

Dulles and Hammarskjöld, Greg Poulgrain

Evidence showing a tragic clash of policy occurred between UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and DCI Dulles, resulting in the death of the former, has come mainly from two sources. The first is an interview I conducted in the UK in 1982 with Hammarskjöld's right-hand man, George Ivan Smith; and the second, an envelope containing some letters brought to light in 1997 by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). These letters indicated Allen Dulles was involved in the assassination of UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld in 1961.

George Ivan Smith told me that the Secretary-General was about to intervene in the long-running dispute between the Netherlands and Indonesia over sovereignty of West New Guinea. He had intended to announce this dramatic UN intervention at the General Assembly upon returning from the Congo in September 1961. The UN involvement had come about through President Kennedy. From his first day in office when DCI Dulles presented Kennedy with the sovereignty dispute, he saw the invidious choice facing him was between a NATO ally, the Netherlands, and Indonesia, a newly-independent country that Kennedy wanted 'on-side' in the Cold War. Before Kennedy became president, he met Hammarskjöld several times and was aware that the OPEX program in Africa could be applicable to West New Guinea.

At the Economic Club of New York on March 8, 1960, Hammarskjöld outlined how newly independent countries of a special category would benefit from a UN Special Fund he had devised. In the welter of decolonisation that was taking place in the wake of the Second World War, the UN Secretary-General explained that he was giving special attention to indigenous peoples and the obstacles they faced in achieving statehood. He had designed a project called OPEX which involved sending UN officers for up to six years to work in the government departments of newly independent countries in this special category. He started OPEX in Africa in 1961 and with Kennedy's approval proceeded with planning to include Netherlands New Guinea.

On April 28, 1961, together with Adlai Stevenson, Kennedy spoke with Hammarskjöld in the presidential suite of the Waldorf Astoria Towers. On his desk in the Oval office, JFK always kept a coconut as a memento of his wartime experience in the Navy, in the Solomon Islands - the same location that James Michener's as a naval historian gathered the data that later became *Tales of the South Pacific*. After Lieutenant Kennedy's patrol-torpedo boat PT-109 was sliced in two by a Japanese destroyer, he and his crew were rescued by some Solomon Island people - culturally and racially linked with the Melanesian people of NNG (West New Guinea). Before his meeting with Hammarskjöld, President Kennedy wanted a regional update so he arranged a private meeting with General Douglas MacArthur, the former commander whose wartime headquarters were in Netherlands New Guinea¹. For an hour or so before meeting Hammarskjöld in the Waldorf Astoria Towers, Kennedy and MacArthur talked in Suite 37A, then JFK went directly to the presidential suite, endeavouring to keep both meetings on this matter as discrete as possible. But Kennedy's attempt to have the UN intervene in the sovereignty dispute in 1961 was thwarted when the UN Secretary-General was assassinated in September that year. Allen Dulles had a key role in this tragedy, according to evidence unearthed by the TRC. The death of Hammarskjöld left JFK no choice but to deal directly with the sovereignty dispute.

Hammarskjöld was planning for the Papuan people, as the indigenous inhabitants of the territory, to gain their independence by removing both parties (the Dutch and the Indonesians) who claimed sovereignty over them. Having discussed the issue with Kennedy, Hammarskjöld also talked this over with his long-time UN assistant, George Ivan Smith. It was he who explained to me that the UN Secretary-General was planning to announce this at the UN General Assembly as soon as he returned from the Congo assignment. Hammarskjöld departed for the Congo in September 1961 to mediate a dispute over the breakaway province of Katanga but never returned.

Addressing the UN General Assembly, September 25, 1961, upon the death of Hammarskjöld, Kennedy displayed the same anti-colonial eloquence Allen Dulles had noted during his many conversations with Kennedy as a young Senator. He spoke of

the exploitation and subjugation of the weak by the powerful, of the many by the few, of the governed who have given no consent to be governed, whatever their continent, their class, or their color.²

Hammarskjöld's approach to the Cold War had drawn criticism from both sides, yet in characteristic style he refused to be daunted. A year before Hammarskjöld's death, Nikita Khrushchev as Premier of the Soviet Union had addressed the UN General Assembly, September 23, 1960. His proposal was that the role of the UN Secretary-General be replaced by a 'directorship of three'.

