamulenge—defense of community and assertion of rights Government of Congo—expulsion of Banyamulenge, displacement to serve political and economic power interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFDL v. Congo</td>
<td>Internationalized internal armed conflict</td>
<td>Oct 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>North and South Kivu provinces, Congo</td>
<td>AFDL—Topple Mobutu and seize control of the country Congo—Preserve the Mobutu regime and retain territorial integrity of country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda v. Ex-FAR/Interahamwe</td>
<td>Extrasystemic conflict</td>
<td>Oct 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>Initially North and South Kivu provinces, but later southern and western Congo</td>
<td>Rwanda—disperse refugees and Ex-FAR, Interahamwe; exact revenge on Hutu Ex-FAR, Inter.—maintain bases in refugee camps; take over Government of Rwanda; continue the 1994 genocide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda v. Congo</td>
<td>Interstate war</td>
<td>Oct 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>Starting in the Kivus and expanding west through Kisangani and south through Lubumbashi to Kinshasa</td>
<td>Rwanda—remove the Mobutu regime and end its support for Ex-FAR and Interahamwe Congo—preserve Mobutu regime, support Ex-FAR allies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola v. UNITA</td>
<td>Extrasystemic conflict</td>
<td>Apr-May 1997</td>
<td>Angola-Congo border area; battle of Kenge</td>
<td>Angola—eliminate UNITA and UNITA’s rear bases in Congo UNITA—support ally Mobutu and maintain rear bases in Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi v. FDD</td>
<td>Extrasystemic conflict</td>
<td>Oct 1996</td>
<td>Burundi-Congo border area</td>
<td>Burundi—defeat FDD force and destroy bases in Congo FDD—maintain bases; support ex-FAR/Interahamwe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table compiled by Dan Fahey from multiple sources.

13 Some sources say the accord was actually signed in Gisenyi, Rwanda (Reyntjens 1999, 124, n. 294; de Villers and Willame 1998, 19).
Table 7. Combat Actors in the First Congo War

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARMED FORCE</th>
<th>ROLES</th>
<th>SUPPORTED</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>LOCATIONS Province (District)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Recruited armed forces; planned and funded the war; directed military operations; deployed military units</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Oct 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Planned and funded war; recruited AFDL leaders; allowed Rwanda/AFDL forces to pass through Ugandan territory; deployed military units</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Oct 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>North Kivu, Orientale (Ituri), Maniema, Orientale (Tschopo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFDL</td>
<td>Recruited armed forces; deployed military units</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Oct 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banyamulenge</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Oct 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Deployed military units; provided air transport</td>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Oct 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-FAR</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Self/Congo</td>
<td>Oct 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interahamwe</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Self/Congo</td>
<td>Oct 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai Mai</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Oct 1996-Jan 1997</td>
<td>South Kivu, North Kivu, Ituri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai Mai Ngilima</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Oct 1996-Jan 1997</td>
<td>South Kivu, North Kivu, Ituri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Oct-Nov 1996</td>
<td>South Kivu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDD</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Self/Congo</td>
<td>Oct 1996</td>
<td>South Kivu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>Deployed military advisors</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Oct-Dec 1996</td>
<td>South Kivu, North Kivu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katangan Tigers</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Feb-May 1997</td>
<td>Katanga, Kasai Orientale, Kasai Occidental, Bandundu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITA</td>
<td>Deployed military units; provided air transport</td>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Dec 1996-May 1997</td>
<td>Katanga, Kasai Orientale, Kasai Occidental, Bandundu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercenaries</td>
<td>Deployed armed forces; trained armed forces; flew combat aircraft</td>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Jan-Mar 1997</td>
<td>Orientale (Haut Uele, Tschopo), Maniema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADF/NALU</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Self/Congo</td>
<td>Nov 1996-Feb 1997</td>
<td>North Kivu, Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WNBF</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Self/Congo</td>
<td>Oct 1996-Mar 1997</td>
<td>Orientale (Ituri), Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Provided funding; deployed military units; provided air transport</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Apr-May 1997</td>
<td>Kasai Occidental, Bandundu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFERI</td>
<td>Deployed military units</td>
<td>Congo/Katanga</td>
<td>April 1997</td>
<td>Katanga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table compiled by Dan Fahey from multiple sources.
Table 8. Supporting Actors in the First Congo War

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTOR</th>
<th>ROLES</th>
<th>SUPPORTED</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>LOCATIONS Province (District)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Provided intelligence to Rwandan government about refugee movements</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Nov-Dec 1996</td>
<td>South Kivu, North Kivu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Recruited mercenary force</td>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Jan 1996</td>
<td>Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>Allowed safe passage of Rwanda/AFDL forces for attack on Lubumbashi</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Mar-Apr 1997</td>
<td>Northwestern Zambia near Congo border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Provided military equipment and supplies</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Military training in Jinja, Uganda for RPA/AFDL</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Jinja, Uganda; possibly other locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Provided material support</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Provided material support and planning</td>
<td>ADF/NALU, WNBF</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Orientale (Ituri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeBeers (South Africa)</td>
<td>Provided financial support ($7.4 mil)</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Apr 1997</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Mineral Fields (USA/Canada)</td>
<td>Provided financial support ($1.3 mil); provided air transport for Kabila</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>Apr 1997</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenke Mining Corp. (Canada)</td>
<td>Provided financial support ($64.6 mil)</td>
<td>Rwanda/AFDL</td>
<td>May 1997</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table compiled by Dan Fahey from multiple sources.

The AFDL was an alliance of four groups assembled by Rwanda and Uganda to make the war appear to be an internal Zairian conflict.14 During the first half of 1996, the Rwandans and Ugandans had identified several individuals and groups that became the AFDL (Pomfret 1997a). None of these individuals or groups commanded much public support inside Congo, but their assemblage created the illusion of a Zairian rebellion at the same time that it enabled Rwanda to heavily rely upon Zairian proxies (many of them child soldiers or *kadogos*) to fight against FAZ, ex-FAR and Interahamwe inside Congo. Uganda played a major role in selecting the future leader of the AFDL, Laurent Désiré Kabila (Museveni 1998, 6-7; Mbabazi 2001), and the alliance’s nominal military leader, André Kisase Nganda (Museveni 1998, 7; de Villers and Willame 1998, 19-23; Allio 1999b). In reality, Kabila had little or no role in planning or executing the war; the driving force behind the war was the Rwandan government (Pomfret 1997). Kisase had

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14 The four groups were: *Le Parti de la Révolution Populaire* (PRP), which had fought against Mobutu during the 1960s; *Le Conseil National de Résistance pour la Démocratie* (CNRD), which was the only armed force of any importance at the start of the conflict; *Le Mouvement Révolutionnaire pour la Libération du Congo* (MRLZ), a group of Banyamulenge headed by a Rwandan soldier; and *L’Alliance Démocratique des Peuples* (ADP), also a group made up mainly of Tutsis living in Congo.
the only Zairian armed group of any importance in what became the AFDL (Kennes 2003, 319); the rest of the forces were largely assembled, trained, and equipped by Rwanda and Uganda. Although Kisase did command troops in the field, the overall RPA/AFDL military commander was James Kabarebe, an officer in the RPA and a veteran of Uganda’s National Resistance Army (Reyntjens 1999, 60; Pomfret 1997).

At the start of the war in October, the Rwandan-led AFDL had approximately 2,000 combatants. The Rwandans had recruited these boys and men from among the Banyamulenge of eastern Congo and trained them in Rwanda and Uganda (Museveni 1998, 13). During the first two months of the war, the RPA/AFDL recruited another 2,000 soldiers in eastern Congo (Van Acker and Vlassenroot 2001, 106-107). The RPA/AFDL included current DRC president Joseph Kabila, former DRC Minister of Foreign Affairs Mbusa Nyamwisi, and former rebel leader Laurent Nkunda (Stearns 2008, 253). Starting in late October, the RPA/AFDL alliance enlisted the support of two local militias from North Kivu with ethnic and territorial roots, who I will collectively refer to as the Mai Mai.15 The Mai Mai played important roles in fighting from Goma to Bunia (Wild 1998, 451-454). By January 1997, Kabila claimed to have more than 15,000 troops fighting for the AFDL, including 4,000 Banyamulenge (Mamdani 2001, 258).

After the attack at Lemera, the RPA/AFDL moved to the north and south, attacking refugee camps and clashing with FAZ, ex-FAR, and Interahamwe. On 24-25 October the RPA/AFDL captured Uvira, the second-largest town in South Kivu (after Bukavu). Two features of the fighting in and around Uvira merit attention. First, the RPA/AFDL’s targeting of refugee camps and massacres of Hutu refugees were repeated throughout the war. The Rwandan strategy was not only to disperse the refugees and the ex-FAR and Interhamwe among them, but also to exact revenge against Rwandan Hutus and Zairian Hutus and other groups which had been killing and persecuting Tutsis in Congo and Rwanda since the 1994 genocide (Pomfret 1997). Between 20 October and 1 November, the RPA-led force allegedly killed more than 9,500 refugees and local Zairians to the north and south of Uvira.16 Second, the RPA/AFDL’s victory at Uvira further demonstrated the weakness of the Zairian army. As the RPA-led force pressed south towards Uvira, the undisciplined and unpaid Zairian soldiers looted Uvira town before fleeing the small RPA/AFDL force (Pomfret 1997). In later battles at Goma, Bunia, Kisangani and elsewhere, the FAZ disintegrated as the RPA-led force approached, looting and raping as they fled.

15 There were four militias active during late 1996: the Mai Mai based in the central area of Masisi and Walikale, drawn from the Bahunde and Batembo ethnic groups; the Ngilima from the Lubero and Beni areas, drawn mainly from the Banande; the Kasingien, a mainly Banande group based at the Ruwenzori mountains with members drawn from Congolese living on both sides of the Uganda-Congo border; and the Katuko, composed mainly of young Banyanga recruits operating from Kale in the south to Walikale in the north (Mamdani 2001, 257-258; cf. HRW 1996, fn. 2).
16 A United Nations’ investigation reported 9,496 dead, plus unspecified “hundreds” at Kamanyola; I have chosen to round up to 9,500, which may be a conservative estimate of the actual number of dead (UNSC 1998, Appendix § 26).
After dispersing the refugee camps near Uvira, the RPA-led force moved north towards South Kivu’s capital and biggest town, Bukavu, killing hundreds of refugees along the way (UNSC 1998, § 26a). After the fall of Bukavu on 30 October (UNDHA 1996b), reports emerged that the RPA-led force had executed hundreds of people (UNSC 1998, § 29-30). The battle for Bukavu also displaced approximately 310,000 refugees (UNDHA 1996e), who fled into the mountains and along roads leading to the west and north. In what was to become another defining characteristic of the war, thousands of refugees died of malnutrition and disease during their flight from Bukavu (UNSC 1998, § 28).

On 24 October, the RPA/AFDL opened a second front in the war north of Goma, the capital of North Kivu. One RPA/AFDL force crossed into Congo from Rwanda and attacked the refugee camp at Kibumba, forcing approximately 200,000 Rwandan refugees to flee south toward the Mugunga camp, eight miles west of Goma (UNDHA 1996a). A second RPA/AFDL force traveled from Rwanda into Uganda and then into Congo. This force captured key towns near the Uganda-Congo border and forced approximately 315,000 refugees to flee to the south (towards Mugunga) and to the west (towards Masisi and Walikale) (UNDHA 1996b; Emizet 2000, 175-176). The fact that these attacks were launched from Rwanda and Uganda attests to the importance of the international dimension of the war.

During November, the Rwandan-led forces solidified their control over the Congo-Rwanda border area. Using a double envelopment attack from the north and east, RPA-led forces took the important border town of Goma in just three days of fighting, ending on 4 November (UNDHA 1996b). Hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees were now concentrated west of Goma the Mugunga refugee camp. On 12 November, the RPA-led force, which reportedly included an elite RPA unit, started attacking the Mugunga camp (UNDHA 1996f). Before the camp fell, the ex-FAR and Interahamwe at Mugunga had forced some refugees to flee with them and killed others who refused to leave (UNDHA 1996h). When the RPA/AFDL and their Mai Mai allies entered the Mugunga camp, they reportedly beat some refugees, told them to return to Rwanda, and summarily executed others (UNSC 1998, § 91-93). The RPA/AFDL and Mai Mai also blocked access to the west from Mugunga, effectively forcing refugees to go east, towards Rwanda. As a result, from 15 to 19 November approximately 600,000 refugees returned to Rwanda (Emizet 2000, 168). The fighting in and around Goma killed an estimated 6,800 people (Pomfret 1997), including 2,700 in Goma town (HRW 1997, 30).

The birth and death of UN intervention
During October 1996, the attacks on refugee camps, reports of massacres, and massive population displacements in eastern Congo garnered regional and international attention. After a meeting of regional leaders in Nairobi, Kenya (UNDHA 1996c), on 9 November the Security Council issued a resolution deploring the violence in eastern Congo and requesting the Secretary General to set up a member-led humanitarian mission to help refugees and displaced persons (UNSC 1996). The proposed mission to Congo was to

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17 RPA-led forces allegedly crossed into Uganda from Cyanika, Rwanda and then traveled to Congo through the Congo-Uganda Bunagana border post (Reyntjens 1997).
include up to 15,000 troops, including approximately 4,000 U.S. servicemembers and up to 3,500 British forces (Mitchell 1996, Binyon 1996).

The difference in French and American responses to the multinational force reflected their opposing allegiances in the conflict. France wanted a humanitarian intervention that would freeze the advance of the RPA/AFDL and force it to negotiate a power-sharing agreement with Mobutu (McNulty 1999, 73). France backed up Congo in its assertion that the conflict was an international war waged by Rwanda and Uganda, which required international intervention to stop it. Even though some US officials expressed concern about the role of Rwanda and Uganda in Congo (Reyntjens 1999, 84-85), the US government wanted to keep the mission narrowly focused on addressing the humanitarian needs and repatriation of refugees in eastern Congo, which was in line with Rwanda’s objectives (Mitchell 1996). The reasons for the US stance include post-Somalia limitations on intervention in humanitarian emergencies,\(^\text{18}\) and post-Rwandan genocide guilt that manifested in strong U.S. support for Kagame and the Rwandan government.

The mandate of the proposed to mission was a subject of hot debate. Although some NGOs such as Oxfam and MSF called for the UN mission to disarm the ex-FAR and Interahamwe (UNDHA 1996i), Canada and the US made clear that their participation was contingent on not having their forces involved in disarmament (UNDHA 1996g). The proposed mission revived the ghost of the failed US mission in Somalia and the still-potent specter of the quagmire in Viet Nam (Ruane and Slevin 1996).

On 15 November, the UN Security Council authorized creation of a member-led multinational force with a Chapter VII mandate to deliver humanitarian aid and assist resettlement of refugees and displaced persons (UNSC 1996a). The mandate did not include disarmament specifically, although under Chapter VII the mission had authority to use force if necessary. Rwanda argued against passage of the mandate, stating it was not necessary because thousands of refugees were then heading towards Rwanda after the attack on the Mugunga refugee camp (DPA 1996; UNDHA 1996i). The Rwandan ambassador to the UN stated that humanitarian groups were cynically quoting higher numbers to justify UN intervention and keep themselves in business (Bennet 1996; Henk 1998, fn. 19; Gowing 1998, 55). Then-US ambassador to Rwanda Robert E. Gribbin backed up the Rwandans, saying: “I’m of the opinion that most of the people who are Rwandan refugees and who want to return home have done so.” He added that he thought the remaining refugees in Congo were “in the tens to twenty thousands rather than vast numbers” (Bennet 1996).

The Rwandan attack at Mugunga served both tactical and strategic goals. First, it dislodged the vast assemblage of refugees and militants near Goma. This led to an unprecedented exodus of refugees back to Rwanda and pushed the ex-FAR and Interhamwe (as well as many refugees) west, away from Rwanda’s border. Second, when this exodus was publicized in international media, support for the mission weakened in the United States, the United Kingdom, and other countries. The attack on Mugunga provided a public relations coup with images of returning refugees—rather

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than bloated, crying children—broadcast in Europe and the United States. Less than a week after the Security Council passed its resolution, the mission was essentially dead. Robert Oakley, a former US ambassador to Congo, summed up the reasons for the end of the mission: “Two things changed: the facts on the ground and public opinion…Call it the CNN factor. They started showing people going home” (Keen 1996).

**The US role**
The role of the United States in the First Congo War remains partly obscured, but existing evidence suggest the US government at the very least provided important military training, political support, and intelligence to the Rwandan government. Strong US support for Rwanda and Uganda foreshadowed US foreign policy during the second Congo war.

US military support to Rwanda may have indirectly aided Rwanda’s war effort. After the 1994 genocide, the US government provided $75.08 million in military assistance to the RPA, including a “border package” that “was devoted mostly to communications gear and transport assets” (Gribbin 2005, 121), including vehicles and patrol boats for Lake Kivu (Odom 2005, 251). Just before the outbreak of the First Congo War, U.S. Special Forces soldiers trained 30 RPA soldiers for combat operations, but it remains unclear if the American-trained troops subsequently fought in Congo. Although rumors of US involvement inside Congo were widely reported (Reyntjens 1999, 82-83; HRW 1997a, 36), no solid evidence of such involvement has emerged in the ensuing years.

US political support to Rwanda came in two forms. First, as Canadian and European officials claimed, the US may have delayed Security Council action on the multi-national force (UNDHA 1996g; UNDHA 1996j), thereby enabling Rwanda to plan and execute the 15 November attack at Mugunga that forced hundreds of thousands of refugees back to Rwanda. Second, as discussed above, the US ambassador to Rwanda and other US officials expressed opposition to the multi-national force after the Mugunga attack, thereby siding with Rwanda in opposing deployment of the force. The loss of US support for the multi-lateral force helped to seal its fate.

The US also provided important intelligence information to the Rwandan government. In mid-November the U.S. military created Joint Task Force (JTF) “Guardian Assistance” to assess participation in the multi-national force (US DoD n.d.), but as soon as the JTF arrived in the region, the RPA/AFDL attack on the Mugunga refugee camp changed the course of the mission. With humanitarian intervention increasingly unlikely, the JTF’s new role “became information enabler to Rwanda and relief agencies” (Smith 1998-1999, 94). After Rwandan and American officials accused humanitarian groups of overstating the size and condition of the refugee population in eastern Congo (Gowing 1998, 15), the

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20 This was a Joint Combined Exchange Training, or JCET (US DoD n.d.).

21 Then-Ambassador Gribbin wrote: “In retrospect, I believe that the report of black English-speaking soldiers who were not Rwandan was probably the first evidence of Ugandan involvement” in the war in Congo (Gribbin 2005, 189).
US military used aircraft, satellite imagery, and other information in an effort to verify the size, location, composition, and direction of movement of refugees in eastern Congo. US aircraft were not permitted to fly more than 100 miles into eastern Congo, however, thus limiting their ability to identify refugees deeper inside the country (AFP 1996e). In addition, thousands of refugees hid in forests and were largely invisible from the air.

The information gathered by US intelligence assets on refugee movements became controversial for two reasons. First, the US military shared the information about refugees with the Rwandan government (Smith 1998-1999, 95), which had for several weeks been directing the attacks on refugees in eastern Congo. This raises the question—still unanswered—about whether intelligence purportedly gathered for humanitarian purposes was in fact used for military purposes by the Rwandan government to direct further attacks against refugees and Hutu militants (Gowing 1998, 58-61). Second, the estimates of the number of refugees produced by the US military led the head of the multinational force, Canadian General Baril, to conclude the multinational force was no longer needed because the remaining refugees were supposedly affiliated with the génocidaires (Adelman and Baxter 2004, 267-268), a dubious assertion also articulated by then-Rwandan Ambassador Gribbin (Gribbin 2005, 198; Bennet 1996). Subsequent assessments indicated that 200,000 to 300,000 refugees—the vast majority unarmed women and children—were still in Congo (Buckley 1997). Out of these refugees, a Rwandan official claimed in early February 1997 there were approximately 40,000 ex-FAR and their families (UNDHA 1997a). The US intelligence estimates therefore understated the number of refugees needing, wanting, or deserving assistance in eastern Congo.

Uganda enters the fight
Uganda fought two internationalized internal armed conflicts in Congo during the first Congo war. The first conflict was against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), who united in 1995 to fight against President Museveni and Uganda (Kayunga 2000, 115-116; Prunier 2004, 383). The second conflict was against the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF), composed of former soldiers from Idi Amin’s army who sought the overthrow of President Museveni and the restoration of Idi Amin, who was then living in exile in Saudi Arabia. Both ADF/NALU and WNBF had bases in Congo, and both movements received material support from the Government of Sudan.

Uganda fought ADF/NALU along the Congo-Uganda border near the Rwenzori Mountains. On 13 November, ADF/NALU attacked and captured several towns in western Uganda, including Bwera and the border post at Mpondwe (de Temmerman

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22 EURCOM initially deployed two US Navy P-3 patrol planes from Patrol Squadron 16 in Sigonella, Sicily. These P-3s were based at Entebbe and flew missions over eastern Congo as early as 14 November 1996. By 26 November EURCOM deployed 1-2 additional P-3s to Entebbe. In addition, EURCOM deployed a USAF AC-130 gunship, which was used for intelligence gathering over eastern Congo. On 20 November the UK military deployed one Canberra PR9 surveillance aircraft from 39th Squadron, RAF Marham in Norfolk, to support intelligence gathering over Congo; the Canberra and its crew were based at Entebbe (Bacon 1996; Smith 1998-1999, 98).
The UPDF counterattacked, pushed ADF/NALU into Congo, and on 28 November captured the Zairian town of Kasindi, near the border with Uganda (AFP 1996; cf. Photo 1). In a joint operation starting 16 December, the RPA/AFDL attacked ADF/NALU bases in Congo and pushed the rebels east towards the UPDF (Musoga 1997; AFP 1997). Between January and March 1997 the UPDF and ADF/NALU continued to clash along the border (Karugaba 1997; AFP 1997c; Karenzi 1997; Sserwanga 1997; AFP 1997d; Nzinjah 1997; Karugaba et al 1997).

23 The Mpondwe attack may have been coordinated with the LRA, WNBLF, and Uganda People’s Army (UPA) (Borzello 1996).
Farther north, the Uganda v. WNBF conflict played out along the Congo-Uganda border. During October and November 1996 the WNBF launched attacks from Congo into Uganda against infrastructure and refugee camps housing Sudanese refugees. On 1 December, the WNBF attacked two border posts near Arua, Uganda (AFP 1996d). The WNBF coordinated its attacks in northern Uganda with the then Sudan-based Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) (Van Acker 2004, 335-357; Prunier 2004, 359-383). During January 1997, WNBF rebels launched several attacks into Uganda (AFP 1997a; AFP 1997c). On 12 February the UPDF joined the RPA/AFDL in an attack on WNBF rebels at Ariwara, 12km (8 miles) inside Congo (AFP 1997e). During March the UPDF reportedly again attacked WNBF bases at Ariwara and elsewhere in northeastern Congo near the Uganda border (The Monitor 1997; Prunier 1999, 50).

**Advance of the RPA/AFDL alliance**

After securing the territory along Congo’s borders with Burundi and Rwanda, the RPA/AFDL alliance steadily pushed back FAZ and ex-FAR/Interahamwe forces. During the waning months of the war, new armed forces joined the battle to support either the RPA/AFDL or FAZ. The fighting took place on three main fronts in the north, west, and south.

On the northern front, the RPA/AFDL steadily advanced despite occasional opposition from FAZ and European mercenaries. With help from the Mai Mai and possibly the UPDF,24 the RPA/AFDL took the crossroads town of Beni (30 November), the Ituri capital of Bunia (24-25 December) (Parayre 1996), and the gold-mining town of Mongbwalu (28 December) (Tomlinson 1997). The war passed through Ituri relatively quickly, but two points merit attention. First, Ituri and its rich goldfields were not primary targets of the Rwandan-led army. Second, there was no organic rebel force that started the war in Ituri (or in Congo), in contrast to conceptions of the resource curse that argue rebel groups start wars to obtain valuable resources like gold.

In February 1997, the RPA/AFDL swept aside mercenaries led by Belgian Christian Tavernier (UNDHA 1997a; BBC 1997), who Mobutu had hired in a desperate attempt to slow the Rwandan advance (BBC 1997a; Kiley 1997a). The northern front then turned south for the attack on Kisangani (see below). After the 15 March capture of Kisangani, one group of RPA/AFDL moved west down the Congo River from Kisangani, taking Bumba (29 April) (Xinhua 1997), and Mobutu’s hometown of Lisala (2 May) (French 1997e).

On the western front, the RPA/AFDL alliance pursued the retreating FAZ, Ex-FAR/Interahamwe, and Hutu refugees across the entire length of Congo. On 20 January, FAZ launched a counter-offensive, using mercenaries flying jets from Kisangani and later Kindu to bomb RPA/AFDL positions in and around Walikale (UNDHA 1997; UNSC 1998, § 53). With the assistance of the Katangan Tigers, an anti-Mobutu rebel group that deployed in February from Angola (Rupert and Duke 1997; Renytjens 1999, 72-73; Rupert 1997; cf. French 1997), the RPA/AFDL advanced towards the strategic city of

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24 These Mai Mai were Hunde, Nande, and Mayogo ethnic groups (DPA 1996a; cf. AFP 1996b; AFP 1996c).
Kisangani. The RPA/AFDL alliance pushed more than one hundred thousand refugees out of camps at Amisi (9 February) (McKinley and French 1997; UNSC 1998, § 54), and Tingi-Tingi (2 March) (McKinley and French 1997), killing hundreds or perhaps thousands of refugees in the process (UNSC 1998, § 54, 100-101).

Many politicians and analysts expected the battle for Kisangani to decide the fate of the Mobutu regime (Rupert 1997). In early March, the RPA/AFDL approached Kisangani from the north, northeast and the southwest (AFP 1997g). The RPA/AFDL force included Katangan Tigers and Ugandan soldiers (Gribbin 2005, 218), while Kisangani’s defenders included Zairian Presidential Guards, Hutu fighters, and Serb mercenaries. In the days before the final assault began, the RPA/AFDL reportedly infiltrated Kisangani and encouraged FAZ soldiers to lay down their arms (Rupert 1997). As the RPA/AFDL alliance closed in, many FAZ troops looted the city and fled to the west (AFP 1997i; Orr 1997), while the Serb mercenaries based at the airport blew up their headquarters at the airport and flew out of Kisangani on the three helicopters (French 1997; AFP 1997i; Reuters 1997). The final battle on 15 March largely took place around the airport, sparing downtown.

Following their victory at Kisangani, the RPA/AFDL turned their attention to the south towards Ubundu, where over 100,000 refugees and Hutu militia had fled in March from the Tingi Tingi refugee camp (McKinley 1997a; UNDHA 1997d). Around 22 March, one group of Hutu political leaders, fighters, and their families left the main group of refugees, while approximately 50,000 refugees settled into camps (UNSC 1998, Appendix § 102; UNDHA 1997d; Gribbin 2005, 224). During late March and April 1997, the AFDL and/or RPA killed hundreds (perhaps thousands) of refugees in camps between Kisangani and Ubundu and directly caused the deaths of hundreds (perhaps thousands) more by denying them aid and assistance.25 The RPA/AFDL initially denied humanitarian agencies access to the refugees (UNSC 1998, Appendix § 108), but starting in April the UN and others airlifted approximately 45,000 of these refugees home to Rwanda (McKinley and French 1997; AFP 1997o).

The refugees heading west hoped to enter the Congo Republic (WFP 1997). By early May, approximately 50,000 refugees had reached western Congo. Many of these refugees were reportedly in poor shape after their long trek, suffering from malnutrition, disease, and fatigue. Although thousands of refugees crossed the Congo River and entered the Congo Republic (AFP 1997n), the RPA/AFDL reportedly killed hundreds of refugees, most notably at Mbandaka (UNSC 1998, Appendix § 60-61, 110-117). An AFDL officer was nominally in charge of the massacres at Mbandaka, but a subsequent UN investigation determined “those in effective control were Rwandan Army officers” (UNSC 1998, Appendix § 117).

On the southern front, the RPA/AFDL alliance captured important mining areas and spearheaded the advance on Kinshasa. Aided by Katangan Tigers, the RPA/AFDL moved south, capturing Kalemie (3 February) (UNDHA 1997a; Roberts 1997), and Moba

25 The Zairian Red Cross claimed 500 people died when the refugees moved through Ubilo, 51 miles south of Kisangani (Pierre-Pierre 1997; McKinley 1997c).
(6 February) (Kiley 1997), Congo’s two major ports on Lake Tanyanika that enabled Zairian trade with Tanzania. The RPA/AFDL pressed to the southwest, taking Mbuji-Mayi (4 April) (AFP 1997j), which was capital of the diamond-rich Eastern Kasai province. On 14 April the RPA/AFDL captured Kolwezi, a town of great economic significance for its copper and cobalt reserves (AFP 1997k).

The RPA/AFDL pressed on towards the economically and politically important town of Lubumbashi. Some RPA/AFDL units advanced on Lubumbashi from the southwest after traveling through Zambia (Campagne 1997). Unlike many other towns where the FAZ troops looted and fled, the FAZ Presidential Guard fought for several days on the outskirts of Lubumbashi after the final assault started on 7-8 April. Hundreds of FAZ surrendered to the rebels during the final battle on 10 April (McGreal 1997; Meares 1997).

Another war enters the polywar
Angola had long-standing disputes with Mobutu, who had close personal ties to UNITA leader Joseph Savimbi and allowed the UNITA rebels to maintain bases on Zairian territory. In addition, UNITA used Zairian territory to transit diamonds from Angola worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year (Gordon 1997; Matloff 1997). UNITA forces reportedly first deployed to eastern Congo in December 1996, but during February 1997 they concentrated at a base in Kamina, in the heart of Katanga Province (Matloff 1997; Rupert and Duke 1997). UNITA deployed approximately 1,600 troops to support the Zairian government (Matloff 1997).

Angola arguably entered the war when it deployed the Katangan Tigers (see above) because the Tigers were a mixed force of Zairian exiles and Angolan troops (Turner 2002, 82). In early 1997 UNITA and the Angolan government were working together to form a government of national unity (Casteran 1997), but when it became clear that Zairian government officials were selling large amounts of weaponry and ammunition to UNITA rebels (Rupert 1997), the Angolan government evidently decided to intervene more robustly in the war to ensure the RPA/AFDL victory and the defeat of Mobutu. Angolan army units crossed into Congo around 23 April near Tschikapa, Congo and participated in the march to Kinshasa along the southern front through Kikwit and Kenge. The Angolans brought tanks and artillery to the battlefield (Lippman 1997), as well as air transport used to supply combat units and evacuate wounded troops (Nevill 1997; AFP 1997l; Duke 1997b). In May and June 1997, the Angolan army carried out military operations around the former UNITA stronghold of Kamina in Katanga province, but these offensives were only partly successful and thousands of Savimbi’s UNITA rebels managed to escape and maintain a presence in the newly renamed DRC (Turner 2002, 83).

March to Kinshasa
The RPA/AFDL’s main advance towards Kinshasa came from forces of the southern front that had captured Mbuji-Mayi. The RPA/AFDL took Kananga (12 April), an important diamond trading town and capital of Western Kasai province, after the FAZ defenders fled (DPA 1997a). From Kananga the RPA/AFDL took two lines of advance
towards Kinshasa: the northern route running through Ilebo and Bandundu, while the southern route ran through Kikwit and Kenge.

The battle for Kenge was one of the most significant combat engagements of the war and the last major battle before the fall of Kinshasa. FAZ Presidential Guards reportedly blew up bridges on the approach to Kenge but the RPA/AFDL used bridge-laying gear to continue their advance (QNP 1997). The FAZ-led forces pulled back to a defensive position west of Kenge (French 1997f), where fighting resumed on 13 May before the RPA/AFDL-led forces finally broke through on their way to Kinshasa.

The RPA/AFDL-led forces approached Kinshasa along roads from Bandundu and Kenge. The FAZ tried to slow the rebel advance by destroying a bridge over the Black River, 60 miles east of Kinshasa (Duke 1997b), but this did not significantly slow the rebel advance. On 16 May President Mobutu flew out of Kinshasa to Gbadolite, just barely ahead of the RPA/AFDL army. That night, RPA/AFDL troops seized N’Djili Airport, 10 miles east of downtown Kinshasa. As the RPA/AFDL closed in, FAZ Presidential Guard soldiers at Camp Tsha Tshi killed defense minister Mahele Lieko Bakungu, reportedly after he encouraged some hard-line soldiers to lay down their arms (Duke 1997c; French 1997h; Wrong 2000, 275-277). On 17 May the RPA/AFDL moved into the city with little resistance (French 1997h). Many military commanders fled Kinshasa to Brazzaville, Congo Republic and other destinations, while some fled west to Matadi. With Kinshasa in the control of the RPA/AFDL, Kabila declared victory from Lubumbashi and proclaimed himself President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Financing and natural resources
The economic dimension of the first Congo war is inseparable from the political dimension. Despite decades of exploitation by Belgian colonialists and the Mobutu regime, in 1996 Congo still had immense reserves of valuable natural resources including gold, diamonds, copper, cobalt, coltan, cassiterite, wolfram, and timber. Congo also had untapped potential as a trading partner for Uganda and Rwanda, who were geographically well placed to take advantage of business opportunities in the Kivus and Ituri. The decision by Rwanda and Uganda to wage a war to topple Mobutu and attack rebels in eastern Congo carried with it an implicit understanding that a new regime would provide political and economic benefits. President Museveni of Uganda certainly recognized this fact when he claimed that one of his reasons for supporting the war was “to see that Congo is not unstable such that we can do business” (Museveni and Aptidon 1997).

As the spokesman-cum-leader of the AFDL, Laurent Kabila initially provided little information about his or the AFDL’s economic agenda. The AFDL’s initial 18 October 1996 declaration simply noted the disastrous economic situation in Congo as a reason for AFDL’s existence (de Villers and Willame 1998, 20). In another statement on 23 November, Kabila simply stated that the wealth of the country should serve the country’s development and be used to help the poorest people (de Villers and Willame 1998, 43-44).
Kabila did take some actions, however, such as establishing administrative structures in areas under RPA/AFDL control. The AFDL abolished import duties to spur trade in the border area, and Kabila negotiated directly with humanitarian groups to bring assistance into eastern Congo (Reed 1998, 148). Economic activity increased in eastern towns taken by the RPA/AFDL during the first phase of the war, and some foreign owned companies returned after having fled in October. By the end of December Kabila also asserted the right to renegotiate mining contracts in the areas under RPA/AFDL control. Kabila declared that mining companies that abandoned operations in areas under RPA/AFDL control had until 3 January 1997 to resume operations or lose their licenses (Nduru 1996).

During the beginning of 1997, Kabila’s economic agenda became clearer. Kabila and his aides sold diamonds and mining rights, but as became evident after the war, they did little to prepare politically for the post-conflict environment. An article in The Washington Post described AFDL leader Laurent Kabila as “a former Marxist who has embraced free-market reform and pledges to overthrow the corrupt government of President Mobutu Sese Seko” (Shiner 1997), but in retrospect it is clear Kabila was simply a smart businessman who took advantage of his role as a leader of the “civil war” to enrich himself and repay his benefactors. What Kabila could not sell, he took. As the war drew to a close, Kabila seized $64.6 million in locomotives and railcars owned by South Africa’s Spoornet railway plus another $19.4 million in railroad assets.

According to current Rwandan President Paul Kagame, the main funders of the RPA/AFDL alliance were Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola (Mamdani 1997). While the story of exactly how the war was funded has yet to be told, it is clear that the RPA/AFDL’s success on the battlefield also translated into additional sources of funding. Some of this money came from captured mines and some of it came from the sale of mining rights.

During the first phase of the war, the RPA/AFDL seized two important gold mines. Around 1 December they captured the Sominki mine at Kamituga, approximately 55 miles southwest of Bukavu (Fox 1996). Retreating FAZ soldiers had reportedly looted this mine (Ludden 1996), however, leaving little behind for the RPA/AFDL to exploit (UNDHA 1996j). On 28 December the RPA/AFDL captured the gold mining town of Mongbwalu, approximately 40 miles northwest of Bunia in the Ituri district. The mines at Mongbwalu had been called “Mobutu’s gold mine” (Tomlinson 1997), so their seizure marked an important symbolic victory as well as a potentially lucrative take.

During the final phase of the war, the RPA/AFDL war effort gained financially from diamond sales. After the RPA/AFDL in March captured the important diamond-trading town of Kisangani, Kabila granted a monopoly on diamond sales to the company

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26 The Heineken brewery in Bukavu, the coffee and lumber mill in Beni, the sugar refinery in Uvira, and a Belgian shipping company in Goma (McKinley 1997).

27 In 1997 US$, the value of the railcars and locomotives was reported to be $50 million; the value of the assets was $15 million (Cahn 1997c; Maykuth 1997).

28 This mine was run by the Anglo-Canadian consortium of Cluff Mining and Banro.
American Diamond Buyers (ADB), a subsidiary of America Mineral Fields (AMF), which reportedly provided the AFDL with $1.29 million29 in “advance taxes” for diamond sales in Kisangani (Maykuth 1997a). On 7 April, Kabila flew to the diamond center of Mbuji-Mayi in AMF’s jet and met with executives from the Société Minières de Bakwanga (MIBA), the state-owned mining company that was the largest producer of diamonds (Wrong 1997). MIBA had not yet sent the production from March (approximately 450,000 carats of diamonds) to Kinshasa, so Kabila seized the diamonds and sold them just three days later. Under the Mobutu regime, the South African company DeBeer’s had a monopoly on the purchase of diamonds from MIBA, but Kabila sold the diamonds to DeBeer’s only after a rapid bidding process that included America Diamond Buyers (Maykuth 1997a). On 10 April, DeBeer’s paid $7.4 million for the diamonds to a bank in Kigali.30 Out of $43.5 million in diamond sales by MIBA between April and August 1997, which were handled by a bank in Kigali, approximately $25.5 million was paid to the governments of Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Eritrea, and Tanzania;31 this money was reportedly compensation for those governments’ support of the AFDL.32 The remaining $18.1 million went to the AFDL.33

During 1996 and early 1997, the Government of Congo entered into joint contracts with several international companies to exploit deposits of cobalt, copper, diamonds, and gold (DRC 2007, 18-20, 22, 208; DRC 2007a, 17-27, 33-34, 232, 239-240). While these contracts provided the Mobutu regime with some needed revenue, they were precarious given the war sweeping eastward. In early 1997, as the RPA/AFDL advanced into Shaba (Katanga) and Kasai, foreign mining companies and businessmen started to flock to meet the new “de facto” government, negotiate new contracts, or ensure the viability of contracts signed with the Mobutu regime.

In April the AFDL signed several commercial contracts for the trade and exploitation of Congo’s rich natural resources. The first contract signed by the AFDL gave America Diamond Buyers the only license to buy diamonds in Kisangani (Cahn 1997; Maykuth 1997a). On 16 April, AMF announced it had signed three more contracts worth $1.14 billion with the AFDL to process copper- and cobalt-rich tailings at Kolwezi, to rehabilitate a zinc mine on the border with Zambia at Kipushi, and to explore for minerals in the Kipushi area.34

America Mineral Fields’ contracts had both political and financial benefits for the AFDL. In its press release announcing the contracts, AMF stated it had signed the agreement with “the Democratic Republic of the Congo”—not Congo—using the new name the

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29 This was reported to be $1 million in 1997 dollars. Another source states AMF paid $25.8 million ($20 million in 1997 US$) to Kabila, but the sources he cites do not mention this amount or any figure (cf. Huliaris 2004, 288).
30 This was reported to be $5.7 in 1997 US$.
31 In 1997 US$, the total amount of sales was $33.7 million; the amount paid to Rwanda et al was $19.7 million.
32 Of this money, Rwanda received approximately 35 percent, Uganda received approximately 25 percent, and the remainder was divided among Burundi, Eritrea, and Tanzania (Le Potentiel 1997).
33 In 1997 US$, this was $14 million.
34 This amount was $885 million in 1997 US$ (Cahn 1997).
AFDL would give to the country after the capture of Kinshasa (PR Newswire 1997). AMF also asserted that the agreement was with the “state-owned mining company Gecamines,” even though Gecamines was still technically under the control of the Zairian government in Kinshasa. AMF’s words and actions lent credibility and legitimacy to Kabila and the AFDL; moreover they heralded a flood of foreign financial and business interests who flocked during April to Lubumbashi and Goma. As noted above, AMF gave Kabila more than $1 million and allowed Kabila to use AMF’s chartered jet for three weeks (McKinley 1997b).

The AFDL negotiated other contracts during April that brought it additional financial and political benefits. In mid-April, several American companies signed agreements for banking and communications ventures in Goma (Shiner 1997). In early May the Canadian company Tenke Mining Corp. paid $64.6 million to the AFDL to secure a contract it had signed in December 1996 with the Zairian government to exploit copper and cobalt at Tenke-Fungurume, east of Kolwezi; the AFDL reportedly used this money to fund its war effort (Cahn 1997a). On 10 May, AMF flew a group of 30 businessmen and American politicians to Lubumbashi to help secure financing for its projects. Although Kabila personally handled some discussions with international businessmen, his newly-appointed ministers of finance (University of Kentucky doctoral graduate Mwana Nanga Mawampanga) and mines (Kambale Kabila Mututulo) also engaged in negotiations at Lubumbashi’s Hotel Karavia (McKinley 1997b).

