

## A Study in Destabilization: U.S. Intervention and the Congo Crisis 1960-1961

by Molly M. McFadden

This presentation will explore the role of the Eisenhower Administration's covert operations on the Congo Crisis (1960-1961). Following the Second World War, a wave of decolonization swept through Asia and Africa, carving new states out of Europe's overseas empires. The Eisenhower Administration feared that communism would spread rapidly through these newly independent states, and sought a way to discreetly curb potential Soviet influence. The solution was to use the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to carry out covert operations to aid counterrevolutionary movements and undermine leaders the U.S. determined to be "communist-inclined." In the newly independent Congo these operations resulted in the perpetuation of violence and civil unrest, the assassination of the first democratically elected president, and the installation of a pro-Western dictator who remained in power for nearly 30 years. The extent of these atrocities remained hidden from the American public for nearly 25 years until sweeping Senate investigations into the CIA during the mid 1970s. While these investigations prompted domestic reform, they offered little to the people of the Congo who are still plagued by the consequences of these operations decades later. By analyzing primary documents including CIA correspondence between Washington and Leopoldville and testimonies from Senate select committees, this presentation will use the Congo Crisis as a case study for the disastrous impact Eisenhower's covert operations had on newly independent states during the Cold War.