The Soviet Government has come to a definite conclusion. The conditions appear to be ripe for abolishing the post of the Secretary-General, who is at present the sole administrator of the apparatus, the sole interpreter and executor of decisions of the Security Council and of the UN General Assembly.

Khrushchev's words were being quoted by Adlai Stevenson,³ the US representative in the United Nations, in a written report to President Kennedy, dated May 27, 1961. Stevenson explained that evidence from recent history

helps to explain why the leaders of the Kremlin regard the West with suspicion; why new suspicion must be created by such events as the Western *volte face* in 1955 from their own disarmament proposals, after Russia had accepted them; Suez, 1956; Lebanon, 1958, when US and Britain acted in defiance of Hammarskjöld; the U-2 episode; and Cuba, 1961.

The U-2 episode referred to the Gary Powers incident, when a spy-plane over the Soviet Union was brought down and the pilot captured. The incident caused Khrushchev to walk out of the Paris disarmament conference in 1960 when the super-powers were on the verge of agreement. Who or what caused this dramatic reversal? Colonel Fletcher Prouty has drawn attention to this incident because covert flights were part of his CIA activities under DCI Dulles. He said the only reason that Power's U-2 had been forced to a lower altitude, where it became a target for Soviet fire, was because of the delicate fuel-system of the plane, an adjustment possibly done before departure. The result was that disarmament talks were disbanded and the Cold War went to a higher level. Détente had no place in Allen Dulles' plans. The U-2 incident and then Cuba helped admirably to ramp up tension, as did the Soviet detonation of a 50-megaton bomb said to be more than 1500 times more powerful than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined. Stevenson commented to Kennedy that when Khrushchev had visited the US in 1959, and went to the Garst farm (a farm

in Guthrie County, Iowa owned by Roswell and Elizabeth *Garst*) Khrushchev had quietly told Stevenson that as soon as disarmament talks were concluded – and Khrushchev was keen for them to be concluded – Moscow would be more favourably disposed towards the US proposal regarding the role of the UN as 'international police'. This role was precisely what caused difficulties for Hammarskjöld in the Congo. From the Soviet perspective, Hammarskjöld was not strictly 'neutral' and had Khrushchev known about the deal between Kennedy and Hammarskjöld over New Guinea, it would have added to his suspicion. In his letter to Kennedy, Stevenson wrote that soon after his conversation with Khrushchev on the Garst farm

The UN was called into the Congo; a UN International Force was created; it was responsible to Hammarskjöld, virtually alone, and he and his agents made decisions in the Congo which Khrushchev did not like.

Kennedy was aware of Khrushchev's concern but unaware that in the event of Hammarskjöld's OPEX plan for the Papuan people being implemented – the joint plan, that is, with Kennedy - it would jeopardize Allen Dulles' Indonesia strategy. I should stress that my interview with George Ivan Smith was fifteen years before the TRC documents which Desmond Tutu brought to light, implicating Allen Dulles. Yet my reading of Indonesian history and the fact that a US Senate investigation in the mid-1970s found Allen Dulles responsible for the death of Patrice Lumumba in 1961, three days before Kennedy's inauguration, suggested a possible link with the death of Hammarskjöld. This was why I had decided to contact George Ivan Smith.

In and around the Congo in 1961, various parties were already objecting to UN interference but this decisively took the direction of eliminating the UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld only with the involvement of Allen Dulles. Because my meeting with George Ivan Smith was still a decade and a half before Bishop Tutu's papers revealed Dulles was involved in 'Operation Celeste', the planned assassination of Hammarskjöld, Dulles' actual involvement and the idea that the Congo might not have been his primary motive seemed mere conjecture. George Ivan Smith pursued his investigation into the death of Hammarskjöld by focusing on how it actually occurred, the means rather than motive. Any extraneous motive for Dulles' involvement seemed superfluous, particularly when it was on the other side of the world!