Uganda’s amazing gold exports

During the first six months of 1997, an amazing event happened that has not been repeated since. Between 1 January and 30 June 1997, Uganda exported 6,591 kg of gold (see Chart 4, p. 65). Yet for the entire calendar year 1997, Uganda produced only 6 kg of gold (Chart 7), or about 0.1 percent of what the country exported. This windfall in a six-month period has not been repeated since then, and only once since then has Uganda exported more gold in an entire year (2002). Where did the gold come from?

As discussed in Chapter 2, there were numerous changes to the production and trade of gold in Congo during the years leading up to the war. On the eve of the first Congo war, the production of gold in Ituri was largely artisanal and semi-industrial. Tens of thousands of miners, rock-breakers, and processors produced thousands of kilograms of gold each year. At the same time, individual Congolese businessmen largely controlled

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35 This amount was reported to be $50 million in 1997 US$.
36 Among the investment firms represented were Goldman Sachs, Northern Mining of Ontario, CIBC Wood Gundy, C.M. Oliver and Co. of Vancouver, B.C., Value Investing Partners of Britain, National Securities of Britain, Bunting Warburg of Toronto, Yorktown Securities of Britain, Nile International of North Carolina, Marathon Securities of Vancouver, B.C., Deutsche Morgan Grenfell and Breco Int. of Britain. Accompanying the group was Robin Sanders of the U.S. State Department’s Africa bureau, U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney of Georgia, and Phillip Christenson from the staff of Sen. Jesse Helms, head of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. McKinney and Sanders met with Kabila for about an hour on 10 May (Cahn 1997c).
37 There are no reliable estimates for gold production during this period. The USGS has estimated that prior to the war, Congo produced approximately 10 metric tons of gold per year. Since the Kilo belt is one of the top few gold producing regions in Congo, it is reasonable to suggest that gold mining in Ituri produced several thousand kilograms per year.
the gold trade. These traders smuggled gold out of Congo, and some businessmen used gold as a currency to purchase consumer goods in Uganda and other countries, which they then sold in eastern Congo’s markets. During the early 1990s, Burundi was the main destination for Congolese gold due to a free trade regime that reduced taxes (Raeymaekers 2007, 82). As Burundi, Rwanda, and the Kivus in Congo became increasingly unstable in 1993-94, the trade in Ituri’s gold was pushed to Kampala. Increasing violence south of Ituri coincided with policy changes by the Ugandan government, which increased profit margins for gold traders and helped to pull the gold trade to Kampala.

The effects of these push and pull factors is evident in Ugandan government statistics. In the first quarter of 1995, Uganda exported only 1 kg of gold, but by the third quarter of 1996—up until the start of the first Congo war in late September—Uganda exported
1,099 kg (Chart 4). Uganda’s gold production was negligible (2 kg in 1995, 3 kg in 1996), and the only other regional source of gold was Congo.

So, what explains Uganda’s massive gold exports in the first six months of 1997? One explanation for the increase was that Kabila gave a “large consignment” of gold to the government of Uganda for “services rendered” during the war (Photo 2; Mwenda 1997). This gifted gold was then supposedly distributed among President Museveni’s inner circle of advisers and relations, although Ugandan government officials vigorously denied the allegation (Mwenda 1997). Another explanation is that the war created new opportunities for foreign businessmen to buy gold at Mongbwalu and other sites in eastern Congo and sell that gold in Kampala (French 1997c). The truth may lie in some combination of payoff to Ugandan government officials and new business opportunities in areas under RPA/AFDL control. On the downside, military operations in western Uganda against ADF/NALU caused a drop in tourism and tourism revenue to Uganda (EIU 1997, 20). The twin wars in Congo and Sudan also negatively affected some Ugandan businesses (Nabeta et al 1997; Karugaba 1997a).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart 7. Uganda, Gold Exports and Domestic Production, 1994-98 (kg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>1996</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<td>1998</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Chart compiled by Dan Fahey from various sources.

**DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES**

After the multinational force imploded in December, diplomatic initiatives during the remainder of the war failed to significantly affect the RPA/AFDL march to Kinshasa. On

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38 Interview with Ugandan journalist, January 2008, Kampala, Uganda.
22 January the UN Security Council appointed Algerian diplomat Mohammed Sahnoun to be the joint UN-Organization of African Unity (UN-OAU) envoy to the Great Lakes region (AFP 1997b). Sahnoun promoted a cease-fire and peace plan approved by the Security Council. Congo balked and insisted that Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi had to agree to the plan since they were supporting the AFDL in the war.

In addition to the UN/OAU effort, the United States and South Africa tried to broker negotiations between the Zairian government and the AFDL. On 25 February Laurent Kabila flew from Rwanda to South Africa for talks with South African President Nelson Mandela (Duke 1997). UN/OAU envoy Sahnoun also participated in the talks, but the discussions in South Africa failed to produce a lasting cease-fire and resulted only in vague promises of future direct talks between Kabila and the Zairian government (Gribbin 2005, 215; UNDHA 1997b; UNDHA 1997c; DPA 1997).

On 28 February UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called for reconsideration of a multinational force in Congo to protect and deliver aid to refugees (Burns 1997). France, Egypt, and Norway supported a multinational force, but the United States and United Kingdom opposed it, effectively killing the idea (Penketh 1997; AFP 1997f). On 15 March, Kabila demanded direct negotiations with Mobutu before calling a cease-fire, but Mobutu insisted on a cease-fire first (Reid 1997; AFP 1997h).

**End game diplomacy**

During the final phase of the war, diplomatic efforts focused on facilitating the transfer of power from Mobutu to Kabila. President Mobutu’s declining health mirrored FAZ’s faltering military campaign against RPA/AFDL. In mid-March Mobutu was hospitalized in Monaco with complications from earlier prostate surgery (Duff-Brown 1997). On 23 March Mobutu returned to Kinshasa in poor health with his government in disarray. On 25 March Mobutu accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo, who had been censured by Congo’s Parliament for his handling of the war (French 1997a; French 1997b). In an apparent effort to mollify the AFDL, on 1 April Mobutu approved opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi to be the new Prime Minister (Pierre-Pierre 1997a). Tshisekedi immediately proposed to form a new cabinet that excluded Mobutu’s MPR party and offered important cabinet positions to the AFDL (Duke 1997a), but amid public protests Mobutu fired Tshisekedi and appointed General Likulia Bolongo to be the new Prime Minister (Bryson 1997). In roughly two weeks Congo had three Prime Ministers in a sign of the disorganization and confusion within the Zairian government as the end grew near.

During April, the United States and South Africa led international efforts to ease Mobutu from power before the RPA/AFDL army arrived at Kinshasa. Diplomats from the United

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39 The peace plan called for an immediate end to the fighting in eastern Congo; the withdrawal of all foreign forces, including mercenaries; reaffirmation of the territorial integrity of all states in the region; protection of refugees, and the convening of an international conference to resolve conflicts in the region (Mutond 1997).

40 The US team in South Africa included Assistant Secretary of State for African affairs George Moose and Susan Rice, an Africa specialist with the National Security Council (Davies 1997; Khadige 1997).
States worked with their counterparts in South Africa to foster negotiations between the Zairian government and the AFDL. Kabila rejected calls for a cease-fire (Thomas 1997), but Mobutu rejected calls to negotiate with Kabila, who Mobutu viewed as a bandit (Wrong 2000, 273). Mobutu was apparently holding out for foreign intervention (by France, Togo, or Nigeria), a reversal of the military situation, or some other change of events that would afford him the opportunity to retain a titular position in a new government (Wrong 2000, 270; Gribbin 2005, 220). Finally, on 29 April US envoy Bill Richardson delivered a letter from President Clinton to President Mobutu and encouraged Mobutu to relinquish power “with honor and dignity” (French 1997d; Wrong 2000, 271-273). Even this request from Mobutu’s former ally failed, however, and Mobutu insisted upon meeting with Kabila.

The end of Mobutu’s rule came swiftly in May. On 4 May, South African President Nelson Mandela hosted a meeting between Mobutu and Kabila on the South African ship Outeniqua, but the meeting failed because Mobutu continued to insist on power-sharing and Kabila continued to insist on Mobutu’s resignation. On 7 May Mobutu traveled to Gabon for a regional summit with leaders from Gabon, the Congo Republic, Togo, and Equatorial Guinea. Mobutu did not go into exile from Gabon, as some speculated, but he did announce that he would not run for re-election in Congo (Buckley 1997a). On 10 May Mobutu returned to Kinshasa for the final time. Nelson Mandela organized another face-to-face meeting onboard the Outeniqua, but while Mobutu and Mandela sat waiting on the ship, Kabila stayed away in Cabinda, Angola, effectively ending any hope for a negotiated settlement (French 1997g). Three days later, on 16 May, Mobutu and some his family members and loyalists flew to Gbadolite. The next day, Mobutu and his entourage boarded an aircraft belonging to UNITA’s Joseph Savimbi. In a hail of gunfire from angry Presidential Guards, Mobutu left Gbadolite and flew to Togo (Wrong 2000, 278-279). After several days in Togo, Mobutu flew on to Rabat, Morocco, where he died on 7 September 1997 after his prolonged battle with prostate cancer (Maykuth 1997b).

**Call me by my true name**

The dominant roles of Rwanda and Uganda in planning and executing the first Congo war are both widely recognized and *prima facie* evidence that this was not a “civil war” as narrowly defined by the creators and users of conflict lists. Jason Stearns put it this way: “The war that started in Congo in September 1996 was not, above all, a civil war” (Sterns 2011, 54). Both Rwanda and Uganda denied involvement in what they termed a “civil war” in Congo, but in subsequent years the international origins of the first Congo war have become clear. In the absence of detailed information about Rwandan control over the AFDL and the conduct of the war, which is not publicly available, the statements of key participants and observers offer convincing evidence this was an international war first, and a civil war second.

Statements by key officials confirm that Rwanda planned the first Congo war with assistance from Uganda. Shortly before the start of the war, in August 1996 then-Rwandan Vice President Paul Kagame made a consultative trip to Washington, DC; of

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41 The ship was anchored on the Congo River at Pointe Noire, Congo Republic (Wrong 2000, 274).
42 I borrow this phrase from Thich Nhat Hahn’s poem, “Please Call Me by My True Names.”
this meeting Kagame later said: “I delivered a veiled warning: the failure of the international community to take action would mean Rwanda would take action” (Mamdani 1997). Kagame lacked confidence in Congolese rebel groups to execute a successful war, however, “So we said, let us support total change, even if it meant being directly involved...Left on their own, [Congolese rebel groups]...would not have changed anything” (Mamdani 1997). The Rwandans formulated a battle plan with three objectives: to “dismantle the camps;” to “destroy the structure” of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe in eastern Congo; and to topple Mobutu (Pomfret 1997a). After the war ended, Kagame claimed that he had ordered the war to begin in October 1996 after the government of Rwanda uncovered evidence that Hutus from the refugee camps planned a major military offensive against Rwanda (Pomfret 1997b; cf. Pomfret 1997a; McKinley 1996).

Uganda helped Rwanda to organize the Congolese rebel group that would be the public face of the war and mask international involvement, at least during the early stages of the war. Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni referred two key Congolese leaders—Laurent Kabila and Kisase Ngandu—“to our Rwandese brothers” (see more discussion below) (Museveni 1998, 6-7). Museveni acknowledged that “the Rwandese informed me that they had brought four groups of Congolese together” to form the AFDL (Museveni 1998, 6-7). Then-US Ambassador to Rwanda Robert E. Griffin noted that Rwanda had doubts about Kabila, but that “Rwandans said Kagame went along with Kabila on Museveni’s recommendation” (Gribbin 2005, 191).

Other U.S. officials have acknowledged the importance of Rwandan and other external involvement in starting the war. In March 1998, then-Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice made the following statement at a hearing of the House of Representatives:

[New leaders in Central and East Africa] also came together when they perceived the common threat that Mobutu’s Congo posed. While we had urged and would much have preferred a negotiated solution to the conflict in Congo, the leaders of the region determined that it was in their mutual interest to try to end the security threats posed by the refugee camps in Eastern Congo and to bring a halt to Mobutu’s 30 years of destabilizing his neighbors (Rice 1998).

Rice conspicuously ignored the role of the US government in supporting Mobutu’s “destabilizing” rule, but acknowledged the centrality of unnamed regional leaders in planning and executing the war. In addition to Rice, former US Defense Attaché to the Rwandan embassy, Thomas Odom, stated in his memoirs that “The RPA moved into Congo and forcefully closed the camps...[T]he Rwandans created an allied army of Tutsi exiles in Congo and ultimately conquered the whole country” (Odom 2005, 272).

The Rwandan government appears to have had extensive control over the RPA/AFDL alliance. Rwandan army officer James Kabarebe had overall military control over the AFDL, RPA, and other forces assembled to fight against FAZ, ex-FAR and Interahamwe (Reyntjens 1999, 60; Pomfret 1997). AFDL leader Laurent Kabila reportedly had little or no role in planning or executing the war (Pomfret 1997).

The Rwandans were the primary funders of the war on the anti-Mobutu side, but many other countries also contributed in direct and indirect ways. After the war, Rwandan then-Vice President Kagame stated, “The war was totally regional in its cost bearing… We asked the Ugandans and the Angolans to share. There was actually a sharing of the burden, though we [Rwanda] bore the main burden” (Mamdani 1997). Ugandan President Museveni stated, “A number of African countries like Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Zambia and Uganda, gave material support. Angola even contributed troops, and Tanzania later gave the ‘Alliance’ training personnel” (Museveni 1998, 10). In a statement issued shortly after the start of the Second Congo War, Uganda’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted “President Kabila was put in power by, especially, Rwanda, but also others…” (Uganda 1998, 6).

The statements by Kagame, Museveni, Gribbin, Rice and others indicate that the dominant feature of the war was an international conflict planned by Rwanda and Uganda; funded by Rwanda, Uganda and Angola; and directed by Rwandan army officers. The war initially appeared to be between the Banyamulenge and the Government of Congo (French 2004, 125), and then seemed to be a conflict between the AFDL (including Banyamulenge) against the Government of Congo, but in retrospect it is clear the dominant conflicts were Rwanda against the ex-FAR/Interahamwe and Rwanda against Congo. As the conflict progressed, three additional conflicts became part of the war. Uganda fought separate conflicts against ADF/NALU and WNBF, while Angola fought against its nemesis UNITA. There were 18 conflict actors and 10 supporting actors involved in the seven conflicts that constituted this polywar.

CONCLUSION
The first Congo war was a polywar of separate but interconnected armed conflicts and more than two-dozen actors. The dominant conflicts were Rwanda against the *génocidaires*, and the Rwandan-led war against the Mobutu regime in Congo. These conflicts incorporated pre-existing civil conflicts in eastern Congo. During the course of the war three additional internationalized internal armed conflicts played out on Zairian soil involving Uganda, Burundi, and Angola against rebel groups operating inside Congo. All of these conflicts overlapped in time, space, and sometimes actors. All told, at least 18 armed groups (state and non-state) participated in combat.43 Seven governments and at least three multinational corporations also participated in supporting roles.44

43 Rwanda, Congo, Uganda, Burundi, AFDL, Banyamulenge, Angola, Eritrea, Ex-FAR, Interahamwe, FDD, Mai Mai (two groups), ADF/NALU, WNBF, Katangan Tigers, UNITA, mercenaries.
44 Tanzania, United States, France, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Sudan, American Mineral Fields, Tenke Mining Corp., DeBeers.
The polywar emerged from several conflicts in the Kivus and Rwanda. The onset of the war was made possible by four factors:

- Escalating ethnic conflict in the Kivus during the early 1990s;
- Ethnic-based violence in the Kivus following the influx of Hutu refugees and militants after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda;
- The failure of the United Nations to demilitarize refugee camps in eastern Congo; and
- Regional and international support for toppling Mobutu.

Once the war started, its duration was affected by an additional four factors:

- A successful military strategy by the Rwanda-led alliance;
- Military and financial assistance to the Rwanda-led alliance by regional governments and transnational corporations;
- A demoralized Zairian army that failed to mount an effective defense; and
- Failed international efforts to create a multi-national force and foster a negotiated settlement.

At the end of the war, only some of the polywar’s conflicts were resolved. The government of Congo/Congo had changed, but Rwanda continued to battle the genocidaires, Uganda continued to battle ADF/NALU, Burundi continued to fight the FDD, and Angola continued to fight UNITA. The main interstate war was over, but numerous extrasystemic wars remained unresolved.

The first Congo war was also the first stage of a hegemonic shift in the Great Lakes Region that continues today. By 1996 the international order in Central and Eastern Africa was undergoing profound political, economic, and social change. A “new breed” of leaders in the rising states of Rwanda and Uganda challenged the declining hegemonic power—Congo—for political and economic dominance in the region. The changing distribution in power of the states in the region was tied to the larger re-ordering of the international system after the end of the Cold War. The United States abandoned Mobutu and embraced Kagame and Museveni, creating a permissive environment in which Rwanda and Uganda could invade, occupy, and plunder the Congo without fear of significant international sanction.

The role of natural resources during the war highlights two themes. First, international acquiescence of the Rwandan-led war created a politically permissive atmosphere that enabled companies based in the United States and elsewhere to sign contracts with the invading coalition for the future exploitation of Congo’s resources. If the United States had backed Mobutu and Congo during the war, instead of supporting Rwanda and Uganda, I argue it would have been much more difficult for Western-based companies to enter into contracts for resource exploitation with a rebel coalition that asserted sovereign rights (to sign contracts) that it did not actually possess. Second, resources had an important commercial value as a source of funding and as a payoff for foreign governments that supported the invaders, but they also had a significant symbolic value for the AFDL and Laurent Kabila. As the Rwandan-led force captured key mining areas, Kabila signed contracts with foreign companies to exploit the mines, enhancing his stature and international recognition as the future leader of Congo.
The Rwandan-led war was a military victory but a political failure, followed barely a year later by the disastrous second Congo war. At the time the first Congo war began, there was no consensus or understanding among the Rwandan side of what a post-war Congo/Congo would look like. Although the war had an effective military strategy, it lacked a grand strategy. The concept of grand strategy, developed by military historian B.H. Liddell Hart, states “fighting power is but one of the instruments of grand strategy—which should take account of and apply the power of financial pressure, of diplomatic pressure, of commercial pressure, and, not least of ethical pressure, to weaken the opponent’s will.” Grand strategy “looks beyond the war to the subsequent peace,” regulating the various instruments of war “to avoid damage to the future state of peace” (Liddell Hart 1967, 322). Indeed, “the object in war is a better state of peace—even if from your own point of view. Hence it is essential to conduct war with constant regard to the peace you desire” (Liddell Hart 1967, 338).

The Rwandan grand strategy for the first Congo war only partly succeeded. The Rwandans succeeded in dispersing the ex-FAR and Interhamwe, exacting revenge by killing thousands of unarmed Hutu refugees, and toppling Mobutu. The Rwandans failed, however, to create a rebel movement with either political legitimacy or a commitment to creating a political structure capable of dealing with the post-conflict situation.45 Indeed, once in power, Kabila’s responses to his own political and social weaknesses led to further problems and paved the way to the next war (Vlassenroot 2004, 49-50). The Rwandans also lost the moral strength of their cause by murdering thousands of Hutu refugees and causing the deaths of thousands more who fled the Rwandan-led advance.

The shortcomings of Rwanda’s grand strategy became evident after the war. After taking power on Rwanda’s coattails, Kabila jailed and ordered the murders of members of the anti-Mobutu opposition and even his own allies in the AFDL (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 226-227). The Rwandans also caused serious problems for themselves and Kabila by trying to conceal evidence of the massacres of thousands of Hutu refugees. Some analysts have lauded the “achievements” of the Rwandan war strategy, arguing that the scattering of the génocidaires and the ousting of Mobutu were both welcome and “highly beneficial for Central Africa” (Winter 2004, 131). Such a view is myopic and shortsighted, however, as shown by the persistence of war, plunder, rape and countless human rights abuses since May 1997 in the Congo. The first Congo war created the conditions for the second Congo war through the militarization of ethnicity in the Kivus; the flawed grand strategy that excluded a political strategy for post-war rule; and the creation of new economic space for external actors to exploit natural resource wealth and commercial trade. The first Congo war simply produced a reconfiguration of the political and economic space in eastern Congo in ways that perpetuated the polywar.

45 Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni notably disagreed with Rwanda’s approach, stating afterward: “Since this was quite a big war, involving regional troops, I was of the opinion that a national conference of all anti-Mobutu political forces should have been organized into an ultimate body that would select the future government of Congo instead of leaving it to the ‘Alliance’, whose internal mechanisms or decision-making were not known to us. My fear was that any future complications in Congo would be blamed on the regional leaders that, without doubt, decisively and quickly tilted the balance of forces in favour of H.E. Kabila and the ‘Alliance’” (Museveni 1998, 15).
Chapter 4. Golden Dreams, Golden Realities

The end of the first Congo war was a time of optimism in Congo and the Great Lakes region. Referred to by many Congolese as the “War of Liberation” (Stearns 2011, 94), the war marked the end of the 32-year rule of dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. The war also heralded the ascendancy of the governments of Rwanda and Uganda, which skillfully took advantage of post-Cold War shifts in geopolitics to establish themselves as the new regional hegemonic powers. Yet despite the prospect of better days ahead in central Africa, the end of the first Congo war was shortly followed by the continuation and expansion of polywar.

In order to understand the onset and duration of war in Ituri, it is necessary to understand what happened during the interbellum after the first Congo war (June 1997-July 1998), and during the second Congo war (August 1998-May 2003). This chapter does not tell the complete story of either period, which has been amply related by others (e.g. Reyntjens 2009, 102-231; Prunier 2009, 149-296; cf. Stearns 2011, 163-325). Rather, I further elaborate on the concept of polywar by analyzing the continuation and expansion of internal and international wars between 1997 and 2003, thereby contributing to development of theory on the typology of war. Moreover, I expand upon other explanations of this period by highlighting the development of economic interests in natural resources and markets, and by assessing how these interests contributed to the start of war in August 1998. I also highlight how geopolitical support for the government of Uganda enabled it to occupy and wage war in Ituri and other parts of eastern DRC.

I make several arguments. First, although the Rwandan government started the second war, Ugandan interests in Congo’s gold contributed to the Museveni regime’s decision to enter the war. Rwanda’s invasion of Congo was a strong pull on the Museveni regime, but Ugandan interests in gold constituted a discernable push. Second, international interests in Congo’s gold were more important for understanding how and why war came to the Ituri District than the local interests of Congolese rebel groups. Third, the second Congo war was not an internal or civil war, as some conflict theorists assert (Table 9), but a polywar of international and internal conflicts, in which the international conflicts were most important in determining the onset and duration of war.
Table 9. The Second Congo War in Conflict Lists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type of Conflict</th>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Used by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Internationalized internal armed conflict (minor for year but Major overall)</td>
<td>Government (with Angola, Chad, Namibia, Zimbabwe) v. MLC, RCD, RCD-ML (with Rwanda, Uganda)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000, 2001</td>
<td>Internationalized internal armed conflict (minor for year but Major overall)</td>
<td>Government (with Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe) v. MLC, RCD, RCD-ML (with Rwanda, Uganda)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COW Militarized Interstate Disputes (v. 3.10, 2004)</td>
<td>14-18 August 1999</td>
<td>Interstate (4252)</td>
<td>Rwanda and Uganda fight at Kisangani</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COW Militarized Interstate Disputes (v. 3.10, 2004)</td>
<td>August 1998—3 June 2001</td>
<td>Interstate (4339)</td>
<td>Second Congo War; actors mentioned: Angola, Chad, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, two rebel groups (presumably MLC and RCD)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table compiled by Dan Fahey from multiple sources.
THE INTERBELLUM

The first Congo war ended on 17 May 1997, but barely fifteen months later, the second Congo war began. Mobutu was gone and Zaire was renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but the new government faced many challenges. As President Kabila consolidated his power during late 1997 and early 1998, several events and processes set the Congo and the region back on the course to war. Most importantly, Kabila alienated his Rwandan and Ugandan backers, who launched the second war to depose the man they thought would do their bidding in Kinshasa.

During the interbellum, the Rwandan government faced several political and economic pressures that escalated tensions and contributed to the resumption of war. Despite Rwanda’s brutal attacks on refugees and génocidaires during the first war, the génocidaires who survived the war reformed in the Kivus and launched vicious attacks inside Rwanda1 (Reyntjens 2009, 173-178; Prunier 2009, 193-195). At the same time, relations between Rwanda and the new Kabila regime became strained when the heavy Rwandan influence in Congo’s army coupled with Kabila’s obstruction of international investigations of the second genocide created the impression Kabila was a Rwandan puppet, threatening the legitimacy of his government. Prunier also argues the Rwandan government launched the second war in part to open up economic opportunities for senior Rwandan army officers, an assertion later confirmed by various United Nations investigations (Prunier 2009, 195). Also during this time, Rwanda enjoyed tremendous political and economic support from the United States, United Kingdom, and other major powers.

Several processes during the interbellum also contributed to Uganda’s involvement in the start of the second war. First, Ugandan economic interests in Congo failed to fully materialize. Ugandan businessmen and regime insiders—including senior UPDF officers—rushed into Congo at war’s end to obtain rights to natural resources and access to markets, but became frustrated by Kabila’s incoherent economic policies. Second, Uganda faced an insurgency from the ADF/NALU rebels, who remained a nuisance but did not pose a serious threat to the Museveni regime. Third, President Museveni sought political and economic hegemony in the Great Lakes Region, and while the overthrow of Mobutu significantly enhanced Museveni’s regional standing, the Rwandan government under the leadership of Museveni’s former protégé, Paul Kagame, was challenging Uganda’s emerging leadership. Thus, when Rwanda started the second war, the Museveni regime quickly joined the battle.

This section highlights three processes that contributed to the start of the second Congo war. First, I describe how the international controversy over the Rwandan-led genocide during the first Congo war contributed to internal dissent against the Kabila regime and international discord between Rwanda and Congo. Second, I analyze Uganda’s economic interests in Congo after the first Congo war—their golden dreams—that failed to materialize. Third, I assess Uganda’s military operations against the ADF/NALU rebels in Congo and Uganda. Uganda later claimed it entered the second war in self-

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1 This force, composed of Interahamwe militia and the ex-Rwandan army, consolidated in a single force structure known as the Armée de libération du Rwanda (ALiR).
defense against these rebels (a position the International Court of Justice later rejected). These three processes, combined with other events outlined above, contributed to the onset of war in Congo, which very quickly brought occupying forces to northeast Congo’s main goldfields and trading towns.

**Fallout from the second Rwandan genocide**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the first Congo war had several causes and purposes. A main cause of the war was the international desire to terminate the Mobutu regime. Rwanda led the war to terminate Mobutu with significant support from Uganda, other African nations, and Western powers such as the United States. Another important cause was the desire of the Rwandan government to eliminate the génocidaires in eastern Congo. But in attacking the génocidaires, the Rwandan government also killed tens of thousands of ethnic Hutu refugees (see chapter 3). Even before the end of the war, news of Rwandan army-led massacres against civilians trickled to the outside world (see Gowing 1998, § 6.3), but after the war ended, the details of this second genocide started to emerge. The political fallout of Rwanda’s actions was most heavily felt in Congo, where President Kabila became viewed as a puppet of the Rwandan regime and anti-Rwandan sentiment increased. These facts directly contributed to the outbreak of the second Congo war.

In March 1997, before the war ended, the United Nations dispatched a special rapporteur to the region to investigate the alleged massacres of refugees. On 2 April 1997, special rapporteur Roberto Garretón issued a preliminary report that claimed the RPA and/or AFDL had killed hundreds of unarmed Hutu refugees during their westward march (Bulman 1997). Garretón’s call for an international mission to study the massacres echoed recommendations made by human rights groups, including Human Rights Watch (1997) and Kinshasa-based AZADHO2 (1997). On 3 May a UN investigative team deployed to Kigali, but on 9 May it abandoned its work because the AFDL refused to grant it access to the DRC (UNHCR n.d.; AFP 1997m).

On 2 July 1997, the first investigative team released a report based on its limited investigations in Congo and the region. On the topic of genocide perpetrated by Rwandan-led forces, the report noted:

> There is no denying that ethnic massacres were committed and that the victims were mostly Hutus from Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire. The joint mission’s preliminary opinion is that some of these alleged massacres could constitute acts of genocide. However, the joint mission cannot issue a precise, definitive opinion on the basis of the information currently available to it. An in-depth investigation in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo would clarify this situation (UNGA 1997, § 80).

This allegation prompted the UN Secretary General to order a second investigation, but the new investigation also encountered resistance from the new Congolese government and its main backer, the Rwandan government.

The second UN investigation largely confirmed the findings of the first, but failed to

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2 *Association de Défense des Droits de l’Homme au Congo/Kinshasa.*
produce any accountability for the massacres. The final report, released in July 1998, noted “at some times and in some areas, the attacks on former camp populations which fled westward into the interior of Zaire were not intended to force them to return, but simply to eliminate them” (UNSC 1998, § 96). The report further found:

The available information strongly suggests that at least the massacres committed by the AFDL and its allies during the period October 1996 to May 1997 and the denial of humanitarian assistance to displaced Rwandan Hutus were systematic practices involving murder and extermination, which constitute crimes against humanity, as defined by the Statutes of the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda (UNSC 1998, § 95).

The report failed to produce any penalty or sanction—no international criminal investigation, no UN sanctions—and was criticized for being too weak. Filip Reyntjens (2009, 92) noted that “For all concerned parties, the message was clear: impunity was to prevail.” The report’s significance was also diminished by the start of the second Congo war just a few days after its release.

In September 2010, a leaked UN report on massacres committed in Congo largely confirmed the findings of the 1997 and 1998 investigations. In part, the recent investigation found:

The systematic attacks, in particular killings and massacres perpetrated against members of the Hutu ethnic group…resulted in a very large number of victims, probably tens of thousands of members of the Hutu ethnic group, all nationalities combined. In the vast majority of cases reported, it was not a question of people killed unintentionally in the course of combat, but people targeted primarily by AFDL/APR/FAB3 forces and executed in the hundreds, often with edged weapons. The majority of the victims were children, women, elderly people and the sick, who posed no threat to the attacking forces. Numerous serious attacks on the physical or psychological integrity of members of the group were also committed, with a very high number of Hutus shot, raped, burnt or beaten. Very large numbers of victims were forced to flee and travel long distances to escape their pursuers, who were trying to kill them. The hunt lasted for months, resulting in the deaths of an unknown number of people subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading living conditions, without access to food or medication. On several occasions, the humanitarian aid intended for them was deliberately blocked, in particular in Orientale Province, depriving them of assistance essential to their survival (UNHCR 2010, § 512).

The report further stated: “The systematic and widespread attacks described in this report, which targeted very large numbers of Rwandan Hutu refugees and members of the Hutu civilian population, resulting in their death, reveal a number of damning elements that, if they were proven before a competent court, could be classified as crimes of genocide” (UNHCR 2010, § 517).

The 2010 UN report is less important for understanding the start of the second Congo war than the 1997 and 1998 reports. Both the new Congolese government and the Rwandan government strongly interfered with the conduct of the early UN investigations, and

3 AFDL was the Congolese coalition; APR was the Rwandan army; FAB was the Burundian army.
disputed their findings (see e.g. UNSC 1998a). The interference hurt Kabila’s relations with the international community (Reyntjens 2009, 165), but also indicated to the Congolese that he was doing the Rwandan’s bidding by concealing the extent of the second Rwandan genocide inside Congo (Reyntjens 2009, 168). The reports also highlighted the extent to which this was largely a Rwandan-led war.

The strong role of the Rwandans in the first Congo war and their genocidal acts might not have created problems for Kabila if the Rwandans had politely left after the war ended, but they did not leave. As a sign of the close relationship between Kabila and the Rwandans, Kabila made Rwandan-army officer James Kabarebe his chief of staff of the reformed Forces Armées Congolaises (FAC) (de Villers and Willame 1998, 94, 171; cf. Gribbin 2005, 203, 240, 274). The Rwandan army continued to deploy in eastern Congo, and many of the soldiers in the new FAC were Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda Tutsi, who many people in eastern Congo viewed as being Rwandan rather than Congolese. Growing anti-Tutsi sentiment in eastern Congo amplified beliefs that the Rwandan government sought to control or even annex parts of eastern Congo (Reyntjens 2009, 144-152).

While Kabila’s close ties to Rwanda became fodder for his opposition inside Congo, Kabila’s crisis of legitimacy also stemmed from his practice of rule. Shortly after he took power, Kabila was accused of displaying “Mobutuist” tendencies, including misappropriation of public funds, human rights violations, suppression of dissent within the AFDL, and nepotism (Afoaku 1999; Tajudeen 1998). Kabila became authoritarian, concentrating power in himself and surrounding himself with trusted supporters (Reyntjens 2009, 158-159). Kabila rounded up political opponents and displayed his disregard for human rights and democracy (French 2004, 242-249). By early 1998, Kabila was increasingly seen as a puppet of Rwanda, and to a lesser extent, Uganda. Kabila had to distance himself from those who brought him to Kinshasa in order to overcome growing domestic opposition to his rule (Dunn 2003, 64), and one way he did this was through his economic policies.

Uganda: “Go for it!” in Congo
After Laurent Kabila took control of Kinshasa on 17 May 1997, the Government of Uganda and Ugandan businessmen moved quickly to normalize relations and establish business connections with the new regime. On 7 July, Uganda Airlines began flights from Entebbe to Kinshasa, carrying a high-level delegation of Ugandan government officials and businessmen on its inaugural flight (Yunusu 1997). At the end of July, Ugandan businessmen were planning to begin shipping fuel oil into eastern Congo (Matsiko 1997). During 12-13 August, President Museveni went to Kinshasa where he and President Kabila agreed to jointly undertake a series of economic development projects in transport, telecommunications, oil exploration, and other areas (The New Vision 1997). These projects included a railway that would have improved trade between Uganda and eastern DRC (Wasswa 1997), although this project never materialized. From 8-11 September, a group of about 50 Ugandan companies staged a trade exhibition in Goma as the “Uganda business community swiftly moved to take up business.
opportunities in an economy that had virtually collapsed during three decades of misrule” (Ojulu 1997).

The reaction in Uganda to the economic opportunities in the Congo was very positive (Photo 3; The New Vision 1997a). In November 1997 The New Vision exhorted Ugandan businessmen to “Go For It!” in the Congo (The New Vision 1997b). Among those seeking business opportunities in the Congo was President Museveni’s son, Muhoozi Keinerugaba. Muhoozi traveled twice to Kinshasa, first in October 1997 to discuss exporting cows to the Congo (Mwenda 1997a). His second trip was in early 1998 when he was working for Caleb International, the company owned by his uncle (Museveni’s brother), Lt. Gen. Salim Saleh (Uganda 2002, 29). Caleb International was interested in securing rights for diamond and gold mining in Province Orientale (Kennes 2000, 322-323). The Porter Commission absolved Muhoozi of any wrongdoing, stating “these were genuine visits during peacetime to promote international trade” (Uganda 2002, 29). But the visits came to naught: Kabila ignored Salim Saleh’s desire for mining rights in eastern Congo, giving them instead to Australian and Ghanaian companies (Reyntjens 2009, 163).


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4 Muhoozi joined the UPDF in August 1999 at the rank of private, and became an officer after attending a one-year military training camp at Sandhurst Royal Military Academy in the UK (The New Vision 1999).
Salim Saleh’s interests in gold mining in Ituri and Haut-Uélé were undoubtedly stimulated by Uganda’s record gold exports during the first half of 1997 (see chapter 3, and Chart 4, p. 65). Uganda exported 3,695 kg of gold during the second quarter (April-June) of 1997. The flood became a trickle by the end of the year; Uganda exported only 151 kg of gold during the fourth quarter (October-December) of 1997. Uganda’s gold exports did not start to pick up again until 1999, by which time Uganda was in control of the Kilo gold mines in Ituri and the Moto mines in neighboring Haut-Uélé district. What accounted for the decline of Uganda’s gold exports during the interbellum?

The massive decline in Uganda’s exports appears to be due to a return to pre-war trading routes. As noted in the chapter on the first Congo war, during the early 1990s, gold from northeast Congo was mainly traded in Burundi (Raeymaekers 2007, 82). Violence in Burundi, Rwandan, and the Kivus starting in 1993 coincided with Ugandan government policy changes in 1994 that started a reorientation of the gold trade and a surge in Ugandan gold exports. After the war and the return of relative stability in the route south to Burundi, the old traders revived the old trade route. The main traders at this time were the Goetz family (Antoine (Tony) and his son Alain, both from Antwerp, Belgium) and Kambale Kisoni (Congolese from Butembo).

On 29 April 1997, in the waning days of the first war, Alain Goetz signed an agreement with the AFDL at Goma to open a comptoir using the name of his father’s company, AFFIMET. A few months earlier, in January 1997, Goetz had talked to the Rwandan government about opening a comptoir there, in part because regional sanctions imposed on Burundi after the July 1996 coup d’état made doing business in AFFIMET’s birthplace unrealistic (Africa Intelligence 1997; cf. Reyntjens 2009, 42). But as the Rwandan-led army advanced through Zaire and victory appeared imminent, Goetz signed a contract instead with the AFDL’s minister of the economy, Mawapanga Mwana Nanga. AFFIMET also established a second comptoir at Bunia in collaboration with Kambale Kisoni’s company, CongoCom. Thus, there was a shift in the flow of Ituri’s gold through Bunia to Goma, and on to Belgium via Kigali, Rwanda.

The Bunia-Goma gold trade route became clear as a result of a theft just after the end of the war. On 28 May 1997, a representative of CongoCom arrived at Bunia airport with 49.5 kg of gold for shipment to Goma, worth around a half million dollars; this was one of the first post-war shipments of gold out of the Kilo belt (La Reference Plus, n.d.). The local representative of the Congolese intelligence agency, Mr. Christian Katoto, took the gold while paperwork and other formalities were completed. These formalities dragged on into the next day, but at some point during the night of 28–29 May, a soldier of the AFDL army named Fabien stole the gold and fled toward Uganda.

5 The world price of gold on 28 May 1997 was about $345/ounce (current year US dollars), which for 49.5 kg would equal approximately $600,000 (current year USD). However, as most raw gold exported from Ituri is approximately 88-90 percent pure, the actual value of this gold was approximately $500,000. 6 Journalist Collette Braeckman reported in September 1997 that Rwandan soldiers and officers had taken 68 kg of gold from Kilo-Moto, but it is not clear if this refers to the May incident or another theft (Braeckman 1997).
The AFFIMET contract with the AFDL and the CongoCom presence in Bunia are significant because they represent a re-orientation of the gold trade away from Uganda and toward Rwanda. During the war, Ugandan businessmen and government officials saw the potential profits to be made from the trade in Congolese gold, but the prospect of greater wealth did not materialize during the interbellum.

Uganda: border (in)security

Although Kabila’s ascension brought new economic opportunities for Ugandan army officers and businessmen, it did not end the attacks against Uganda by Congo-based rebels. With continuing support from the Government of Sudan, the ADF/NALU stepped up its military attacks through the summer and fall of 1997 in the western Uganda districts of Kasese, Kabarole, and Bundibugyo (Nzinjah 1997a; Sserwanga 1997a; Karugaba 1997d; Hannington 1997). The UPDF responded by increasing operations in western Uganda (Sserwanga and Nzinjah 1997), and police and army rounded up “idle and disorderly” youth it suspected of assisting or sympathizing with the rebels (Amanyire 1997). As the attacks and casualties mounted, by October 1997 an estimated 100,000 Ugandans were displaced. The economy of western Uganda was also negatively affected by the ADF/NALU actions and the UPDF’s response.

The UPDF pursued the ADF in both western Uganda and eastern DRC. As discussed above, the UPDF was active in Zaire/Congo during the first war from November 1996 until at least March 1997. The UPDF reportedly stayed in eastern Zaire during the last stages of the war, but in May 1997 a small UPDF force was deployed to the new-DRC (ICJ 2001, § 31). As a result of increased attacks by the ADF during the summer (Sserwanga and Nzinjah 1997), in September 1997 the UPDF and AFDL started planning joint military operations in the DRC. These operations began in December 1997, when the UPDF deployed two battalions (1,200 soldiers) to eastern DRC to supplement the force sent in May. These units established bases near Beni and Butembo, and, along with ADFL soldiers, the UPDF pursued the ADF/NALU forces in the Rwenzori Mountains along the DRC-Uganda border (Thawite 1997; Sserwanga 1997c; ICJ 2001, § 31).

On 27 April 1998, Uganda and the DRC signed a Protocol on Security along the Common Border that formalized the arrangement allowing the UPDF to operate in the DRC. Pursuant to this agreement, the UPDF deployed a third battalion to eastern DRC, raising the number of its soldiers there to approximately 2,000. The UPDF continued to conduct operations against ADF/NALU and WNBF both unilaterally and jointly with the AFDL.

