

## **German links to the Hammarskjöld case**

### **Making the case for another possible murder weapon**

**Torben Gülstorff**

On 18 September 1961, at approximately 00:13, a Douglas DC-6 came down close to the North Rhodesian town of Ndola. Sixteen passengers and crew on board died, among them the United Nations (UN) General Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld. The plane was carrying a UN peacekeeping delegation to a meeting with Moïse Tshombe, the self-declared prime minister of the secessionist Congolese province of Katanga, to discuss the future state of the province and finally put an end to the crisis that had kept the Republic of the Congo in suspense for more than a year.

### **Background to the crisis**

On 30 June 1960 Belgian Congo became independent. Centralist parties gained the majority in parliament and elected Patrice Lumumba prime minister. Nevertheless, parties favouring a decentralized Congo still formed a strong opposition and worked for a change of government. When on 5 July riots broke out within Congolese military, decentralists took advantage of the country's unstable constitution and the government's weakness to foster their ambitions. On 11 July decentralist Moïse Tshombe declared the Congolese province of Katanga to be a free state, with himself as prime minister. Soon the former colonial power, Belgium, which intervened with troops to protect its citizens, became his prime sponsor.

The Lumumba government was unable to cope with the escalating crisis. It called in a UN peacekeeping mission. On 15 July the first UN troops entered, and Belgian intervention forces left the Congo, except for Katanga, where they stayed to train and build a Katangese security force strong enough to resist the Congolese military. UN troops took up position in Katanga as well but stayed out of the intra-Congolese conflict. This position remained even into the new year of 1961, when Léopoldville decentralists captured Lumumba and two of his colleagues and deported them to Katanga where their secessionist allies tortured and finally murdered them.

In the aftermath of these events, the UN mandate was strengthened, but not to the point that its troops could end the secession. At that time the power

structure in the Congo did not permit such attempts.

Several months later, this situation changed fundamentally. On 2 August a new Congolese government, led by Prime Minister Cyrille Adoula, uniting centralists and decentralists, was appointed. The UN felt that the time had come to put Tshombe under pressure. On 28 August it began Operation Rum Punch to take control of the secessionist territory and weaken its security forces. The self-declared country became occupied. However, its government was not yet defeated. The UN ordered it to surrender its political hardliners, such as the Minister of the Interior Godefroid Munongo, whom the UN believed to be responsible for ethnic cleansing, the death of Lumumba, attacks on UN troops and, more importantly, the preparation of a counterattack. The Tshombe government refused. On 13 September the UN began Operation Morthor to pre-empt such an attack and finally put an end to the Katangese secession. However, this time Katanga resisted. Its government established a temporary seat at Kipushi, a small town close to the border with Northern Rhodesia, several hours drive from Ndola. All over the province security forces engaged with UN troops, who soon had to pull back and entrench themselves. Nevertheless, Tshombe knew very well that the Katangese resistance was limited and he had to negotiate. Thus he invited the UN General Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld, who was in the Congolese capital Léopoldville, to peace talks. They agreed to meet on neutral territory, at Ndola where, on 18 September, just after midnight, Hammarskjöld's DC-6 crashed during its landing approach.

## **Aftermath**

**R**umours soon spread that the crash had not been an accident but an assassination: by sabotage, or an attack from the ground or from the air. The last soon became the most likely variant. Several official investigations declared the crash an accident. However the rumours continued. In 2011, a book by Susan Williams outlined several serious doubts about the accidental character of the crash.<sup>1</sup> Her study led to the formation of the investigative Hammarskjöld Commission in 2012. Three years later this commission's findings firstly formed the basis of the constitution of a panel of experts, and later the appointment of Eminent Person Mohamed Chande Othman at the UN.

I first came into contact with the investigation in 2015, when I read about it in the news. I remembered several documents mentioning the Hammarskjöld

---

<sup>1</sup> Susan Williams, *Who killed Hammarskjöld? The UN, the Cold War and white supremacy in Africa* (London: Hurst and Company, 2011).

case that I had found while working on my PhD thesis,<sup>2</sup> and contacted the UN. Soon after I became a voluntary researcher. I also believe in an aerial attack. What follows is the current state of my research.

## **Katanga's air force and the UN Operations Rum Punch and Morthor**

When Tshombe declared Katanga's independence on 11 July 1960, his decision was enforced by the provincial security force *Gendarmerie Katangaise*. In the following months, the Tshombe government enlarged this force, improved its training and equipment, and added foreign mercenaries to foster its combat strength. A national air force, *the Force Aérienne Katangaise* (FAK) also known as *Aviation Katangaise* (Avikat), was also added. The Belgian Victor Volant became its commander. Reports on the number and the types of aircraft owned by Avikat vary. It operated across several airfields in the hinterland and three airports in the major cities of Katanga: Jadotville, Kolwezi, and Elisabethville, the last harbouring its headquarters. Furthermore, landing rights for several airfields in Northern Rhodesia, perhaps also Angola, existed.