George Ivan Smith commented how surprised he was at Hammarskjöld's preoccupation with solving the sovereignty dispute over Netherlands New Guinea. After all, by resolving potential conflict between the superpowers, his intervention (ignoring Khrushchev's complaint) seemed to embody the very ideal of the UN. Smith, from the time he retired from the UN and for the rest of his life, continued his private investigations into the death of the Secretary-General in the Congo. He saw no reason to look any further than the environs of the Congo because the presence of the UN had stirred such enmity among the various mercenary groups there, Belgian, French and British. When he visited the Congo after the UN plane had crashed, he too was nearly killed. Interviewed in 1982, he did not see how Netherlands New Guinea could be linked with the death of Hammarskjöld and, at that time, I did not have sufficient detail to convince him otherwise. However, from the vantage point of the 21st century, the present-day reader will focus more on Allen Dulles because of Archbishop Tutu's announcement and, as a result, realise how previously neglected information has acquired new significance – such as the presence of a CIA communications plane operating at midnight on the airstrip just when Hammarskjöld's plane was due to land.

Had the plan of Hammarskjöld (and Kennedy) to intervene in Netherlands New Guinea been carried out, it would have decimated Dulles' Indonesia strategy in a way that was similar (not precisely the same, but similar) to the way that Kennedy's proposed visit to Jakarta also threatened to end Dulles' strategy. This similarity of motive makes Dulles' involvement in the death of Dag Hammarskjöld far more significant when considered as a precedent for his involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy.

By 1963, Dulles' strategy - in addition to New Guinea gold and regime change in Indonesia - included the Sino-Soviet conflict. Would Allen Dulles have resorted to assassinating not only the UN Secretary-General but also the President of the United States to ensure his 'Indonesia strategy' was achieved? This is for the reader to decide - which is why I have written this book - but, as a ghastly precedent, the death of Hammarskjöld in 1961 can now be linked with Kennedy in 1963.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Allen Dulles' global reach was a reflection of his vast experience. From the First World War to the Warren Commission, Allen Dulles' life was immersed in the world of intelligence, dealing with issues that ranged from empire to armaments, national security to regime change, oil, military and many other matters. In Berne during the Second World War, the assistance he provided the Allied war effort from contacts within Germany and his own expertise was nothing less than extraordinary; so much so that in the following decade, Dulles was regarded as an icon of US intelligence and any accusation to the contrary was readily dismissed. However, six years after his death in 1969, a US investigation chaired by Senator Frank Church produced a different profile of Allen Dulles. As part of fourteen reports on US intelligence activities, the Church Committee revealed that some of the activities former DCI Allen Dulles engaged in were nefarious in the extreme and these included the assassination of foreign leaders.

The Church Committee found that the death of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo, which occurred three days before Kennedy's inauguration, was directly instigated by Allen Dulles. In arranging for an agent to kill Lumumba, Dulles had left a paper trail in the form of a telegram to Leopoldville, September 24, 1960:

We wish [to] give every possible support in eliminating Lumumba from any possibility [of] resuming governmental position....

The Church investigation found that two days later the Congo CIA station officer (Hedgman) contacted a CIA go-between named Joseph Scheider (alias Joseph Braun) who did not himself kill Lumumba but was responsible for the group of persons who did. Answering a Church Committee question, Hedgman replied:

It is my recollection that he (Dulles) advised me, or my instructions were, to eliminate Lumumba.

Question: By eliminate, do you mean assassinate?

Hedgman: Yes.⁴



Lumumba and Hammarskjöld

The killing of Lumumba, before he had served three months as the first Prime Minister of the Congo, involved much brutality and torture. This was public knowledge at the time; later, when added to the heinous role of Dulles as outlined in the findings of the Church Committee, it shocked the nation, indeed, shocked the world.

The death of Lumumba fuelled even more political instability in newly-independent Congo after the unrest caused by its mineral rich province of Katanga threatening to secede. The mining industry there was controlled by Western interests. In September 1961, in the wake of the violence that erupted after Lumumba was eliminated, UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld became involved in mediation between Katanga and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A few minutes after midnight on Sunday 17 September 1961, as the UN plane carrying the Sec-General and 15 others approached the Ndola airstrip in Northern Rhodesia (today Zambia), it crashed, killing all.

Two Rhodesian enquiries in early 1962 concluded 'pilot error – a misreading of the altimeters' – had brought down the DC6, known as the 'Albertina'. However, in March 1962, an investigation by the United Nations did not rule out sabotage, although it fell short of stating officially that assassination was suspected. The Church Committee in 1975 did not make any links between Dulles and Hammarskjöld, and a 1993 investigation by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded the pilot had made an error in judging altitude. Persistent investigation by George Ivan Smith, who was the Secretary-General's spokesman and close friend, unearthed a disturbingly vital clue that the plane was forced down as a result of interference by hostile aircraft. Whether this caused the crash remained inconclusive.