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7 In September 1997, the UPDF reported that 52 rebels were killed; 2 UPDF soldiers were killed and seven wounded; and 29 civilians killed, nine injured, and 30 captured by the ADF. Between January 1997 and 10 October 1997, 365 civilians were killed in Bundibugyo and Kasese districts, including 11 land mine victims (Karugaba 1997c; Mugagga 1997).
9 UPDF Lt. Col. Jet Mwebaze (brother of UPDF commander James Kazini), was in Kinshasa at this time working with the Congolese government (ICJ 2002, § 3.37, 3.40).
10 At the beginning of July 1998, the DRC government authorized the deployment of the UPDF at Ntabi to more efficiently combat the ADF (ICJ 2005a, § 46; ICJ 2002, § 3.38).
In June 1998, ADF/NALU carried out a deadly attack that outraged the Ugandan public and pressured Museveni to forcefully respond. At 6 a.m. on 8 June, more than 100 ADF/NALU rebels with a female commander attacked the Kichwamba Technical School in Kabarole District (Tumusiime 1998c). The rebels abducted approximately 80 students and set fire to three of the seven dormitories at the school, killing approximately 70 students.\(^\text{11}\) The rebels took the abductees into the Rwenzori Mountains, marching some of them for five days to Katonga training camp on the Congo side of the mountains. A rebel commander named Tiger killed eight students along the way who were too fatigued or ill to complete the forced march (Laghu 1998). Those who survived or failed to escape during the march were incorporated into ADF/NALU, provided military training, and sent into battle within two months of their abduction (Sserwanga 1998a).

The Kichwamba massacre had several significant effects. First, it brought national and international attention to rebel attacks in Uganda and led to widespread expressions of outrage and calls for action from many civil society organizations (Mugagga and Juuko 1998; Ssemujju 1998; The Monitor 1998; HRW 1998). Second, the attack led to the arrests and detention of youth and Muslim men in western Uganda who were suspected of being sympathizers or accomplices with ADF/NALU (The Monitor 1998a; Tumusiime 1998a; Lubega 1998). Some detainees were tortured and at least one tortured man from Bwera died in captivity (Aliro 1998); however, many of those detained were later released without being charged (Aliro 1998b; Sserwanga 1998). Third, the incident embarrassed the UPDF, whose soldiers failed to fight the rebels during the attack and even reportedly fraternized with them in the days leading up to the attack (Mugunga and Mugisa 1998; Mugisa 1998; Mugisa 1998b; Matsiko 1998; Aliro 1998a). Fourth, “it looked like the ADF was very close to denting Museveni’s international image as a ‘new breed’ African leader who had returned peace and stability to Uganda” (Aliro 1998a). Museveni responded by appointing a trusted veteran of the Luwero bushwar, Brig. Gen. James Kazini to lead operations against ADF/NALU (Ammon 1998; Tumusiime 1998b). Within three weeks of the massacre, the UPDF was aggressively pursuing ADF/NALU in the Rwenzori Mountains along the DRC-Uganda border.

The UPDF offensive against ADF/NALU took place during the weeks leading up to the start of the second Congo war. The UPDF deployed 1,400 soldiers in the Rwenzoris along the DRC-Uganda border, who were supplemented by approximately 3,000 Ugandan civilians working as porters, guides, and support staff for the UPDF. At that time, General Kazini estimated there were between 200 and 500 ADF/NALU rebels in the mountains (Aliro 1998).

Phase I of the UPDF offensive started 24 June with a UPDF attack on the ADF/NALU base at Kamunyu in the DRC, near the border with Uganda. On 26 June the UPDF killed 30 rebels when they shelled an ADF/NALU camp at Ntabi, DRC (Amooti 1998a). The UPDF attacks on ADF/NALU forces in the DRC forced the rebels to cross back into Uganda, where UPDF forces engaged them near Bwera (Karugaba 1998). The ADF/NALU fled again, this time north to Bundibugyo, Uganda where they linked up

\(^\text{11}\) Seven civilian non-students were killed (Kibirige 1998; Mugunga and Mugisa 1998).
with other ADF/NALU fighters who had crossed into Uganda on 16 June from Kakuka, DRC. As a result, General Kazini moved his tactical base from Kiraaro (near Bwera) to Butama in Bundibugyo district (Aliro 1998b).

Phase II of the UPDF offensive began 11 July when Kazini started operations in Bundibugyo. The UPDF pursued the elusive ADF/NALU high in the Rwenzoris, at altitudes of 3,500 meters where the climate is cold and wet, the terrain extremely rugged, and porters from the lowlands must carry food up. The UPDF quickly scored a number of victories, starting with a four-day battle 11-15 July to capture the Kidedeya heights in Butama; eight UPDF soldiers and five ADF/NALU rebels were killed in this battle. The UPDF then overran several small ADF/NALU bases before capturing the ADF/NALU headquarters and training camp at a place the UPDF called Bulimba II (Aliro 1998b). All told, during July the UPDF captured three main ADF/NALU camps and eight smaller bases in the mountains of Bundibugyo. The UPDF also continued to pursue the ADF/NALU in the DRC, capturing a senior ADF/NALU commander in mid-July after a UPDF offensive at Kanonga, DRC (Mugisa 1998c).

By the end of July, Phases I and II of the UPDF offensive had put ADF/NALU on the run. In just over three weeks of combat operations, the UPDF had captured 18 ADF/NALU bases in Uganda and the DRC, and killed 55 ADF/NALU rebels while losing nine UPDF soldiers (Amooti 1998a). One ADF/NALU commander who surrendered to the UPDF in mid-July stated that more rebels were likely to surrender because the pressure from the UPDF had cut their food and supply lines and prevented ADF/NALU from re-organizing.12 Another ADF/NALU rebel who surrendered to the UPDF in late July stated that the rebels were almost starved because the UPDF had overrun most of their camps in the Rwenzoris (Mugisa 1998d).

By late July 1998, the UPDF appeared to be on the verge of eliminating ADF/NALU. General Kazini gave an optimistic assessment of his operations during a 20 July interview:

I can deduce by saying they have nowhere to go. Because if they go beyond the bamboo-line, that will be in Tooro, Fort Portal. That way they will be exposed to our forces there, and the forces will annihilate them completely...Hopefully in the next few days we shall have got them, they will be forced into a fight when they can’t move anymore...I have ordered for more forces to be brought, so that we engulf the whole area (Aliro 1998a).

Kazini added: “we have almost entirely displaced them from their strongholds. What remains are sweep-and-search operations. After that I shall announce they are either finished or about to be finished. But right now, my operations continue.” In late July, an additional 1,000 UPDF soldiers arrived in Bundibugyo to supplement Kazini’s force.

While the UPDF was scoring impressive victories over ADF/NALU in the Rwenzori Mountains, ADF operatives were committing terrorist attacks in Kampala. On 12 July,

12 This ADF commander also named some of the ADF leaders: Abdallah Yusuf Kabanda, president; Henry Matovu, army commander; one Dr. Kyeyune, financial controller; and Medison Rutehenda, secretary general (Amooti 1998).
one bomb blast injured six people at the popular Slow Boat pub on Kampala Road while another attack hurt eleven people at the Isabella Bar (Nannozi and Bayego 1998; Matsiko wa Mucoori 1998). These blasts followed earlier grenade attacks in Kampala that killed and injured scores of people at the Nile Grill (4 April 1998), the Speke Hotel’s Mama Mia terrace restaurant (4 April 1998), a backpacker’s hostel (2 November 1997), the Old Taxi Park (31 October 1997), and three police stations in Kampala (30 July and 1 August 1997) (AFP 1997p; Borzello 1998; Kibirige 2004). These attacks afforded ADF/NALU little strategic advantage, but they instilled terror within the population of Kampala, which put increased pressure on Museveni to act.

Despite the terror attacks in Kampala, by late July 1998 the UPDF had dealt ADF/NALU a severe blow. The success of the UPDF’s operations was in part due to their ability to pursue ADF/NALU on both sides of the Uganda-Congo border. Although Uganda ostensibly was close to eliminating the ADF/NALU threat, it soon lost this focus and diverted its attention to fighting the second Congo war.

The story of Uganda’s pursuit of the ADF/NALU rebels is important for assessing Uganda’s involvement in Congo and Ituri. In the landmark 2005 decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case DRC v. Uganda, the court summarily rejected Uganda’s claim that it had acted in self-defense against ADF/NALU when it invaded and occupied DRC starting in August 1998 (ICJ 2005a, § 106-147). As discussed below, Uganda quickly seized northeastern Congo’s goldfields and advanced far into Congolese territory, far from the purported ADF/NALU threat. The Court noted, “…that the taking of airports and towns many hundreds of kilometres from Uganda’s border would not seem proportionate to the series of transborder attacks it claimed had given rise to the right of self-defence, nor to be necessary to that end” (ICJ 2005a, § 147).

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The interbellum was a period of high expectations both in Congo and neighboring countries. Congolese people were happy to be rid of Mobutu and his destructive, patrimonial rule. Most of Congo’s neighbors were also happy to be rid of a regime that had tolerated and supported various rebel movements. Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola in particular stood to gain from a new government that (they hoped) would be intolerant of the génocidaires, ADF/NALU and UNITA rebels, and other armed groups. The governments of Rwanda and Uganda also saw the end of Mobutu’s Zaire as an important step in their hegemonic aspirations; the center of power had now decidedly shifted east and away from Congo. Many powerful Western nations also welcomed the end of Mobutu, who had become an embarrassment to them; U.S. and British support for Rwanda and Uganda was particularly strong by the late 1990s, and Western powers welcomed the “new breed” of African leaders including Kagame and Museveni.

But soon after the end of the first war, there followed disappointment and increasing animosity, both in Congo and between Kabila and his sponsors. Kabila’s close relationship with the Rwandans in particular alienated many people in Congo, and this only increased in the months after he took power when he assumed authoritarian behavior
and sought to suppress opposition. Partly to address domestic political concerns, Kabila started to distance himself from his sponsors. In particular, relations with Uganda and Rwanda soured, as shown by Uganda’s frustrated economic goals in Congo, and by Rwanda’s concerns about the return of the génocidaires who survived the second, Kagame-directed genocide (cf. Gribbin 2005, 279). Kabila’s break with the Rwandans and Ugandans led directly to the second Congo war, and Kabila’s break with the U.S. and other major powers helped to ensure that Rwanda and Uganda could prosecute the next war with impunity.

The rift between Kabila and his sponsors in Rwanda and Uganda became public when regional leaders stayed away from the 17 May 1998 events in Kinshasa celebrating Kabila’s first year in power (Tumusiime 1998; Juuko 1998). A week later, the Congolese Energy and Oil Minister publicly accused Ugandan government officials of trafficking in Congolese gold, timber, and diamonds (BBC 1998; cf. Reyntjens 1999b). In July 1998, the DRC government also claimed to have uncovered a Rwandan-Ugandan plot to assassinate Kabila (ICJ 1999, § 11; Allio 1999a). On 14 July Kabila replaced his Rwandan chief of staff, James Kabarebe, with a native Congolese officer. Finally, on 27 July, Kabila announced that he was terminating the Rwandan military presence in Congo and stated: “This marks the end of the presence of all foreign military forces in the Congo.” Kabila’s pronouncement was followed less than a week later by the outbreak of the second Congo war.

THE SECOND WAR

The second Congo war started on 2 August 1998 as an attempt by Rwanda and Uganda to topple the Kabila regime, and, to some extent, the war continues today, in 2010. During early 1998, as relations between Rwanda and Congo (and between Uganda and Congo) started to sour, the Rwandans took advantage of dissent within the Congolese army (commanded by Rwandan General James Kaberebe until mid-July), and manipulated the ethnic makeup of units in eastern Congo to favor those disgruntled with Kabila (Prunier 2009, 177). This helped to ensure that if relations fell apart, as they did in July 1998, Rwanda could potentially call upon dissenters in the Congolese army to help with another war. This was strategically smart, as it would enable Rwanda to claim a new war was the result of Congolese rebels, and tactically smart, as it would enable Rwanda to utilize Congolese rebels as proxies in a new war.

The way in which the war began illustrates the fusion of international and internal conflicts into a polywar. The primary instigator of war was the Rwandan government, whose army had been kicked out of Congo just a few days before (Reyntjens 2009, 194-195; Prunier 2009, 181-182). On 2 August, the Rwandan army invaded eastern Congo and supported a mutiny by the Congolese army’s 10th brigade at Goma; the following day the Rwandan army supported a mutiny in Bukavu. At the same time, there was fighting

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13 Although Uganda has argued that this did not specifically terminate the April 1998 protocol allowing the UPDF on Congolese territory, the International Court of Justice ruled that “any earlier consent by the DRC to the presence of Ugandan troops on its territory had at the latest been withdrawn by 8 August 1998” (ICJ 2005a, § 49, 53).
at Congolese army bases near Kinshasa, where Congolese army soldiers fought against Banyamulenge soldiers amidst their ranks. The Banyamulenge had been part of the first war’s rebel force and been integrated into the Congolese army (Reyntjens 2009, 195).

On 3 August, the Rwandan army launched a daring, cross-country airborne raid in an ultimately futile attempt to capture Kinshasa and depose Kabila. Under the command of Rwandan officer James Kabarebe, who had only recently been kicked out of Congo, the Rwandans commandeered three cargo planes at the Goma airport and packed them with 200 soldiers (Remy 1998); most were Rwandan but there were reportedly some Ugandans in their ranks (Plummer 2007). On the morning of 4 August, the planes arrived at an airbase at Kitona, near the mouth of the Congo River, approximately 1,500 km from Goma. Upon arrival, the Rwandan-led force quickly took control of the base and enlisted the support of the impoverished, hungry soldiers stationed there (de Villers and Omasombo Tshonda 2001, 18-19), in part through offering them money (Remy, 1998). Many of the Congolese soldiers at Kitona had served in Mobutu’s army and were not completely loyal to the new Kabila regime.

The rebel force quickly moved east toward Kinshasa. It captured several key towns and (on 13 August) the strategically important Inga Dam, which enabled Kaberebe to cut the power supplied to both Kinshasa and the mines in Katanga. The approach of this rebel force led to concern in Kinshasa, where the government stirred up fear of the “Tutsis” and provided arms to groups of young men to attack and kill Tutsi; as a result, many people who simply ‘looked’ Tutsi were murdered (UNHCR 2010, § 312). Kabila fled to Lubumbashi, but foreign intervention ironically helped to save his regime and defeat the Rwandan-led force in the east.

Shortly after the war started, Kabila appealed for help from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and from individual African countries. On 18 August, as the Rwandan-led force was approaching Kinshasa from Kitona, SADC authorized its members to intervene militarily. Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe subsequently deployed forces in support of the Kabila regime, although more in pursuit of their own interests than out of an obligation to SADC (see Turner 2002; Rupiya 2002; Africa Confidential 1998). The Angolans in particular supported Kabila to ensure the destruction of rear bases in Congo used by the Angolan rebel group, União Nacional para a Independência de Angola (UNITA) (Africa Confidential 1998; Prunier 2009, 187-190). Chad and Sudan also deployed troops through bilateral agreements with the Congolese government, but they fared poorly in fighting against the Ugandan army and MLC, and did not play a significant role in the war (Prunier 2009, 193, 204-205, 207).

The Angolan expeditionary force (which included South African mercenaries) quickly defeated the Rwandan-led rebel force at Kitona and other locations, which threatened the re-supply of the Rwandans (Prunier 2009, 185-186). The Rwandan force entered Kinshasa on 26 August, but the Congolese army, local militia armed by the Congolese government, and Zimbabwean troops (who had just arrived at Kinshasa’s main airport at N’djili) defeated them; many Tutsi or people suspected of being rebels were killed during

14 The Ugandans have denied they participated in the Kitona raid.
the violence (UNHCR 2010, §313). Kabarebe led his defeated forces to an air base at Maquela do Zombo, Angola, which he occupied until planes from Rwanda were able to rescue the remains of his force (Plummer 2007).

As this short discussion demonstrates, the second war started as an inter-state war in which Rwanda and Uganda tried to defeat and replace the government of the DRC. During the first few months of the war, the armies of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Chad, and Sudan had fought on Congolese soil. In addition, numerous non-state armed groups fought inside Congo, both for and against the Congolese government. Kabila was able to rally some groups to support and/or fight for his government by stirring up anti-Tutsi sentiment (Africa Confidential 1998), but other rebel groups (including ex-Mobutu soldiers) joined the anti-Kabila Rassamblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD), which announced its existence on 16 August, two weeks after the start of the war (Prunier 2009, 183). The second war was therefore primarily an international war, and secondarily an internal conflict. That is, the second Congo war was a polywar of international and internal conflicts, with the international conflicts of greatest importance for explaining the onset of conflict.

The role of Uganda
When the war began, the UPDF already had three battalions (2,000 soldiers) in the DRC deployed in North Kivu province and the Ituri district of Province Orientale (ICJ 2005, Tab 2, 1). On 3 August, a day after the Rwandans invaded the Kivus, additional UPDF units streamed into the DRC through Beni and Aru (Allio 1999b). The UPDF quickly seized Butembo (6 August), Beni (7 August), and Bunia (13 August). A fourth UPDF battalion entered the DRC at Aru (10 August) and then moved westward to take Watsa (24-25 August). During August, the RPA and RCD moved rapidly through South Kivu, North Kivu (south of Butembo) and parts of the provinces of Orientale, Maniema, and Kasai Orientale (ICJ 2005, Tab 2, 2). The Rwandan and Ugandan forces met on 1 September at Kisangani. During September and October 1998, the UPDF consolidated its control in Province Orientale and North Kivu.

After the taking of Kisangani, the UPDF, RPA, and RCD agreed to form a joint command to coordinate their operations. The proposal was to have 13 members with Uganda’s Brig. James Kazini to head the joint command. The deputy chief was to be Rwanda’s Col. Patrick Nyavumba. This coordination ended barely a month into the war when the UPDF created a new rebel group that was a rival to the RCD (Allio 1999a; Allio 1999b). This marked the start of the creation, fragmenting, and reformation of rebel groups in Ituri, often with the active support of the Ugandan and Rwandan governments (Figure 1).
In September 1998, the UPDF assisted Congolese businessman Jean-Pierre Bemba with the creation of the *Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo* (MLC). Bemba and other Congolese businessmen who had poor relations with Kabila formed the nucleus of the MLC, which although ostensibly independent of Ugandan control was used by the UPDF as a proxy force to fight the DRC army and its allies. At Kapalata, near Kisangani, the UPDF provided military training to the armed wing of the MLC, known as the *Armée de Libération du Congo* (ALC) (Bemba 2001, 18-22). The ALC first saw combat at Dulia in western Province Orientale (27 October), and in November it moved with the UPDF into Equateur Province, taking the town of Bumba (17 November) (Bemba 2001, 29-31). Through the remainder of 1998 and up until July 1999, the UPDF continued to expand its sphere of control in Equateur, Orientale, and North Kivu with the help of the ALC (ICJ 2005a, § 85-87).

Uganda’s support of the MLC/ALC sparked tensions between Rwanda and Uganda. In October 1998, Gen. Kazini responded to Rwandan criticism of the creation of the MLC by criticizing the RPA as “undisciplined, arrogant, and colonialist,” adding that the Rwandans were using the same crude methods of looting and torture of opponents they allegedly used during the anti-Mobutu campaign (Allio 1999a; Allio 1999b). The war of words between Rwanda and Uganda subsequently escalated and the divide surfaced again
during the December 1998-January 1999 sitting of the RCD general assembly. Uganda wanted the RCD and MLC to unify, but when Wamba initiated talks with Bemba, the Goma faction of the RCD and the Rwandans were vehemently opposed. The divide grew larger in March 1999, when Wamba and his deputy Mbusa Nyamwisi moved their headquarters from Goma to Kisangani. At this time, Uganda replaced the RPA protection unit of Wamba and Mbusa with UPDF forces under command of Major Reuben Ikondere (Allio 1999b).

**Things fall apart**

The growing tensions in RCD came to a head in May 1999. On 18 May 1999, thirty-seven of the original 41 RCD members calling themselves “The College of RCD Founders” met in Kabuga, near Kigali and resolved to replace Wamba with Dr. Emile Ilunga, a former brother-in-arms with Laurent Kabila who was supported by Kigali (Allio 1999b). When the RCD general assembly met two days later, however, they voted to reinstate Wamba as president. On 21 May, Wamba flew back to Kisangani but a shootout there the next day between Ugandan and Rwandan backed forces solidified the division of the RCD. From that point forward the RCD was effectively split into the RCD-Goma, led by Ilunga, and the RCD-*Mouvement de Libération* (ML), led by Wamba.20

Wamba had popular support—plus the essential support of Uganda—but he had no army. Wamba had represented the intellectual and political side of the RCD, but the split left the military leaders in charge of RCD-G.21 The UPDF undertook aggressive recruitment and training in Beni, Isiro, Bunia, Kisangani, and other towns, providing Wamba with several thousand soldiers by early August 1999 (Allio 1999). To the west, Uganda continued to work with the ALC to take control of Equateur Province, climaxing on 3 July 1999, when the UPDF supported ALC soldiers during the triumphant battle for Gbadolite, Bemba’s hometown (Bemba 2001, 39-46).

As Uganda, Rwanda, and their proxy forces expanded their control over the DRC into the summer of 1999, pressure grew for a cease-fire that could pave the way for a peace agreement. On 10 July 1999, an agreement brokered by South Africa and Zambia in Lusaka called for a cease-fire, the gradual withdrawal of foreign armies, and disarmament of armed groups (Baregu 2006, 65). The agreement acknowledged the security concerns of Uganda and Rwanda in Congo and linked their withdrawal to the deployment of peacekeepers in the Congo and the start of an inter-Congolese dialogue (Clark 2002, 158).

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19 In January 1999, the RCD assembly expanded from 47 to 128 members to accommodate most of the discontented Congolese who accused the Congolese Tutsi Banyamulenge of dominating the RCD. Wamba was re-elected as leader, while Rwanda’s candidate was second, Moise Nyarugabo (a Munyamulenge). Another losing candidate, Prof. Arthur Zaidi Ngoma, later quit and accused Uganda and Rwanda of a monopoly in the RCD. Dr. Bizima Karaha, former Foreign Affairs minister to Laurent Kabila and a favorite of the Rwandans became head of security (Allio 1999b).

20 RCD-ML was also known as RCD-Kisangani (EIU 2000, 11-12).

21 Interview with former RCD-ML official, March 2008, Kinshasa.
Six nations agreed to the Lusaka accord, but a major sticking point became the rights of rebel groups to sign. After the May 1999 split in the RCD, the RCD-Goma and its Rwandan backers refused to acknowledge the authority and legitimacy of Wamba and the RCD-ML. These tensions started to intensify at Kisangani, where the RCD-G and RCD-ML would hold competing rallies to garner public support. The RCD-G led by Ilunga lacked public support and was viewed as a puppet of Rwanda. In the Kivus, this distrust led to the creation of local defense groups, many of which were known as Mai-Mai, who were against foreign occupation and ideologically anti-Tutsi (Turner 2007, 37-38). In Kisangani, Wamba’s rallies often turned into anti-Tutsi rallies, which further upset the RCD-G. On 17 July, these tensions came to a head when RPA/RCD-G surrounded a training camp of about 600 Wamba fighters west of the city, accusing the Ugandans of training Hutu Interahamwe militias for Wamba. The Rwandan force later withdrew after negotiations between UPDF and RPA (Allio 1999).

In August 1999, the tensions between the Rwandan and Ugandan forces finally devolved into a bloody, three-day fight at Kisangani. This first Kisangani clash (there would be two more in 2000) resulted from both political and economic competition. Politically, Uganda and Rwanda disagreed about who should sign the Lusaka agreement as the representative of the RCD. Uganda wanted RCD-ML to sign on its own, while Rwanda claimed RCD-ML was not a real group and that only RCD-G could sign the peace agreement (Mayombo 2001). Diplomats from Zambia and South Africa traveled to Kisangani to verify the status of RCD, and therefore who could or should sign the Lusaka accord. As both RCD-G and RCD-ML asserted their legitimacy (through the support of their Rwandan and Ugandan backers, respectively), tensions increased, erupting into violence on 14 August (Allio 1999).

The Kisangani clash also had a significant economic dimension. Both the Rwandan and Ugandan armies were involved in diamond trading at Kisangani (Prunier 2009, 222), but when the Ugandan “Victoria Group” (run by President Museveni’s brother, Salim Saleh, and sister-in-law, Jovia Akandwanaho) tried to establish a monopoly over the diamond trade, this increased tensions that fed the escalating political conflict (UNSC 2001, § 88). Prunier concludes the Kisangani clashes were “both about politics (who will control the RCD) and about mineral resources” (Prunier 2009, 223). That is, the political and economic dimensions of the Kisangani clashes are inextricably linked. Rwanda and Uganda fought twice more in Kisangani; first in May 2000 and then for several days in June 2000, causing high casualties among the civilian population and extensive damage in the town (UNSC 2000a). The struggle for political and economic power between Rwanda and Uganda continued for the duration of the war.

At the same time as the Lusaka peace negotiations and the increasing Rwanda-Uganda tensions, a “war within the war” started in the Ituri District of Orientale Province, in northeastern Congo. The origins of this war are discussed in the next chapter, but several issues are salient to the present discussion. First, the fighting that erupted in late spring 1999 was rooted in local struggles for political and economic power that were largely disconnected from the larger war going on in Congo at that time. Second, the start of the

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22 Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia.
war coincided with increased Ugandan army involvement in and control over the politics and economics of northeastern Congo, including Ituri. This control, which included appointing a new governor (see chapter 5) and exploiting Ituri’s gold (see below), exacerbated local tensions and power struggles, and helped to escalate the war. Third, the war in Ituri highlighted the dominant role of the Ugandan army in the political economy of armed conflict in northeastern Congo. That is, the central role the Ugandan army played in the war in Ituri makes it clear this was not a simple civil war, as many conflict theorists have asserted (see infra), but rather a predominantly international conflict with significant internal dimensions, or, more simply, a polywar.

Economic motives move to the fore
The first Congo war spurred Ugandan economic interests in eastern Congo. After the first war, President Museveni admitted one of the main reasons supported the war because he wanted Congo to be stable for Ugandan business interests (see infra). During the interbellum, Ugandan businessmen (including members of Museveni’s family and inner circle) tried to take advantage of the new opportunities in Congo, but President Kabila’s incoherent agenda and cooling Uganda-Congo relations stymied Ugandan economic interests. Uganda’s economic interests in Congo, and in particular in Congo’s gold, were part of the political and economic landscape that influenced President Museveni to invade and occupy Congo.

Prior the first Congo war, Uganda was expanding its exports to then-Zaire. As part of Uganda’s externally devised, export-led development (see chapter 2), Uganda’s official exports to then-Zaire tripled in value between 1994 and 1996 (Table 10). The start of the first war in October 1996 disrupted Uganda-Congo trade, but in the post-war period, the official trade remained only a quarter of pre-war levels. As shown in Table 10, the official trade was one-sided, with Uganda exporting millions of dollars per year but importing very little in return.

While the official trade lagged, the unofficial or informal cross-border increased, particularly after August 1998, when the Ugandan and Rwandan armies started the second Congo war. The UN Panel of Experts documented how Ugandan military officers used their authority to gain “unprecedented control of the economy of the eastern and north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo” (UNSC 2001a, § 64). This control enabled Ugandan army officers and business agents to easily bring consumer goods and other merchandise from Uganda to Congo, and to take looted items and illegally exploited timber and gold from Congo to Uganda.

| Table 10. Uganda’s Official Trade with Zaire/Congo, 1994-2002 (millions US$, current year$) |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Imports**     | n/a            | n/a            | 0.0            | 0.0            | 0.0            | 0.0            | 0.052          | 1.339          | 1.178          |

n/a—not available
Sources: UBOS n.d; BOU 2003, Appendix 12, 96 and Appendix 13, 97; BOU 1999, Appendix 10, 84; BOU 2000, Appendix 10, 73.
Table 11. Uganda, Gold Exports by Fiscal Year (1 Jul-30 Jun) and Value (million US$, current year dollars), 1993/94-2008/09

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Export Value</strong></td>
<td>0.960</td>
<td>12.444</td>
<td>35.150</td>
<td>110.537</td>
<td>25.453</td>
<td>27.946</td>
<td>39.393</td>
<td>58.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Export Value</strong></td>
<td>56.668</td>
<td>48.184</td>
<td>58.487</td>
<td>71.326</td>
<td>101.554</td>
<td>116.142</td>
<td>44.852</td>
<td>27.836</td>
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Uganda’s official trade with Congo remained low through 2002 (Table 10), but one indication of the size of the unofficial trade during this period is Uganda’s export of gold that originated in occupied areas of Congo.\(^{24}\) For example, in the calendar years 1999-2001, Uganda’s official imports from Congo totaled only $1.391 million (current year US$) (Table 10). Yet Uganda officially exported $97.880 million of (mainly) Congolese gold during the same period (Table 11). This indicates that Uganda’s official imports from Congo were just over one percent of the value of the gold unofficially imported into Uganda during 1999-2001.

In addition to the unofficial gold trade, Uganda reportedly imported large quantities of coffee, timber, and other resources from Congo during the early stages of the war (UNSC 2001a, § 34-35). The proximity of the coffee growing areas to Congo’s border with Uganda and trade routes leading to a regional market in Uganda’s capital Kampala enabled Ugandan officers and their Congolese allies to easily export the coffee. A Ugandan government commission justified Ugandan involvement in the trade in Congo’s coffee by citing the importance of market location: “If that market is across the border of another country, then that is where it will be sold, whatever the rules of an administration thousands of kilometres away, which has no de facto control over the area where the coffee was grown” (Uganda 2002, 15). Indeed, the commission, known as the Porter Commission after the British judge who chaired it, further noted: “…on many occasions, military flights paid for by [the Ugandan] Ministry of Defence, or flown on Uganda Air Cargo (flying for Ministry of Defence) were carrying large quantities of coffee in particular back from the Democratic Republic of Congo” (Uganda 2002, 19).

\(^{23}\) The Bank of Uganda’s 2007/08 report lists the figure as 118.465, but the 2008/09 report lists the figure as 44.852. I have listed the latter because it most likely represents an updated amount. Uganda’s official exports significantly dropped during the second half of the 2007 calendar year after the UN Security Council added Uganda’s two largest gold exporters to a sanctions list; this prompted Emirates Gold in Dubai to announce it would no longer buy gold from the sanctioned companies.

\(^{24}\) Investigations by the United Nations and Human Rights Watch have established that Uganda exports gold that originates in the Congo. The Government of Uganda’s Porter Commission disputed this finding and asserted that the proportion of gold mined in Uganda is uncertain because production of gold in Uganda is not adequately recorded. The Porter Commission’s assertion is borne out by estimates from the Ugandan Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development that 90 percent of artisanal and small-scale mining activities in Uganda take place outside the government’s legal framework. Still, given Uganda’s insignificant gold production (generally a few kg/year), it is clear that the vast majority of Uganda’s gold exports originate in the Congo (cf. Uganda 2001, 111-113; UNSC 2001b, § 27-28; Hinton 2005, ii).
General Kazini ordered Ugandan troops to allow the Victoria Group—which paid taxes to Bemba’s MLC rebel group—to engage unimpeded in the trade of coffee (and diamonds and gold) (Uganda 2002, 84), suggesting that plant products helped to sustain and prolong the war by funding armed groups.

The importance of foreign (Ugandan) interest in northeast Congo’s gold was evident from the start of the war on 2 August 1998. Uganda consolidated its control over northeastern Congo, including the goldfields in Ituri and Haut-Uélé districts, during the first two months of the war. The UPDF took control of Bunia on 13 August (ICJ 2001, § 48)—just eleven days after the start of the war—which effectively gave it control of the nearby Kilo goldfields around Mongbwalu. On 9 September, a UPDF unit took control of the town of Durba, and with it the Moto goldfields of the Haut-Uélé district (Okumu 2001). After taking control of the border areas and the Kilo and Moto goldfields, the Ugandan army turned its focus toward more strategic locations. As Uganda told the International Court of Justice, “The march to take control of key airfields and river ports began on 20 September 1998, with the occupation of Isiro” (ICJ 2001, § 54).

Once Ugandan officers seized control of the mines, they worked with Congolese businessmen and rebel officials to quickly establish structures of exploitation. At the end of October, the RCD announced it was taking control of the OKIMO (Kilo and Moto) mines already captured by the Ugandan army in August and September (HRW 2005, 15-16). Yet the Ugandan army’s heavy involvement in the production and trade in gold makes it clear that the UPDF—and not RCD—was the true power in the region. In the Kilo goldfields, the Ugandan army quickly took control of gold production and required local miners to pay daily fees in order to mine gold (UNSC 2001a, § 59). In the Moto goldfields, the Ugandan army took over security at key mining sites, and levied taxes and fees on the miners. Against the advice of local Congolese officials, UPDF ordered the use of dynamite at the underground Gorumba mine (near Durba) to speed up production, which led to a collapse in late 1999 that killed an estimated one hundred miners (HRW 2005, 16-18).

Once the gold was produced, Ugandan officers and regime insiders worked closely with Congolese businessmen and rebel officials to control the gold trade. The most important enterprise in Ituri engaged in the gold trade was a company called Trinity. Although much about the directors and inner workings of Trinity remains unclear, the company was reportedly set up in 1999 by RCD to help it raise money for the rebel movement’s activities (Uganda 2002, § 18.5.2). Among Trinity’s directors was Manu Soba, a Hema businessman and gold trader from Bunia, and John Tibasima, a Hema businessman who had been director of OKIMO (the government agency in charge of the Kilo and Moto gold mines) (Uganda 2002, § 18.5.2). Tibasima joined the RCD movement in August 1998 and officially became RCD’s minister of mines in January 199925 (Omasombo and Kennes 2006, 237); Tibasima was therefore both an official in the rebel movement and a manager of the Trinity company (cf. UNSC 2001a, § 81). Salim Saleh, President Museveni’s brother, also reportedly had ties to Trinity (UNSC 2001a, § 81; cf. Uganda

25 Tibasima remained an economic and mines minister with RCD-ML after the split of the RCD in early 1999.
The Trinity company collected fees from businessmen that allowed them to avoid paying customs fees at the Uganda-Congo border, but it is not clear if this money benefited Tibasima and his associates or the RCD group, or both (Engola 2001; Uganda 2002, § 18.5.2).

The other company involved in the trade in Ituri’s gold was called Victoria. This enigmatic group included a Lebanese businessman, Mr. Khalil, and several senior Ugandan officials, including Gen. James Kazini (Uganda 2002, § 18.5.1; UNSC 2001a, § 80). Gen. Kazini instructed the UPDF officers under his command in north and northeast Congo not to interfere with the business of Victoria group representatives (Uganda 2002, § 18.5.1). As with the Trinity company, Salim Saleh and his wife appear to have been involved with the Victoria group, but the exact ties remain unclear (Uganda 2002, § 18.5.1). The Victoria group also reportedly had ties to the MLC rebel group (UNSC 2001a, § 80). The UN panel examining Ugandan and Rwandan involvement in Congo stated the Victoria group was purchasing gold in Kampala (UNSC 2001b, § 28).

While the operations and directors of Trinity and Victoria remain partially obscured, the results of their work to facilitate the gold trade are evident in Uganda’s official gold exports for this period. The increased flow of gold in Uganda’s export statistics becomes clear from the first quarter of 1999 (Chart 8), and continued through 2002 (Chart 9). During the period of Uganda’s occupation of northeastern Congo (August 1998 to May 2003), Uganda exported approximately $230 million (current year dollars) of mainly Congolese gold (Table 11, p. 122).
At this point it is worth restating several key points. First, within weeks of the start of the second war, the Ugandan army had taken control of the Kilo and Moto goldfields; i.e., the gold mining areas were among the first locations occupied by the Ugandan army. Second, Ugandan officers managed gold production in the mining areas, and the Victoria and Trinity companies (working with senior Ugandan officials) traded the Congolese gold in Kampala. Third, from the start, the RCD rebel group helped to facilitate Ugandan exploitation of the Kilo belt’s gold, and the MLC rebel group had ties to the Victoria group. Fourth, Uganda’s gold exports increased dramatically starting in the first quarter of 1999, barely four months into the second war. All of this suggests the Ugandan army and regime insiders entered the Congo war with clear economic agendas of profiting from Congo’s gold. These Ugandan actors worked closely with Congolese businessmen, who themselves had ties to the RCD and MLC rebel groups.

Based on the above information, I argue economic agendas did not emerge at some later stage of the war, as some have suggested (see Conclusion, below), but rather were integral parts of Uganda’s war strategy from the very start. The Ugandan army quickly occupied the key gold mining areas and oversaw production, including levying taxes and fees on gold miners. The produced gold was then channeled through companies that had close ties to both senior Ugandan officials and the RCD and MLC rebel groups. The speed with which Ugandan officials and their Congolese allies moved to exploit gold from the Kilo and Moto mines is evident in the spike in Uganda’s gold exports in the first quarter of 1999, which marked the start of a sustained gold trade in Congolese gold.
through Kampala. Since the Ugandan army was the de facto military and political force in northeastern Congo during late 1998 and early 1999, I argue Uganda’s interests in Congolese gold were both present at the start of the war and more important for the incorporation of gold into the war than Congolese interests.

**Shifting alliances in Ituri**

The evolution of the gold trade after 1999 reflected larger changes in the military and political landscape in eastern Congo. After the split of the RCD in May 1999, the RCD-ML faction had nominal control of Ituri, although the Ugandan army had ultimate control (see infra). Even as RCD-ML formalized and relocated in September 1999 to Bunia, new divisions appeared that reflected escalating ethnic tensions in the region and competing economic interests.

When the Ituri war started in June 1999, the Ugandan army worked closely with Hema leaders, including those within the RCD-ML structure, to repress the Lendu population in Ituri’s Walendu Pitsi territory (see chapter 5); however, from the start, some UPDF officers helped Lendu leaders, reflecting conflicting agendas and allegiances within the occupying army. The Ituri war exacerbated latent divisions within RCD-ML, as the new leader, Wamba dia Wamba, drew support from and was sympathetic to the Lendu, while Tibasima (Hema from Ituri) and Mbusa Nyamwisi (Nande from Beni, North Kivu) had close ties the Hema community.

Tensions over commercial interests also emerged in 1999. Tibasima’s dual roles as minister of finance for RCD-ML and manager of the Trinity organization raised concerns about where the money was going, leading to disagreements between Wamba and Nyamwisi on one side, and Tibasima on the other (Uganda 2002, § 18.5.2). Trinity was profiting from Uganda-Congo trade, including the trade in Ituri’s gold, but it was not clear if this was benefitting the RCD-ML group (as it was supposedly intended to do), or simply benefitting Tibasima, other Hema businessmen in Ituri, and Ugandan officers and regime insiders (cf. UNSC 2002, § 120-121).

During 2000, RCD-ML split further into a Wamba camp and a Nyamwisi-Tibasima camp. Although the division was tied to differences over political and economic power, it also took place along more personal lines, with the Wamba camp containing intellectuals interested in diplomacy, and the Nyamwisi-Tibasima camp more oriented toward military and commercial affairs. After an April tour of areas affected by the emergent war in Ituri, Wamba established a commission to investigate the exploitation of natural resources in Ituri by Ugandan officers and Congolese businessmen; this predictably caused a conflict between Wamba and those—such as Tibasima and Nyamwisi—who were profiting from the status quo (cf. Omasombo and Kennes 2006, 251). Nyamwisi was reportedly concerned about Trinity’s operations, which favored Tibasima and other Hema businessmen at the expense of the powerful Nande business

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26 RCD-ML had control of Beni-Lubero (North Kivu) and the Kibali-Ituri (Orientale) regions, but as Reytjens (2009, 241) notes, the UPDF was in fact in control of the RCD-ML and the region.

27 Interview with former RCD-ML official, March 2008, Kinshasa.
community allied to Nyamwisi, but he sided with Tibasima against Wamba because of political and commercial interests.

The divisions in RCD-ML during 2000 also manifested militarily when Nyamwisi and Tibasima each started to recruit soldiers for the APC. At Nyaleke (near Beni), Nyamwisi helped to assemble the Usalama battalion, which consisted mainly of Nande youth, but also included Lendu and Hema recruits (HRW 2001, 12). At Rwampara, near Bunia, Tibasima oversaw the recruitment of a largely Hema armed force. In both locations, Ugandan army officers helped to train the recruits. The loyalty—or rather disloyalty—of these units to Wamba, who was still head of RCD-ML, became clear later in the year. With the APC’s two main military units largely having allegiance to either Nyamwisi or Tibasima, Wamba had effective control only over his President Protection Unit (PPU).

Nyamwisi and Tibasima tried several times in 2000 to oust Wamba from leadership of RCD-ML, all of which failed due to Museveni’s continued support of Wamba, exercised through the UPDF (Prunier 2009, 230). In August, after the Nyamwisi-Tibasima camp failed in an attempt to take power, the Ugandan government transported from Bunia approximately 700 APC defectors to Kyankwanzi camp in Uganda for UPDF military training (HRW 2001, 13; cf. UNSC 2000a, § 75; UNSC 2001, § 66). In October, President Museveni brought Wamba, Nyamwisi, and Tibasima to Kampala to sign a peace accord, but this failed to reconcile the growing divisions in RCD-ML (HRW 2001, 14). Around August 2000, Roger Lumbala reformed the RCD-ML unit in Haut-Uélé district into RCD-N (N standing for National) (HRW 2001, 15), which became a proxy for MLC and the Ugandans.