All this changed on 28 August with the UN Operation Rum Punch. The UN took control of Katanga and seized most of the Avikat planes, which were based at the Elisabethville headquarters at that time. Only a small number of planes (again, numbers tend to vary), which had been based elsewhere, remained under the control of Avikat. These included aircrafts and helicopters of the following types: Aérospatiale-Potez-Fouga CM-170 Magister, De Havilland DH-104 Dove, Piper PA-18 Super Cub, Piper PA-22-150 Caribbean, Douglas C-47A, and Sikorsky S-58C.

In the aftermath of Operation Rum Punch, Avikat moved its headquarters to Kolwezi, one of the few cities still under control of the Katangese security forces. Victor Volant was replaced as commander by the Katangese Jean-Marie Ngosa. Ngosa's former adviser, the Belgian José Delin, became chief of operations.<sup>3</sup> On 13 September, when the UN began Operation Morthor, Avikat deployed one fighter jet, a Kolwezi-based CM-170 Magister with the aircraft registration code KAT-93, to support the Katangese ground operations. On 14 September KAT-93 provided close air support to Katangese units attacking UN troops at Jadotville and carried out an airstrike on UN troops at Elisabethville. This occurred again just one day later, when it provided close air support to

---

<sup>2</sup> Torben Gülstorff, *Trade follows Hallstein? Deutsche Aktivitäten im zentralafrikanischen Raum des 'Second Scramble'* (Berlin: Humboldt-Universität, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Othen, *Katanga 1960-63. Mercenaries, Spies and the African Nation that Waged War on the World* (Stroud: The History Press, 2015), pp. 139–147.

Katangese units attacking UN troops at Jadotville and Kamina and carried out another airstrike on UN troops at Elisabethville. On 16 September, it provided close air support to Katangese troops attacking UN troops at Jadotville and two UN companies trying to relieve them, chased away a UN helicopter at Jadotville, attacked a parked UN DC-3 at Kamina, and carried out another airstrike on UN troops at Elisabethville. On 17 September, it provided close air support to Katangese troops attacking UN troops at Kamina twice, destroyed a Sabena Douglas DC-4 on the ground and chased away a DC-3.

Understandably, soon after the Hammarskjöld crash, KAT-93 became the investigators' prime target, even though no shoot-down of a UN plane by the CM-170 Magister had been reported and, for technical reasons, its deployment in an air-to-air combat operation on a dark night is highly questionable. Furthermore, as by the end of 1961 Avikat began to use a De Havilland DH-104 Dove to provide close air support to Katangese troops, investigators became interested in this model as well.

None of the other aircraft, namely Piper PA-18 Super Cub, Piper PA-22-150 Caribbean, Douglas C-47A, and Sikorsky S-58C, were ever seriously considered. This also applies to another plane that was in operation in Katanga on 18 September 1961. Due to several false reports dating its arrival not earlier than mid-October, it has been overlooked for a long time: a Dornier DO-28A with the aircraft registration code KA-3016.

## **Four plus one (plus four plus one) – selling several Dornier DO-28As to Avikat**

Altogether, five (or six or even ten) Dornier DO-28As were ordered and received by Avikat in 1961 via the Belgian-Congolese trading company MITRACO. Its owner was the retired Belgian Colonel Jean Cassart, who, in the late 1950s, had become Dornier's sales agent for Katanga. Negotiations for buying several DO-28As had already started in July 1960. On 24 February 1961 MITRACO placed an order, and on 10 August the first receipt was signed.<sup>4</sup>

The first DO-28A, with the production number 3016, took off in Germany on 21 August and bypassed Portuguese Angola on 28 August. It would have reached Katanga around 29 August. Four further DO-28As, with the production numbers 3017 to 3020, took off in Germany around 7 October and bypassed Portuguese Angola on 15 October. They would have reached Katanga around

---

<sup>4</sup> ZFST to Federal Agency for Commercial Economy, 21 December 1961, German Federal Archive (BArch), B 102, 139598.

16 October.<sup>5</sup> According to their production numbers, they received the Katangese aircraft registration codes KA-3016 to KA-3020. These five planes are already known about.

However, according to Dornier Representative Otto Wien<sup>6</sup> and the West German Ministry of Defence,<sup>7</sup> at least one further DO-28A must be added to this list. As the US State Department informed the West German Embassy in Washington on 21 October, this further DO-28A had been disassembled, its components shipped to Portuguese Angola and transported to Kolwezi where they had been put together by a company technician.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in the same meeting, the US State Department also declared that four DO-28As marked in the colours of Katanga had been seen flying through the airspace of Gabon. These planes could have been KA-3017 to KA-3020 which probably bypassed Gabon on 14 or 15 October. However, in November the British newspaper the *Daily Express* published an unnamed eyewitness report, stating that five DO-28As had taken off at Munich on 16 October,<sup>9</sup> refuelled at Gabon around 20 October, and arrived at Katanga about one day later, fitting chronologically much better into the US State Department's 21 October report on five DO-28As entering African territory. In the following months, all these DO-28As (whether five, six, or even ten) were used by Avikat for close air support operations all around Katanga.