In 1997, more documentary evidence emerged as part of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and since then the death of Dag Hammarskjöld has been re-investigated. The chance discovery of relevant documents by the TRC provided the impetus for a new enquiry which was started in 2012 by the Hammarskjöld Commission. It examined the TRC documents and letters in some detail to decide if the new evidence justified re-opening another investigation into the death of the Secretary-General. The report of the Hammarskjöld Commission was published in September 2013, fifteen years after the TRC documents had first emerged, and a Report tabled in the UN.⁵

In August 1998, the TRC Chairman, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, had called a press conference, releasing eight documents and explaining their chance discovery in a folder from the National Intelligence Agency. A member of the TRC had requested a folder with information on a 1993 assassination in South Africa, and the additional material happened to be in that same folder. The additional sheets of paper were letters and they referred to an 'Operation Celeste', a plan to assassinate Dag Hammarskjöld. These letters showed Allen Dulles was involved, his name specifically mentioned. The documents bore the letterhead of the South African Institute for Maritime Research (SAIMR) and the name of Allen Dulles was specifically mentioned.

UNO [United Nations Organisation] is becoming troublesome and it is felt that Hammarskjöld should be removed. Allen Dulles agrees and has promised full cooperation from his people....⁶

Information from Dulles included the type of plane the Secretary-General would use and the date he would arrive. More importantly, even though the letter was signed by a person at SAIMR, it was directly conveying the words of DCI Dulles. As mentioned, when Dulles initiated the killing of Lumumba, the evidence brought before the Church Committee was written by Dulles: 'We wish [to] give every possible support....'

The wording here seems relatively innocuous but in the context of the Church Committee investigation, the sinister import in Dulles' euphemism acquires a meaning far more significant. It is the order to kill – but not read as such without the explanation from the CIA station chief in the Congo that Dulles requested him to kill Patrice Lumumba. Otherwise the euphemistic expression 'give every possible support' might well have been interpreted as if Dulles had played a secondary role when, in fact, he *initiated the action* that led to the assassination of Patrice Lumumba. In the case of Hammarskjöld, the TRC document states that Dulles promised 'full cooperation' but this was written by a 'commander' of SAIMR, the intelligence organisation mentioned in the documents. The same commander then states: 'I want his [Hammarskjöld's] removal to be handled more efficiently than was Patrice.'

This sentence links SAIMR with Dulles, whom we know already initiated the killing of Patrice Lumumba. Up until the Church Committee proved otherwise, Lumumba's death had been regarded as the tragic outcome of violence initiated by local tribes-people, but the order to kill Lumumba was given by Dulles and carried out by SAIMR. Local people were involved only in the final act. Using the similar euphemistic term of 'promising full cooperation', an equivalent scenario for Operation Celeste would have Dulles (from his office in Washington) initiating the killing of the UN Sec-General, and for the operators, SAIMR (as revealed in the TRC documents) to carry out the murder using locally based European mercenaries including a pilot or two in the final act.

The 'Operation Celeste' documents were examined in 2011 by Susan Williams in her book *Who Killed Hammarskjöld* with extensive research into SAIMR. She concluded that it was involved in covert action over many years, and that its structure was in 'cells' which operated independently. Williams raises the possibility that 'Operation Celeste' involved SAIMR cells for three separate actions against Hammarskjöld's plane. These three include hostile aircraft, a 6kg bomb to disable the steering mechanism, and the altimeters.