To stem further divisions and competition among Uganda’s proxies in Congo, in January 2001 President Museveni tried to unite the RCD-ML and MLC into a coalition called the Front de libération du Congo (FLC). Museveni reportedly saw Bemba’s force as potentially being able to unite Uganda’s proxies, and Bemba actively sought control over RCD-ML and all of northern Congo, for both economic interests and to position himself for post-war power sharing in Kinshasa (HRW 2001, 17). As noted by Human Rights Watch, “Under the firm grip of its leader Jean-Pierre Bemba, the MLC had a unified political and military command with none of the internal dissentions and spectacular defections that regularly rocked both the RCD-Goma and RCD-ML” (HRW 2001, 16). With Museveni’s encouragement, the FLC had MLC’s Bemba as president and RCD-ML’s Nyamwisi as second in command. By November, however, the FLC had disintegrated due to struggles for political and economic power between Bemba and Nyamwisi (Reyntjens 2009, 242). As a result, Nyamwisi took control of both RCD-ML and Ituri; Tibasima remained his deputy.

During 2001, as the FLC disintegrated, the divisions in RCD-ML grew deeper. The growing divide was partly due to economic competition for control of trade and natural resource flows between Nyamwisi and his Nande businessmen friends on the one hand, and Tibasima and his Hema business associates on the other (cf. UNSC 2002, § 121). In

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28 After international attention and criticism, Uganda allowed UNICEF and other agencies to demobilize and repatriate approximately 163 of these children (mostly Hema) to Bunia (HRW 2003, 47).
addition, violence between the Hema and Lendu communities affected relations within the RCD-ML. As violence escalated in late 2000 and early 2001, the UPDF was often directly involved, usually supporting Hema militias in attacks against Lendu populations; however, Lendu militias also committed many attacks against the UPDF and Hema villages (HRW 2001, 26-27; UNSC 2004a, § 22-23). Nyamwisi’s cadres had been recruiting many Lendu to become APC soldiers, while (as discussed above), Tibasima’s force near Bunia was comprised mainly of Hema recruits (cf. HRW 2001, 26). After the disintegration of the FLC in mid-2001, a new Hema group formed by Thomas Lubanga and former governor Adele Lotsove (see chapter 5) called the Union des patriotes congolais (UPC) signed an agreement with Nyamwisi to help manage the Kibali-Ituri province (Omasombo and Kennes 2006, 122).

Despite all of the problems in the RCD-ML, it was clear real authority in Ituri remained in the hands of the Ugandan army. In December 2000, representatives from the Hema and Lendu communities in Ituri appealed to the UPDF commander in Bunia—not to RCD-ML—to stem escalating violence (HRW 2001, 18). Also during December, the UPDF commander, Col. Edwin Muzoora, “removed Ernest Uringi Padolo, a staunch supporter of Wamba, from his post as Ituri governor and named the province’s general administrator as acting governor” (HRW 2001, 18). These facts reinforce my argument that the international dimension of the war was more important than the internal dimension, in contrast to those who describe the second Congo war as a “civil war”. Uganda was in control of Ituri from the start, and Congolese rebel groups played a lesser role in the war.

The end of the beginning

During 2002, the political and economic landscapes in Ituri continued to shift, with deadly results. In effect, two wars were playing out in Ituri during 2002. The larger war—the second Congo war—was slowly drawing to a close, but the Ituri war was intensifying. Alliances shifted and groups fragmented due to ethnic affiliation, political disputes, and commercial interests. And looming above it all were the Ugandan and Rwandan governments, then under significant pressure from their international backers to end their embarrassing and destructive occupations of Congo.

The Hema–Lendu tensions within the RCD-ML led to a split, although not along the Nyamwisi-Tibasima line. The split came from Thomas Lubanga and UPC, the Hema group Lubanga co-founded that had allied with RCD-ML. In December 2001, Nyamwisi made Lubanga defense minister for RCD-ML (Omasombo and Kennes 2006, 122), but concerned about Lubanga’s power and aspirations, in March 2002 Nyamwisi appointed a new governor of Kibali-Ituri, Jean-Pierre Lompondo, and gave him power over the RCD-ML’s military forces (UNSC 2004a, § 46; HRW 2003, 5). Angered by this move, as well as Nyamwisi’s refusal to appoint Bosco Ntaganda as deputy chief of military operations (UNSC 2004a, § 46), Lubanga announced his rejection of the RCD-ML, and split the UPC off into a separate group. Despite differences between Nyamwisi and Tibasima, Tibasima stuck with RCD-ML after the split with UPC.
The split in RCD-ML was also related to the peace talks underway during early 2002. After the assassination of Laurent Kabila in January 2001, his son Joseph Kabila, who took over as president of the DRC, gave renewed energy to peace negotiations through the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), which brought together most of the major stakeholders (Grignon 2006, 72-75). During the February-April 2002 meeting of the ICD at Sun City, South Africa, Nyamwisi improved relations with the government in Kinshasa to ensure a place for him and RCD-ML in a post-war government. As part of the Sun City agreement, RCD-ML integrated Lendu militia into the APC, which angered Lubanga and other Hema leaders, and contributed to conflict between UPC and RCD-ML (HRW 2003, 6, 19).

By the summer of 2002, the situation in Ituri was increasingly volatile. The split between RCD-ML and UPC further exacerbated the Hema-Lendu divide. In June 2002, the Ugandan government arrested UPC’s Thomas Lubanga and several UPC leaders and transferred them Kinshasa (UNSC 2004a, § 30). At this point, remaining UPC leaders turned to Rwanda for support, fearing a loss of Ugandan allegiance (HRW 2003, 17). Yet even while turning to Rwanda, the UPC continued to work with the UPDF, including during the August 2002 battles for Bunia, in which UPC and the UPDF defeated the RCD-ML, took control of the town, and killed many Lendu people (UNSC 2004a, § 46-49; HRW 2003, 19). UPC took control of large sections of Ituri from RCD-ML (HRW, 2003, p. 21), and in August 2002 committed (with the aid of Bira militants) a massacre of Lendu villagers at Songolo (UNSC 2004a, § 50-51). A week later, in September 2002, Lendu militants working with APC and Mai-Mai killed more than one thousand mostly-Hema people at Nyakunde (UNSC 2004a, § 52-61).

By the end of the year, new groups had formed and new alliances were at work. Lendu communities in Ituri formed groups to defend themselves and to attack Hema communities and the UPC. In November 2002, the Lendu community in southern Ituri (called Ngiti) created the Front de résistance patriotique de l’Ituri (FRPI), partly from APC defectors. Around the same time, the Lendu community in northern Ituri formed the Front nationaliste integrationniste (FNI), to oppose Hema and UPC. FRPI and FNI briefly joined in coalition with a Hema group that split off from UPC called Parti pour l’unite et la sauvegarde de l’integrite du Congo (PUSIC); this coalition (called Front pour l’integration et la paix en Ituri, FIPI) disintegrated by early 2003. Because of growing UPC ties to Rwanda (HRW 2005, 24), during the end of 2002 the Ugandan government stopped supporting UPC and started to supply FNI, FRPI, and PUSIC (UNSC 2004a, § 28). After the UPC took Bunia in August 2002, the RCD-ML established closer relations with Lendu militants (HRW 2005, 24), and by the end of the year supported FNI and FRPI. In March 2003, the Ugandan government helped to split UPC and create a new rebel movement, Forces armées du peuple congolais (FAPC), which controlled the Aru territory in northern Ituri (UNSC 2004a, § 28).

In late 2002 and early 2003, the MLC returned to Ituri for the first time since the failure of the FLC in 2001. The MLC worked with RCD-N, which had split off from RCD-ML in 2000 and aligned itself to the MLC, although Bemba’s MLC was the dominant group in the partnership. Bemba fought against RCD-ML both to gain greater access to Ituri’s
gold, but also to diminish RCD-ML and Nyamwisi in significance as talks for a post-war government in Congo were taking shape.

The MLC/RCD-N encroached on Ituri from two directions; a northern front and a western front. Both forces and lines of attack were part of Bemba’s *Operation effacer le tableau* (Operation erase the chalkboard), which was intended to dislodge RCD-ML from Ituri (cf. UNSC 2004a, § 106). On the northern front, in September 2002 MLC/RCD-N captured the Moto gold mines near Durba from the RCD-ML (HRW 2005, 25). In early November, the northern MLC/RCD-N force moved south as part of a double envelopment attack with UPC on the RCD-ML force at Mongbwalu (see below). On the western front, in October MLC/RCD-N attacked Mambasa, also in coordination with UPC, taking the town for roughly two weeks before being pushed out again by RCD-ML. MLC/RCD-N retook Mambasa in late November and held the town until February 2003. During these operations, MLC and RCD-N forces reportedly committed “serious human rights abuses such as summary executions, systematic rape, systematic looting and acts of cannibalism” (UNSC 2004a, § 108).

The shifts and splits and attacks and massacres of late 2002 and early 2003 took place in the context of a sustained movement toward a national peace agreement and the withdrawal of Ugandan and Rwandan forces from Congo. Of greatest importance for understanding war in Ituri is Uganda’s role, since Uganda helped to create several armed groups (e.g. RCD, MLC), and supported many more at various times during the war (e.g. RCD-ML, UPC, RCD-N, FAPC, FNI, FRPI). A combination of international and domestic pressure finally forced the Government of Uganda to negotiate its withdrawal from Congo (cf. ICG 2002, 6-7; Clark 2002, 160-161). On 6 September 2002, the governments of Uganda and DRC signed an agreement in Luanda, Angola, “in which Kinshasa traded withdrawal of Ugandan troops against establishment of a joint security mechanism at the common border and the holding of an Ituri Pacification Commission (IPC) to which Uganda would be party” (ICG 2003, i).

The Luanda agreement and the prospect of Uganda’s withdrawal produced a power struggle among the armed groups in Ituri, as well as between Rwanda and Uganda, who were both vying for influence there (ICG 2003, 7). As discussed above, Uganda continued to support various sides in the war in Ituri, sowing the seeds of future strife. The slow progress of the IPC—which did not formalize an agreement until less than two weeks before Uganda’s withdrawal from Bunia (UNSC 2003a, § 13)—also virtually ensured a political vacuum would follow Uganda’s withdrawal from Ituri. Nonetheless, Uganda remained politically, militarily, and economically engaged in Congo long after its forces officially withdrew (see later chapter).

**Endgame battles in the Kilo belt**

As the Congolese rebel groups fragmented and fought amongst themselves, and as Uganda prepared to withdraw from Ituri, the importance of gold rose significantly. The Kilo goldfields in Ituri in particular became battlefields where various groups fought to

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29 The retreating RCD-ML force, under the command of Jerome Kakwavu, retreated to Aru; in March 2003 Jerome created FAPC from the remnants of this RCD-ML unit with support from Uganda.
control an important source of funding while also conducting ethnic cleansing campaigns. As was the case throughout the second Congo war, the Ugandan army was intimately involved in the fighting that took place, and in the atrocities that were committed during the campaigns. Uganda’s goal was to ensure the Kilo goldfields and key trading routes would be in friendly hands when the Ugandan army withdrew.

As discussed earlier, the Ugandan army seized the Kilo and Moto goldfields within several weeks of the start of the war and oversaw the start of production. Shortly thereafter Ugandan officials worked with Congolese businessmen and politicians in the nascent Congolese rebellion to establish trade networks that funneled gold to Ugandan hands through companies like Trinity and Victoria. Thus, from late 1998 until mid-2002, the gold mines were under the control of Uganda and its proxies, and the gold trade benefited a small number of Congolese businessmen-cum-rebels and Ugandan government officials. The gold trade also made Uganda’s export-led growth—praised by the World Bank and others (Collier and Reinikka 2001, 15)—appear even better than it would have likely been without the war. Table 12 shows that for the main period of Uganda’s exploitation of Congolese gold, Uganda’s gold exports were approximately 10 percent of Uganda’s overall export value. Moreover, for 1999-2002—when Uganda occupied northeastern DRC for the entire calendar year—gold was Uganda’s second or third leading foreign exchange earner each year, reinforcing the importance of gold for Uganda’s economic profile.

Table 12. Uganda, Major Exports, 1996-2004 (percentage of total exports by value)

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<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<td>Tea</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<td>Fish</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
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<td>17.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td>Electricity</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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Sources: Data from 1996-1998 is from IMF 1999, 72, Table 22; data from 1999-2003 is from UBOS 2004, 208, Table 4.2.c; data from 2004 is from Bank of Uganda 2005, 50, Table 16.

Hidden in these benign statistics are the violence and bloodshed that rocked the Kilo belt at the end of 2002 and beginning of 2003. The first acts of violence happened 11-12 June 2002 in and around Mongbwalu, when fighting between irregular Hema and Lendu militias killed scores of people and resulted in many Hema leaving the area; however, APC remained militarily in control of the Kilo belt. After UPC took control of Bunia in

30 Uganda’s fishing industry primarily operates on Lake Victoria.
31 Human Rights Watch and the UN Security Council give very different accounts of what happened. Human Rights Watch says the APC and Lendu militias attacked Hema in Mongbwalu town, while Hema attacked Lendu in outlying areas (HRW 2003, 23). The Security Council report on Ituri says Hema leaders bribed APC elements and tried to clear Mongbwalu of Lendu, but Lendu militias fought back and as a result, the Hema in Mongbwalu had to leave the area (UNSC 2004a, § 99-100).
August 2002, Thomas Lubanga worked with OKIMO officials (who were also Hema) to plan for managing gold operations in the Kilo belt after UPC could take control from APC and Lendu militias (HRW 2005, 24).

During Fall 2002, UPC remained allied to Uganda, but sought assistance from Rwanda as it prepared to move on the main gold producing area around Mongbwalu. Rwanda aided UPC in three ways: by providing advisors and senior staff, by providing training in both DRC and Rwanda, and by supplying arms (Kassem 2003, § 22-28). Rwanda’s goals in supporting UPC were reportedly two-fold: to secure access to Ituri’s gold, and to counter Ugandan influence in Ituri (Kassem 2003, § 24; HRW 2003, 26). On 6 January 2003, as a sign of its shifting allegiance, UPC entered a military alliance with RCD-G, which was closely allied to Rwanda (UNSC 2004a, fn. 34).

Several battles took place during November 2002 for control of Mongbwalu. UPC attacked Mongbwalu town on 8 November from the south, but the APC (RCD-ML armed wing) force there repulsed the attack (UNSC 2004, § 101). In anticipation of a second attack by MLC/RCD-N, some APC moved north on 9 November to counter the attack. The next major attack came on 22 November, when MLC and UPC jointly attacked the town32 (HRW 2003, 24); UPC succeeded in taking the town on 24 November (UNSC 2004a, § 102).33 Within three days of taking Mongbwalu, UPC commander Bosco Ntaganda welcomed a Ugandan journalist who toured the gold mining areas with UPC commanders (Photo 4). The journalist, who acted more like a public relations official for UPC, notably stated, “Foreign investors are now invited [to Mongbwalu] because they are going to be provided with security by UPC rebels, who are eager to assist foreign investors who are willing to rehabilitate this factory.”34 UPC was clearly interested in profiting from Mongbwalu’s rich gold reserves (HRW 2003, 25-26), but in taking over the town, UPC forces also conducting an ethnic cleansing of the Lendu population, in which they “slaughtered civilians on an ethnic basis, chasing down those who fled to the forest, and catching and killing others at roadblocks” (HRW 2005, 27).

Other acts of violence and war took place elsewhere in the Kilo belt at the end of 2002 and early 2003. In October 2002, Lendu militias attacked the town of Nizi, where UPC had a small base; scores to hundreds of people were killed (UNSC 2004a, §103). In December 2002, UPC forces attacked Kilo, to the southeast of Mongbwalu, and massacred many Lendu villagers (HRW 2005, 29-31). Between January and March 2003, UPC carried out other military operations in the Kilo belt, killing hundreds of Lendu villagers (UNSC 2004a, § 68-70; cf. HRW 2005, 29-31).

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32 Interestingly, Human Rights Watch’s seminal report “The Curse of Gold” fails to mention the role of MLC in this attack, but highlights the role of Commander Jerome, formerly of RCD-ML who later formed FAPC (HRW 2005, 25-29).
33 There are differing accounts of the role of Ugandans and Rwandans in this attack. One Human Rights Watch report states Ugandan and Rwandan soldiers were helping UPC and MLC (2003, 24, 26), but another mentions only Rwandans as helping to plan and direct the attack (2005, 27).
34 Video in author’s files.
The spring of 2003 saw several major attacks and massacres as Congolese groups and the Ugandan army prepared for the departure of the UPDF from Ituri. Having abandoned its alliance with the UPC, the UPDF entered into alliances with the FNI and FAPC. At this stage, Uganda sought to ensure the Kilo goldfields and the key trading towns would remain in friendly hands, to ensure the flow of gold to Kampala.

In March 2003, the Ugandan army worked with FNI to push UPC out of Bunia and Mongbwalu (UNSC 2004a, § 73-74). During these operations, the FNI massacred Hema and Nyali civilians in and around Kilo (HRW 2005, 37-40; UNSC 2004a, § 113). Lendu militants carried out additional attacks in the Kilo belt during May 2003 (UNSC 2004a, § 114).

The Ugandan army finally ended its occupation of Ituri on 6 May 2003. After the UPDF pulled out, the FNI and UPC fought several bloody battles to control territory and access to the goldfields. For roughly three weeks in May, the FNI and UPC fought for control of Bunia, with UPC finally emerging victorious. During the fighting, both sides killed hundreds of civilians, looted shops, burned houses, and committed acts of sexual violence (UNSC 2004a, § 77-83). The UPC successfully retook Mongbwalu on 10 June, but lost it two days later to FNI; during the retaking FNI reportedly killed hundreds of civilians, including many Hema (HRW 2005, 40-43).
With Mongbwalu firmly in the hands of FNI by mid-2003, the disruptions in gold production and trading during the previous six months of fighting were able to resume. At this point, Butembo gold trader Kambale Kisoni re-entered the picture (see infra). Kisoni had close ties to Mbusa Nyamwisi and RCD-ML, which had enlisted Lendu fighters and retained close ties to FNI. Since UPC controlled Bunia, through which passed the main route to Mongbwalu from Butembo, and because the Ituri war was quite intense in late 2003 and early 2004, Kisoni used a small Antonov plane to fly from Butembo to Mongbwalu (HRW 2005, 102). The trade in gold from the Kilo belt was thus reoriented towards Butembo, from where Kisoni traded his gold in Kampala.

The other main trading center for gold at the end of the second war was through Ariwara, in Ituri’s Aru territory. Most of the gold passing through Ariwara was produced in the Moto goldfields around Durba and Watsa, but some also reportedly came from Mongbwalu. The gold flowing through Ariwara also went to Kampala (HRW 2005, 104-105).

The shifting alliances and violence of late 2002 and early 2003 is evident in Uganda’s official gold export statistics. As shown in Chart 10, Uganda’s monthly gold exports hit a two-year low in December 2002 (227 kg), a month after the UPC/MLC/RCD-N battles against APC for control of Mongbwalu. After the UPDF helped FNI take control of Mongbwalu in March 2003, Uganda’s exports rose, only to drop to zero during July and August 2003, right after Uganda pulled out of Ituri and violence in the region significantly increased. As conditions stabilized in late 2003, Uganda’s gold exports rose again, but that is the story for a later chapter.

In December 2005, the International Court of Justice handed down its long-awaited decision in the case *DRC v. Uganda*. The decision was essentially a verdict about why and how Uganda had waged war in Congo, and particularly in Ituri. The Court found that:

> [T]he Republic of Uganda, by the conduct of its armed forces, which committed acts of killing, torture and other forms of inhumane treatment of the Congolese civilian population, destroyed villages and civilian buildings, failed to distinguish between civilian and military targets and to protect the civilian population in fighting with other combatants, trained child soldiers, incited ethnic conflict and failed to take measures to put an end to such conflict; as well as by its failure, as an occupying Power, to take measures to respect and ensure respect for human rights and international humanitarian law in Ituri district, violated its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law (ICJ 2005a, § 345(3)).

The Court further stated Uganda violated international law by allowing its armed forces to engage in “looting, plundering, and exploitation of Congolese natural resources” (ICJ 2005a, § 345(4)). While the decision was publicly embarrassing for Uganda, it carried no real political or economic effect, and could therefore be considered one of many toothless statements of criticism that emerged from the international community during the course of the war.
The ICJ also rejected Uganda’s claim that it had invaded and occupied Congo as an act of self-defense against the ADF/NALU rebels (ICJ 2005a, § 147). Uganda’s claim rang hollow in part because Ugandan forces rushed into Congo and quickly seized key gold mines and commercial centers, far from the area of operation of ADF/NALU. Uganda’s neglect of ADF/NALU allowed them to persist in the Congo-Uganda border area near the Rwenzori Mountains.

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter highlights how struggles for political and economic power at the international, national, and local levels contributed to the onset, intensity, and duration of armed conflict in Congo, and in Ituri. During the interbellum, several processes influenced the return of war, most importantly the deteriorating relations between the government of Congo and the governments of Rwanda and Uganda, which was partly related to fallout from the Rwandan-led genocide inside Congo during the first war. In addition, contributing factors included Uganda’s frustrated commercial ambitions, and Ugandan engagement with ADF/NALU rebels along the Congo-Uganda border.

Filip Reyntjens asserts Uganda was reluctantly pulled into a war started by Rwanda.35 Reyntjens (2009, 196) states Museveni’s agenda “was to be part of the game and not to

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35 Prunier (2009, 196) states the main reason for Uganda’s entry into the war was to contain Sudan, which is unconvincing given the UPDF’s containment of ADF/NALU in the summer of 1998 and the lack of a real threat to Uganda from Sudan.
abandon the entire Congolese theater to Kigali.” I agree with this interpretation, but argue the political and economic interests of President Museveni’s key regime supporters contributed to his decision to immediately join the Rwandan-led “rebellion” in Congo. Museveni’s patrimonial system in Uganda required him to consider the desires of his family members (e.g. Salim Saleh), senior army officers, and regime insiders who, during the interbellum, openly sought access to natural resources and markets in Congo. Once liberated by Museveni’s decision to invade, these family members and key associates quickly—within weeks of entering Congo—initiated gold production and established networks of trade. This suggests Ugandan interest in gold influenced Museveni’s decision to invade and occupy Congo, even though Museveni’s dreams of regional hegemony and goal of regime perpetuation may have been more important factors.

My argument that gold factored into Museveni’s decision to go to war contrasts with positions taken by other scholars. For example, Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2004, 405) stated: “Although this development [of Ugandan exploitation of Congo’s natural resources] in no way confirms that the UPDF had a ‘hidden agenda’ before entering the DRC in 1998, it demonstrates that the initial goal of Uganda and the UPDF to oust Laurent-Désiré Kabila from power gradually shifted to that of acquiring financial and economic gain.” I acknowledge that Uganda’s agenda became dominated by commercial interests, but argue these commercial interests were present at the start of the war—and even before it, during the interbellum—thus clearly influencing Museveni’s decision to go to war. In assessing the political economy of the war, it is impossible to separate the political from the economic in understanding Uganda’s motivations for interstate war.

Michael Nest also downplays the importance of economic agendas in understanding Uganda’s entry into the war. He states:

> Economic interests were also not the main factor that led foreign governments to intervene [in Congo]. To be sure, the economic agendas of foreign belligerents eventually became a prominent part of the conflict and were an obscured part of the peace process, but they emerged as a function of war; interstate war did not occur as a result of economic interests (Nest 2006, 129).

Here Nest makes two important, but contradictory statements. On the one hand he says economic interests were not “the main factor” for interstate war, but on the other hand he says interstate war “did not occur as a result of economic interests.” I argue that while economic interests were not the main factor, they were certainly one of the main factors in President Museveni’s decision invade Congo. The economics behind Uganda’s entry into the war cannot and should not be separated from the political factors.

A number of factors explain how and why gold became part of the conflict. These factors can be categorized as geography; method of production; characteristics of the resource; political utility; and economic importance. First, the Kilo goldfields in Ituri (and Moto goldfields in neighboring Haut-Uélé district) are close to the Uganda-Congo border, facilitating Ugandan access to and control over mining areas. Second, the pre-existing artisanal mode of production prevalent in the Kilo belt made exploitation possible. Industrial mining was essentially impossible due to poor infrastructure, difficulty of restoring or replacing industrial equipment, lack of trained personnel, and
lack of investors willing to take the risk on a mining operation in a war zone. The Ugandan army could more easily manipulate human capital to provide labor than it could attract financial capital and know-how to operate an industrial operation. Third, the portability of gold made it easy to transport. Fourth, the high value of gold per volume made it highly desirable and easily convertible to cash or consumer products. Fifth, gold enabled Museveni to satisfy his patrimonial network, thus serving an important political function for his regime. And sixth, gold was important for Uganda’s economy, constituting variously the second or third leading foreign exchange earner each year during the second war.

These factors enable a more sophisticated explanation of the role of gold in war in Ituri. The Ugandan government’s political and economic interests in Congo’s gold—cultivated in the early 1990s and intensified during the first Congo war and interbellum—contributed to Uganda’s rapid entry into the second war. The geographic proximity of the Kilo and Moto goldfields to the Uganda-Congo border enabled the Ugandan army to rapidly seize the mining areas within weeks of the start of the war. Moreover, the nearness of the goldfields to the border facilitated the illegal export (in partnership with Congolese businessmen-cum-rebels) of highly-portable gold to Kampala. The existence of a longstanding artisanal mining sector in the Kilo and Moto goldfields enabled the Ugandan army to spur a rapid production increase; indeed, if production had been strictly industrial, output may have been far less due to supply and professional staff problems, in addition to the danger of likely targeting by opposing military forces of key production facilities. The speed and efficiency with which the Ugandan army took over and managed production is evident in the fourfold increase of Uganda’s gold exports between the last quarter of 1998 and the first quarter of 1999. Altogether, Uganda’s political and economic interests in Congo’s gold were realized through war, and enabled due to the favorable geography, method of production, and character of gold.

Congolese actors also helped make Uganda’s golden dreams into golden realities. Most importantly, Congolese miners produced the gold, and Congolese men and women—and boys and girls—served as the soldiers in Congolese forces that were supported and equipped variously by the Ugandan, Rwandan, or Congolese governments. In addition, Congolese businessmen and political figures worked closely with Ugandan officials to establish trade networks through the Trinity and Victoria organizations. Local actors were important to the exploitation of gold and the maintenance of war, but overall, these local actors were dependent upon the Ugandan presence to provide security and enforce the region’s political economy. As the war dragged on, the Congolese rebel groups split and formed new alliances, sometimes to pursue ethnic and political agendas, sometimes acting in the Rwanda-Uganda power play taking place in Congo, but sometimes simply seeking access to the Kilo and Moto goldfields.

Gold was important throughout the war as a source of financing and power. Gold became woven into the fabric of the war, and became a major element in the intensification and continuation of war after Uganda’s May 2003 withdrawal from Ituri. Just before leaving, Uganda tried to ensure friendly forces were in charge of key gold production and trading areas, and, as will be shown in a later chapter, after Uganda
withdrew, it did its best to sustain the brutal war in Ituri and protect the flow of gold from eastern Congo.
Chapter 5. What Caused the War in Ituri? A Reassessment of Received Wisdom

The difficulty of researching the origins of the war in Congo’s Ituri District was made clear to me one afternoon as I sat in a small, roadside shack having a soda. I was with my research assistant in the town of Fataki, near where the war started, when the wife of the man who owned the shack asked why I was there. After I told her about my research she laughed and said: “You will fail in your studies. If you ask the Hema they will say the Lendu started the war, and if you ask the Lendu they will say the Hema started the war. You will fail!”

That woman’s comment captured the essence of the difficulty I faced in tracing the processes and events that led to the start of the war. In addition to the Hema and Lendu narratives, there are other explanations offered by academics, activists, and United Nations panels that identify numerous ultimate and proximate causes for the war. Some of these narratives also suffer from incomplete or biased information, making a thorough and objective analysis challenging.

This chapter is an attempt to provide a fuller and more accurate portrayal of the start and escalation of the war in Ituri, but due to the obstacles noted above, I acknowledge that my account is far from complete. Paul F. Steinberg has described the dilemma of explaining causation in this way:

Having undertaken a thorough historical analysis to identify the causal processes leading to an outcome of interest, the investigator discovers that the outcome resulted from a multifaceted stream of events, with numerous variables emerging as necessary but insufficient to produce the outcome (Steinberg 2007, 182). In Ituri, this stream of events and processes are historical, political, economic, and social. But what is the relative importance of the component causes? How important were land disputes for the start of the war? Do ethnic differences explain what happened, or was ethnicity mobilized by political and economic elites to start the war? Are Ugandan army officers and their economic interests to blame, or is the failure of justice and conflict resolution mechanisms in Ituri the main reason for the war? In short, what set of variables explains the onset and escalation of violence?

This chapter analyzes the origins of the war in Ituri and evaluates the relative contributions of several causal processes contributing to the outcome of war (cf. Steinberg 2007, 187). In this chapter I use Gerring’s definition of cause as something (an event or process) that raises the probability of an event occurring (Gerring 2005, 167). I have compiled conflict explanations obtained through literature reviews and approximately 100 interviews conducted in Congo, Uganda, and the Netherlands (Table 13). I break these down into ultimate (more than two years before the event) and proximate (within two years of the event) causes to facilitate analysis, but at the end of the chapter I will revisit these causes assess their interactions and relative importance for the outcome of war.
The war in Ituri was related to but independent of other conflicts then raging in Congo. After the first Congo war ended in May 1997, Ugandan businessmen and government officials flocked to Congo to profit from its rich resources and underserved markets. After Rwanda and Uganda re-invaded Congo in August 1998, starting the second Congo war, the Ugandan army occupied Ituri, fought against the Congolese government in other parts of northern Congo, and battled the anti-Uganda ADF/NALU rebel group along the Congo-Uganda border. At the same time, some Ugandan officers enriched themselves through looting and trading in Congo’s natural resources. As international pressure mounted in early 1999 to end the war, Uganda, Rwanda and other actors engaged in peace negotiations that would produce, in July 1999, the Lusaka peace accords. Around the same time, tensions between Rwanda and Uganda (and their respective proxy forces) were escalating, culminating in a battle between these erstwhile allies at the town of
Kisangani, on the Congo River. These processes and events—war, occupation, economic interests, and peace talks—affected the onset and escalation of the war in Ituri.

The Ituri war started in 1999 and ended in 2007. This section focuses on the events in 1999 prior to and following the start of hostilities. After briefly describing the geography and human resources of Walendu Pitsi (the territory in Ituri where the war started), I review five theories about why the war began. I then analyze the proximate events and processes that led to the outbreak of the war, and assess the escalation of the conflict after it began.

Walendu Pitsi
The Ituri District is located in northeastern DR Congo, bordering Sudan to the north and Uganda to the east. Administratively, Ituri is within Orientale Province; the capital of Ituri is Bunia. Ituri contains five Territories, each of which has numerous Collectivities.

The area at the heart of the conflict in 1999 in Walendu Pitsi Territory consists of rolling hills and valleys, with numerous streams and rivers. The region’s highest mountain, Aboro (8,020 feet), stands to the south of Kpandroma, and the landscape stretching westward from the mountains varies in height from 5,000 to 7,000 feet. Prior to the start of the war in 1999, the territorial capital was at Libi, but since the war, the de facto capital has become Kpandroma. Prior to and since the war, the primary economic activities involve timber harvesting and export, agricultural production, and commercial trade.

There are nine major ethnic groups in Ituri, but the conflict that started in 1999 in Walendu Pitsi quickly became a conflict between the Hema and Lendu groups. For this reason, I focus in this chapter on the history of the Hema and Lendu, with only minor references to Ituri’s other tribal groups.

Hema and Lendu peacefully co-existed for centuries in this part of Ituri prior to the outbreak of war in 1999 (see chapter 3 for more detail). Lendu people from southern Sudan settled the area now known as Walendu Pitsi prior to the arrival of Hema people (also known as Gegere) from present-day Uganda. The Gegere established political and economic dominance over the Lendu (Meesen 1951, 181; Thiry 2004, 16, 27, 29, 109-113; Southall 1953, 152-154; Pottier 2008, 432), but this was a relationship more akin to servitude than slavery, and as a sign of their close relationship the Gegere adopted the Lendu language. Pottier (2008, 432) states: “To the north, in Djugu territory, Hema and Lendu developed relations of subservience, but Lendu imposed on Hema their language and made them adopt certain practices and values.” Pottier fails to explain why the Hema would dominate the Lendu politically and economically and yet let the Lendu dictate to the Hema what language they speak. 

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1 Ituri was supposed to become its own province in 2009 but political disputes have prevented this from happening.
2 These are Aru, Mahagi, Djugu, Irumu, and Mambasa.
3 Meesen (1951, 172-183) identifies them as the Pygmées, Banyari (Banyali), Wallendu, Mabendi, Babira, Bahema, Okebo, Alur, and Lugwaret.
4 Pottier (2008, 432) states: “To the north, in Djugu territory, Hema and Lendu developed relations of subservience, but Lendu imposed on Hema their language and made them adopt certain practices and values.” Pottier fails to explain why the Hema would dominate the Lendu politically and economically and yet let the Lendu dictate to the Hema what language they speak.
inhabitants and enable the extraction of resources, especially gold. The colonial government allocated lands for farming and cattle raising, known as concessions, to white settlers; initially this was intended to ensure the supply of food for gold miners, but later the agricultural sector developed into a significant part of Ituri’s economy. After independence and the ascendancy of Mobutu Sese Seko, the Zairian government re-allocated many concession lands in Walendu Pitsi to local businessmen from Ituri, most of whom were from the politically connected Hema ethnic group. The government and churches retained control over other concessions.

The emergence of a Hema business and political “elite” in Ituri took place over time. As noted by Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2004a, 180):

Even though some argue that initially, colonial policy mainly benefited the Lendu inhabitants of Ituri, it were the Hema who gradually developed favourable access to education, politics and employment opportunities. Especially in the resource-rich highlands of Irumu and Djugu (north Ituri), Hema strongmen acquired favourable access to the mining industry and plantations. Thus for the empowered, they further consolidated their economic dominance through cattle ranching and commerce. For the Lendu, the only option was to work as labourers in the mines and plantations.

While this description provides a useful overview of elite formation and social dynamics, it fails to acknowledge that the vast majority of Hema were and are peasant farmers and cattle herders. In addition, a small number of Lendu became politicians, clergy, and successful businessmen – not all Lendu were laborers – although the Lendu elite was much smaller in size and with less power than the Hema elite in Ituri.5

The information in chapter 2 highlights three themes that appear in contemporary Hema and Lendu accounts of the start of the war in Ituri. First, many Lendu invoke a moral right to the land in the Walendu Pitsi area by asserting the primacy of their arrival in the region.6 Lendu declare the land in this area ultimately belongs to them, and that after colonialism it should have been given back to them by the state. Second, Lendu leaders invoke the history of Hema collaboration with Henry Stanley and colonial authorities to assert a moral superiority over the Hema.7 Lendu interviewed for this dissertation portray themselves as righteous resisters of colonialism, while viewing Hema as beneficiaries of colonial and post-colonial structural dynamics in Congo. Third, Hema interviewed for this dissertation talk about the Lendu as belligerent and warlike in much the same way described by early European explorers and colonialists, ascribing a cultural trait to the Lendu that they say helps to explain why the Lendu initiated the war in 1999 in Ituri.8 Although some Lendu acknowledge they are “quick to fight”, they place this within the

5 Interviews with Hema and Lendu academics, politicians, administrators, Catholic Church officials, and teachers, May and June 2009, Bunia, Fataki, and Kpandroma.

6 Interviews with Lendu peasants, politicians, administrators and teachers, May and June 2009, Fataki and Kpandroma.

7 Interviews with Lendu elders, politicians, administrators and teachers, May and June 2009, Fataki and Kpandroma.

8 Interviews with Hema peasants and academics, May and June 2009, Fataki and Bunia.
context of their resistance to colonial and post-colonial oppression. Lendu notables assert that the Hema have carried forth into present times the “ideology” created by Stanley of Lendu belligerence and inferiority.

Despite the differences between the groups, the history of relations between Hema and Lendu is characterized more by peace than by war. For long before the war started in 1999, there were many mixed villages where Hema and Lendu (and people from other tribes) lived and worked together, and dated and married each other (cf. Thiry 2004, 113). In the last century there had been periodic violence between the groups (ASADHO 1999), but these episodes did not escalate to the level of brutality and the geographic reach of the recent war in Ituri. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 3, most of the colonial-era violence took place in southern Ituri, whereas in northern Ituri where the war started, Hema-Lendu relations were more serene (cf. Thiry 2004, 112-113). Due mainly to Hema-Lendu tensions in southern Ituri, leaders from both communities signed a peace agreement, which created a committee of customary chiefs in Ituri to encourage communication between Hema and Lendu (ASADHO 1999; cf. Prunier 2008a, 42).

In Walendu Pitsi collectivity, where the war started in 1999, the population was predominantly Lendu, but Hema businessmen ran many of the concessions (or plantations) and employed Lendu labor. Gérard Prunier has claimed these Hema businessmen were engaged in a conspiracy to “keep the wages of Walendu workers as low as possible” (Prunier 2008a, 41). In addition, Prunier claimed the Lendu “relationship with the Wahema landowners was fraught with suspicion and resentment” (Prunier 2008a, 42). While Prunier’s claim may have been true with respect to some Lendu workers and some Hema businessmen, his claim is weakened by the lack of any evidence or specific information; indeed, research conducted for this dissertation – including observations and interviews – suggests that there were problems between Hema and Lendu at some but by no means all concessions. As discussed further below, some of the tension at concessions in Walendu Pitsi may have been due to agitation by Lendu leaders, who planned to forcibly seize Hema concessions. The social and political dynamics in Ituri – and particularly in Walendu Pitsi – were variable depending on the location. The narrative that Hema elites were engaged in a conspiracy to marginalize their Lendu workers, or that all Lendu workers were resentful of their Hema bosses, attributes the acts of individuals to entire groups; as noted by Kalyvas (2006, 391) “it is incorrect to explain the behavior of individuals by reference only to the actions of elites or vague “groups.”

**Five theories**

In September 2010, a leaked United Nations report about atrocities committed between 1993-2003 in Zaire/DR Congo generated significant international controversy (UNHCR 2010). The report claimed the Rwandan government may have committed genocide in 1996-97 in Congo (AFP 2010), and described how the Ugandan army contributed to tens

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9 At the end of the colonial era, Southall (1953, 160, 165) echoed these characterizations of the Lendu as belligerent, noting that “fighting and unrestrained violence are regarded as the natural mode of interaction between different [Lendu] clans,” and that “Lendu do not behave with restraint in situations of provocation, and do not expect one another to do so.”

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of thousands of deaths in Congo’s Ituri District (Kelly 2010). To some extent, the report was old wine in a new bottle, as many of the claims about massacres and other serious human rights violations had been previously documented. One aspect of the leaked report that has received no attention is its repetition of received—and inaccurate—knowledge about the events and processes that produced the violence in Ituri’s small Walendu Pitsi collectivity, which led to the start of Ituri war.

The UN report recycles an oft-repeated interpretation of the start of the Ituri war. The narrative is simple: greedy leaders from Ituri’s northern Hema community tried to steal land from marginalized Lendu villagers. When the Lendu resisted, Hema leaders used Ugandan army soldiers to enforce their land grabbing, and the ensuing escalation of violence calcified into divisions that led to a long, brutal, and senseless war. The “Hema greed-Lendu victim” theory has become the most popular and influential thanks to its promotion in UN reports and scholarly publications; indeed, it is the “received wisdom” this chapter challenges.

Including the “Hema greed-Lendu victim” theory, there are five major theories of why war started in 1999 in Ituri, all of which incorporate conflicts over land. Three explanations essentially place the bulk of the blame on one of the three main actors—Hema elites, Lendu elites, or Ugandan army officers. The fourth explanation attributes the conflict to ancient ethnic hatreds between the Hema and Lendu. A fifth explanation attributes the onset of conflict to the exploitation by local and regional actors of local power struggles in Walendu Pitsi, thus essentially acknowledging that each of the main actors played a major role in starting the war. Each of these explanations has numerous other ultimate and proximate causes attached to it, including claims about the character of the Hema and Lendu groups, the effects of colonial and post-colonial policies, and strategic and tactical considerations by various groups in the context of the larger war going on in Congo. I briefly describe each explanation here, but will also assess each of them at the end of the chapter after presenting my account of the start of the war.