While I had not previously considered the first two possible actions, there was a strong possibility that the altimeters were sabotaged. The 2013 Commission presented

reliable evidence that the barometric readings (QNH) given to the *Albertina* by Ndola air traffic control were incorrect. Attention was drawn to the fact that the voice recordings of the air traffic controller at Ndola were turned off, possibly deliberately. As well, before the *Albertina* (Hammarskjöld's plane) departed for Ndola, where it crashed, there was a four-hour period when the plane was left unattended. If altimeters in the cockpit of the *Albertina* were sabotaged, how was it possible sabotage was not detected in subsequent testing of the altimeters? In the 'Comments from the United Nations' (attached to the 1962 crash report) it was stated there could have been a 'misreading of the altimeters'⁷ as the DC6, just after midnight descended to 5000ft and was doing a procedural turn in preparation to land when it clipped trees and crashed at 4357ft. The action of a small fighter plane, which began to harass the DC6 in the final few minutes of descent, made the advice coming from Ndola air traffic control vitally important because the pilot at that moment would have been relying entirely on air traffic control and his own reading of the altimeters.

Immediately after the crash in September 1961, one of the first actions was removal of the altimeters. There were two CIA planes waiting at Ndola airport, ready to offer assistance. The altimeters were checked in the USA and the all-clear was given by none other than J. Edgar Hoover. The 2013 Commission findings do not seem to have even considered the possibility that the 'official check' on the altimeters might have been fraudulent. In the findings of the 1962 UN Crash Report, paragraph 6.5 stated:

Although it has been suggested that a false QNH was given to the *Albertina* on its approach to Ndola, all three altimeters were found after the crash to be correctly calibrated.

The Commission tended to dismiss reliable evidence that the *Albertina* was given a false QNH on its approach simply because they did not consider the possibility that J. Edgar Hoover's check on the altimeters might have been fraudulent. His affiliation with Dulles in relation to being re-appointed in the Kennedy administration has already been mentioned. Hoover himself had previously clashed with Hammarskjöld in the 1950s in New York, during the McCarthy era, when Hoover's FBI men were forcefully evicted from the UN building.

Because Allen Dulles was in 'Operation Celeste' to assassinate the UN Secretary-General, the reliability of J. Edgar Hoover's check on the altimeters must be seriously questioned, simply because of Hoover's ties with Dulles. Any sabotage to the altimeters of the *Albertina* would have been done during the four hours the plane had been left unattended in Leopardsville before departure for Ndola, so the last technician who accessed the plane would probably also be part of 'Operation Celeste'.

George Ivan Smith

In the United Kingdom in 1983, I interviewed two UN officers, Conor Cruise O'Brien who was in the Congo at the same time as Hammarskjöld, and George Ivan Smith who was there soon after the crash. Both UN officials expressed their belief that the Secretary-General was assassinated, despite the inconclusive evidence of the official investigations. Three times I visited George Ivan Smith,⁸ who lived at Stroud in Gloucestershire. He had at first worked also alongside Hammarskjöld's predecessor, Trygve Lie, a Norwegian, who had resigned in 1953, making way for Dag Hammarskjöld from Sweden. He and George Ivan Smith worked together over a period of eight years, becoming close friends. Ivan Smith was a trusted associate, at

times taking on a dual role as spokesman and confidant. It was in this role, Ivan Smith explained to me, discussing hopes and aspirations, that the Secretary-General referred to an impending UN announcement which Hammarskjöld had been formulating for several months preceding September 1961. He fully intended to implement his plans upon his return from the Congo, but he never did and the announcement died with him! The Secretary-General arrived in Leopoldville on September 13, 1961, a few days before the fatal flight to Ndola where the plane crashed shortly after midnight on September 17/18th.

Before Dag Hammarskjöld departed on the mission of mediation which claimed his life, George Ivan Smith noted that the Secretary-General was very much focused on the plan he intended to launch at the UN General Assembly after dealing with the unrest in the Congo. Hammarskjöld had been conducting private talks with President Kennedy about the long running dispute between Indonesia and the Netherlands over sovereignty of West New Guinea. Leading up to the General Assembly meeting in 1961, these talks had crystallised into new UN policy.

Harry S. Truman

At the same time, Kennedy had also engaged in confidential discussion on this and other issues with former president, Harry S. Truman (who one year earlier had doubted whether the youthful JFK had the foreign policy experience that was needed in the White House.) During his first year in office, Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline, so much won the approval of Mr and Mrs Truman that they were known to stay overnight with the Kennedy family in the White House.