As described above, the most frequently cited explanation for the start of the war closely adheres to Lendu claims, and places land disputes at the center of its explanation for conflict in Ituri. During interviews in May and June 2009 in the Ituri district, many Lendu, including Lendu politicians and elders, stated the Hema started the conflict in order to take land from the Lendu. Some Lendu even attribute a genocidal intent to the Hema and claim the Hema wanted to drive all Lendu out of Walendu Pitsi.11

The Lendu claim is echoed in scholarly and policy literature. Johan Pottier articulates the explanation in this way: “[the war] originated in the accelerated acquisition, allegedly under dubious circumstances, of Hema concessions in Lendu villages” (Pottier 2008, 435). He further states: “the ultimate raison-d’être for land conflict is Mobutu’s zaïreanisation campaign, which began in 1973 and made him use land to reward political followers;” this in turn “speeded up the process whereby Hema cattle herders could displace ‘autochthonous’ Lendu agriculturalists.” The United Nations Security Council’s

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10 See e.g., UNSC 1998; HRW 1997a; ICJ 2005a.
(UNSC) special report on conflict in Ituri similarly states that the conflict started when Lendu revolted against local Hema concessionaires who tried to illegally seize land from Lendu villagers. The leaked 2010 UN report similarly states Hema concessionaires had Lendu “expelled from the concessions they wanted,” but when the Lendu “refused to leave,” UPDF intervention on behalf of the Hema led to escalating violence and war (UNHCR 2010, § 364-365). The International Crisis Group also claimed “[t]he first wave of violence started in June 1999, when a Hema businessman with fake deeds attempted to evict Lendu families from land he claimed to have acquired” (ICG 2003, 3).

A second explanation of the onset of war in Ituri closely adheres to Hema claims, and also emphasizes land conflicts. Many Hema, and especially Hema community leaders, assert the Lendu community started the war in order to illegally take land from Hema concessionaires. This “Lendu greed-Hema victim” claim includes additional assertions by some Hema of a genocidal plan on the part of the Lendu to completely take over Walendu Pitsi and other areas.

A third explanation stresses the Ugandan army’s pursuit of economic gain as the driving cause of the war. Gérard Prunier articulates the “Ugandan greed” explanation, and declares the war resulted “from the exploitation by corrupt Ugandan army officers of latent social contradictions (mostly about landholdings) in order to brutally control the local economy” (Prunier 2009, 292). He asserts that UPDF officers “were up to their necks in using the Hema as proxies for their local economic interests” (Prunier 2009, 229). Prunier’s claim is echoed by Colette Braeckman, who states the war in Ituri was the direct result of actions by Ugandan army officers to exacerbate local tensions between the Hema and Lendu. While these accounts acknowledge the role of land disputes in the start of the conflict, they place greater emphasis on Ugandan exploitation of the disputes for economic gain as the main cause of the war.

A fourth explanation claims the war was simply the result of ancient ethnic hatreds. Ugandan government sources have most notably promoted this account. The Ugandan government inquiry into Ugandan army misconduct in Congo, known as the Porter Commission, reported: “the [Hema-Lendu] conflict had existed ever since the two tribes found themselves living in the area” (Uganda 2002, 140). The Porter Commission further stated:

The evidence clearly shows that it is about the distribution of land: where to live, where to farm and where to graze their animals. The Lendus think that the Hemas have been favoured in the land distribution. The inter-ethnic clashes occur when one tribe encroaches on land belonging to another tribe (Uganda 2002, 140). This narrative would appear to absolve the Ugandan army of responsibility for starting or escalating the war in Ituri; following this explanation’s logic, the war was inevitable.

12 The UNSC report also states: “[t]hese local problems would not have turned into massive slaughter without the involvement of national and foreign players;” however here I am looking at the onset, not the escalation of the conflict (UNSC 2004a, § 17-18).
13 Interviews, Bunia and Fataki, June 2009.
14 “En réalité, c’est l’occupation étrangère qui a exacerbé les rivalités latentes entre les deux principaux groupes ethniques. Les troubles qui dévastent Bunia, et qui ont déjà fait plus de 50 000 morts, sont la conséquence directe des manœuvres ougandaises dans la région.” (Braeckman 2003, 174).
Interestingly, the Porter Commission based its account on statements made by UPDF officers and others implicated in starting and escalating the conflict (see e.g. Kerim 2001). These officers denied they had trained any Hema or Lendu militias, or manipulated them to fight each other, yet the Porter Commission “did not find them to be credible witnesses” (Uganda 2002, 140).

Finally, a fifth explanation emphasizes “local and regional power struggles” in a context of governance failure. Koen Vlassenroot and Timothy Raeymaekers offer a more nuanced explanation of the causes of the war in Ituri that ties in all the main actors. They argue “the outbreak of violence in Ituri has been the result of the exploitation, by local and regional actors, of a deeply rooted local political conflict for access to land, economic opportunity and political power” (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004, 385). In addition, they note: “according to international observers, the conflict in June 1999 was caused by a number of ruthless individuals, who took advantage of the absence of local authority to safeguard their own agendas” (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004, 391).

Map 3. Northeast Djugu Territory, Ituri. This is an excerpt from the map “Territoire de Djugu,” created in 1959 by the Geographical Institute of the Belgian Congo; the scale is 1:200,000. The key towns of Djugu, Fataki, Libi (also known as Tsupu), and Kpandroma are identified. The locations of the Ugwaro and Leyna concessions are shown, as is the village of Yozza. The war in Ituri started 19-20 June 1999 with attacks on the villages of Linga and Jiba.
The Path to War
The war in Ituri started slowly, with a few incidents spread over space and time. Between April and June 1999, what started as apparently isolated conflicts in a few disparate locations escalated into a violent conflict spanning the Collectivité of Walendu Pitsi. From July to September 1999, the conflict spread outside of Walendu Pitsi to surrounding collectivités, and it continued to escalate through the end of 1999 and into 2000.

Leyna
The first incident took place at the Leyna concession, located to the southeast of Kpandroma, near Aboro mountain (Map 3). There are divergent accounts of the causes of the actions at Leyna (discussed below), but general agreement on the central facts. In April 1999, some Lendu villagers from Gosenge, a village abutting the northwest corner of Leyna, accused the concession owner, Singa Kodjo, of trying to illegally expand his concession into Lendu lands and Gosenge village. Most of Singa Kodjo’s employees were Lendu, and many lived in Gosenge village. Singa Kodjo convened a meeting with local Lendu to try to resolve the matter, but the two sides failed to come to agreement. In early May, some Lendu attacked crops on the Leyna concession. On 14 May 1999 (UNSC 2004a, fn. 12), Singa Kodjo asked police and the Ugandan army to push some Lendu farmers off of disputed land, near the hill known as Dju. After this action, some Lendu attacked the Leyna concession and destroyed buildings and some crops; Singa Kodjo abandoned the concession at that time.

Both sides in the conflict acknowledge there was a dispute over the boundary of the concession that led to a series of small but escalating actions by both parties, but the differences between their accounts are significant and indicative of broader themes. According to the Lendu perspective, Singa Kodjo, was using his connections in the government and courts to illegally expropriate “vacant land” that was actually Lendu land. Various Lendu including those living in Gosenge village claim that Singa Kodjo wanted to take from them some land being farmed by the Lendu, the hill called Dju, and the adjacent village of Gosenge. The Lendu say they resisted his action, so Singa Kodjo brought in the police, had the police chase people off their farms, and had four local leaders arrested. After this, the Lendu returned to gardens the disputed area, which they assert was their land. The police returned a second time and chased people off the land, but this time they shot and wounded one man, and assaulted a woman. After this attack, the Lendu responded by attacking the Leyna concession.

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15 The Leyna concession is also called Aboro, after the nearby mountain.
16 Unless otherwise specified, this discussion is based on interviews conducted during May and June 1999 in the Ituri District.
17 The four are identified as Vincent, Gosenge, Amona and Tchedy.
The Hema perspective on the events at Leyna is quite different than the Lendu account. According to the Hema perspective, Lendu leaders agitated some of the Lendu who worked at Leyna by telling them the concession owner, Singa Kodjo, wanted to take their land. Hema give two reasons for this agitation: the Lendu had a long-standing plan to attack and seize the Hema concessions, and/or President Kabila encouraged the Lendu to attack the Hema in order to create problems for the occupying Ugandan army and their local allies in the rebel group RCD. Hema assert the Lendu were mistaken about the border of the concession, and were claiming land for themselves that was actually inside the concession boundary. After some Lendu individuals cut down some coffee trees and looted some cattle, Singa Kodjo got the police involved to arrest the perpetrators. After the arrests, the Lendu attacked the concession and destroyed both crops and infrastructure.

Although there is still much about the events at Leyna and the motivations behind them that remains unclear and unproven, two pieces of evidence more heavily favor the Hema explanation than that of the Lendu. First, available maps show that the hill called Dju, which Lendu claim was their land, has been inside the Leyna concession since the concession was created (Map 4). Mt. Dju is clearly labeled in both the original 1948 map laying out the boundaries for the concession, and the 1992 map included in the

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Government’s contract extension for the Leyna concession (Zaire 1992). These maps suggest the villagers of Gosenge and other Lendu did not know the exact boundary of the concession; therefore they wrongly believed that Mt. Dju and lands to the southeast of it were within the Leyna concession.

Map 4. The Leyna Concession, Walendu Pitsi, Ituri. The map on the left shows the original boundaries of the Leyna concession when it was created in 1948. The map on the right shows the boundaries of the concession in 1992, when concession owner Singa Kodjo renewed his contract with the government for this land. The red circle marks Dju hill (added by the author), and the boundary line as locally identified in 2009 is represented by the red diagonal line rising to the right in the middle-right of the map (added by author).

The second piece of evidence that supports Hema claims is a 1995 intelligence report about the Lendu group, *L’Association Culturelle* LORI. The report, by the Zairian intelligence agency, warns about the actions of LORI in Walendu Pitsi. It states, in part: “The tribal character of the Association is at the foundation of its member’s projects to expropriate the concessions and fields of non-Lendu, particularly of the Hema.”

Although the report does identify any particular concession or concession owner, it indicates a general intent on the part of Lendu leaders to take back concession lands that, in their minds, belong to the Lendu tribe, which originally inhabited Walendu Pitsi.

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19 “Le caractère tribal de l’Association est à la base de projets de ses membres à s’exprorier les concessions et champs de non LENDU, particulièrement des HEMA” (SNIP 1995).
The incident at Leyna is often incorrectly described as being symbolic of the greed of Hema concessionaires who tried to illegally seize land from Lendu villagers. For example, Gérard Prunier states:

But soon [after Uganda came into Ituri in 1998] the rich Wahema got greedier. Since their cattle ranches and coffee plantations were growing, they needed more land. So they started to illegally appropriate land belonging to the socially inferior Walendu…Then in April 1999 the rich Muhema trader and farmer Singa Kodjo decided to “acquire” a large plot and hired a number of UPDF soldiers to act as his bodyguards. Local Walendu protested and a “reconciliation” meeting was called in the small town of Kpandroma on 19 June. Since Singa Kodjo showed that he had no intention of relinquishing his ill-acquired land, the meeting soon degenerated into an armed confrontation during which a number of Walendu were murdered (Prunier 2008, 186).

Prunier’s account is notable not only for its simplistic presentation of a battle between good and evil, but also because it is factually inaccurate. As I have just demonstrated, it does not appear that Singa Kodjo tried to illegally expand his concession. In addition, I found no evidence of any reconciliation meeting on 19 June that degenerated into a Hema-induced bloodbath of Lendu. As I describe below, 19 June was the date of a Lendu attack on Linga, far to the south of Kpandroma.
Prunier’s flawed account does raise the issue of Hema businessmen expanding their concessions into Lendu villages and farms. During my research, I heard many stories about this—from both Hema and Lendu individuals—but was unable to obtain corroborating evidence. Some Hema businessmen reportedly manipulated and/or bribed government officials to acquire certificates of registration entitling them to land from surrounding villages. Other Hema businessmen reportedly bribed local chiefs to obtain land, who did not report the transfer to local villagers. The extent to which Hema businessmen expanded their concessions through illegal acts or bribes is unclear; however, this does not appear to apply to Singa Kodjo.

The Yoza letter

The second event prior to the outbreak of war took place in early May 1999 at the village of Yoza. Yoza is a small village on the top of a small hill, in the savanna to the west of the Blue Mountains. The residents of Yoza raised cattle in the fields around their village, and used a pen on a hill called Ikani, adjacent to Singa Kodjo’s concession at Tsa, to gather their herds. To the east of Yoza, on the ridge of the mountains, there are several Lendu villages including Mokpa and Bangosa.

A letter dated 8 May 1999 preceded the attack on Yoza. The letter, from the village chiefs of Mokpa and Bangosa to the chief of Yoza, reads in its entirety:

Today, just today, you and your people get time to vacate and leave the village where you are staying. He bought hills there let him prepare the map. Those who have cows, goats and sheep must take [them] and leave our hills up to Ikani. Friday is your last day. If not done like this, after it will be done the way you are hearing. There is food there. Vacate and leave the place completely.20

On the following Friday, 15 May 1999, some armed Lendu men reportedly attacked Yoza and chased away its inhabitants. Lendu people then reportedly moved their own livestock into the area vacated by the Hema.

The Yoza letter is controversial. Many Hema invoke the letter as proof that the Lendu started the conflict in order to force Hema to leave Walendu Pitsi. Hema further state the attack on a Hema village shows that the Lendu were not angry about the expansion of concessions, as the Lendu allege, but simply executing a genocidal plan against Hema. For their part, Lendu claim a prominent Hema politician wrote the letter in order to frame the Lendu and justify arresting Lendu leaders. I was not able to verify the authenticity of the letter or the precise sequence of events that led to the taking of Yoza. The letter may be real, or it is a fake, but each side invokes the letter as proof of the other side’s violent intentions. The Yoza letter has become part of the history of the war.

Incident at Ugwaro

The third major incident took place at the Ugwaro concession, owned by Ugwaro Kukwaro. The Ugwaro concession is approximately 10km south of Libi, to the east of the Fataki-Libi road. As with the story of the incident at Leyna, there are divergent views about what happened at Ugwaro (discussed below), but general agreement on some basic facts. Ugwaro had cattle on his concession that strayed off the concession on numerous occasions and trampled crops in the farms of neighboring Lendu villages. In addition there were disputes over the exact boundaries of the Ugwaro concession, and Ugwaro may have extended the boundaries over time through illegal means. The District Commissioner of Ituri had sent a delegation to investigate the disputes between local
Lendu villagers and Ugwaro, but no final decision was taken before the attack on Ugwaro and his concession.

The attack took place on 28 May 2009. A group of Lendu from surrounding villages converged on the concession and attacked Ugwaro. One of Ugwaro’s workers shot a gun into the air, which dispersed the attackers. Ugwaro was taken to the hospital in Fataki but he later died. The Lendu also took over Ugwaro’s concession at that time (and continue to control it today).

In addition to the general story, Hema and Lendu add additional claims. Some Hema state that Ugwaro allowed some Lendu to farm within his concession, but that the Lendu were also digging holes to look for gold. Some of Ugwaro’s cows allegedly fell into the holes and were injured or killed. Some Hema also state that Ugwaro may have also illegally expanded his land by purchasing land from local chiefs, who pocketed the money and did not inform local villages of the concession’s expansion. The Lendu version of the story also adds additional information. Some Lendu claim Ugwaro had been slowly expanding his concession over years, through illegal means, and taking over local Lendu village lands. Some Lendu also assert the courts and government had sided with Ugwaro, and with no legal recourse available to them, the Lendu attacked Ugwaro.

Regardless of the exact cause, the incident at Ugwaro was significant for two reasons. First, Ugwaro’s murder and the Lendu occupation of his concession frightened other Hema concessionaires and led them to politically pressure and financially entice the UPDF to respond. Second, the incident at the Ugwaro concession prompted the UPDF to arrest several dozen Lendu leaders and to take them to Bunia.

**Arrests of Lendu leaders**

The fourth event took place one day after the attack at the Ugwaro concession. On 29 May 1999, some Hema businessmen reportedly paid Capt. Kyakabale, the UPDF sector commander, the sum of $12,000 to dispatch UPDF soldiers to Hema concessions in Walendu Pitsi and arrest prominent Lendu leaders Walendu Pitsi (UNSC 2004a, § 19), including the Chef de Collectivité Longbe Tchabi Linga. Those arrested included several leaders of the Lendu group LORI. 21 They were taken first to Fataki, and then to Bunia, where they arrived on the morning of 30 May. They were kept for two weeks at the Bunia airport, in a container within an area used by the Ugandan army as a base. The Lendu leaders were reportedly beaten and tortured by Ugandan officers and, in one case, a Hema leader.

On or about 13 June, the RCD-ML authorities moved the Lendu leaders to the main prison at Bunia to facilitate the start of legal proceedings against them at the district court. The authorities charged the Lendu leaders with inciting violence in Walendu Pitsi; however, the trial lasted only a few days. The escalation of violence in Walendu Pitsi over the weekend of 18-20 June led the district authorities to release the Lendu leaders on 22 June in exchange for their help in quelling the escalating violence in Walendu Pitsi.

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21 In addition to Longbe, those arrested included Headmaster of the Libi Institute Ndjango Gokpa Salim, and a teacher at Libi Institute and President of Collectivity Council Ngbadhego Gobba Ferdinand.
The War Begins

Linga and Jiba

In Ituri, locals identify the start of the war as beginning during the weekend of 18-20 June 1999. That weekend, armed groups attacked the predominantly-Lendu villages of Linga and Jiba, in the Collectivité of Bahema Nord. As with the other incidents, there are different accounts from Hema and Lendu. These differences are significant. The Lendu say the Hema attacked these villages, but the Hema say it was the Lendu who were the aggressors. After briefly describing each side’s story, I will provide my own assessment.

The Lendu assert that on 18 June 1999, Ugandan authorities and Hema militia arrived in Mokpa to arrest the chief of Mokpa, who allegedly wrote the aforementioned letter to the chief of Yoza. They state that on or about 18 June, some Lendu burned down the village of Sokpa, near Mokpa, which prompted the UPDF to arrest a Lendu elder from Linga and take him to Singa Kodjo’s concession at Tsa, where the UPDF was camped. The arrest prompted a clash on 18 June between the UPDF and villagers from Linga. The following day, 19 June, two groups of UPDF soldiers and Hema militias converged on Linga, a Lendu village on the ridgeline south of Mokpa. The UPDF and Hema militias attacked the market at Linga, as well as the village of Dhendo. The following day, 20 June, the UPDF/Hema force attacked the village of Jiba. On 21 June, the UPDF/Hema attacked Blukwa.

The Hema narrative asserts the Lendu were the aggressors in a series of attacks. First, around 18 June, the Lendu attacked a Hema village near Linga. On 19 June the Lendu attacked the market at Linga, searching for Hema. This prompted some Hema to flee west towards Fataki, while others fled south towards Jiba, where there is a Catholic parish that was then run by Hema priests. The Lendu attacked in the evening of the 20th at the market center of Jiba, searching for and attacking only Hema. This attack prompted many Hema and Lendu to seek shelter at the Catholic parish. At the request of the Catholic priests, the UPDF stationed three soldiers to guard the parish, but two weeks later (on or around 4 July), the UPDF withdrew the soldiers. At this point the priests told the people they could no longer guarantee their safety. The Hema at the parish then fled—along with the priests—to Fataki, while the Lendu remained at the parish. The priests left a local Lendu man in charge of the parish, although the priests returned to Jiba every Sunday after they left to say mass.

These two accounts have significant differences, but based on dozens of interviews with both Lendu and Hema, I believe the Hema account is more accurate. Specifically, the Hema accounts were more detailed and compelling than the Lendu narratives. Based on my assessment of the available evidence, I believe Lendu militias attacked both Linga (19 June) and Jiba (20 June), where they sought out and attacked Hema who were living in or

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22 According to this narrative, one group came from Tsa and the other from the village of Rule.
23 The UPDF/Hema force reportedly killed eight people at Dhendo.
24 This may be Sokpa, which the Lendu acknowledge attacking and burning prior just prior to the date Linga was attacked.
visiting those Lendu villages. One report supports my assessment, stating the attacks on Linga and Jiba killed 200 people, the majority of whom were Hema (ASADHO 1999).


Two other significant events happened around time of the attacks on Linga and Jiba. First, on 18 June 1999, the Ugandan general in charge of northeast Congo authorized the creation of a new province of Kibali-Ituri, which combined the districts of Ituri and Haut-Uélé (ICJ 2005a, § 175). Just as the Belgian colonial authorities created the province of Kibali-Ituri in 1928 in order more effectively administer the region to support gold production in the Kilo and Moto goldfields, Kazini’s declaration was intended to enable his Hema allies to more effectively administer the region to support the financial interests of both Hema elites and Ugandan army officers. Kazini reportedly acted without consulting Wamba dia Wamba, then head of the RCD-ML (HRW 2001, 21).

General Kazini’s decree creating Kibali-Ituri also named Madame Adèle Lotsove Mugisa, a Hema politician, as governor of the new province (ASADHO 1999). Lotsove joined Hema politician John Tibasima in the RCD-ML hierarchy; Tibasima was also a former managing director of the Kilo-Moto gold mining company (Mayombo 2001). Lotsove and other Hema had sought the creation of the new province, and Lotsove had personally sought the position of Governor (HRW 2001, 21). The fact that Kazini both created the new province and appointed its governor indicated the UPDF and not RCD-ML was the supreme political and military power in northeast Congo. The appointment
of Lotsove, a Hema, to be the new governor of a new province further alienated the Lendu community at the exact moment the fighting between Lendu and the UPDF was escalating.

The second event took place on 22 June, when the authorities in Bunia released the Lendu leaders who had been under arrest since 29 May. The arrested leaders report that during their incarceration, they asked in vain for the Ituri district to undertake a survey of all concession lands. The Lendu leaders also report that the authorities in Bunia released them on the condition they try to calm the situation and end the violence in Walendu Pitsi. After their release the Lendu leaders returned to Walendu Pitsi and report they saw extensive destruction caused by the UPDF and Hema militias.

During July, the conflict increased in intensity and spread geographically. At the beginning of July, the UPDF commander of forces in Ituri, Capt. Kyakabale, dispatched a unit of soldiers from Bunia to Walendu Pitsi (ASADHO 1999). Some UPDF soldiers guarded Hema property and villages, while others battled irregular Lendu forces, which were armed mainly with machetes and bows and arrows. The UPDF killed many Lendu during these battles, and burned down many Lendu villages. The Lendu also attacked Hema concessions and Hema people in Walendu Pitsi. The UPDF responded to the Lendu attacks by brutally repressing the Lendu and burning many villages, which escalated the violence rather than ending it. Also during July, the conflict spread from Walendu Pitsi and Bahema Nord to the north and south. Lendu combatants attacked Alur villages to the north of Walendu Pitsi in Mahagi Territory; Alur youth responded by attacking Lendu villages in northern Walendu Pitsi (ASADHO 1999). The war also spread to the south, towards Fataki, and into Walendu Djatsi territory.

**Peace talks**

While the violence escalated during July, there were tentative steps towards peace talks. On 5 July, Governor Lotsove held a public meeting in Bunia, where she called upon Chief Longbe to bring peace to Walendu Pitsi (ASADHO 1999). Lotsove’s action, which ignored the role of the UPDF in causing violence, clearly demonstrated her partiality.

By mid-July, plans were underway for peace talks in Bunia, but the situation was becoming more polarized. On 20 July, the head of LORI in Bunia wrote to Lendu leaders at Kpandroma, recommending conditions for peace negotiations. Among those conditions were the unconditional departure of all Hema from parishes, government, and concessions in areas the Lendu considered their territory. This hard-line approach is consistent with the aforementioned 1995 intelligence report, which stated LORI leaders planned to seize Hema concessions in Walendu Pitsi.

Governor Lotsove convened peace negotiations from 29 July to 4 August at Nyakasanza, in Bunia. These negotiations produced a protocol for the cessation of hostilities, and led

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25 During July, battles took place in most parts of Walendu Pitsi, including the Groupements of Dz’na, Tsunde, Mibrebu, Laudjo, Ladedjo, Dhera, Bubu, Zabu, Utchondi, Dhendo-Petro, and Linga.
26 Letter from President of LORI, 20 July 1999.
to Governor Lotsove’s creation, in August, of a “Committee of Pacification and Follow-Up” (HRW 2001, 21). Unfortunately, an incident at Fataki blunted the effect of the Bunia talks.

**Incident at Fataki**

On 7 August 1999, a UPDF soldier reportedly shot two young Hema men at Fataki.\(^{27}\) The soldier was part of a UPDF escort taking Lendu leaders from the negotiations in Bunia back to Walendu Pitsi. As the convoy approached Fataki, it stopped to confront two young men who were reportedly armed with nail-studded clubs. One of the UPDF soldiers shot the two young men, killing one and wounding the other.

Word of this incident quickly spread in Fataki, but many Hema believed the Lendu leaders had shot the young Hema men. An angry mob formed in Fataki and a group of Hema reportedly drove north to set up an ambush for the convoy. This prompted the UPDF commander at Fataki, a man named Juma, to keep the Lendu leaders overnight in Fataki at a hotel the UPDF used as its base (Photo 8). The next morning, 8 August, the UPDF re-arrested nine Lendu leaders, including Chef de Walendu Pitsi Longbe, and took them back to Bunia.\(^{28}\) The re-arrests of Lendu leaders angered the Lendu community and effectively scuttled any hope of peace in the short-run.

![Photo 8. Hotel in Fataki formerly used as a UPDF base.](image)

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\(^{27}\) This section is based on interviews during June 1999 in Bunia and Kpandroma.

\(^{28}\) ASADHO (1999) says this incident and the arrests happened on 20 July.
Escalation

During the late summer and fall of 1999, the conflict in Ituri intensified. The UPDF and Hema militias attacked dozens of Lendu villages, and Lendu militias attacked dozens of Hema villages (HRW 2001, 22). The fighting was characterized by massacres, burning of villages, looting, and massive population displacements (see e.g. Ilengo 1999; Anonymous 2000).

The fighting mainly pitted localized irregular Lendu forces with *arme blanche*\(^{29}\) against UPDF, APC soldiers, and Hema militias armed with automatic rifles and other modern weaponry. As noted above, Hema businessmen had paid the UPDF Sector Commander, Capt. Kyakabale, to protect concessions and Hema villages. The Committee of Pacification and Follow-Up appointed by Governor Lotsove issued a report in September 1999 that described how UPDF soldiers under the command of Capt. Kyakabale attacked Lendu villages and killed civilians (HRW 2001, 21-22); however, not all UPDF soldiers were attacking the Lendu.

Lendu leaders reached out to UPDF Col. Peter Kerim, who was stationed in Paidha, Uganda just across the border from Mahagi, DRC. Kerim, like Kyakabale and other UPDF officers, used his position to acquire personal wealth. Despite having been implicated in a smuggling scandal in 1996 during the first Congo war (Mayombo 2001), at the start of the second Congo war the UPDF assigned Kerim to the Uganda-Ituri border to liaise with local Congolese chiefs and prevent conflict from spreading into Uganda (Kerim 2001). By early 1999, Kerim was reportedly engaged in illegal business activities at the Uganda-DRC border (Uganda 2002, 20).

The Lendu leaders contacted Col. Kerim to communicate their frustration with the UPDF leadership in Bunia, which they viewed as favoring the Hema in the escalating conflict. In September 1999, Lendu leaders asked Kerim to prevent the rotation of some UPDF units stationed at Dhebu, Linga, and Kpandroma, which were actually protecting the Lendu population from other UPDF units. Around this time, one UPDF unit sympathetic to the Lendu traveled south from the Ugandan border and reportedly exchanged fire with another UPDF unit sympathetic to the Hema,\(^{30}\) suggesting the conflictingly loyalties and allegiances within the UPDF units stationed in Ituri.

During the late summer and/or fall of 1999, Kerim reportedly trained up to 1,000 Lendu combatants (HRW 2001, 23; UNSC 2001a, § 180). In his testimony to the Porter Commission, Kerim flatly denied training any Lendu militias (Kerim 2001), but as noted above, the Porter Commission found Kerim’s testimony to lack credibility. Assuming the widespread reports of Kerim’s assistance to the Lendu are true, part of his motivation may have been financial. In addition to profiting from cross-border trade, Kerim may have obtained funds from the sale of coffee (HRW 2001, 23), which was grown on concessions in Walendu Pitsi including the Leyna concession.

\(^{29}\) That is, bows and arrows, spears, machetes, and homemade weapons.

\(^{30}\) Interviews with Lendu leaders in June 2009 in Kpandroma place this clash as taking place 14 July 1999 at Dyamo, near Dhebu, but Human Rights Watch (2001, 23) reports this clash took place in September 1999.
By late fall, the Ugandan government and UPDF leadership in Kampala were becoming increasingly concerned about the conduct of the UPDF in Ituri. In early December, Ugandan President Museveni invited Governor Lotsove and a delegation of Hema, Lendu, and Alur leaders to Kampala to discuss the conflict (HRW 2001, 24; cf. Anonymous 2000). This meeting coincided with the release of a report from the RCD-ML-appointed “Committee for Security and Peace in the Djugu Zone,” headed by Jacques Depelchin. This committee reported the UPDF had troops stationed on Hema concessions, found the UPDF also criticized the UPDF and recommended the UPDF replace its units in Djugu Territory (HRW 2001, 22).

Shortly after the meeting in Kampala on Ituri, on 17 December 1999 Col. Kerim wrote to President Museveni to complain “about the behaviour of UPDF [in Ituri] – some individuals – not UPDF generally” (Kerim 2001). Specifically, Kerim reported dissatisfaction among some Ituri people about “interference in administration by appointing the local leadership there by us – by the UPDF” (Kerim 2001). Kerim stated that Governor Lotsove and some UPDF officers were using UPDF soldiers to “kill and evict [the] civilian population” (Kerim 2001); this apparently refers to UPDF attacks on the Lendu population.

As a result of the December meeting in Kampala, and perhaps Kerim’s letter, the UPDF deployed fresh troops to Ituri and in December 1999 replaced Capt. Kyabakale in Bunia with a new sector commander, Lt. Col. Joseph Arocha (HRW 2001, 24). Arocha was reportedly well received in Ituri in the months after his transfer, in contrast to the clearly pro-Hema reputation of Kyakable (HRW 2001, 24). In early January 2000, Arocha spoke to Lendu communities at Pimbo and encouraged rebels in the surrounding hills to lay down their weapons (bows and arrows, machetes, clubs); they failed to do so and several days later the UPDF attacked a Lendu stronghold called D’ye, killing twenty-seven people and wounding many others (Anonymous 2000). Arocha became controversial, however, when he reportedly continued the UPDF training of Hema militias in Ituri (UNSC 2001a, § 180), and ignored requests from RCD-ML to investigate UPDF misconduct (HRW 2001, 24). Partly in response to complaints about Arocha from RCD-ML leader Wamba dia Wamba, in April 2000 the UPDF replaced Arocha with Col. Charles Angina.31

While the UPDF shuffled the military command, the head of the RCD-ML changed the political leadership in Ituri. In December 1999, Wamba dia Wamba removed Lotsove from her position and appointed a new Governor, Uringi Padolo, who was an Alur from northern Ituri. This helped to calm the situation, since Lotsove was widely perceived to be promoting Hema interests and tolerating violence against Lendu. It also served to make Wamba and RCD-ML appear as the true political authorities in Ituri, given that UPDF Gen. Kazini had appointed Lotsove.

31 Angina was replaced in November 2000. A UN report noted: “Only Charles Angina and Kale Kayura left [Ituri] without serious allegations being levied against them” (UNSC 2004a, § 27).
The situation remained volatile in early 2000. In February 2000, the UPDF command took steps to reconcile the Hema and Lendu communities. By a letter of 26 February, UPDF Chief of Staff James Kazini appointed Peter Kerim to liaise with John Tibasiima of RCD-ML. The UPDF command chose Kerim because of his close relationship with the Lendu, whereas Tibasiima was a Hema leader. Kerim reported he turned down this appointment because the situation had deteriorated too far, and because he was concerned about being placed under rebel (RCD-ML) authority (Kerim 2001).

Within RCD-ML, a power struggle was brewing between militant leaders like John Tibasima and Mbusa Nyamwisi, and political leaders like Wamba dia Wamba. During early 2000, Tibasima started recruiting Hema youth and Nyamwisi recruited Nande youth for the Armée Populaire Congolaise (APC), the military wing of the RCD-ML (HRW 2001, 12), in a move designed to consolidate their power. In Ituri, the APC consisted of mostly Hema soldiers, which further alienated the Lendu community (HRW 2001, 24-26). Tibasima and Nyamwisi were also heavily involved in economic activities with the UPDF, including the exploitation of natural resources (UNSC 2001a, § 87-89). During 2000, the real power in Ituri—President Museveni of Uganda—brought the leadership of RCD-ML together in Uganda three times to prevent a split (HRW 2001, 10), but while Wamba remained nominally in charge, power shifted towards Nyamwisi and Tibasima (de Villers et al 2001, 87-90).

Between June 1999 and early 2000, the conflict in Ituri killed an estimated 7,000 people and displaced 150,000 more (HRW 2001, 5; cf. IRIN 2000). Attacks by the various parties to the conflict resulted in the destruction of many villages, schools, medical centers, and churches; Walendu Pitsi was particularly hard hit (Londoni 2000), but by early 2000 the conflict had spread south to other territories in Ituri. As I will discuss in a later chapter, the war picked up in intensity in 2002 and 2003, and by 2007, had killed approximately 60,000 people.

CONCLUSION

The war in Ituri was not just about land, or ethnicity, or power. The conflict in Ituri started as a result of specific actions and events that took place during a time of war in a region occupied by a foreign military power. The foreign military power, Uganda, appears to have been more interested in facilitating the economic interests of its officers and regime insiders than in properly governing Ituri (and other occupied areas). As a result, the Ugandan army badly mismanaged the problems in early 1999 in Walendu Pitsi and significantly contributed to the escalation of hostilities. The war in Ituri was the product of historically rooted power struggles between the Lendu and Hema communities that intersected with contemporary Ugandan hegemonic and economic aspirations. What should have been manageable disputes in an area with a functioning political system instead became a brutal war.

The explanations of the war listed in Table 13 (p. 140) at the beginning of the chapter are significant for three reasons. First, virtually all of the ultimate and proximate causes

32 Interview in Kinshasa, March 2007; also see The Monitor 2000.
appear to have contributed, each in its own small way, to conditions that led to the outbreak and rapid escalation of war in June 1999. This highlights the importance of understanding historical processes and analyzing how these processes interact with contemporary events to enable conflict to escalate to violence and war.

Second, several of the causes listed in Table 13 could be categorized as perceptions or misperceptions, rather than verifiable facts. In this respect, Jervis’ (1988, 101) observations on interstate war are relevant to understanding war in Ituri:

Although war can occur even when both sides see each other accurately, misperception often plays a large role. Particularly interesting are judgments and misjudgments of another state’s intentions. Both overestimates and underestimates of hostility have led to war in the past.

In the case of war in Ituri, perceptions of Lendu inferiority and belligerence, as well as impressions of Hema superiority and greed, informed the decision making of Lendu and Hema elites, and contributed to the onset and escalation of violence.

Third, the causes identified in Table 13 highlight the importance of multi-level analysis in understanding the causes of war. The causes include processes, perceptions, and actions by individuals, social groups, the government in Congo, and external actors such as the Ugandan government. This chapter has shown how historical and contemporary processes and the interaction of a variety of local, national, and international actors combined to produce the outcome of war.

Of the five theories about the start of the war described at the start of this chapter, all are incomplete. The “Hema greed-Lendu victim” theory correctly identifies part of the problem in Ituri during early 1999. The available evidence indicates some Hema concession owners were illegally or unethically expanding their concessions into neighboring Lendu lands, but this does not appear to apply to Singa Kodjo, who is widely identified as being one of the primary instigators of the war. Numerous sources identify the Savo family as being involved in lawsuits related to illegal expansions of land, yet the initial violence started not at the Savo concessions but at those of Singa Kodjo and Ugwaro. The available evidence suggests Singa Kodjo was not trying to expand his concession but simply to manage its use by local Lendu villagers, while Ugwaro may have illegally expanded his concession and allowed his cattle to trample the crops of local Lendu villagers. There is nothing to suggest a more widespread conspiracy of Hema concession owners and illegal land appropriations. Once the violence started, some Hema concession owners—including Singa Kodjo—paid the Ugandan army to protect their plantations and some Hema villages, but this was an effect of the start of violence, not its cause.

The “Lendu greed-Hema victim” theory also contains shortcomings. The evidence indicates some Lendu leaders involved with the group LORI planned as early as 1995 to

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33 The only exception would be “Government of DRC encourages Lendu to act.” This claim, made by a Hema academic during an interview in June 2009 in Bunia, could not be verified.
34 Interviews with Hema and Lendu peasants, academics, and church officials in Ituri, May and June 2009; cf. ASADHO 1999; Prunier 2008a, 41.
seize Hema concessions in Walendu Pitsi. Indeed, Lendu leaders are not shy about asserting their right to lands including Hema concessions that they consider to be part of their historical territory. Although Lendu leaders may have dreamed of seizing land in Walendu Pitsi, there does not appear to have been a coordinated conspiracy in place during early 1999 to make this dream a reality. At Leyna, confusion among local Lendu villagers (perhaps created by Lendu leaders) about the boundary of the concession contributed to the start of the violence, and the UPDF/Hema response escalated the situation. The incident at Yoza may indicate a conspiracy to seize Hema lands, but this remains unclear. In the case of Ugwaro, it appears local villagers had legitimate grievances against the concession owner. In the context of the dysfunctional political system under UPDF-Hema control, the Lendu (rightly or wrongly) addressed their grievances with violence. Perhaps Lendu leaders in Walendu Pitsi orchestrated the incidents at Leyna, Yoza, and Ugwaro in the hopes that the response would be heavy handed and lead to an uprising of the Lendu population in Walendu Pitsi; there is simply not enough evidence to prove or disprove this hypothesis. Nonetheless, while the “Lendu victim” narrative has been dominant in policy and scholarly theories of the start of the war, there is limited evidence to support “Lendu greed” narrative. It does not appear the war started solely because of the machinations of Lendu elites in Walendu Pitsi, but Lendu leaders had clearly envisioned such a war would start and that Lendu would seize Hema concessions.

The theory attributing the start of the war to greedy Ugandan army officers is unconvincing. If anything, the Ugandan army could be accused of neglect for failing to adequately govern the Ituri district, which it occupied and controlled. Ugandan officers ranging from the general in charge of Ugandan forces in Congo (Kazini) to the captain in charge of Ituri (Kyakabale) had close ties to Hema political and business elites, and used those ties to enrich themselves. The Ugandan occupiers had a strong Hema bias that contributed to the tensions between the Hema and Lendu communities in Walendu Pitsi, but they did not cause those tensions. The heavy handed Ugandan response to the initial acts of violence—including UPDF attacks on Lendu villages and the arrest of Walendu Pitsi’s Lendu leaders—contributed to an escalation of the situation and helped to turn it into a war. Once the fighting started, Ugandan officer Peter Kerim assisted the Lendu, demonstrating both the complex ways in which Ugandan army officers participated in the violence and the competing allegiances within the Ugandan army. In short, the Ugandan army contributed to the onset and escalation of the violence, but is not the main cause of the war.

The theory ascribing the war to “ancient ethnic hatreds” rings hollow. This theory, notably promoted by Ugandan government officials, makes the war in Ituri seem almost inevitable. This theory fails to explain why war started in Walendu Pitsi, given that most prior Hema-Lendu violence took place in Walendu Bindi, in the southern part of the Ituri district. That is, most of the prior Hema-Lendu violence took place in southern Ituri, yet the war started in northern Ituri. While historical animosity and injustice undoubtedly contributed to the war, these sentiments do not appear to have been so deeply entrenched as to make war a fait d’accomplis.
The final theory attributing the war to local and regional struggles for power comes closest to reality, but still has shortcomings. The proponents of this theory, Belgian scholars Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers, correctly identified how local (Iturian) and regional (Ugandan) actors manipulated local struggles for land, political power, and economic influence. This explanation correctly assigns responsibility to Lendu and Hema leaders, as well as Ugandan army officers, but suggests an intentionality that is difficult to see given the available evidence. It is hard to say if the war started more by design than by chance; whether actions were more important than perceptions; and if intention played a larger role than neglect and mismanagement.

There is no one, simple cause of the war in Ituri. Myriad factors were important, including historical memory, politics, identity, perception, financial interests, justice, and governance. It was not just the Lendu or Hema leaders, the Ugandan army officers, or ethnic tensions that caused the war. The start of the war in Ituri was rooted in local histories and triggered by a series of events tied to power struggles among local elites. The context in which the war in Ituri started—the second Congo war, the ADF/NALU war, Ugandan army profiteering, Ugandan creation of a new province headed by a Hema politician, the Lusaka peace talks, and growing Rwanda-Uganda tensions—also affected how a few small incidents in Walendu Pitsi escalated into a major war. Intentionality may be less important for understanding why the war started than poorly designed and violent responses to real and imagined provocations. Moreover, disputes over the commercial and symbolic important of land were tangential to the actual causes of the war (cf. Bobrow-Strain 2001, 180). Overall, the story of the origins of the war in Ituri shows how social histories and political and economic agendas can interact with land disputes and poor governance to produce armed conflict.