In terms of wending one's way through Cold War issues, Kennedy's understanding with Hammarskjöld over the proposal to resolve the New Guinea sovereignty dispute, which now held the potential for conflict with Moscow, no doubt had Truman's support. Hammarskjöld's resolve to implement a policy of 'Papua for the Papuans' was in effect a countermeasure to rising Cold War tension, an example of his Swedish-style 'third way' proposing a form of 'muscular pacifism'.⁹ His plan was to annul all claims to sovereignty other than the indigenous inhabitants and to announce this at the UN General Assembly in October/November 1961, but his death occurred in September. Surprisingly, Harry S. Truman, expressing his opinion on the tragic news to reporters of the *New York Times* on September 20, 1961, commented enigmatically:

Dag Hammarskjöld was on the point of getting something done when they killed him. Notice that I said 'When they killed him'.

The report in the *New York Times* continued:

Pressed to explain his statement, Mr Truman said, 'That's all I've got to say on the matter. Draw your own conclusions'.

The Hammarskjöld Commission in 2013 commented on the statement:

There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the *New York Times*' report. What we consider important is to know what the ex-President, speaking (it should be noted) one day after the disaster, was basing himself on. He is known to have been a confidant of the incumbent President, John F. Kennedy, and it is unlikely in the extreme that he was simply expressing a subjective or idiosyncratic opinion. It seems likely that he had received some form of briefing.¹⁰

The UN Secretary-General had Kennedy's support in formulating a plan to make the UN a central player in the sovereignty dispute over Netherlands New Guinea. From Kennedy's perspective, Hammarskjöld was proposing a welcome initiative because it would preclude the inevitable criticism of the alternative decision Kennedy himself would be forced to make: that is, if the UN did not assume full responsibility for the Papuan people in the disputed territory of West New Guinea, then Kennedy would be forced to choose between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Hammarskjöld no doubt was aware there would be opposition to his planned intervention in the Dutch-Indonesian sovereignty dispute, not only from the two principal disputants, the Netherlands and Indonesia, but also from both the Soviet Union and China, both of whom supported Indonesia's quest to expel Dutch colonial power from New Guinea.

While it cannot be said that the UN Secretary-General or President Kennedy were oblivious to the personal and political risk they were taking in pursuing this approach to the New Guinea sovereignty issue, neither of them seemed fully aware of how high the stakes were; or rather, how high the stakes were for others who were involved – such as Allen Dulles. The battle for sovereignty of Netherlands New Guinea, from Dulles' perspective, involved far more than the plight of the indigenous inhabitants: it had become a key issue in the larger strategy of regime change in Indonesia.

Hammarskjöld's radical initiative to solve the sovereignty dispute by assigning it to the Papuan people themselves was a step in the process of upgrading the status of the UN to protect indigenous peoples. Such a move would have totally disrupted Allen Dulles' regime-change. Hammarskjöld's plan in 1961 and later JFK's proposed visit to Jakarta both unknowingly threatened Dulles' Indonesia strategy. Because of this similarity, Dulles' alleged involvement in the death of Hammarskjöld (through 'Operation Celeste') can be seen as a precedent for Dulles' involvement in the death of Kennedy.



OPEX

Hammarskjöld's planned intervention to settle the New Guinea dispute peacefully was following unchartered UN guidelines, but generally came within the ambit of the 1960 UN Declaration. This was a call for 'the speedy and unconditional granting to all colonial peoples of the right of self-determination'. There were still 88 territories under colonialist administration waiting to become independent national states. Had the UN Secretary-General succeeded in bringing even half of these countries to independence, he would have transformed the UN into a significant world power and created a body of nations so large as to be a counterweight to those embroiled in the Cold War. Cameroon, for example, situated in what might be called the arm-pit of Africa with a land area the same as West New Guinea, had formerly been under French and English administrations. Its population included the fabled pygmies. In March 1961, the people

of Cameroon conducted voting under the auspices of the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner for Cameroons. The people of the Northern Cameroons decided to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria, whereas the people of the Southern Cameroons similarly decided to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon.