This chapter raises several important points with respect to the typology of war, the connections between natural resources and war, and the concept of ethnic war. First, the war in Ituri does not fit neatly into the classifications described in Chapter 2. The “state” party to the conflict was the Ugandan army, which was then occupying and running Ituri. The “non-state” parties were the RCD-ML rebel group, which worked with the Ugandan army, and loosely organized Hema and Lendu militias. The war in Ituri could only be considered a civil war if the meaning of this concept is stretched – as it is by Kalyvas (2006, 17) – to cover situations were non-state actors battle a foreign occupying power and its allied local forces. The fact is we lack the language to talk about this type of war; our concepts have not kept up with the evolution of forms of war. I argue the war in Ituri started as an inter-communal war with international involvement; i.e. a war between Lendu militias and a Hema-RCD-ML alliance, with the Ugandan army playing a central role, mainly on behalf of the Hema-RCD-ML alliance, but also assisting the Lendu militias. The polywar taking place in Congo at this time created the proximate conditions that enabled the war in Ituri to start.

With respect to natural resources and war, this chapter raises two significant issues. First, it is clear that land is a resource that various political and economic actors can contest in ways that contribute to the escalation of conflict into violence and war. This observation is hardly novel (cf. Bobrow-Strain 2001, 159-163, 180-184; Cramer 2006, 217-229), but
highlights the importance of evaluating how land interacts with social tensions and struggles for political and economic power to cause war. Second, it is worth considering how interests in gold affected the onset of violence in Ituri. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Ugandan army and its allies in the RCD-ML rebel group (which included Hema leaders) quickly established networks to exploit Ituri’s gold after the start of the second Congo war in August 1998. Indeed, as I argued in Chapter 5, Ugandan army officers were more interested in profiting from gold and commercial trade in Ituri than in properly governing the district. Thus, the occupying power’s focus on gold contributed to a lack of governance that facilitated the rapid escalation of a few minor incidents into a brutal inter-communal war.

With respect to ethnicity and war, this chapter shows that ethnicity was tangential to political and economic causes of violence in Walendu Pitsi. The story of the war in Ituri shows how political and economic elites may invoke ethnicity and mobilize ethnic identity to get people to commit violence, or to justify violence against another ethnic group (cf. Kaufman 1996; Kaufman 2006; Varshney 2001). In addition, the political system in Ituri during early 1999 functioned in a way that foreclosed the resolution of the problems in Walendu Pitsi through institutional channels. Some Hema businessmen were using the political system to illegally or unethically acquire land, and Lendu villagers had little recourse through official channels such as the courts for redress. Ituri was not in a state of anarchy, but the political system functioned in a way that created structural and perceptual security dilemmas (cf. Posen 1993), which contributed to the onset of war.

This chapter has provided a new explanation of the onset of war in Ituri, but it also makes another contribution that may be less visible to those not well versed in the history of the war in Ituri. While this chapter represents my own production of knowledge on the war in Ituri, I uncovered some significant inaccuracies in the knowledge others have produced on this subject. I have already pointed out some of these errors, such as the apparent mischaracterization of Singa Kodjo and his role in starting the war. Less visible are other errors, such as numerous problems of dates and facts in the UN Security Council report about war in Ituri. For example, the UN report claims:

\[
\text{UPDF carried out its first attacks on the village of Loda, located between Fataki and Libi, in the night of 29 to 30 May 1999, burning it down and burning alive several elderly persons and women locked in their houses. Later, the villages of Lubea, Buba, Giba [Jiba], Linga, Ladejo, Petro and Arr were reportedly all destroyed by UPDF forces under the command of Captain Kyakabale…}(\text{UNSC 2004a, § 19}).
\]

Since I have already outlined the events at the start of the war (above), I will simply point out that the war did not start with UPDF attacks on Loda (which was apparently first attacked by Lendu militias in September 1999\textsuperscript{35}), and the UPDF did not (initially) destroy Jiba or Linga (Lendu militias attacked these villages in June 1999). The UN report also simplistically blames the war on Lendu resistance to Hema expansion of concession lands.

\textsuperscript{35} I made numerous visits to Loda in May and June 2009, which is a government concession (not Hema) where a defunct veterinary school sits. Prior to 1999, people from numerous ethnic groups lived in Loda. When Loda finally was attacked, it was by Lendu militias who stole animals present at the veterinary school; i.e. it was not an attack on a Hema concession, as suggested by the UN report.
(UNSC 2004a, § 4). Prunier, Pottier, and others who apparently did not conduct research in Walendu Pitsi also repeat the mantra that greedy Hema are responsible for the war, while my account suggests a far more complex picture. This chapter thus exposes some of the flawed knowledge about the war in Ituri in both academic and policy literature.

After the Ugandan army withdrew from Ituri in May 2003, the war in Ituri intensified. Local armed groups largely controlled Ituri (Figures 3, 4), and MONUC had only a small presence concentrated in Bunia. Ituri’s armed groups not only fought each other to control territory and key sites of economic importance, but also carried out ethnically targeted-killings, massacres, and rapes. The war also escalated because Rwanda and Uganda acted as spoilers to the peace process by continuing to support Ituri’s armed groups (Kassem 2003).

The polywar changed during late 2003 and into 2004 when new “external” forces arrived in Ituri; namely MONUC’s Ituri Brigade and the Congolese army’s Integrated Brigade. In 2005, MONUC and FARDC started to aggressively attack Ituri’s armed groups. At the same time, MONUC leveraged diplomatic pressure on the Ugandan government to curtail its support of Ituri’s armed groups. MONUC’s actions altered the military and political landscapes in Ituri, leading Uganda to move away from its support of the “gun” to pursue the “butter” of commercial trade with Ituri. MONUC and FARDC also weakened Ituri’s armed groups, leading to shifting alliances and continued conflict, but in the end, the armed group leaders also put aside the “gun” to obtain the “butter” of positions in the Congolese army.

This chapter analyzes how and why an extremely violent and multifaceted conflict can shift into a fragile post-conflict phase. This chapter further contributes to my argument about the typology of war by analyzing the progression of the numerous conflicts taking place in Ituri during this period. It also assesses how robust military action by the United Nations mission combined with its sustained political engagement with local groups and the Ugandan government contributed to the end of the war. I argue Uganda played a major role in sustaining conflict in Ituri, and only altered its policy of support for Ituri’s armed groups when UN operations succeeded and it became clear peace would be better than war for Uganda’s commercial interests in Ituri. This chapter also supports assessment of the “resource curse” by describing not only how the interests of Ituri’s armed groups and Ugandan businessmen and military officers in Ituri’s gold helped to prolong the conflict, but also how Ugandan interests in Ituri’s commercial markets helped to contribute to Uganda’s shift in emphasis away from supporting the “gun” and towards pursuing the “butter” of economic interests in Ituri and northeastern Congo.
Figure 3. Geographic Distribution of Ituri Non-State Armed Groups, March 2005.

APC – Congolese Popular Army, armed wing of the RCD-ML (Armée Populaire Congolaise); FAPC – Armed Forces of the Congolese People (Forces armées du peuple congolais); FNI – Nationalist and Integrationist Front (Front Nationaliste Intégrationniste); FPDC – Popular Force for Democracy in Congo (Force Populaire pour la Démocratie du Congo); Koliba Faction – a faction of FNI headed by a man named Koliba; FRPI – Forces of Patriotic Resistance of Ituri (Forces de Résistance Patriotique d’Ituri); PUSIC – Party for the Unity and Protection of the Integrity of Congo (Parti pour l’unite et la sauvegarde de l’integrite du Congo); UPC/L - Union of Patriotic Congolese (Union des patriotes congolais) – Lubanga faction

Source: MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2005, 7.
POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS
On 6 May 2003, Uganda finally withdrew from Bunia, marking the start of a new phase of the war in northeastern Congo (UNSC 2003d, § 3; UNSC 2004a, § 77-87).¹ For the preceding four years, the Ugandan army (UPDF) had not only incited ethnic conflict in Ituri, but also created and equipped several armed groups. The UPDF was a great source of instability in Ituri, but it also exerted some control over the Congolese groups with which it engaged in military operations and business enterprises; Uganda had been playing the role of both arsonist and fireman (HRW 2003, 4). The new war that took shape as the UPDF was pulling out of Ituri involved various Congolese armed groups supported by Uganda or Rwanda that fought each other, a European Union force (IEMF), and newly deployed MONUC troops.

¹ The last Ugandan troops reportedly re-entered Uganda from Congo on 19 May 2003 (Mpagi 2003), although a UN Security Council report states some UPDF soldiers were in Tchomia on 31 May, when it was attacked by Lendu militants (UNSC 2004a, § 86). On 22 May, a platoon of UPDF soldiers also reportedly crossed the border from Arua, Uganda to Aru in Ituri to prevent a coup attempt against Commander Jerome of FAPC (UNSC 2004a, § 136-137).
To address the surge in violence in Ituri after the withdrawal of the UPDF, on 30 May the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of a European Union-led Interim Emergency Multinational Force (IEMF) (UNSC 2003b). This deployment, known as Operation Artemis, consisted of just over 1,000 troops at its peak, mainly from France, who deployed to Congo in early June, plus another 500 support troops at Entebbe, Uganda (UNSC 2003d, § 6). The IEMF aggressively took control of Bunia, secured the Bunia airport, and created a weapons-free zone in Bunia town.

Operation Artemis paved the way for the deployment of the MONUC Ituri Brigade, which the Security Council authorized on 28 July 2003 (UNSC 2003c). The Ituri Brigade, which had a Chapter VII mandate, started to deploy in mid-August and formally took over from the IEMF on 1 September. Its initial efforts focused on the military and political stabilization of Ituri, but the nine armed groups then active in Ituri did not initially cooperate with either MONUC or the Ituri Interim Administration established by the Ituri Pacification Commission (UNSC 2003d, § 7, 12; UNSC 2004, §26-27).

Ituri’s armed groups remained active during 2003, despite the deployment of MONUC’s Ituri Brigade. In May 2003, five of Ituri’s armed groups signed an agreement in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, that established a plan for the groups to disarm and created a consultation group of the armed groups to facilitate interaction with the Transitional Government and MONUC. In August 2003, President Kabila and the Transitional Government held a meeting of the consultation group in Kinshasa, at which time they told the representatives of Ituri’s armed groups that they must garrison their troops; however, the groups failed to meet a late October deadline to provide information on troop levels and locations (MONUC 2003d, § 12).

2 Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland also provided troops.
3 Interviews with former rebel soldiers, Catholic Church officials, and academics in Bunia, November 2007.
4 During April and May 2003, MONUC had deployed approximately 720 Uruguayan soldiers to Bunia, but they had a limited Chapter VI mandate and limited duties; thus they did not intervene in the violence that followed the withdrawal of the UPDF (UNSC 2003a, § 14).
5 Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter empowers the UN Security Council to authorize military action “by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to main or restore international peace and security” (Article 42).
6 The Ituri-based armed groups were: UPC, PUSIC, FPDC, FAPC, FNI, and FRPI. Regional (Congolese) groups present in Ituri included MLC, RCD-ML, and RCD-N.
7 This process started in February 2003 with a meeting in Dar es Salaam attended by Presidents Kabila and Museveni, as well as UPC leader Thomas Lubanga. At this meeting, “the Foreign Ministers of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo signed an amendment to the Luanda Accord, allowing for a new timetable for the work of the envisioned Ituri Pacification Commission” (UNSC 2003, § 13). The preparatory work that followed culminated in May 2003, when five of Ituri’s armed groups (UPC, PUSIC, FAPC, FNI, FRPI) signed the Dar es Salaam agreement, which called for the demilitarization of Ituri (UNDP 2007, 6). The consultation of armed groups was formally called Comité de concertation des groupes armés.
The departure of the UPDF and the initial ineffectiveness of the MONUC forces left a power vacuum in Ituri that enabled various armed groups to exact revenge or pursue political and economic agendas. A UN Security Council report (2004a, § 95) noted:

Both Hema and Lendu combatants attacked territories belonging to other ethnic communities for different reasons: in some cases to punish them for having hosted enemy combatants, in others, because they took one side or the other in the conflict. Some towns, such as Mongbwalu, Mahagi and Aru, were attacked for control of their natural or financial resources. Regardless of the reasons for the attack, both Lendu and Hema militia parties committed similar types of exactions: mass killing of civilians, destruction of social infrastructures, looting of goods, abduction of women for sexual slavery and forced labour.

The fighting that took place between May and December 2003 in Ituri killed hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands more (UNSC 2004a, § 41, 77-94, 104, 114-117, 131-132).

The persistence of violence in Ituri highlighted the need for a process to disarm the militias. On 20 January 2004, the Congolese Transitional Government and partners including UNDP and UNICEF adopted a Disarmament and Community Reinsertion (DCR) plan for Ituri’s armed groups (UNDP 2007, 6; UNSC 2004, § 26). The DCR plan called for five disarmament centers in Ituri (at Aveba, Kasenyi, Nizi, Kpandroma, and Mahagi; see Figure 5);8 a sixth was later added at Bunia. At these sites, ex-combatants would have the choice of entering the national army (FARDC) or being assisted with reinsertion into their communities (Figure 6).

Several problems delayed the start of the DCR process, thereby prolonging the war. As discussed further below, the Ituri district remained insecure, largely under the control of the various rebel groups, which fought each other and MONUC. This insecurity limited the willingness of the rebel groups to disarm, but it also hindered MONUC’s ability to construct the DCR transit sites (MONUC 2004d, 21, 26). The lack of security also hindered the work of MONUC’s engineers to rehabilitate roads leading to the transit sites, particularly at Aveba in Irumu territory (MONUC 2004c, 15). UNDP’s slow bureaucratic process led to delays in planning for the reinsertion process, and contributed to the overall delay in the plan (MONUC 2004d, 21, 26).

The deterioration of security in other parts of Congo also impacted the DCR process by delaying the deployment of MONUC troops to and within Ituri (MONUC 2004d, 21). In June 2004, MONUC redeployed two companies from the Ituri brigade to support MONUC’s forces in Kinshasa and Bukavu. This redeployment out of Ituri delayed MONUC’s deployment of troops in Ituri to the gold mining town of Mongbwalu, and to the key trading town of Aru near the Ugandan border (UNSC 2004b § 30). In addition, the insecurity in Kinshasa and Bukavu delayed deployment of a Moroccan battalion to Ituri (MONUC 2004c, 19).

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8 The DCR process involved arrival at the transit site, registration, billeting in a tent, issuance of supplies (civilian clothes, food, blanket, hygiene kit, and food utensils), sensitization (on war, HIV/AIDS, human rights), issuance of a departure kit (food for one month, domestic kit, production kit, transport allocation and documentation), and movement to the reinsertion community (MONUC 2004c, 11, 12).
Figure 5. Transit Sites for Ituri Disarmament and Community Reintegration, September 2004.
Source: MONUC 2004c, 16.

The situation at Bukavu was particularly difficult and deadly, but led to changes in MONUC that affected the course of events in Ituri. During May and June 2004, renegade FARDC officers Laurent Nkunda and Jules Mutebusi attacked and looted Bukavu (South Kivu) (Reyntjens 2009, 211-212; UNSC 2004b, § 34-46), flouting the authority of MONUC and the Congolese government. The various parties to the fighting in Bukavu committed ethnically targeted killings and rapes, while the MONUC troops (Uruguayans) essentially hid on their base (Prunier 2009, 297-298). Nkunda withdrew his troops from Bukavu on 4 June, but the incident was deeply embarrassing for MONUC, as it demonstrated the inability or unwillingness of its troops to defend the civilian population. This rebellion prompted the UN’s Department of Peace Keeping Operations to re-evaluate MONUC’s overall strategy, including changing its “hearts and minds” approach in the Ituri District to a “more robust approach.”

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9 Interview with former MONUC military commander, May 2008, the Netherlands.
10 Interview with former MONUC military commander, May 2008, the Netherlands; cf. MONUC 2004b.
The changing polywar
During 2004, the military landscape of eastern Congo slowly but perceptively changed. As shown in Figure 7, in mid-2004 there were numerous conflicts taking place in eastern Congo involving state and non-state actors. In some areas, non-state actors battled each other (e.g. Mai Mai v. RCD-Goma), while in other areas the Congolese army was fighting rebel groups (FARDC v. FDLR). In addition, Rwanda and Uganda remained heavily involved in eastern DRC by supporting various armed groups, thus contributing to the perpetuation of the polywar.

In Ituri, MONUC’s deployment of the Ituri Brigade during late 2003 and into 2004 changed the polywar of conflicts. During early and mid 2004, MONUC had a force of approximately 10,900 personnel in Congo,\(^\text{11}\) including approximately 4,600 troops in the Ituri Brigade (MONUC 2004b, 28). By mid-2004, the Ituri Brigade had troops in eight locations,\(^\text{12}\) plus Bunia-based helicopters that enabled it to carry troops and make aerial attacks on armed groups throughout Ituri. As discussed above, in June 2004 MONUC had to redeploy two combat companies from Ituri to address problems in Bukavu and

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\(^{11}\) In July 2004, MONUC’s total force was 10,874. This consisted of 10,184 troops, 551 military observers, and 139 civilian police (MONUC 2004b, 6).

\(^{12}\) These were Bunia, Iga-Barrière, Fataki, Kpandroma, Mahagi, Kasenyi-Tchomia, Marabo and Bogoro (UNSC 2004b, § 30).
Kinshasa, demonstrating that the size of MONUC’s force was inadequate to fulfill its mission and to deal with the polywar of conflicts in eastern Congo. Indeed, MONUC’s force for the size of the country and its population was small in comparison to other UN peacekeeping missions (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Polywar in DRC, June 2004. This MONUC PowerPoint slide shows four major conflicts in eastern DRC. In Ituri, the main conflicts involved five main armed groups and MONUC. Elsewhere in eastern Congo, the RCD/Goma group was engaged in conflicts against various Mai Mai militias, the FDLR rebel group that included Rwandan genocidaires, and the Burundian rebel group FDD. This slide also shows the Congolese army (FARDC) engaged in a conflict with the FDLR. Source: MONUC 2004a, slide 62.

As MONUC extended its presence in Ituri, the military and security situations became more dynamic, signaling shifts in the polywar and creating avenues for conflict resolution efforts. Within the armed groups, divisions formed between hardliners, who wanted to resist disarmament and the transitional political process, and moderates, who wanted to join the DCR process (UNSC 2004b, § 27). For example, in December 2003 there was a split in UPC in which chief of staff Floribert Kisembo and other moderates who supporting disarming formed UPC-K (for Kisembo), while hardliners who resisted MONUC and disarmament remained loyal to UPC’s president Thomas Lubanga and became known as UPC-L (for Lubanga) (MONUC n.d.(e); UNSC 2004, § 24); however,
UPC-L (hereafter called UPC) remained strong while UPC-K essentially ceased to exist during 2004.

Figure 8. UN Peace Keeping Operations comparison, July 2004.
Source: MONUC 2004b, 6.

By early 2004, the deployment of the Ituri brigade, involvement of external actors (Rwanda and Uganda), and delays in the political transition and DRC processes combined to produce “shifting alliances of the armed groups operating in the region, no longer necessarily along ethnic lines” (UNSC 2004, § 24).13 The shift in emphasis away from ethnically motivated attacks is significant, as it points to a change in the agendas of the leadership of the organizations toward maintaining economic interests and positioning themselves politically for negotiations with the government. By August 2004, with the DCR process still delayed, the UN Security Council reported: “While direct clashes along ethnic lines have decreased, the armed groups have nevertheless continued to harass the local population, collect tax revenues, exploit natural resources and engage in arms trafficking” (UNSC 2004b, § 27). The economic agendas of Ituri’s armed groups are discussed further below.

The shifting alliances cut across previously rigid ethnic divides. In 2003, the armed

13 Ethnic attacks continued, such as the 8 July attack by thirty Hema individuals on the Bira population at Lingabu village, southwest of Bunia (MONUC 2004b, 39).
groups fell into one of two general camps. On one side was the predominantly Hema
group UPC, which operated with support from Rwanda and RCD-Goma. On the other
side were the predominantly Lendu groups FNI and FRPI, which worked with former
UPC allies FAPC and PUSIC; this alliance enjoyed the patronage of Uganda (cf. UNSC
2003d, 9, 26; UNSC 2004, § 24). By early 2004, the alliances started to break down.
In mid-2004, the FNI-FAPC alliance ended in part due to competition for control of gold
mines and cross-border trade with Uganda (HRW 2005, 85; UNSC 2004b, § 30; cf.
MONUC 2004b, 39). FNI also stole guns from FAPC, and intercepted gun shipments
from Uganda destined for FAPC (UNSC 2005, § 135-136). In late 2004, FAPC entered
an alliance with UPC (against FNI) (HRW 2005, 96). Yet there were also reports during
2004 that FNI and FRPI carried out joint operations with their former enemies UPC
(UNSC 2004, § 24).

The dynamic nature of the shifting alliances was the result of the existential threats posed
to all the groups by MONUC and FARDC had a unifying effect on Ituri’s armed groups.
The armed groups particularly targeted their common enemy: MONUC. Between
November 2003 and May 2004, various Ituri armed groups carried out dozens of attacks
against MONUC patrols, facilities, and aircraft, killing one Blue Helmet and wounding
at least five others (MONUC 2004b, 33; cf. UNSC 2003d, § 9; UNSC 2004, § 25, 28).
Between 1 September and 15 December 2004, MONUC sustained forty attacks by
various armed groups in Ituri (UNSC 2004c, § 11).

Through most of 2004, MONUC was the de facto government army in Ituri, although it
controlled very little territory outside the towns where its troops were garrisoned. The
Congolese army, FARDC, was active the Kivus, but dormant in Ituri. In June 2004,
Belgian soldiers completed training of a new Integrated Ituri Brigade in Kisangani,
consisting of three battalions and 3,545 troops who had formerly been in the Congolese
army (FAC), RCD-Goma, and MLC (MONUC 2004b, 63, 64). The weakness of
FARDC was apparent, however, in its inability to transport these units to Ituri and
provide them with necessary equipment (cf. UNSC 2004b, § 30; UNSC 2004 § 13). The
units finally deployed in August and September 2004 to Ituri (UNSC 2004c, § 13),
enabling them to help facilitate the DCR process (MONUC 2004d, 17).

With the deployment of the FARDC brigade and additional deployment of MONUC
troops, the DCR process finally started in mid-September 2004. The political basis for
the DRC program was a May 2004 acte d’engagement signed by President Kabila and
representatives of Ituri’s armed groups, which committed the groups to the transitional
process in Ituri and to participating in the DCR plan (UNSC 2004b, § 27). Although
there were an estimated 15,000 troops (including 6,000 child soldiers) in Ituri’s various
armed groups (Figure 9; UNSC 2004b, § 31), only 1,506 people (including 724 male and

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14 FNI did not have a well-integrated command structure, and there were many FNI factions that operated
more or less autonomously. As an example of this, on 4 January, an FNI faction known as the Koliba
group (headed by a man named Koliba) massacred more than 100 people at Gobu, on the shore of Lake
Albert (cf. UNSC 2004, § 28). Most of the victims where Alur from the Mahagi territory in northern Ituri;
Koliba reportedly killed them because he accused the Alur of collaborating with FAPC and UPC, despite
the fact that FNI had been collaborating with FAPC at this time (HRW 2005, 85).

15 That is, a UN soldier.
169 female children) entered the process by mid-December due to hardliner elements that resisted disarmament, particularly in UPC and FAPC (UNSC 2004c, § 12).

![ARMED GROUPS](image)


Source: MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2005, 27.

Shortly after the start of the DCR process to downsize Ituri’s armed groups, MONUC embarked on a process of increasing its force and presence. The planning for this expansion started several months earlier, after the debacle at Bukavu (described above), which was such an embarrassment for MONUC that it nearly terminated the mission.\(^\text{16}\) UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan tasked his military adviser, Dutch General Patrick Cammaert, to develop a new military strategy for MONUC. In August 2004, the Secretary-General proposed Cammaert’s plan, which called for increasing the size and

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\(^{16}\) Interview with former MONUC military official, May 2008, the Netherlands.
scope of MONUC, including adding 13,100 troops and strengthening intelligence capacities (UNSC 2004b, § 65-102, 120). A key aim of this expansion was to enable MONUC to help the Congolese government hold free and fair elections in 2005 (Figure 10; UNSC 2004c, § 29; cf. UNSC 2004b, § 64). The initiation of planning to expand MONUC and to take a more aggressive posture in Ituri was thus carefully considered and planned, in contrast to the assertion made by Reyntjens (2009, 221) that MONUC changed tactics in Ituri only after a February 2005 incident in which MONUC troops were killed.

![Figure 10. MONUC’s Desired End State, March 2005. Dutch Major General Patrick Cammaert, then head of MONUC’s eastern Congo forces, disembarks from a helicopter in this slide from a MONUC briefing that describes MONUC’s desired end state. Source: MONUC Eastern Division HQ, 2005.](image)

On 1 October 2004, the Security Council extended MONUC’s mandate, but authorized fewer than half the number of new troops the Secretary-General had requested. The Security Council authorized only 5,800 new troops,17 which required the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and MONUC to develop a new plan (UNSC 2004c, § 38). The new plan retained MONUC’s pre-existing focus on eastern Congo:

> Ituri and the Kivus continue to be the most insecure areas of the Democratic

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17 This brought the new troop ceiling to 16,700.
Republic of the Congo, while the situation in other areas, such as Katanga, the Kasai, and Kinshasa, remains unpredictable and potentially volatile (UNSC 2004c, § 39).

The key elements of the new plan were to establish a new MONUC military command for eastern Congo, based in Kisangani, and to create a new unit to gather and analyze intelligence (MONUC 2004e; UNSC 2004c, § 38-44). On 7 January 2005, Dutch General Cammaert became the commander of MONUC forces for eastern Congo (UNNS 2005). Cammaert went to eastern Congo to execute the new operational plan he designed, which coupled strong military attacks (coordinated with FARDC) and aggressive negotiations.

MONUC’s “robust approach”
Starting in January 2005, MONUC shifted the balance of power in Ituri in its favor. MONUC increased its footprint and visibility in Ituri on the ground, in the air, and on Lake Albert. MONUC also supported FARDC soldiers, who engaged various armed groups, but unfortunately started to prey on the population of Ituri. The new, robust approach dislocated armed groups from their areas of influence, and pushed thousands of combatants to enter the DCR process. Yet MONUC’s aggression provoked resistance and increasing attacks on UN forces. Deadly attacks on MONUC’s troops produced a strong response from the United Nations, which successfully pressured the Congolese government to arrest key rebel leaders, and to pressure the Ugandan government to reduce its support for some of Ituri’s armed groups.

MONUC’s proactive strategy initially focused on eastern Ituri (Figures 11, 12). In January 2005, MONUC responded to escalating attacks by UPC and FNI militias by dismantling several FNI and UPC camps near Fataki and close to Lake Albert (MONUC 2005a, 8, 10, 12; UNSC 2005a, § 14-15). At the same time, MONUC continued operations against FAPC in Mahagi territory, leading the group to leave Mahagi and concentrate to the northwest, in Aru territory near the Ugandan border (MONUC 2005a, 1, 3, 9; cf. MONUC 2005, 25). MONUC also killed a UPC leader named Major Alex, prompting claims of retaliation against MONUC (MONUC 2005a, 11).

By late February, resistance to MONUC increased, but this in turn led MONUC to increase its pressure on the armed groups. The most deadly attack came on 25 February, when suspected FNI militia carried out a “well-planned and coordinated ambush” at Kafé (80 km north of Bunia) that killed nine MONUC peacekeepers from Bangladesh (UNSC 2005a, § 16). This attack led MONUC – and Secretary-General Kofi Annan – to pressure the Transitional Government in Kinshasa to arrest the hardliner leaders of FNI, UPC, and FRPI (UNSC 2005a, § 17, 72). In response to this pressure, in March the Transitional Government arrested several prominent rebel leaders including Thomas Lubanga (UPC).

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18 The new unit created as a result of Resolution 1565 was called Joint Mission Analysis Cooperation (JMAM).
19 Interview with former MONUC military commander, May 2008, the Netherlands.
20 At the beginning of the year, units of Bangladeshi, Moroccan, Nepalese, Pakistani, and South African soldiers patrolled Ituri’s roads and hills; Bangladeshi MI-17 helicopters ferried these troops; and Indian MI-25 attack helicopters supported troops on the ground. By March, MONUC added Uruguyan sailors and boats on Lake Albert, and later in the year added Guatemalan Special Forces based in Bunia.
and Floribert Njабu (FNI); local authorities in Bunia also arrested Chief Kahwa (PUSIC) (UNSC 2005b, § 30). However, arrested leaders Lubanga and Njабu reportedly encouraged continued resistance in Ituri from their prison cells in Kinshasa (MONUC 2005m, 2).

**Figure 11.** MONUC Campaign Plan, March 2005.
Source: MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2005, 29.
After the February attack on the Bangladeshi peacekeepers, MONUC stepped up its military operations. In early March, MONUC launched Operation Djugu, which targeted FNI camps and troop concentrations in several locations, and killed dozens of militants (MONUC 2005f; UNSC 2005a, § 18). FNI leaders threatened to attack MONUC in response to the Djugu operation, as noted in a MONUC briefing:

The possibility does exist that the FNI could look to launch a reprisal attack against MONUC in reaction to the loss of FNI militia during the DJUGU III operation launched…in LOGO but the possibility also exists that this is a bluff on the side of the FNI. The aim of the bluff would be false propaganda launched in an attempt to intimidate MONUC forces but also to motivate FNI forces (MONUC 2005d, 16).

The increased pressure on FNI exposed its decentralized structure, which limited its ability to resist pressure from MONUC and FARDC. FNI consisted of loosely connected militias who sometimes supported common operations, but other times fought each other
and engaged in banditry such as looting and plunder\textsuperscript{21} (MONUC 2005b, 11; MONUC n.d.(e); MONUC 2005g).

As MONUC’s operations and the DCR process weakened Ituri’s armed groups (cf. MONUC 2005u),\textsuperscript{22} the hardliners within groups reorganized and continued to carry out attacks (cf. MONUC 2005h, 8, 17; MONUC 2005l, 19). On 10 March in Kpandroma, FNI leaders held a meeting of the various FNI factions, who signed an agreement on a range of political and military topics. While most of the positions were intended to unify FNI’s militias so they could more effectively resist MONUC and FARDC, the agreement also included a call for an “investigation about [an] alleged hatred statement made by the Chief of BABU Locality against the Chief of the Collectivity” (MONUC 2005e, 7), which is an indication of the deeply personal and local nature of the violence in Ituri.\textsuperscript{23}

The arrest of key leaders also prompted organizational restructuring. After the March arrest of UPC’s leader Thomas Lubanga, his military chief Bosco Ntaganda took over; Bosco’s new deputy was John Linganga. A MONUC analysis from May 2005 noted: Reportedly, UPC/L has restructured its senior command. The new Bn Cmdr [Battalion Commander] at KATOTO is “Maj” Bonavatir and his deputy is “Capt” John. Mr Jimmy is the deputy Bde Cmdr [Brigade Commander] in LINGO with Mr Innocent as his deputy. All these Cmdr [Commanders] are Rwandans. At IGA BARRIERE the new Cmdr is Mr Ngadja, the younger brother of “Col” Linganga (MONUC 2005g, 7).

The analysis also commented: “This restructuring could be an effort by UPC/L to gear up his recruitment to fill in the gaps left by militiamen opting for DCR. The presence of RWANDANS in UPC/L ranks needs further confirmation” (MONUC 2005g, 7).\textsuperscript{24}

In addition to internally restructuring, Ituri’s armed groups sought to work more closely together. During May, UPC’s leader, Bosco, made efforts to ally with other groups, notably FAPC, FNI, FRPI and PUSIC (MONUC 2005i; MONUC 2005j; MONUC 2005n; MONUC 2005g; MONUC 2005s, § 14, 21, 24, 31, 39, 51, 60). The strange coupling of groups that had bitterly opposed each other, and which had each carried out numerous ethnically-targeted massacres, was a response by hardliner elements to external threats to their power and existence. In May, a MONUC analysis noted that the statement by UPC’s deputy John Linganga demanding “the unconditional release of

\textsuperscript{21} FNI was a loosely organized group in contrast to the centralized structure of groups like UPC and FAPC. There were many FNI factions with primary loyalty to individual leaders, including Koliba, Metre (sic), and Modjangure. On 4 February 2005, a clash took place between FNI loyal to Peter Karim and FNI loyal to Metre. Cf. Interview with MONUC human rights officer, February 2008, Bunia.

\textsuperscript{22} Military operations by MONUC and FARDC also produced episodes of strong resistance, such as the May attack by UPC on FARDC at Berunda (MONUC 2005g; MONUC n.d.(f)), and the June attack by FNI at Lugo (MONUC 2005t; MONUC n.d.(f)).

\textsuperscript{23} Another example of the blending of personal and political objectives comes from statements made by UPC deputy John Linganga, as reported by MONUC: “On 12 May 05 at a meeting in MABANGA (80km N from BUNIA), Mr Linganga (UPC/L) reportedly declared that he would not stop his activities in ITURI as long as the Government of DRC does not recognise his rank and status, and his right to control ITURI. He purportedly demanded a change in status of ITURI from district to province” (MONUC 2005g).

\textsuperscript{24} While some of UPC’s staff may have been Rwandan citizens, the reference to “Rwandans” by MONUC more accurately refers to the fact that some of UPC’s leaders were ethnic Tutsi from the Kivus.
Floribert Ndjabu (FNI President) and Thomas Lubanga (UPC/L President)" indicated there was collaboration between these former enemies (MONUC 2005g). Analysts within MONUC viewed Bosco’s success in uniting “the different groups or at least elements from the hardliner cadre” as suggesting “that there could be higher order involvement” (MONUC 2005i, 2-3). The “higher order involvement” in Ituri referred to the external interventions of the Ugandan and Rwandan governments.

External involvement
While MONUC tried during 2005 to end conflict, the Ugandan government continued to meddle in Ituri. Uganda helped to main instability and commercial interests through support of rebel groups, thereby acting as a spoiler to the peace process in Congo led by the United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC). Stedman defines a spoiler as a leader or party that believes “peace emerging from negotiations threatens [its] power, world view, and interests, and [uses] violence to undermine attempts to achieve it” (Stedman 1997, 5). Stedman classifies spoilers based on their strategies to disrupt peace processes: limited, greedy, or total. Limited spoilers have limited goals, such as redress of a specific grievance, while total spoilers pursue total power and have immutable goals (Stedman 1997, 10). Between limited and total spoilers is the “greedy” spoiler, who pursues “goals that expand or contract based on calculations of cost and risk” (Stedman 1997, 11).

The Ugandan government’s role as a greedy spoiler took several forms. MONUC operational reports from 2005 include reports of Ugandan instructors training militias in Ituri (MONUC n.d.; MONUC 2005o; MONUC 2005z; cf. MONUC 2005s), and of movement of armed groups from Uganda into Ituri after receiving military training in Uganda (MONUC 2005q; MONUC 2005r). Ugandan soldiers may have directly entered Congo and participated in combat operations, as suggested in MONUC report from May:

BANBATT reported that unconfirmed number UGANDAN Defence Forces personnel (Officers and men) have infiltrated into NGETI areas in support of FRPI militias. They are providing them with all types of logistic support, including planning guidance. They are believed to be taking part directly with FRPI militias in their operational activities (MONUC 2005g).

MONUC reports also state that Ituri armed groups were engaging in trade with Ugandan businessmen (MONUC 2005s), including reports of trading timber for ammunition and guns (MONUC 2005n; MONUC 2005p; MONUC 2005s). Some MONUC reports mention connections of an unknown purpose and intent, for example:

At DELE check point [SE of Bunia], the intelligence officer informed the patrol team that on 16th May 05, 8 persons (7 Ugandans and one American) who came from UGANDA were arrested by the ANR (National Intelligence Agency) at TCHOMIA. Four of them were immediately sent back to UGANDA because they were found with mobile phone numbers of some Ugandan Generals (MONUC 2005o).

In mid-May, there were reports in Ituri that Uganda was “seeking a platform through [Ituri’s armed] groups, to make inroads into the DRC” (MONUC 2005j, 2)

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25 Tchomia is a small town on the southwest coast of Lake Albert, in the Ituri district. There is regular boat traffic across the lake to Ntoroko, Uganda.
The platform Uganda sought became a reality – at least on paper – on 15 June 2005. That day, representatives of the four main rebel groups in Ituri (UPC, FNI, FRPI, FAPC, and PUSIC) signed an agreement in Jinja, Uganda to unify their efforts under the name *Mouvement révolutionnaire congolais* (MRC) (Prunier 2009, 308; MONUC 2005y, § 64). The MRC immediately issued an appeal to Uganda’s President Museveni for military and logistical support (UNSC 2006, 43-44). Following the agreement, rebel leaders returned to Ituri from Uganda to continue the process started earlier in the spring of coordinating Ituri’s various armed groups (cf. MONUC 2005w, 1).

The news of a new alliance of Ituri’s disparate – and increasingly desperate – rebel groups concerned MONUC and politicians from Ituri. On 5 August, MONUC political affairs officers met in Kinshasa with three National Assembly deputies from Ituri to discuss the MRC. The deputies highlighted insecurity in Irumu territory along the Ugandan border, and “expressed concern saying that these [MRC] forces were capable of undermining the entire peace process, especially as they were allegedly backed by Uganda” (MONUC 2005y, § 64). MONUC shared the concerns of these deputies, and enlisted the support of foreign governments to put diplomatic pressure on Uganda to cease its meddling in Ituri. This increased pressure succeeded in getting the Ugandan government to declare six rebels, including the coordinator of MRC, as *persona non grata*, giving them 48 hours to leave the country. This was a symbolic gesture intended to placate MONUC and to satisfy Uganda’s main international supporters, but in reality Uganda continued to allow these and other Ituri rebel leaders to operate in Uganda. MRC’s activities in Uganda included recruiting ex-Congolese army soldiers from refugee camps in Hoima, near Lake Albert in western Uganda (MONUC 2005ab, 2).

**Resistance and surrender**

The hardliners in Ituri’s armed groups had a common agenda of survival, but the differences among the groups prevented MRC from becoming a viable and effective platform for continued war. One source of division was rivalry among the leaders of the various groups. MRC coordinator Bwambale Kakolele had the support of some groups, but was opposed by Bosco (UPC) and Cobra Matata (FRPI) (MONUC 2005ab, 2). Bosco also had a dispute with Peter Karim of FNI because of the latter’s refusal to participate in the MRC coalition (MONUC 2005af, § 12). In addition, “clashes between the armed groups have been reported over different view points regarding collection of illegal taxes in each other’s AOR [Area of Responsibility], and whether or not to allow locals to register as potential voters” (MONUC 2005ad, 2).

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26 The MRC was mainly a coalition of Ituri’s armed groups, but it claimed support in North Kivu. It’s coordinator was “Major General” Bwambale Kakolele, who had been in RCD and then RCD-ML. This raised the prospect – never realized – of a unification of the conflicts in the Kivus and Ituri.

27 Interview with former MONUC military official, May 2008, the Netherlands.

28 “The GoU has already declared Vihuto Bwambale KAKOLELE, Dido MANYIROHA, Mathieu NGUDJOLO, Mbuna DIEUDONNE, Jean Pierre SAMBIDHU and Justin LOBHO persona non grata on 23 Aug 05, at that time giving them 48 hours to leave the country” (MONUC 2005ak, § 7).

29 Interview with MONUC political affairs officer, August 2007, Kinshasa.
During the summer and fall of 2005, MONUC continued to pursue its “robust” strategy, with the assistance of FARDC, attacking various armed groups and forcing the surrender of more rebels and armed group leaders both inside and outside the MRC coalition (cf. MONUC 2005u; MONUC 2005ac; MONUC 2005ae; MONUC 2005af; MONUC 2005ak, § 6-8). In late November, six prominent rebel leaders fled from Ituri for the safety of Kampala, Uganda. Three of the six had already been declared persona non grata by the Ugandan government (MONUC 2005ak, § 7), but as noted above, the Ugandan government continued to tolerate and support Ituri’s armed groups and their leaders.

In a significant development, UPC’s leader Bosco Ntaganda also left Ituri. For most of 2005, Bosco had tried to unite Ituri’s armed groups, but internal divisions and external pressure had thwarted unification efforts. In October, a MONUC brief cited unconfirmed reports that Bosco was “heading for North Kivu with his heavy weapons to hand them over to the RDF [Rwandan Defense Force – the Rwandan army] to both keep them safe and avoid embarrassment to Rwanda” (MONUC 2005af, § 12). By late November, Bosco had left Ituri with other senior UPC leaders, and traveled to Rwanda (MONUC 2005ak, § 8). MONUC interpreted this development as evidence that Rwanda was giving up hopes of influencing politics in Ituri (MONUC 2005ak, § 8). In February 2006, Bosco reappeared with former MRC coordinator Kakolele in a training camp in North Kivu of the Rwanda-allied group CNDP, headed by Laurent Nkunda (MONUC 2006d, § 6).

As discussed in chapter four, in December 2005, the International Court of Justice issued its decision in the case DRC v. Uganda. The damning decision faulted the Ugandan for committing “acts of killing, torture and other forms of inhumane treatment of the Congolese civilian population,” inciting ethnic conflict, and “looting, plundering, and exploitation of Congolese natural resources” (ICJ 2005a, § 345(3), (4)). The timing was auspicious, as it coincided with MONUC’s increasing pressure on Uganda to stop supporting conflict in Ituri.

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30 As FARDC increasingly deployed in eastern Congo as part of these operations, its undisciplined and underpaid/unpaid soldiers engaged in many of the same predatory activities as the armed groups they displaced, including rape, extortion, murder, and theft (MONUC 2005am; cf. MONUC 2006h; MONUC 2007c).

31 On 11 September, FNI faction leader Koliba surrendered to FARDC at Drodro, along with 75 of his combatants, as a result of MONUC’s Operation Linga (MONUC 2005ac, 5).

32 “John BEBWA (G3 of PUSIC), MUTEGEKI (PUSIC), Alex MUNYALIZI (DCOS of PUSIC), Justin LOBHO (Pol Com of FNI and G2 of MRC), Dido MANYIROHA (PUSIC, in charge of the security in the MRC), Col Vihuto Bwambale KAKOLELE “Aigle blanc” (ex-APC, PIO of MRC). Some of them have been reported to be staying in KAMPALA despite of arrest warrants issued against them” (MONUC 2005ak, § 7).

33 “It is also reported that the most influential leaders of the UPC/L, Bosco NTAGANDA (Supreme Comd), Col SALONGO ”Tiger One” (D COS) and Gen Innocent KAYINA ”India Queen” (G3), have fled to Rwanda” (MONUC 2005ak, § 8). In 2006, India Queen was back in Ituri as one of the leaders of MRC. He was captured 16 May 2006 at Hego (24km east of Mongbwalu) after a shootout with FARDC; Innocent Queen was shot in his right leg during the encounter, and four of his MRC militia were killed (MONUC 2006l, 3-4).
Uganda’s other wars

Around the time the ICJ issued its decision, MONUC (with FARDC) launched military operations against ADF/NALU and the anti-Ugandan Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). The first, operations, against ADF/NALU, came just weeks after the ICJ issued its decision. From 24-29 December 2005, 600 MONUC and 3,000 FARDC soldiers undertook Operation North Night Final against ADF/NALU. MONUC followed up the first operation with Operation North Nutshell from 22-23 January 2006. These operations dislodged ADF/NALU from its camps and led some militants to surrender during February 2006 (MONUC 2006). The action by MONUC and FARDC signaled a shift in the ADF/NALU conflict, which started as a civil war in Uganda in the early 1990s, and evolved into an extraterritorial armed conflict after 1996 when Uganda fought ADF/NALU inside Congo. In late 2005, it became a war in which a Ugandan rebel group fought the Congolese government and an international force from the United Nations; this is not a traditional civil war or a straightforward internationalized internal armed conflict, but is representative of the type of transformative conflicts that take place within a polywar.

The second anti-Uganda group in northeastern Congo was the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). During 2005 and 2006, the Ugandan army and Southern Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) fought the LRA in Southern Sudan near the DRC and Uganda borders; their operations pushed the LRA into Congo’s Ituri and Haut Uélé districts. In late 2005, the LRA established camps in Garamba National Park in Haut Uélé (cf. MONUC 2005am; MONUC 2005ai). In January 2006, MONUC launched Operation Paper Tiger against the LRA at Garamba, but the operation ended in disaster when the LRA killed 8 Guatemalan Special Forces soldiers in an ambush. In April 2006, the

34 Three other groups are worth mentioning, although they did not significantly affect security in either eastern DRC or Uganda after 2003. First, in December 2003, MONUC repatriated most of the remainder of the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) from eastern Congo to Uganda, who were from the so-called “Sierra battalion” (MONUC n.d.(e)). Second, there may or may not have been a group called the People’s Redemption Army (PRA) operating in eastern Congo; it is possible the Government of Uganda asserted the existence of this group in order to help President Museveni get re-elected in 2002 (MONUC 2005aj; MONUC n.d.(e); Interview with MONUC political affairs officer, November 2007, Bunia; cf. Reyntjens 2009, 218). Third, a group called Fanya Fujo Uone (FFU) operated in North Kivu and Ituri in late 2005; one source states the FFU is anti-Ugandan, while another states the FFU was in alliance with UPDF, FNI, FRPI and UPC (MONUC 2005ah; MONUC 2005aa.

35 This operation, led by the Indian Army, killed 86 ADF/NALU, recovered 33 weapons, and destroyed many ADF/NALU camps. The fighting also killed 6 FARDC soldiers and wounded 18 more; MONUC suffered one killed in action and four wounded in actions (MONUC n.d.(d)).

36 This operation resulted in 4 ADF/NALU killed in action, 3 militants captured, and 20 weapons captured (MONUC n.d.(d)).

37 By the end of February 2006, 43 ADF/NALU had surrendered to MONUC and FARDC. This included 37 adults (32 Congolese and 5 Ugandans) and 6 children (3 Congolese and 3 Ugandans) (MONUC 2006d).

38 In September 2005, approximately 400 LRA armed men and families were present in the Ituri District, near the town of Aba (200 km NW of Aru) (MONUC n.d.(a)). “[T]he UPDF has stationed two attack helicopter in Southern Sudan to combat the rebels” (MONUC 2005af).

39 The Guatemalan forces had deployed to Garamba on 8 January 2006 to support FARDC and Senegalese Battalion troops to seek out the LRA and arrest LRA leaders. On 23 January the LRA ambushed a Guatemalan unit, killing 8 and wounding five. MONUC attack helicopters engaged the LRA with rockets, killing an estimated 15 LRA militias (MONUC 2006h).
UPDF reportedly pursued some LRA elements into the DRC near the Haut Uélé-Ituri border after fighting in Southern Sudan (MONUC 2006j; MONUC 2006g). During the remainder of 2006, the LRA and FARDC clashed several times in Haut Uélé district (MONUC 2006r; MONUC 2006p), and the UPDF reportedly crossed the DRC border to either pursue or defend against the LRA (MONUC 2006s; MONUC 2005ai). As with the war against ADF/NALU, the war against the LRA defies easy classification, but exemplifies the transformative nature of violence within a polywar.

Uganda supported MONUC actions against ADF/NALU and the LRA, but during 2006, Uganda continued to function as a rear base and source of supplies for numerous other armed groups in northeastern Congo. The MRC continued to obtain ammunition and arms from Ugandan territory (MONUC 2006f), as did the FNI.40 In December 2006, Laurent Nkunda of CNDP41 reportedly ordered his forces to take control of an area near the Ugandan border in North Kivu in order to facilitate the resupply of ammunition from Uganda (MONUC 2006t). In addition, during 2005 and 2006, the Government of Uganda took no action against Congolese businessmen who did business in Kampala despite being on a UN sanctions list because of their ties to the arms trade in Eastern Congo (UNSC 2006a, § 215) (see further discussion in Economic Aspects section, below).

**Rearming and disarming**

Despite the success of MONUC’s operations, supported by FARDC, the war continued during 2006. The first disarmament phase in 2005 was only partially successful, requiring a second phase in 2006, and a third in 2007. Ituri’s armed groups continued to launch attacks on civilians, MONUC, and government authorities, but overall they never regained the strength they had prior to 2005, and by the end of 2007, most of Ituri’s armed group leaders and combatants had disarmed, signaling the end of the war and growth of a fragile peace.

The war in Ituri continued into 2006 partly because hardliner elements in various armed groups were able to recruit ex-combatants to take up arms again. The DCR process ended 25 June 2005,42 but problems in the “CR” – community reintegration” – aspect facilitated recruitment and reduced the effectiveness of the DCR program. All told, the DCR process disarmed 15,941 combatants, including 263 women and 4,522 children (including 599 girls) (UNDP 2007, 6). However, even as the program was ending, problems were evident, caused by “constraints in the disarmament and community reintegration programme [that created] a pool of disgruntled demobilized soldiers who are potential candidates for remobilization outside FARDC” (UNSC 2005b, § 31). Indeed, there were numerous complaints and protests from ex-combatants in the summer of 2005, including lack of jobs, and delays in delivery of reinsertion packages (MONUC 2005v, § 8-10; cf. MONUC Eastern Division 2005a, Annex B). Other problems related to the fact that many combatants turned in ammunition or non-operational weapons,

40 “Mr. Karim regularly receives ammo in sacks of salt and in cooking oil jerry cans from UGANDA and the person who delivers the ammo is an old man” (MONUC 2006i).
41 Congrès national pour la défense du peuple.
42 The original end date of 30 March had been extended to facilitate more entries into the program.
leading to concerns that armed groups continued to stockpile weapons (MONUC 2005g; MONUC 2005x). 43

During the first half of 2006, Ituri’s armed groups stepped up their attacks on MONUC and FARDC. The main groups at this time were FNI, FRPI, and MRC; UPC elements joined with either FNI or MRC (cf. MONUC 2006i, 4), and FAPC had largely integrated during the DRC process (cf. UNSC 2005b, § 30). 44 In January, a MONUC report noted: “The militias in Ituri are recently showing more determination. This is primarily linked to the pressure which they are under due to FARDC/MONUC operations” (MONUC 2006b). The first major operation targeted the FRPI, which MONUC had identified in late 2005 as posing a major threat to its peace and stabilization efforts. 45 That month, FRPI rebels vigorously resisted MONUC and FARDC during MONUC’s Operation Ituri Encourager (MONUC 2006a, 1-2; MONUC 2006c, 1). MONUC and FARDC kept up the pressure, launching Operation Ituri Engraver at the end of February (MONUC 2006e, 1-3; MONUC 2005h, 16-19; MONUC 2006l, 1-3). Other operations targeted FNI and LRA (MONUC 2005h, 20, 21; MONUC 2006m; MONUC 2006k).

MONUC’s operations were intended not only to keep up the momentum gained during 2005, but also to create a peaceful environment for the 30 July national elections (MONUC Civil Affairs Special Report 2006; MONUC 2006m; MONUC 2006h; MONUC 2006j; cf. MONUC n.d.(b)). These operations led directly to the surrender of many combatants and weakened the command and control within Ituri’s main militia groups (MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2006). During June alone, 995 militia with 698 weapons surrendered (MONUC Eastern Division HQ, 2006a, 1). This included “hardcore militia” from MRC, FRPI, and FNI, which were at this point the main rebel groups active in Ituri. While this was a positive development, there were also concerns within MONUC about mounting human rights violations being committed by FARDC forces in Ituri (MONUC Civil Affairs 2006, 1-2).

The success of operations and growing surrenders by armed groups resulted in a second round of demobilization. Between June and September 2006, MONUC and the Congolese government processed 6,728 combatants through a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process; this included 419 women and 1,275 children (including 174 girls) (UNDP 2007, 6). With their ranks further depleted, most of Ituri’s remaining militia leaders appeared to realize this was their “last chance to enter [Congolese] society as important personalities, with access to political life, economy and wealth” (MONUC 2006n). Nonetheless, some militia commanders were concerned that if they surrendered, they would be arrested and put on trial, either within Congo or at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Indeed, several rebel leaders faced civil courts, 46 and

43 For example, an August 2005 report noted that of the AK-47s turned in during the DCR process, 547 were serviceable (usable), 4,470 were unserviceable, and 1,742 had to be segregated (MONUC 2005x).

44 A UNDP official stated FAPC essentially collapsed as an organized movement in early 2005 as a result of public opposition to the group in the Aru/Ariwara area, combined with MONUC operations against FAPC. Interview with UNDP official, November 2007, Bunia.


46 For example, Chief Kahwa, formerly of UPC and PUSIC (MONUC Human Rights Division 2007, § 99).
in March 2006, the Congolese government transferred former-UPC leader Thomas Lubanga to the ICC in The Hague. (The ICC Prosecutor has charged Lubanga with wrongfully recruiting and using child soldiers).

Despite concerns about arrests, during 2007 the remaining militia leaders negotiated with MONUC for the terms of their incorporation into the Congolese army (FARDC).

In the context of negotiations to disarm the remaining militia groups in Ituri and in an effort to bring peace and stability to the region, the three militia leaders (Peter Karim of the FNI, Mathieu Ngudjolo of the MRC, and Cobra Matata of the FRPI) were officially commissioned as Colonels in the FARDC [in December 2006]. Karim is the prime suspect in the murder of two Nepalese peacekeepers in June 2005 and the kidnapping of seven others in February 2006. Ngudjolo, allegedly responsible for the massacre of more than 200 people in Bogoro, in February 2003, escaped from the Kinshasa central prison in March 2005. Cobra Matata-led militias allegedly participated in the most deadly attack known in Ituri, in Nyankunde in September 2002, in which more than 1,000 people were reportedly killed (MONUC Human Rights Division 2007, § 88).

With blood on each of their hands, the rebel leaders sought assurances they would not be arrested, but no such promises were made.

On 16-17 October 2007, the Congolese government transferred a second former rebel leader to the ICC. The ICC Prosecutor accused Germain Katanga,47 a former leader of the FRPI group, of coordinating a massacre in 2003 on a village called Bogoro. This came at a very sensitive time in Ituri, when MONUC was trying to lure the remaining rebel leaders in from the bush to join the national army. MONUC’s Political Affairs division in Bunia was engaged in intense negotiations with the leaders, but the arrest and deportation of Katanga caused concern among the rebels. Despite their concerns, on 30 October 2007, the three rebel leaders—Ngudjolo, Karim, and Matata—assembled in Bunia. A MONUC report noted that Peter Karim “had some fears regarding his future with regards to amnesty as he discussed with [Germain] Katanga, FRPI former leader who has been handed over to ICC” (MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2007a, § 6, 12(b)). MONUC sought to get the rebel leaders out of Bunia—and out of Ituri—as soon as possible; on 2 November a MONUC flight took the leaders and 45 of their soldiers to Kinshasa (Photos 9-12). A final DDR program in late 2007 disarmed 1,352 combatants, including 265 women, from MRC, FNI, and FRPI (UNDP 2007, 6).

47 Katanga had been arrested 11 March 2005, the same day as Thomas Lubanga, and Lendu/Ngiti leaders Floribert Ndjabu, Goda Sukpa, and Pitshou Iribi.
Former leader of the main FNI group, Peter Karim, checking in at Bunia airport for a flight to Kinshasa to join the national army.
Source: MONUC
Photo 10. Former Ituri rebel leaders and FARDC officers at Bunia airport (MONUC terminal), 2 November 2007. From left to right, Mathieu Ngudjolo (ex-FNI, ex-MRC), Peter Karim (ex-FNI), General Kinkela (FARDC), Cobra Matata (ex-FRPI), Col. Nyembo (FARDC), and Col. Ngola (FARDC).
Source: MONUC
Photo 11. Mathieu Ngudjolo (ex-FNI, ex-MRC) gives a thumbs-up in the waiting room of MONUC's terminal at the Bunia airport, 2 November 2007. Four months later, the Congolese government arrested Ngudjolo and transferred him to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands.
Source: MONUC
On 6 February 2008, the Congolese government arrested Mathieu Ndgudjolo. Ndgudjolo, who had come in from the bush only months before with the rank of Colonel in the national army, was sent to the ICC to stand trial, jointly with Germain Katanga, for the Bogoro attack (ICC 2007). Ndgudjolo’s arrest greatly concerned Peter Karim, which in turn greatly concerned MONUC in Bunia that Karim would return to the bush and re-ignite the war. A 16 February 2008 MONUC report noted:

Col Peter Karim said that he was not feeling secure anymore because of the trials against Col Ndgudjolo and other Ituri warlords. Handing over of Col Ndgudjolo to ICC after granting him a rank in FARDC is reportedly being taken as a negative step by the remaining militias of his group who are still in the bush and such an event may provoke remaining militias to resist surrender in TCHEY and LALO areas (MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2008, § 1(b)).

Indeed, immediately after the arrest of Ndgudjolo, Human Rights Watch called for the arrest of Karim and Cobra Matata: “Instead of rewarding abusive warlords like Cobra Matata and Peter Karim with plum military posts, the Congolese authorities should follow the ICC's lead and try them for war crimes in fair and effective trials” (AllAfrica.com 2008). Karim and Matata remained in the army, however.
In 2007, while the ICC’s actions threatened to disrupt the peace process in Ituri, boundary issues and oil in Lake Albert were the basis for new tensions between Uganda and Congo. On 29 July, FARDC troops captured four UPDF marines on the disputed Rukwanzi Island, which both Congo and Uganda claimed as their own (MONUC 2007b; cf. Les Coulisses 2007). Then, on 3 August, a firefight near Rukwanzi Island between FARDC personnel and UPDF naval forces (who responded to a call for help from two Uganda-based Heritage Oil barges) resulted in the death of one FARDC marine and one British employee of the Canadian company Heritage Oil, which was exploring for oil under the Lake from its base in Uganda (MONUC 2007b).

After these incidents, MONUC helped to facilitate diplomatic channels to resolve the disputes. On 8 August 2007, high-level meetings between the Congolese and Ugandan military chiefs at Entebbe led the delegations to reaffirm their commitment to a 1990 agreement signed by the Zaire and Ugandan governments for joint exploration of oil deposits in Lake Albert (Ikem 2007; cf. Les Coulisses 2007a). On 27 August, MONUC started Operation Ituri Inspiration, which consisted of aerial reconnaissance by MONUC of military patrols and oil exploration activities on Lake Albert (MONUC 2007c; MONUC 2007d). A meeting on 8 September between Congo’s President Kabila and Uganda’s President Museveni at Ngurdoto, Tanzania produced a new agreement, which included establishment of a border commission, cooperation on oil exploration, action against the LRA and other “negative forces”, and establishment of a commission to decide on reparations related to the 2005 ICJ decision (Uganda 2007; cf. Oxford Analytica 2008). Differences in language used in the French and English versions of the agreement led to delays in implementing the agreement (Matsiko 2007).

Despite the diplomatic efforts and agreements, during the remainder of 2007 there continued to be tension along the DRC-Uganda border. On 24 September, UPDF soldiers on maritime patrol on Lake Albert opened fire on a boat coming from Congo, killing six people and wounding five more. Also during September there were several reports of UPDF units crossing into Congo or massing on the Ugandan side of the Congo-Uganda border (MONUC 2007c; MONUC 2007d; MONUC 2007e). On 22 November, FARDC soldiers arrested two surveyors working for Heritage Oil and one security guard from Saracen Security after they illegally crossed from Uganda into Congolese territory (Okello 2007). Other incidents during the remainder of the year on Lake Albert or along DRC-Uganda land borders pointed to the persistence of tensions (MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2007e; cf. MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2007b), but these disputes failed to escalate into an armed conflict and relations between the two countries gradually improved (MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2007d; Les Coulisses 2008).

48 These marines were released on 6 August 2007 (Kisakye et al 2007).
49 “TCHOMIA MILOB Team interacted with Dr Pascala at TCHOMIA Hospital and visited the individuals who got wounded on 24 Sep, due to UPDF firing in Lake Albert. Their condition is stable at the moment. All patients confirm that UPDF demanded FARDC weapons and when FARDC soldiers refused, UPDF opened fire indiscriminately” (MONUC 2007d; MONUC 2007e; MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2007).
During 2007 and 2008, illegal armed groups in Congo continued to use Ugandan territory to obtain supplies and plan their activities. Laurent Nkunda’s CNDP reportedly continued to purchase supplies from Ugandan businessmen, including some UPDF officers (MONUC Eastern Division HQ 2007c). In late 2008, the UN’s Group of Experts stated that the presence of CNDP representatives in Uganda (and Rwanda) “has also allowed them to rally funds and organize supplies” (UNSC 2008a, § 18). Around September 2008, a new Congolese rebel group—the Front Populaire pour le Justice au Congo (FPJC)—formed in Uganda. FPJC is reportedly working with FRPI remnants in southern Irumu. Although the connection between the two groups is tenuous, FPJC may be parasitically attaching its name to FRPI’s operations in order to gain legitimacy. The FPJC leadership reportedly uses Kampala as a rear base for political activity and fundraising (UNSC 2008a, § 121-125). In August 2008, another new Ituri group announced its existence; however the Union pour la Révolution Congolaise (URC) appears to be a group in name only operating out of Kampala, Uganda, with no presence and little support inside Ituri.

In late 2008, the Ugandan army re-entered DRC to attack the LRA. Between 2006-2008, the LRA had haltingly engaged in peace negotiations in Juba, Southern Sudan, but the negotiations appeared to doomed to failure due to intransigence on the part of the LRA and possible duplicity on the part of the Ugandan government. On 14 December 2008, the UPDF, FARDC, and Southern Sudan armed forces (SPLA) undertook a joint operation, called Operation Lightning Thunder, against two LRA camps in Congo’s Garamba National Park (MONUC and UNHCR 2009). MONUC was not involved in the planning or execution of this operation (Doss 2009). This operation killed some LRA members, but most rebels reportedly escaped and retaliated by killing more than 600 civilians in the so-called “Christmas massacres” at the end of December 2008 (HRW 2009). Then-President Bush authorized the US Department of Defense’s new Africa command (AFRICOM) to assist the Ugandan army with intelligence, satellite phones, and $1 million in fuel for this failed operation (Gettleman and Schmitt 2009).

Despite making a show of leaving Congo after the end of Operation Lightning Thunder in March 2009 (Egadu 2009), some Ugandan army units have remained in Congo throughout 2009 (MONUC and UNHCR 2009, § 42). Some LRA units have dispersed to the Central African Republic and Sudan (where the UPDF is currently pursuing them), but FARDC and the UPDF are also hunting LRA elements in Haut-Uélé and Bas-Uélé districts. Through June 2009, the LRA had reportedly killed hundreds of Congolese civilians and abducted hundreds more (MONUC and UNHCR 2009, § 3). As of September 2009, the LRA war had displaced 270,000 people in Congo (UNSC 2009, § 17, 29).

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50 Interview with former rebel, February 2008, Kampala, Uganda; cf. UNSC 2008a, § 27, 29, 47.
51 The head of FPJC is Sherif Manda, a Hema who had previously been in the Aru area of Uganda and has ties to Bosco Ntaganda. Interviews in Bunia, June 2009.
52 Interview with MONUC political affairs officer, June 2009, Bunia; URC 2008.
ECONOMIC ASPECTS
The economics of war in Ituri during the period after 2003 had several different dimensions. For Ituri’s armed groups, money was “an operational tool rather than a tool that promotes group cohesion over long term” (MONUC 2006q, 5); i.e. money derived through a variety of means enabled the armed groups’ leaders to continue to wage war. MONUC and the Congolese government tried both to disrupt the ability of armed groups to make money, and to use money to lure combatants away from their groups. Complicating disarmament efforts was the role of the Ugandan government, which enabled Ugandan businessmen and government officials to trade with Ituri’s armed groups, providing them with resources they needed to sustain war.

Ituri’s armed groups
Ituri’s armed groups financed their operations through a variety of means including control of key extractive industries (especially gold and timber), trade in natural resources and consumer goods, direct funding from supporters, taxation, looting, and theft. The mechanisms of finance therefore had local aspects, as in the case of looting, and regional or international aspects, as in the case of the trade in gold. Over time, military operations by MONUC and FARDC combined with international diplomatic pressure on Uganda led to changes that reduced funding for Ituri’s armed groups, and helped to end the war.

The control of the Mongbwalu gold mines by FNI illustrates how local and regional actors used natural resources in ways that sustained war. After taking control of the gold mines in 2003, FNI levied fees and taxes on gold miners, and used the money to sustain its operations and existence (HRW 2005, 51-57). FNI initially had difficulties of resupply and exporting gold, because Mongbwalu was isolated due to the deterioration of the roads. To facilitate the trade in gold, FNI’s leader Floribert Njabu established a business relationship with Kambale Kisoni, the Butembo (North Kivu) gold trader and owner of the CongoCom comptoir (gold exporting business). The connection between Kisoni and Njabu paralleled the connections between RCD-ML and FNI (described in Chapter 4); Kisoni had close ties to RCD-ML and to its leader, Mbusa Nyamwisi, which in turn had close ties to FNI (HRW 2005, 102). Kisoni ran an aviation company called Butembo Airlines, which operated flights between Butembo and Mongbwalu. Kisoni and Njabu worked out an agreement whereby Kisoni flew FNI’s gold out of Mongbwalu to Butembo, and in return paid a small fee to FNI and brought them supplies, including guns and ammunition (HRW 2005, 102; cf. APPG 2004, 24). From Butembo, Kisoni’s CongoCom comptoir exported gold to Kampala, where he traded mainly with Uganda Commercial Impex, thus preserving the flow of gold Uganda had established during its occupation.

FNI also worked with the South African mining firm AngloGold Ashanti (AGA) during its occupation of Mongbwalu. AGA had acquired the contract to mine in the Kilo belt from the Congolese government (Fahey 2008, 359), but until 2005, the central government had no control over the Kilo belt and most of Ituri. In 2003, AGA negotiated access to the Kilo belt with Floribert Njabu, and made its first visit in November 2003 to Mongbwalu (HRW 2005, 61-69). AGA workers made several more trips to Mongbwalu
in early 2004. Starting in May 2004, AGA initiated exploration activities in and around Mongbwalu, working closely with FNI in a way that provided the rebels with both material and symbolic (prestige) benefits. AGA provided a house to then-FNI leader Floribert Njabu, treating FNI soldiers at the AGK health clinic, and paying small taxes and fees to FNI (UNSC 2005, § 131-134). In addition, AGA’s relationship with FNI and in Njabu gave the rebel group a legitimacy in political circles it had not previously possessed (HRW 2005, 74-75). The UN’s Group of Experts later exonerated AGA from wrongdoing, stating “the violations reported in a previous report are isolated cases and are not a reflection of the company’s overall corporate strategy” (UNSC 2006, § 93; HRW 2005, 61-77), but AGA’s involvement with FNI illustrates how transnational corporations can both directly and indirectly support the persistence of armed conflict.

Other armed groups also controlled – or tried to control – gold mines in Ituri. In mid-2004, FNI and FAPC fought each other for control of the Djalasiga gold mines in Mahagi territory (HRW 2005, 85; UNSC 2004b, § 30; cf. MONUC 2004b, 39). In late 2004, FAPC entered an alliance with UPC (against FNI) that included a division of control over gold mining areas in Ituri (HRW 2005, 96). Commander Jerome, who headed FAPC, acted more like a criminal than a rebel leader with a clear political agenda.53 Jerome’s primary interest was in controlling gold mining areas and the trade across the border into Uganda. Commander Jerome’s main business partner was Mr. Ozia Mazio, who facilitated gold-for-guns deals with Ugandan partners (HRW 2005, 85-86, 104-105). Jerome and Ozia Mazio sold their gold in Kampala to the Machanga company (UNSC 2005, § 121-126). MRC was also involved in exploiting gold. In November 2005, MONUC reported MRC militants were obtaining ammunition and guns from Ugandan army officers in exchange for gold (MONUC 2005ag). Ituri’s rich gold mines therefore played a role in financing all of Ituri’s major armed groups, with the exception of PUSIC. The high commercial value of gold, proximity of gold to Uganda’s border, and the existence of a well-established trade with Ugandan army officers and businessmen all influenced the way in which Ituri’s armed groups used gold to sustain war.

Armed groups near forested areas exploited timber, which went to markets in nearby Uganda. During 2004, FAPC traded timber across the border to Uganda (UNSC 2005, § 101). In May 2005, a MONUC report noted FNI was exporting timber to Uganda in exchange for AK-47 ammunition (MONUC 2005g). In November 2005, FNI and FRPI signed an agreement that would enable them to continue to export timber to Uganda (MONUC 2005al, 2).54 During 2006, Peter Karim and other FNI members were still engaged in timber exploitation with Congolese and Ugandan partners (UNSC 2006a, § 180-182; MONUC 2006o, 2). Three factors enabled Ituri’s armed groups to exploit

53 Interviews with MONUC political affairs officers, August 2007, Kinshasa and November 2007, Bunia.
54 “Allegedly an agreement to end all hostilities between the two groups was signed. The main objective of this agreement was to consolidate the areas now under militia control and to deny any further advancement of the FARDC. This also would permit them to maintain control over lucrative timbers trading. The road between the localities of BUDHU and LALO will be reopened in the near future in order to facilitate the exportation of timber from BUDHU towards UGANDA via NIOKA, without the need for passing through the KWANDRUMA area. In return ammunition will be supplied to the militia located at BUDHU via Peter Karim’s group” (MONUC 2005al, 2).
Ituri’s armed groups also collected illegal taxes to obtain financing (UNSC 2005b, § 59-61. In February 2005, a dispute on Lake Albert between FRPI and PUSIC highlighted the ongoing control by these groups of tax revenues from boat traffic from Uganda (MONUC 2005c, 6). During 2005, FAPC and UPC conducted military operations “to ensure continued access to customs revenue” along the Ugandan border in Aru and Mahagi territories (UNSC 2005a, § 11).

Various groups collected taxes at roadblocks, markets, and riverbanks, including FNI (MONUC 2005c, 7; MONUC 2005am, 3; MONUC 2006q, 5), FRPI (MONUC 2005s, § 28; MONUC 2005al), and FARDC (MONUC 2005am, 1).

Some groups also received support directly from local businessmen. Some Lendu businessmen provided support to Peter Karim and FNI (MONUC 2006q, 5), while some Hema businessmen supported UPC (MONUC n.d.(e)). In June 2006, the Savo family was also reportedly allowing Peter Karim’s FNI group, along with some UPC remnants, to stay on one of their plantations, near Fataki (MONUC 2006i, 4).

While armed groups’ abilities to obtain money from resources, taxes, and other means helped to sustain and prolong war in Ituri, the disarmament processes in Ituri provided money to individual combatants that helped to end the war. During the first two disarmament phases (2004-2005, 2006), ex-combatants who chose to reintegrate into civilian life (as opposed to entering FARDC) received $110 for a resettlement allowance if they completed the demobilization program, plus $360 ($25 per month for one year). For the third disarmament program run jointly by UNDP and the Congolese government (2007), ex-combatants received $110 for resettlement and job training, plus they could earn $150 ($50 a month for three months) by participating in work projects (UNDP 2007, 4). In addition, ex-combatants received up to $600 in reinsertion support for having cogent business plans; these plans had to be approved by UNDP/government staff. The third disarmament program also provided funds for community reinsertion projects (for roads, bridges, sanitation projects, health facilities) to thirty communities in Ituri to make them more willing to accept the returning ex-combatants (cf. UNDP 2007, 3). To help promote the final disarmament process in 2007, MRC leaders received “laissez passer” identification cards to enable them to travel freely in Ituri (Figure 13); in addition, leaders of MRC, FNI, and FRPI each received approximately $5,000 “to sensitize their combatants to join [the disarmament] process” (MONUC 2007, 12, 15).

55 In March 2005, the UN Secretary-General noted: “While MONUC has stepped up its military efforts to disarm the factions and protect the civilian population, the Transitional Government has yet to take the steps necessary to put in place a transparent system of revenue collection that would put a definitive end to fighting over the control of parallel tax and custom structures” (MONUC 2005k, § 12).
56 During the second Congo war, the Savo family reportedly supported RCD-ML and UPC (UNHCR 2010, § 407; UNSC 2002, § 98, 116, 120; UNSC 2004a, § 19, 22).
57 Interview with UNDP official, November 2007, Bunia.
58 Interview with UNDP official, November 2007, Bunia.
59 Twenty communities received $20,000 each for projects; 10 communities received $30,000 each. Interview with UNDP official, November 2007, Bunia.
Uganda’s interests

Uganda’s changing economic relationship with eastern Congo during 2003-2009 is evident in two aspects. First, Uganda’s official and unofficial exports to Congo significantly increased. Second, the Ugandan government effectively ignored UN sanctions on Congolese and Ugandan businessmen, although these sanctions disrupted Uganda’s official gold trade. In fact, Uganda continued to export large quantities of Congolese gold throughout this period, but the trade is apparently becoming more unofficial and underground as a result of UN sanctions.

Since 2002, Uganda’s official and unofficial trade with Congo increased dramatically. Uganda’s official exports to Congo increased an amazing 1,300 percent between 2002 and 2008, while imports remained low, giving Uganda extremely favorable terms of trade (Table 10, p. 121). Several factors may explain the increase in official exports, including the establishment of peace and stability in eastern Congo, expansion of business opportunities for Ugandans outside the UPDF-regime circle that controlled trade during the war, and improved efforts by the Ugandan government to monitor trade.

Recent efforts by the Ugandan government to assess unofficial cross-border trade not only suggest a dramatic increase in this trade between 2005 and 2008 (Table 14), but also
indicate the unofficial trade is substantially larger than the official trade. For example, in both 2007 and 2008, Uganda’s unofficial exports were approximately 50 percent higher than its official exports, and unofficial imports from Congo were nearly 2,400 percent higher than official imports. The reasons for the growth in informal trade include new opportunities created by the peace and stability in eastern Congo and lack of effective customs control at border crossings.

Table 14. Uganda, Informal Cross-Border Trade with DRC, 2005-2008 (millions US$, current year $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>TOTAL 2005-2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPORTS: All products</td>
<td>73.964</td>
<td>80.453</td>
<td>156.534</td>
<td>195.167</td>
<td>506.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>21.782</td>
<td>28.276</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>57.969</td>
<td>124.253</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.702</td>
<td>4.006</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>8.870</td>
<td>11.018</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2.417</td>
<td>7.041</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.183</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n/a—not available
Sources: UBOS 2008, 20, Table 2; UBOS 2009, 73.

One aspect of Uganda-DRC trade obscured by both official and unofficial statistics is the trade in gold. Uganda does not acknowledge official or unofficial gold imports from Congo, despite the fact that, as discussed above, the overwhelming majority of Uganda’s gold exports consist of gold produced in eastern Congo. Between 2003 and 2006, Uganda’s gold exports remained high, although below pre-2003 levels (Table 11, p. 122; Chart 9, p. 125). During this time, three companies dominated Uganda’s official gold exports. Uganda Commercial Impex (UCI) was the largest gold exporter, followed by Machanga Ltd. and A.P. Bhimji Ltd. Despite the long-standing ties between Uganda’s gold exports and conflict in the DRC, until 2006 the Government of Uganda publicly praised and awarded Uganda’s major gold exporters.

The United Nations Security Council had a dramatic effect on Uganda’s exports of Congolese gold, although the effect was delayed. The process started on 1 November 2005, when the Security Council listed two gold traders who did extensive business in Kampala—James Nyakuni and the late-Ozia Mazio—on its sanctions list for their ties to the illegal arms trade in eastern Congo (UNSC 2005c). However, in July 2006, the UN’s Group of Experts stated that no action had been taken by authorities in either the DRC or

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60 Seventeen other exporters account for about five percent of Uganda’s gold exports between 2002 and 2006.
61 The annual Presidential Export Awards included among its honorees Uganda Commercial Impex (Gold award—2002-2004, Bronze award—2005), Machanga Ltd (Silver award—2002, 2003), and A.P. Bhimji (Silver award—2004). No gold exporters were given Presidential awards for 2006 due to negative publicity.
Uganda to comply with the UN sanctions (UNSC 2006a, § 215). The sanctions did not negatively affect Uganda’s gold exports, which actually increased during 2006 (UMFPED 2007, Table 44). Perhaps as a result of inaction on the part of the Ugandan and Congolese governments, on 29 March 2007 the UN added Kampala exporters UCI and Machanga to its sanctions list along with Congolese businessman Kambale Kisoni and his companies (UNSC 2007, 2, 7-8).

As discussed in chapter 4 and earlier in this chapter, during the second Congo war, Butembo businessman Kambale Kisoni was the main buyer of gold from Mongbwalu and the main gold trader in Butembo. Kisoni and his companies CongoCom and Butembo Air Lines were added to the UN Sanctions list on 29 March 2007 because of Kisoni’s past ties to Floribert Njabu and FNI when they controlled Mongbwalu (UNSC 2007, 2, 7). The European Commission, United Kingdom, and United States also added Kisoni and his companies to their respective sanctions lists (Bank of England 2007; European Commission 2007; US DoT 2007). Since Kisoni bought gold from both Mongbwalu and négociants in Butembo, his listing significantly adversely affected official gold purchases in Butembo. The biggest effect of Kisoni’s listing, however, may have been to push the gold trade further into the unofficial sector, outside of the control and monitoring of CEEC and other governmental agencies.

Another effect of the UN sanctions was the murder, on 5 July 2007, of Kambale Kisoni in his office in Butembo. Although this may have simply been a robbery attempt gone awry (Le Millénaire 2007), various other theories have circulated. In the months leading up to his murder, Kisoni was trying to enlist the support of the DRC government to get his name off the UN sanctions list (UNSC 2007a, § 138); Kisoni made a trip to Kinshasa for this purpose just weeks before he was killed (Le Millénaire 2007). Frustrated by his listing and the government’s unwillingness to help him, Kisoni was reportedly threatening to divulge damaging information about some of his former business partners and allies. Those who may have wanted to silence Kisoni include current and former RCD-ML officials with whom Kisoni worked closely during the second war (e.g. Mbusa

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62 Interviews with gold traders and former rebels, February 2008, Mongbwalu.
63 Official purchases of gold in Butembo dropped from an average of 4.3 kg/month between January and March 2007 to 0.3 kg in April 2007. Official gold purchases did not rise above 2.2 kg/month (in August 2007) for the remainder of 2007 and were just 1.9 kg for January 2008. Interestingly, after April 2007 eleven négociants entered the official gold trade, although they each bought small amounts of gold (between 1.9 g and 412 g) during the remainder of the year (see Fahey 2008, 373).
64 Centre d’Évaluation, d’Expertise et de Certification.
66 At around 11 am on 5 July, three men posing as businessmen entered Kisoni’s office and shot him. After the three escaped in a car with approximately 400,000$, they proceeded to a house in Butembo where they were later apprehended with three other accomplices. Two of those apprehended were Kenyan and the other four were Ugandan nationals. The six had entered DRC from Uganda through Kasindi. Three Congolese citizens were later arrested for Kisoni’s murder. During the week of 21-27 July, the Ugandan government extradited two Congolese suspects, Kyambaliro Paluku Solomon and his wife, Kavugho Katsuva Kaniki Jorim. DRC authorities also arrested another suspect, Muhindo Mwira, a Congolese citizen from Butembo. The nine suspects stood trial and were convicted in July 2007. An unspecified number of FARDC officers were also arrested in late July 2007 for allegedly extorting the money stolen by Kisoni’s murderers (Fahey 2008, 373).
Nyamwisi); former FNI leaders fearing prosecution by ICC (Muke 2007; Muke 2007a); and Ugandan government officials or businessmen with whom Kisoni had close ties (e.g. Salim Saleh). Another theory suggests that Rwanda and Laurent Nkunda ordered the killing after a falling out with Kisoni. An additional theory postulates that Kisoni was killed as a result of a conspiracy of businessmen who were jealous of his success and domination of the gold trade in eastern Congo (Le Millénaire 2007). Adding to the mystery surrounding Kisoni’s murder, on 12 November 2007 unspecified gunmen attacked the central prison in Butembo using mortars and rockets in a failed attempt to reportedly liberate those convicted of Kisoni’s murder.

![Chart 11. Uganda, Monthly Gold Exports, 2007 (kg)](chart11.png)

Source: UBOS n.d.

The March 2007 sanctions also significantly affected UCI, Machanga (UNSC 2008, § 87), and Uganda’s official gold exports (Chart 11). UCI ceased officially exporting gold in May 2007 while Machanga made its last official gold export in April 2007. In late 2007 UCI unsuccessfully appealed its listing to the UN Security Council, arguing in part that Kisoni’s death removed its link to illegal armed groups in Congo (UNSC 2008, § 87). The Group of Experts reported in February 2008 that the central banks of DRC and Uganda claimed “they were unaware of the individuals and entities whose assets were to be frozen under paragraph 15 of Security Council resolution 1596 (2005)” (UNSC 2008, § 86). By December 2008, the Government of Uganda had still not complied with requests from the Group of Experts for information about Uganda’s gold exports and other violations of UN sanctions (UNSC 2008a, § 192(b) and (h), 193).

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68 Interview with MONUC civil affairs officer, February 2008, Beni.
69 Also interview with former Ugandan government official, January 2008, Kampala.
The destinations of gold exported from Uganda changed significantly since 2002 (Table 15). The shift in exports away from Switzerland and towards Dubai is partly explained by international attention to gold mining in the DRC. The Swiss refinery Metalor, which had been a major importer of gold from Uganda, decided on 20 May 2005 to suspend gold imports from Uganda as a result of reports from Human Rights Watch and the UN’s Group of Experts (Metalor 2005). As a result, Uganda’s main gold exporters started to deal exclusively with Emirates Gold in the United Arab Emirates.

Table 15. Uganda, Gold Exports by Destination, 2002-09 (kg)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESTINATION</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>4,347.4</td>
<td>1,964.0</td>
<td>187.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,498.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>2,581.6</td>
<td>1,124.6</td>
<td>3,549.6</td>
<td>748.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,004.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>336.0</td>
<td>1,724.8</td>
<td>3,429.3</td>
<td>6,894.2</td>
<td>3,181.2</td>
<td>1,844.6</td>
<td>859.3</td>
<td>18,289.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo (Brazzaville)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>99.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>104.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>136.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>7,036.0</td>
<td>3,470.6</td>
<td>5,461.4</td>
<td>4,232.0</td>
<td>6,936.2</td>
<td>3,181.9</td>
<td>2,049.7</td>
<td>931.3</td>
<td>33,299.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UBOS n.d.