Hammarskjöld was especially concerned about indigenous tribes-people. In the case of West New Guinea, Hammarskjöld's intention was to declare invalid both Dutch and Indonesian claims to sovereignty of the territory. He proposed to assist the Papuan people by declaring a role for the United Nations alongside an independent Papuan state, using UN officers to advise the main government departments. A United Nations Special Fund had been established, as he explained in an address to the Economic Club of New York on March 8, 1960, where he outlined this revolutionary approach already being implemented in some former colonial territories in Africa:

We have recently initiated a scheme under the title of OPEX – an abbreviation of 'operational and executive' – whereby the UN provides experienced officers to underdeveloped countries, at their request, not as advisers, and not reporting to the UN, but as officials of the governments to which they have been assigned and with the full duties of loyal and confidential service to those governments. OPEX officials have already been requested by, and assigned to, several newly-independent countries, and I hope that we may be able to use the scheme much more widely in the years to come.

As Williams has noted: 'The activities of the UN in New York were vigorously scrutinised by the CIA'.¹¹ Applying OPEX in West New Guinea, Hammarskjöld was threatening to take the territory and its natural resources out of the hands of all aspiring colonial powers and out of the hands of Rockefeller Oil which had first staked its claim before the Second World War. This solution to the sovereignty dispute was the antithesis of what Dulles had planned, using the Cold War to his advantage, by encouraging Jakarta to purchase Soviet armaments for the Indonesian Navy and Air Force. Hammarskjöld was constructing a solution for the Papuan people capable of withstanding Cold War pressure because he had Kennedy's support.

Criticism of Hammarskjöld came from both Cold War blocs. In the ensuing turmoil, both East and West seemed to have their own motives to 'remove Hammarskjöld'. The CIA was working conjointly with British intelligence, according to the Celeste documents, a precursor of the joint force used to spark Malaysian Confrontation. Given the political situation in mineral rich Katanga, there was no shortage of mercenaries but the overriding motive was that ultimate responsibility for the (Irish) UN troops who were pitted against Katanga lay with the UN Secretary-General (rather than Conor Cruise O'Brien). The killing of Lumumba had already displayed a willingness to resort to murder and mayhem, and no doubt the radicalised mercenary element was capable of taking the life of the UN Secretary-General. Two mercenaries (according to the 2013 Commission Report) were at the Ndola airport in the group awaiting the arrival of Hammarskjöld on the night of the crash.

However, the primary motive for Dulles' participation was not the same as other participants in this tragic episode. While Belgian and British interests were more directly tied to the Katanga dispute, Dulles was seen more as a Cold War participant and slightly removed from direct involvement. Dulles' motive to stop Hammarskjöld for interfering in the New Guinea dispute was far greater than any apparent motive in

the Congo. He was so far ahead of his contemporaries they did not suspect him of pushing a button, or causing a death, on one side of the world to benefit a covert strategy of his on the other side of the world.

When I spoke with George Ivan Smith, he raised two important points in the context of 'Operation Celeste' which now link Dulles to Ndola. The first (as mentioned) was that Hammarskjöld was going to announce at the General Assembly his solution to the West New Guinea sovereignty dispute; and secondly, there was a CIA plane full of communication equipment, its engines operating but stationary on the Ndola airstrip, the same night that Hammarskjöld's plane was due to land. The planes had just arrived at Ndola but only one was operating on the night, its engines running to provide power for the communications equipment that CIA personnel were using inside the plane. The Commission Report drew attention to the CIA communication planes:

Also on the tarmac at Ndola on the night of 17 September were two USAF aircraft. Sir Brian Unwin's recollection, in his evidence to the Commission, was that one had come in from Pretoria and one from Leopoldville, where they were under the command of the respective US defence or air attachés. Of these aircraft he said: 'Those planes we understood had high powered communication equipment and it did occur to us to wonder later, whether there had been contact between one or other of the two US planes with Hammarskjöld's aircraft, as they had, we understood, the capability to communicate with Hammarskjöld's plane. ...I do recall that when we saw these two planes on the ground we were ... saying 'Wonder what they're up to'. [emphasis added]

One of the conclusions of the Commission Report was to seek the voice transmissions from the cockpit of the Albertina in the minute or so before the fatal crash. The CIA communications plane on Ndola airstrip had the capacity to communicate with the Albertina and may well have made a record of the final words coming from it. On the other hand, it is highly unlikely that self-incriminating evidence would ever be made available. The Commission Report has drawn attention to three possible causes of the fatal crash – the presence of another plane that fired at Hammarskjöld's DC6, the altimeters, and a small explosive device to render the Albertina's steering mechanism inoperable. It is possible that SAIMR tried to utilise all three. The Commission alluded to the possibility of igniting the explosive device by radio control, but it remained unclear whether they were considering whether this could have been done from another plane flying near the Albertina or from the Ndola airstrip.