There has not been a comprehensive study of the effects of UN sanctions, but it appears one effect has been to push the gold trade further underground at the very time the Government of DRC is trying to formalize it. Fears about both ICC indictments and UN sanctions are reportedly forcing some Congolese and Ugandan gold traders to avoid any “official” ties that could leave a paper trail.71 The effect of sanctions can be seen in Uganda’s official gold exports, which have declined since March 2007 (Chart 11, Table 15). Yet there has reportedly been no major decrease in production of gold in eastern Congo or reduction in trade in gold between eastern Congo and Uganda,72 so the decline in Uganda’s gold exports suggests the gold trade is becoming more unofficial and perhaps traders are bypassing Kampala to go directly to Dubai or other locations to trade their gold. The UN Group of Experts has reported that during 2009, Kampala-based directors of companies on the UN sanctions list have traded in gold from conflict areas of

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70 These totals differ may differ from other tables due to the source, but are presented here to indicate the general destinations of Uganda’s gold exports.
71 Interviews with gold traders, an NGO official, and a government official, June 2009, Bunia and Mongbwalu.
72 Interviews with gold miners, gold traders, and a government official, June 2009, Bunia and Mongbwalu.
North Kivu (UNSC 2009a, § 133-141), and remain the largest buyers of gold produced in Ituri (UNSC 2009a, § 243-245).

Ugandan businessmen not only continue to trade in gold, but also may be supporting artisanal mining in Ituri. In early 2009 an association of pit bosses in the Mongbwalu area (ASTRAMIN) traveled to Kampala and obtained promises of funding from Ugandan investors. These Ugandans offered to provide capital for generators, tools, and other equipment, but Congolese government authorities reportedly prohibited this investment, citing national security concerns.  

CONCLUSION
The polywar in Ituri underwent a dramatic transformation between 2003 and 2009. At the local level, the actions and aims of the armed groups shifted over time. When the Ugandan army withdrew from Ituri in 2003, various armed groups attacked each other and civilian populations for reasons of both ethnicity and economics. The period of 2003 and 2004 was one of ethnically targeting killing and raping, but also one of competition among the groups for key gold mining areas, commercial centers, and trading routes. With the start of robust military action in 2005 from the United Nations’ forces, Ituri’s armed groups fragmented and weakened, and former enemies even banded together to fight against the United Nations and newly-deployed Congolese army. Through military attacks, diplomatic efforts, and the arrests of key militia leaders, the United Nations slowly defeated the local groups and brought Ituri under control. The leaders of various armed groups moved away from “the gun” and sought to procure lucrative and powerful positions for themselves in the Congolese army and government.

At the regional level, Uganda’s policies in Ituri also shifted over time. For several years after it withdrew from Ituri, Uganda acted as a greedy spoiler to peace in Ituri by supporting armed groups, allowing armed groups from eastern Congo to operate on its territory, and failing to enforce United Nations’ sanctions intended to curb the transfer of weapons to Congo. Uganda also facilitated a lucrative informal cross-border trade in gold and enabled Ugandan businessmen to substantially increase exports to Congo. During 2005, Uganda’s behavior started to change as a result of both the success of MONUC-led military operations in eastern Congo and increased diplomatic and public pressure on the Museveni regime to curtail its meddling in Congo’s affairs. As security conditions improved during 2005 and 2006, particularly in the Ituri District, Ugandan businesses vastly increased their official and unofficial exports to Congo, thereby boosting Uganda’s macroeconomic profile.

At the international level, the United Nations played the key role in bringing peace to Ituri. The UN mission in Congo initially tried to negotiate with Ituri’s armed groups, but actions in Ituri and the Kivus made it clear a more robust approach was needed. In 2005, the UN (with some help from the Congolese army) vigorously attacked Ituri’s rebel groups, displacing them from key goldfields and trading centers. At the same time, the United Nations negotiated with militia leaders and set up disarmament, demobilization,

73 Interviews with gold miners, June 2009, Mongbwalu and Paradizo.
and reintegration programs for combatants. MONUC also facilitated the arrests of several key leaders and helped to secure their indictments at the International Criminal Court, which sent a signal that some leaders, at least, could not expect impunity. Although peace in Ituri remains fragile, the hero of the period 2003-2009 in Ituri is the UN mission in Congo.

The complexity of the conflicts during 2003-2009 in Ituri is further evidence of the existence of a polywar. In effect, the earlier period of polywar in Ituri (1998-2003) extended into the time after Ugandan withdrew its army. Local groups fought each other in Ituri, and helped sustain their operations with the involvement of Uganda, and to a lesser extent, Rwanda. The local groups also fought against the United Nations’ force and the Congolese army in a series of complicated conflicts that may be categorized as internal wars, internationalized internal armed conflicts, and extraterritorial conflicts (see first chapter). The international character changed during 2005, when MONUC aggressively attacked Ituri’s armed groups and sought to cut off the supply of arms from Uganda. By late 2007, most of Ituri’s armed groups had disbanded and the war was effectively over, although the extrasystemic war of Uganda v. LRA continued (and continues) to threaten peace in Ituri. The involvement of local armed groups, national actors (Congo, Uganda, and Rwanda), and international actors (the United Nations mission) in various conflicts during 2003-2009 attests to the existence of a polywar in Ituri.

The war in Ituri after 2003 also illustrates how the role of natural resources changes during war. During 2003-2005, key factors that enabled armed groups to exploit gold were resource location (distance from government center of power, proximity to Ugandan border), market location (in Uganda), commercial value, and international acquiescence of Uganda’s support for FNI and other groups controlling gold mining areas. In addition, armed groups were able to control artisanal production at a time when industrial production was impossible, and in the case of FNI, control of the Mongbwalu gold mining area conferred symbolic value that provided political benefits.

After 2006, two key factors lessened the importance of gold in sustaining war in Ituri. First, MONUC and FARDC displaced armed groups from key gold mining areas. FNI and other groups lost an important source of revenue, which reduced their abilities to acquire guns and ammunition and prolong the war. Second, international acquiescence of the Ugandan government’s spoiler role in Ituri declined. MONUC leveraged diplomatic pressure on the Ugandan government, which was also embarrassed by the December 2005 ICJ decision that severely criticized the Ugandan government’s role in supporting war in Ituri and in exploiting Ituri’s natural resources. The removal of international acquiescence for the illegal exploitation of Ituri’s gold helped MONUC and FARDC to maintain their aggressive action against Ituri’s armed groups, and helped to end the war.
Chapter 7. Rethinking the Resource Curse

This dissertation demonstrated that war in Congo’s Ituri district was part of the larger polywar of internal and international conflicts that took place during the 1990s and 2000s in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Numerous overlapping conflicts in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and eastern and northeastern Congo during the mid-1990s created a polywar that brought together pre-existing conflicts and spawned new “wars within the war,” such as the war in Ituri. The path to understanding war in Ituri, war in Congo, and other contemporary conflicts such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan lies in seeing these wars not as civil wars with third party involvement, but as the coalescence of multiple conflicts (local and international) and the intermingling of numerous conflict actors (local and international) in ways that escalate violence, create new wars, and hinder conflict resolution efforts.

This dissertation also showed how historical patterns of governance over people, territory, and mineral resources intersected with more recent struggles for political and economic power to produce armed conflict in Ituri. Put another way, the story of war in Ituri demonstrates how the integration of space, natural resources, and power influence the onset and duration of armed conflict. I argue the organization of territory (including the natural resources and populations contained therein) by colonial and post-colonial governments in Congo created inequality, exploitation, division, and conflict. The governance of nature and people served to extract wealth from minerals and land through labor for the benefit of a small political and economic elite, while the vast majority of Congo’s population remained mired in poverty. The unjust systems of governance in Congo persisted so long because they conformed to international systems of governance; they were first consistent with the imperialist morality of the colonial era,1 and then in accordance with the geopolitical objectives and economic interests of powerful foreign governments, corporations, and international institutions during the Cold War era.

When geopolitical priorities changed after the end of the Cold War, the corruption, exploitation and violence (direct and structural) that had long characterized governance in Congo became an embarrassment for the United States and other supporters of the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko. As a result, the United States, World Bank, and others significantly reduced or ceased political and economic assistance to Mobutu’s government. Mobutu’s ability to govern quickly eroded due to the end of international assistance and mounting domestic pressures, while conflicts from neighboring countries (Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, and Angola) spilled over onto Congolese territory. The reorganization of geopolitical alliances during the mid-1990s led the United States and other governments and institutions to shift their support to the new regional hegemons, Rwanda and Uganda, at the same time these new powers invaded and occupied eastern Congo. The Rwandan and Ugandan governments managed people and territory in Congo to further their own political and economic agendas, thereby creating

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1 Although there was some early criticism of King Leopold’s methods (see Hochschild 1998), the colonial model in Congo conformed to the patterns of governance then in place throughout Africa.
and sustaining a polywar that incorporated pre-existing conflicts, generated new conflicts, and killed and displaced millions of Congolese people.

In Ituri, as in the rest of Congo, local and international political economies individually and collectively influenced the onset and duration of war. During the colonial era, the calculated practices of governance over people, territory, and natural resources in Ituri were highly exploitive. Government, corporate, and religious actors collectively organized people and territory to facilitate the extraction of wealth from gold mines and fertile land. In the process, they also created physical and symbolic divisions between ethnic groups in Ituri that generated animosities and conflict, which occasionally manifested in episodes of violence. As governance and economic activity eroded during the Mobutu era, tens of thousands of people migrated to the gold producing areas, which had previously been a space tightly controlled by the state, in order to eke out an existence by manually extracting a product that would be consumed in foreign markets.

During the early 1990s, the extraterritorial extension of civil wars from neighboring countries into Congo heralded the violent times ahead for Ituri. War did not start in Ituri on its own: armies from neighboring countries and other parts of Congo brought war to Ituri. During the second Congo war, international institutions and scholars praised and supported the Ugandan government’s internal governance despite the fact that Ugandan President Museveni had violently and illegally extended his governance into Ituri and other parts of eastern Congo. The practices of Ugandan governance in Ituri were calculated to extract wealth from resources and people for the benefit of a small Ugandan and Congolese elite, but the Ugandan system also facilitated the escalation of a few minor disputes in a small corner of Ituri into a major war. In this “war within the war,” armed groups killed tens of thousands of people for reasons of ethnicity, political power, and control of lucrative gold mines, territory, and trading routes.

This brings me back to the question of the resource curse. I argue the resource curse fails to explain war in Congo, or in Ituri, because it ignores how space and power interact with resources to produce war. Conceptions of the resource curse typically analyze data within a particular country, but I argue this application of “island theory” to the study of war obscures important spatial variables such as proximity of resources to predatory states and to international borders and markets. The resource curse also fails to account for the ways that polywars of disparate internal and international conflicts may incorporate natural resources to produce or sustain war. The polywar in Congo consisted of numerous conflicts in which natural resources played different roles at different times, and in which political and economic drivers of conflict were intertwined. Whereas resource curse theory has a normative effect by only talking about civil war – and thus limiting discussion of the range of possible interventions to resolve conflicts – the cases of war in Congo and in Ituri show the importance of analyzing how the entire range of conflict actors use different types of resources in different locations to create or sustain polywars of internal and international conflicts.

Geopolitics also explains the connections between natural resources and war in Ituri in important ways ignored by resource curse theory. In the mid-1990s, international
governmental, corporate, and institutional support for a transition of power in Africa’s Great Lakes region enabled Uganda and Rwanda to invade Congo, change the regime, reinvade a second time, occupy large parts of eastern and northern Congo, and plunder natural resources in Ituri and other regions. International political, economic, and military assistance to Rwanda and Uganda during their occupation and exploitation of Congo are vital elements in the tapestry polywar in Congo, including war in Ituri. In addition, Uganda’s status as a “donor darling” enabled it to continue to support war in Ituri after it withdrew its army in 2003 without fear of significant penalty or sanction.

Although the connections between space, resources, and geopolitics have historically negatively affected Ituri and eastern Congo, they also provide insights into ways these links can be transformed to produce peace and security for the Iturian and Congolese people. Pugh and Cooper outline a set of prescriptions for addressing regional conflict complexes, such as neutralizing warlords and mafiosi; improving international sanctions; building state institutions; promoting regional economic development and protection; more effectively regulating economic activities; and conducting regional analyses (Pugh and Cooper 2004, 226-234). These suggestions provide a useful starting point for resolving Congo’s polywar, but neglect to address how transforming local conflicts and geopolitics can end and prevent war.

With respect to space, there needs to be greater attention to local conflicts during periods of “peace” as well as in the post-conflict state (cf. Autesserre 2010). This requires focused attention on local conflicts by government officials, non-governmental actors, and conflict analysts, who can identify conflicts that have the potential to catalyze violence or be drawn into pre-existing regional wars. Identification of problems is only one step; the institutions and processes engaged in conflict prevention or resolution efforts must have credibility and legitimacy among the population in order for their efforts to have a chance of success. Indeed, the local problems in Ituri during the post-war phase, particularly with respect to unresolved land disputes, are well known locally and regionally, yet efforts to address them are failing due to lack of political will within Congo and Ituri, as well as persistent problems of governance (cf. Fahey 2011).

The geopolitical landscape is perhaps the most difficult to address for a polywar like that in Congo, but also potentially the most important. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine the development of polywar in Congo during the mid-to-late 1990s without the political and financial assistance provided to the governments of Rwanda and Uganda by the United States and other major powers and international institutions. This support ensured that Uganda and Rwanda could largely ignore Security Council declarations and sanctions about war in Congo, thereby enabling them pursue their own agendas in Congo and sustain the polywar. The solution, then, lies in identifying and publicizing the geopolitical links between conflict actors and their international political and corporate partners. With these ties exposed, citizens can pressure geopolitical powers, such as the United States government and World Bank, to condition their support to belligerent governments, such as those in Rwanda and Uganda, upon the latter’s cessation of aggression and illegal exploitation of natural resources.
With respect to Ituri, the process of recognizing the links between Uganda, war in Ituri, and international political and economic networks was slow and incomplete, which prolonged the war into late 2007. In retrospect, scholars should have paid greater attention to the implications of flawed classifications of the war in Congo as a “civil war,” and made more careful observations of the effects of praising Uganda as a “success story” of development at the same time it was occupying and plundering Ituri. Scholars help to shape the geopolitical space; therefore we have a responsibility to thoroughly evaluate how our work may contribute to conceptualizations about how wars start, why they persist, and how they can end.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND POLYWAR
In chapter one I outlined a set of six variables that I argue can help why and how belligerents incorporate natural resources into their war strategies. These six variables are: resource location, market location, commercial value, symbolic value, mode of production, and international acquiescence. I now analyze the two resources that had the greatest influence on war in Ituri – gold and land – and evaluate how the connections among these variables can signal the potential for conflict and war.

Gold
Gold influenced the onset of war in Congo, the development of polywar, and the duration of war in Ituri. Each of the six variables played different roles at different times, and they interacted with each other and with other political and economic dynamics to produce conflict and war. I argue that the abundance of gold in Ituri interacted with factors of location, value, production, and geopolitics in ways that influenced the onset and duration of war.

Resource location is key to understanding the role of gold in Congo’s wars. The three main gold producing areas in northeastern Congo (two of which are in Ituri) are distant from Congo’s capital. By 1996, this distance was enhanced by the enclavement of mining areas due to the deterioration of infrastructure during Mobutu’s rule. This distance theoretically (according to LeBillon 2005) suggests the central government has a harder time maintaining control over production and territory. While the gap between northeastern Congo’s goldfields and Kinshasa was a factor in the central government’s control of gold production in Ituri, its role in influencing conflict cannot be separated from the effects of Mobutu’s destructive patrimonial rule, which eroded state capacity while at the same time receiving substantial political and economic support from major international powers. Thus, distance from the national capital tells us little without being placed within its proper historical, political and economic contexts.

In addition, northeast Congo’s goldfields were proximate to the border of Uganda and to Uganda’s center of power (Kampala). As I showed in chapters 2 and 3, the gold trade between Ituri and Uganda had strengthened in the few years prior to the start of the polywar period. This proximity to a neighboring country’s border and center of power, and the existence of cross-border commercial networks (which were stronger than internal networks in the trade in gold) affected how gold influenced belligerents’ war
strategies. As I showed in chapters 3, 4, and 6, Ugandan interests in Congo’s gold significantly affected the onset and duration of the second Congo war, and the duration of the Ituri war. That is, the combination of distance from host nation center of power, the proximity to gold markets in Uganda, and the existence of gold trade networks with Uganda were all factors that influenced the onset and duration of war in Ituri. In contrast to LeBillon (2005), I argue resource location should be considered in relation to domestic/national centers of power, foreign centers of power, foreign borders, and foreign markets. In the case of Ituri, resource location considerations (in relation to other political and economic dynamics) made international war more likely than internal war, which is anomalous to influential accounts of the “resource curse”, as described in chapter 1.

The market for Congo’s gold is international and global. Prior to the start of the first war, gold exploited in Ituri and other areas of Congo moved through trade networks to Bujumbura (Burundi) and Kampala (Uganda), and from those capitals to other countries including Belgium and South Africa. On the eve of the first war, the gold trade was shifting from Bujumbura to Kampala, and although the Kampala trade route was disrupted during the interbellum, it quickly resumed during the second war when the Ugandan army occupied northeastern Congo. Because gold holds such high value on international markets, and because global demand for gold is consistently high, gold provided a solid source of funding for Ugandan army officers and businessmen, as well as their Congolese partners. After the Ugandan government withdrew its army from Ituri, it continued to support armed groups that controlled key gold mining areas in order to ensure the flow of gold through businessmen in Kampala; this helped to prolong the war in Ituri. The proximity of Congo’s goldfields to regional and international markets, combined with the strong international demand for gold, influenced the onset of the second war and the duration of war in Ituri.

While gold’s commercial value has consistently been high, commercial value alone did not determine when and how belligerents incorporated gold into their war strategies. Gold played different roles at different times during Congo’s wars. As I showed in chapter 3, international and internal interest in Congo’s gold was only weakly and obliquely connected to the onset of the first war, but during that war, the Rwandan-led coalition used gold to reward its main supporters, including the Ugandan government. Since the first war ended in a quick and decisive military victory, gold did not significantly influence the war’s duration; i.e., armed groups did not seek to prolong the war to exploit gold. Right after the first war, Uganda’s interest in Congo’s gold mines became evident, but Kabila frustrated these interests and Uganda’s gold exports declined. Influential members of Museveni’s patrimonial network had golden dreams during the interbellum, but as I showed in chapter 4, these dreams did not become realities until the second war.

During the interbellum, Ugandan interests in Congo’s gold were part of the political and economic process that led Museveni to reinvade Congo and to let Ugandan government officials immediately manage gold production and trade in northeastern Congo. That is, Ugandan interests in acquiring wealth from the trade in Ituri’s gold were part of the

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political and economic considerations that led the Ugandan government to invade and occupy northeast Congo. This notably contrasts with the civil war theory of the resource curse (discussed in chapter 1), which asserts rebel groups start “civil wars” to capture resource wealth, thereby ignoring the role of foreign governments in initiating war to exploit resources.

The exploitation of gold was also a significant factor in the duration of the second war. Ugandan and Congolese interests took advantage of the high commercial value of gold to sustain the war; that is, gold exploitation incentivized continued instability and conflict. Gold provided economic benefits to Museveni’s patrimonial network, and enabled rebel groups (some supported by Uganda) to purchase arms and sustain the war. As I discussed in chapter 6, Uganda supported the continuation of conflict in Ituri through 2005, in part to ensure the flow of Ituri’s gold through Kampala. Thus, the commercial value of gold is important for understanding war in Congo since 1996, but gold mainly influenced only the start of the second war and the duration of the second war and Ituri war.

The symbolic value of gold lies in the power and prestige conferred upon the person or group who either possesses the gold, or who controls the mining areas where gold is produced. Given the high commercial value of gold, possession of large amounts of gold provides a symbolic benefit because of the potential for the possessor to exploit the commercial value to acquire guns and ammunition, or to recruit soldiers. In addition, control of gold mining areas can confer important political benefits by granting legitimacy to an armed group. Human Rights Watch (2005, 73-75) described how the FNI rebel group exploited its control of Mongbwalu and relationship with the mining company AngloGold Ashanti to increase “their legitimacy locally and at the national level.” While the symbolic value of gold is closely linked to its commercial value, the case of war in Congo and Ituri demonstrates that gold’s symbolic value confers substantial benefits that may prolong armed conflict.

In addition, the symbolic value of gold played a role in international acquiescence to Uganda’s occupation and plunder of Congo’s gold. As noted in chapter 1, respected scholars and institutions praised Uganda as a “success story” of post-conflict economic recovery at the same time Uganda’s second leading export was gold exploited from areas of Congo occupied by the Ugandan army. Uganda’s elevated gold exports made Uganda’s economy look artificially strong, and concealed the violence under which gold was produced and traded in Ugandan-occupied Congo. Thus, Uganda and its international supporters took advantage of gold’s symbolic value to support narratives of Uganda’s economic strength and political success.

By the time internal and international conflicts coalesced in 1996 into polywar in Congo, most production of gold in eastern Congo was through artisanal and small-scale mining. As discussed in chapter 2, this was particularly true in Ituri, where manual extraction of gold from rocks, soils, and alluvium had replaced industrial gold mining. In the case of war in Ituri, the fact that artisanal production was dominant presented both opportunities and obstacles for armed groups that sought to profit from gold. Indeed, industrial
production in a war zone is difficult to sustain due to the difficulty of maintaining supply routes for items like fuel and spare parts, and the ability to retain trained staff to operate and maintain industrial machinery. Industrial production likely would have yielded greater quantities of gold, but had declined during the Mobutu era and was gradually replaced by artisanal methods. With artisanal production, armed groups (initially the Ugandan army and RCD-ML, but later FNI, UPC, FAPC and others) were able to exploit the labor of local populations—in some cases by force—in order to extract gold and sustain their activities. The extreme poverty in Ituri and the lack of alternative livelihoods meant that many people continued to mine gold during the war, despite the risks and dangers, simply in order to survive.

The pervasiveness of artisanal and small-scale mining in Ituri prior to the war enabled armed groups to quickly take control of this production and to continually exploit gold, thereby sustaining the war. More generally, the existence of an artisanal mode of production makes it easier – and therefore more attractive – for a government or rebel group to start a war and to sustain it, since industrial production is difficult to maintain during a war. However, artisanal production may also be a disincentive to conflict, since it requires having to control a large labor force, and results in yields likely to be lower than those from industrial production. The mode of production matters, but is context specific.

International acquiescence in the forms of political and/or financial assistance can enable a government or armed group to incorporate gold into its war strategy with virtual impunity. Indeed, there is a clear and compelling connection between international support for the government of Uganda (and conversely, lack of support for Zairian and Congolese regimes) and Uganda’s ability to plunder Congolese gold. Major bilateral supporters (such as the governments of the United States and United Kingdom) and major multilateral donors (such as the World Bank) provided financial assistance and political support to the Ugandan government throughout the polywar period. As discussed above, Uganda’s status as a “donor darling” enabled it to occupy and plunder its neighbor without fear of punishment, and to export hundreds of millions of dollars worth of Congolese gold between 1997 and 2007. After United Nations’ panels and other investigations clearly demonstrated Ugandan government involvement in the production and trade in Congo’s gold, there was increasing political pressure on Uganda to cease its activities, but this pressure was insufficient to get the Ugandan government to stop its support of armed conflict in Ituri until late-2005. It is noteworthy that the United Nations Security Council never sanctioned the Ugandan government for plundering Congo’s resources (including gold), and only belatedly sanctioned (in 2007) Uganda’s main gold exporters. Strong international support for the Museveni regime enabled him to invade, occupy, and plunder northeastern Congo for nearly five years, and to support rebel groups and war in Ituri for nearly three additional years.

Land
In this dissertation, I have limited my discussion of land and territory to a small collectivity in Ituri called Walendu Pitsi. In 1999, the Ituri war began after local political and economic struggles for power incorporated land disputes in ways that led to violence.
For understanding the how local power struggles incorporated land issues to produce violence, the variables of greatest relevance are resource location, symbolic values, and international acquiescence. Market location, commercial value, and mode of production were less important, but still relevant.

Land played an important role in the onset of the Ituri war, which started in June 1999. As I demonstrated in chapter 5, several minor, site-specific disputes in Walendu Pitsi escalated into deadly conflicts that spread to cover virtually the entire Ituri District. I showed how popular theories blaming greedy Hema businessmen for starting the war are incomplete, for although some Hema concession owners apparently did try to illegally expand their concessions by seizing Lendu lands, it is also appears that local Lendu leaders intended to illegally confiscate Hema concessions. Land disputes in Walendu Pitsi were part of a larger struggle for economic and political power in Walendu Pitsi and more broadly in Ituri; i.e. land became incorporated into local power struggles but did not itself cause those power struggles, which were historically rooted. I also showed in chapter 5 that other factors helped to inflame the few land disputes into a war, including the perceptions and misperceptions of local populations about the intentions of their adversary, as well as incompetence and mismanagement of the conflict by Ugandan military officers and RCD-ML officials.

Walendu Pitsi is distant from Congo’s center of power in Kinshasa, but in 1999 was proximate to the center of power of the occupying Ugandan army at Bunia (as well as proximate to Uganda’s border and capital). In this case, it is important to consider the location to the empirical—not the juridical—center of power. According to LeBillon’s (2005) conception, proximity to the center of power should translate into greater governmental ability to control a point resource; in this case the small number and geographic proximity of concessions in Walendu Pitsi arguably made them a point resource.

Uganda was the occupying power in Ituri, but when local struggles for political and economic power incorporated consideration of the commercial and symbolic value of land to produce violence, Uganda’s heavy-handed and confused response had the effect of escalating the situation, leading to inter-communal violence. While proximity to a center of power that has effective conflict prevention and conflict resolution institutions may reduce the likelihood of conflict, proximity to a center of power that has poorly functioning or non-existent institutions may lead to an escalation of conflict into war. The case of war in Ituri highlights the importance of thinking holistically about resource location and its relationships to armed conflict.

Another consideration with respect to land is the location of the actual sites of initial violence that prompted the war. As I noted in chapters 2 and 5, historical conflicts between Hema and Lendu communities happened mainly in southern Ituri’s Irumu territory, but the violence that erupted in 1999 was in northern Ituri’s Djugu territory. The epicenter of conflict—Djugu’s Walendu Pitsi collectivity—was traditionally Lendu territory, although Hema had lived in the territory for centuries and Lendu laborers worked on the Hema-run concessions. But here location becomes important, because
local Lendu leaders invoked their historical association to the land as part of their effort to wield greater political and economic power in Ituri. Therefore, the location of the start of the war became important for its symbolic value in addition to its commercial value. In addition, the first location of violence—Singa Kodjo’s Leyina concession—was not a location where the concession owner was trying to illegally seize neighboring lands, thus diminishing the argument the war started simply because of the greed of Hema concession owners. To sum up, with respect to land, it is important to consider the proximity to the empirical center of power, and to consider location in terms of its relationship to both commercial and symbolic values.

The market for land was local. That is, in Ituri, there was (and is) no significant regional or international demand for land acquisition. The concession lands in Walendu Pitsi where the war started were “owned” by the Congolese government, but leased to concession holders. As discussed in chapter 5, some concession owners reportedly acquired additional land through illegal means in the period preceding the start of the war, but the perception among some Lendu (promoted by Lendu elites) of widespread fraud and intent by some Hema to illegally acquire lands both contributed to the onset and escalation of violence. To the extent Lendu elites helped to initiate the war in Ituri, the intended market for seized lands was local Lendu elites and villagers, as evidenced by (ongoing) occupations of formerly-Hema owned concessions by Lendu farmers and pastoralists. The Lendu leaders who sought to seize concession lands in Walendu Pitsi viewed land as an element that would enhance their political and economic power, and the power of the Lendu people. Since violence in effect opened up many concessions for occupation and seizure, the existence of a local market for seized lands may have influenced the decision of Lendu leaders to start the violence that escalated to war; however, this variable appears less important than other factors such as symbolic value.

The commercial value of the lands in Walendu Pitsi where the Ituri war started is difficult to determine. One measure of the value of the land is found in the fees paid by Congolese businessmen to their government for the rights to a concession. But in considering the commercial value of land, it is also important to consider the commercial value of the products of that land produced by labor, be they livestock (for meat and dairy) or plant products (e.g. coffee, timber and food crops). Yet during a war, agricultural production can become severely disrupted, thereby limiting the commercial value of both the land and its products: this was certainly the case in Ituri, where Ugandan soldiers and Congolese militias stole many cattle, and where massive population displacements severely limited agricultural production.

As discussed in chapter 5, some Hema businessmen sought to illegally acquire land in Walendu Pitsi, allegedly refusing to pay the full commercial value of the land. In addition, Lendu leaders intent on seizing lands they considered theirs by birthright sought to avoid paying for the commercial value of land, and also sought (perhaps) to profit from the value of crops and livestock produced on seized lands. However, during my field research in Walendu Pitsi, it became clear that some seized concessions have fallen into disrepair and/or were underutilized; therefore the commercial value was less important in land seizures and conflict than other factors, such as the symbolic value of land. This
finding suggests that the commercial value of land must be considered in relation to its symbolic value in determining the likelihood that people will start or sustain violence to control access to land.

In Ituri, the symbolic value of land influenced the start of the war. Local Lendu leaders in Walendu Pitsi related narratives about the importance of land and territorial control in areas they considered historically “Lendu.” That is, local Lendu leaders invoked history and historical memory to confer great symbolic value on lands in Walendu Pitsi. In Walendu Pitsi, the symbolic value of land played an important role in the ability of elites to mobilize ethnicity around historical alienation from the land, thereby contributing to the escalation of violence that produced the sustained violence of a war.

For land, mode of production can refer to processes of transformation of the resource (e.g. turning forest into cropland), and of exploitation of the land to obtain mineral resources, plant products, and other products. In Ituri, there was little industrial agriculture at the time of the start of the polywar in 1996. Agricultural production was largely based on simple methods of production, with some tractors and other farm equipment in use, but in general, production of livestock and crops at the concessions involved large amounts of labor and low levels of industrialization. If there had been greater levels of industrial production, and therefore greater use of farm and processing equipment, the mode of production may have influenced the onset of war, since conflict could provide an opportunity for an armed group to seize and utilize valuable equipment, or to rapidly profit from industrial harvesting of commercially valuable resources. But as this was not the case in Ituri, the mode of production of land did not significantly affect the start of the war, or its duration.

International acquiescence affected the way in which the incorporation of land into local power struggles escalated into a major war. As I showed in chapter 5, Ugandan mismanagement of the initial disturbances directly contributed to the start of the Ituri war. In this sense, international tolerance of Uganda’s occupation and predations in Ituri helped to facilitate the incorporation of land disputes into political and economic power struggles that evolved into warfare in an area under de facto Ugandan army control. Put another way, if major international powers had not condoned and supported Uganda’s actions in Congo, thereby enabling Uganda to occupy Ituri, the land disputes may have been resolved peacefully, or may have remained a localized conflict that did not escalate into a brutal, eight-year long war. This last assertion is difficult to verify, but international tolerance of Uganda’s actions in Congo contributed to the major role of the Ugandan army in the escalation of a few land disputes in Walendu Pitsi into the Ituri war.

Summary
The analysis of the six variables in relation to gold and land in Ituri suggests that the interaction of the variables influences the likelihood of conflict; i.e. no one variable in isolation is sufficient to explain how or why an armed force will incorporate natural resources into its war aims. These variables do not determine whether a war will take place, but give insight into the ways natural resources may influence the start or duration of war. The connections between natural resources and individual wars are easier to
ascertain than the links between resources and the coalescing of numerous individual conflicts into a polywar.

Gold is strongly associated with the Ugandan government’s invasion and occupation of northeastern Congo; i.e. with the interstate war started by Uganda (and its ally Rwanda) against the Congolese government. The main variables that explain the Ugandan government’s actions are resource location (gold mines close to Uganda’s border), market location (Uganda had become a major market for Congolese gold), commercial value (high value), and international acquiescence (international political and financial assistance to Uganda). Mode of production and symbolic value do not appear to have played a major role in Uganda’s decision to invade Congo; however, they do help explain how gold became incorporated into war, and how scholars and policymakers interpreted Uganda’s high gold exports as being signs of a well-managed and strong Ugandan economy.

Of the four main variables linking gold to the Ugandan government’s invasion, international acquiescence is the key to understanding why the war started. The other three variables – resource location, market location, and commercial value – are present today, yet Uganda is not waging war in Congo or Ituri. However, the existence of these three variables at the moment in time when powerful Western governments, institutions, and influential academics were praising Uganda and providing it with generous political and financial support helps to explain how Ugandan interests in Congo’s gold influenced the government of Uganda to invade, free of concerns about economic sanctions or other significant penalties.

Land is strongly associated with the onset of the war within the war that started in 1999 in Ituri. The main variables that explain why local actors and the Ugandan army escalated a few minor land disputes into a major war are resource location, symbolic value, and international acquiescence. These variables interacted at a time when Ituri was under foreign military occupation, and in a place where government institutions to redress grievances through political processes did not exist or functioned poorly. Thus, as with gold, the coalescence of different factors at a particular moment in time increased the likelihood that local struggles for political and economic power would incorporate issues of land access and control in ways that produced war.

In cases where a resource is located within an area that is already at war, conflict actors may incorporate those resources in ways that produce new conflicts and contribute to the development of polywar. Ugandan interests in Ituri’s gold helped to produce the second Congo war, which incorporated several disconnected or loosely connected conflicts in Congo and neighboring countries into a regional polywar. With the polywar in Congo well underway in 1999, the incorporation of land disputes into conflicts that created a unique war in Ituri contributed to the expansion of the polywar, making it more difficult to resolve. The interactions of the six variables help to explain the development of individual wars in Congo and in Ituri, but it is the interactions of the individual wars that help to explain the development of a polywar.
LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD
This dissertation explained why and how war took place between 1996 and 2007 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and more specifically, within Congo’s Ituri district. During the course of my research, I have come to appreciate the importance of historical events and processes for understanding contemporary dynamics, and the necessity of evaluating actors and processes at a variety of levels (local, national, regional, and international). I have also come to understand that it is impossible – and indeed counterproductive – to separate political considerations from economic interests in understanding the onset and duration of war in Congo and Ituri. Finally, I could only make sense of war in Congo when I cast off the concept of “civil war” applied by many noted scholars and created the model of polywar, which captures the existence and merging of numerous overlapping conflicts in the same geographic area.

The story of war in Ituri is a story about how space, natural resources, and power interact to cause or sustain war. It is a tragic story full of violence and exploitation, in which local and international actors sought to control people and territory to pursue narrow and self-serving political and economic agendas. But this story also contains lessons and insights about how and why wars start, expand, coalesce, and end. I hope these lessons can inform efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts in Ituri, in Congo, and in other war-torn countries and regions.

This dissertation also highlights several directions for future research to clarify the wars in Congo and Ituri, the concept of polywar, and the connections between natural resources and armed conflict.

Despite the spate of recent books on war in Congo, there are a number of significant research gaps. There has been insufficient research on how international political and economic assistance to the governments of Rwanda and Uganda influenced their conduct in Congo. Such research could examine the extent to which Western governments and institutions pressured Rwanda and Uganda to refrain from waging war in and plundering Congo, and investigate how such pressures did or did not produce the intended results. Related to this point, the motivations behind statements praising Uganda’s development while ignoring Uganda’s predations remain unclear; were they the result of tunnel vision or an expression of ideological agendas? There has also been insufficient attention to the development of polywar in Congo; i.e. how various internal and international conflicts coalesced to produce more than a decade of sustained warfare and illegal natural resource exploitation.

The role of the UN Security Council in addressing war in Congo also merits greater attention. For example, why didn’t the Security Council levy sanctions on the governments of Rwanda or Uganda for their invasion and occupation of Congo? How did Security Council sanctions on individuals and companies influence conflict resolution efforts? How have Security Council sanctions on gold traders affected the Congolese government’s efforts to formalize the gold trade, and how have sanctions impacted the overall transparency of the trade in gold mined in Congo? Are sanctions on governments
more effective than sanctioning individuals, or is some combination of approaches necessary to address the links between natural resources and war?

There are also many opportunities for future research on the war in Ituri. There are many unresolved debates about the land disputes in Walendu Pitsi, and their relationship to the start of the Ituri war. There is contradictory information about the specific events leading up to the start of the war in June 1999, the subsequent battles, the formation of armed groups, the sources of armed group funding, and arms transfers. The thought processes and actions of Hema and Lendu elites also remain unclear, but would provide much greater insight into how and why the war in Ituri began. In addition, the precise role of the Ugandan government in sustaining war in Ituri after 2003 is unclear; was there a conscious policy developed by President Museveni, or was his patrimonial network simply pursuing individual economic interests with the knowledge that neither Museveni nor the international community would interfere?

This dissertation is the first articulation of the theory of polywar, so there are many avenues for future research on how and why numerous conflicts coalesce into a multifaceted war. I have focused on war in Ituri, which was a product of the polywar, but additional research could investigate the precise mechanisms by which numerous conflicts and conflict actors throughout Congo coalesced to create the polywar. I argue that the contemporary wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are polywars, but this claim also merits greater scrutiny.

The theory of polywar also raises interesting questions about the classifications of various wars that provide the basis for many contemporary theories of war. As discussed in chapter one, the term “civil war” remains popular with political scientists and economists studying war, but the complex configurations of internal and international actors in virtually all contemporary wars suggests the term civil war is anachronistic and constraining on debates about why wars start and how to end them. Why are so many conflicts with significant international and internal dimensions classified as one-dimensional civil wars? Why are the wars in Congo classified and analyzed as simple civil wars? How does analyzing polywars or predominantly international conflicts as civil wars affect the descriptive and prescriptive values of conflict models developed by Collier and Hoeffler, Ross, Fearon and Laitin, Sambanis, and other influential scholars?

This dissertation also illuminates topics for future research on the relationships between natural resources and war. As demonstrated in chapter two, scholars using quantitative analyses need to pay greater attention to the definition of “primary commodities,” and to look for other ways to measure the commercial and symbolic values of natural resources that are theoretically meaningful and consistent across countries and regions. The spatial dimension of resources merits greater attention both in terms of concentration (point or diffuse) and with respect to proximity to centers of power, international borders, predatory states, and international markets. The significance of international acquiescence also deserves greater research; e.g., how does the type of commodity and its value to international markets influence the potential that major Western powers or the
UN Security Council will take action to sever the ties between resource exploitation and war?

Finally, there needs to be a reckoning of the effects in Congo of the so-called “conflict minerals” movement. In the last two years, activists in the United States and Europe have crafted narratives about the role of natural resources in war in Congo that are incomplete and misleading. For example, activists have falsely asserted that all cell phones contain “bloody” minerals from Congo, and stated that wherever there is gold in Congo, there is conflict. These and other spurious claims have led to policies and processes that have the potential to negatively affect the livelihoods of miners and to perpetuate the systems of exploitation and inequality that have long prevailed in Congo. There should be focused research on the claims made by activists, and the effects of those claims in Congo.
Methods

My research has been empirical and qualitative. I used a variety of field- and desk-based methods, including: structured and semi-structured interviews, literature reviews, document analysis, analyses of statistical data, and observation.

I conducted field research in Africa and Europe for this dissertation. I conducted preliminary field research during June-August 2005 in Uganda, Congo, and Rwanda. I returned to Uganda and Sudan in May-July 2006; however, most of my time was spent in Sudan for a consultancy job. I spent May-July 2007 in Belgium studying French, meeting with Belgian academics, and conducting archival research at the Africa Museum in Terveuren. From August 2007-March 2008, I was in Congo (Kinshasa, North Kivu, Ituri) and Uganda. Between June-August 2008, I returned to Belgium and conducted additional archival research. From May-July 2009, I conducted field research in Ituri. During June-July 2010, I was back in North Kivu and Ituri for a consultancy on the minerals trade, which enabled me to obtain additional data in support of my dissertation. Finally, from January-June 2011, I split my time between Goma (North Kivu) and Province Orientale for a consultancy job; some of the information I obtained for this job also informed my dissertation.

I conducted approximately 230 interviews during the course of my field research. In addition to these formal interviews, many hundreds of informal conversations in Congo, Uganda, and Europe helped to inform this dissertation. Table 16 summarizes the formal interviews.

Table 16. List of Interviewees

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210 Jiba Elder
211 Lita Catholic Church official
212 Paradizó Gold miner
213 Paradizó Gold miner
214 Mongbwalu NGO official (national)
215 Mongbwalu Catholic Church official
216 Mongbwalu Gold miner
217 Kampala, Uganda Exiled NGO official from Ituri
218 The Netherlands Exiled NGO official from Ituri
219 Bunia NGO official (international)
220 Mongbwalu Gold miner
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223 Mongbwalu Gold trader
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