Kennedy, as a senator, had first met UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld several years earlier, then again as President-elect and then as President they met to discuss the problems of the world. During 1961, to solve the unwanted dilemma that JFK was facing with intervention in the New Guinea sovereignty dispute, the preferred solution was for the UN rather than the USA to be involved. Hammarskjöld agreed. As he was then in the initial stages in Africa of moulding OPEX to meet the needs of indigenous people, OPEX implemented for the Papuan people would prevent any 'super-power stand-off' between Moscow and Washington. OPEX meant Kennedy would not be forced to decide between the colonial administration of a NATO ally or supporting Indonesian administration over the Papuan people, against the wishes of a NATO ally. With Hammarskjöld's death, the pro-Papua plan was abandoned.¹² So the Papuan people in the western half of New Guinea, who were on the verge of becoming an independent state under the auspices of the United Nations, were left hanging in

history. Hammarskjöld's death left Kennedy one of two options, either the Dutch or the Indonesian option, but Dulles' preparation ensured Kennedy chose the latter. Hammarskjöld positioned himself (and the role of the UN) between or above the Cold War blocs. He intended implementing OPEX to resolve the New Guinea sovereignty dispute but did not take into account the extent of covert involvement by Standard Oil under Rockefeller supervision and their right-hand man, Allen Dulles. At the funeral of Dag Hammarskjöld, September 29, 1961, Kennedy described him as 'the greatest statesman of the 20th century'.

ENDNOTES

¹ MacArthur, who lived in the Astoria, had the opportunity to inform Kennedy of West New Guinea's potential oil resources but did not. His presidential aspirations had been irreparably damaged by President Truman who relieved him of command for insubordination during the Korean War. A critic of Kennedy at the Democratic National Convention, July 2, 1960, Truman subsequently became a close, personal friend.

² President John F. Kennedy's address in the UN General Assembly, September 25, 1961, following the death (now deemed assassination) of UN Sec-General Dag Hammarskjöld. <http://www.state.gov/p/io/potusunga/207241.htm>

³ Kennedy Archives <https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKPOF/033/JFKPOF-033-007>

⁴ US Senate, *An Interim Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, 'Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders'*, W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., N.Y. 1976, p. 24.

⁵ See: UN General Assembly, Sixty-eighth Session A/68/800, 21 March 2014, Agenda item 175, 'Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him'.

⁶ Susan Williams, *Who Killed Hammarskjöld? The UN, the Cold War and White Supremacy in Africa*, Hurst & Co., London, 2011, p. 200.

⁷ See: 1962 UN Crash Report (Appendix 1).

⁸ George Ivan Smith (the 'Ivan was short for Sullivan) came from Brisbane, my own home town, so part of our meetings involved some reminiscing. His brother was in charge of the Boggo Road Prison, which no longer operates, but the memory in silhouette of guards patrolling along the high imposing walls on Annerley Road was one of the more enduring images of my childhood. George Ivan Smith died in 1995.

⁹ Robert Skidelsky, 'Dag Hammarskjöld's Assumptions and the Future of the UN', <http://www.skidelsky.com/site/article/dag-hammarskjolds-assumptions-and-the-future-of-the-un/>

¹⁰ UN General Assembly, March 21, 2014, Sixty-eighth session, Agenda item 175, 'Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him'. Annex: Report of the Commission of Enquiry, Paragraph 11.5.

¹¹ Declassified CIA document, 'Memorandum for the Record. Subject: Information concerning the Accidental Death of Dag Hammarskjöld', January 17, 1975, C00023116, DDRS, cited in Williams, *Who Killed Hammarskjöld?*, p. 151.

¹² In its wake came the 'Luns Plan', in which the Dutch Foreign Minister proposed a similarly prominent role for the UN but without the Dutch administration exiting, as envisaged by Hammarskjöld. According to the son of Joseph Luns, Huub Luns (whom I interviewed in Amsterdam), his father announced the 'Luns Plan' to the General Assembly but knew it wouldn't be approved. To ask 'why did he persist?' is like asking 'how did he remain Foreign Minister for 19 years?'