Yet it is only the first one, the plane with the aircraft registration code KA-3016, that is of actual importance for the Hammarskjöld case. Only KA-3016 arrived at Katanga around 29 August 1961, more than two weeks before the crash on 18 September. Could KA-3016 have been used for an attack on Hammarskjöld's DC-6?

## **Making the case for a German plane: a lonesome Dornier DO-28A**

**A**ccounts of the events of the night of the attack greatly differ. Some

---

<sup>5</sup> West German Consulate in Portuguese Angola to West German Foreign Office, 19 October 1961, Political Archive of the German Foreign Office (PA AA), Section Foreign Office (AA), B 34, 254.

<sup>6</sup> Representative Wien (Dornier) to Chief of the West-East Trade Division Klarenaar (West German Foreign Office), without date, PA AA, AA, B 57, 65.

<sup>7</sup> West German Ministry of Defence to West German Foreign Office, 8 December 1961, PA AA, AA, B 130, 8371A.

<sup>8</sup> West German Embassy in the USA to West German Foreign Office, 21 October 1961, PA AA, AA, B 34, 254.

<sup>9</sup> 'I Took Planes to Tshombe', *Daily Express*, 6 November 1961, PA AA, AA, B 34, 254.

eyewitnesses claimed to have seen one plane, others two planes. Some said that they heard a jet engine, others a piston engine. There is even uncertainty about what kind of weapon had been utilized. Some said a machine-gun had been used, others that a bomb had been dropped out of a plane. Consensus exists only in so far as a bigger plane, Hammarskjöld's DC-6, flew at lower altitude, while being attacked by a smaller plane, flying at higher altitude.<sup>10</sup> It is hard to gain any evidence out of this information that could help to identify an attacking plane. Yet perhaps a comparison of the operational capabilities of the three most probable planes, namely a CM-170 Magister, a DH-104 Dove, and a DO-28A, can shed some light on the case. After all, the attacking plane did not leave the scene without leaving any clues behind.

Firstly, the attacking plane obviously had to be armed. A CM-170 Magister was equipped with two machine guns and brackets to carry bombs and rockets. A DH-104 Dove was a civilian plane but could be armed with machine guns and bomb brackets. A DO-28A was also a civilian plane. In the same way as a DH-104 Dove, it could be armed with machine guns, bomb brackets and even rocket brackets, even though Dornier management<sup>11</sup> and the West German Ministry of Defence denied this possibility. In July 1961 the latter made the official claim that Dornier planes had 'no fighting potential'.<sup>12</sup> The West German Foreign Office disagreed, claiming that DO-28As, like their predecessors, the DO-27s, had already been armoured by several buyers for military purposes. The Portuguese army and air force, for example, had used more than a dozen DO-27s in Angola during the indigenous uprisings of autumn 1961. Reports of the West German Foreign Office mention machine guns, bomb brackets,<sup>13</sup> and even rocket launchers<sup>14</sup> installed on DO-27s and used in combat to 'burn complete villages'.<sup>15</sup> Reports from the Foreign Office also indicate the installation of these features in the Katangese DO-28As. On 24 November 1961, the West German Foreign Office informed Dornier that a

---

<sup>10</sup> Williams 2011 (see note 1), pp. 91–129

<sup>11</sup> West German Foreign Office to West German Foreign Office, 12 July 1961, PA AA, AA, B 130, 374a.

<sup>12</sup> West German Foreign Office, 12 July 1961 (see note 11).

<sup>13</sup> West German Foreign Office to Representative Wien (Dornier), 24 November 1961, PA AA, AA, B 130, 374a

<sup>14</sup> West German Consulate in Portuguese Angola to West German Foreign Office, 29 August 1961, PA AA, AA, B 34, 272.

<sup>15</sup> West German Foreign Office to West German Foreign Office, 2 June 1962, PA AA, AA, B 68, 65.

DO-28A had attacked UN and Congolese troops.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, armament cannot be used as a clue as all three planes had the same capabilities.

Secondly, the attacking plane had to have flight characteristics that were fitting to attack a DC-6: a great manoeuvrability and the ability to fly at a speed of approximately 240 to 290 km/h, to which the DC-6 would have slowed down during its landing approach. A CM-170 Magister is a twin-engine jet, built to train jet pilots but also able to provide close air support. Its maximum speed lies at approximately 740 km/h, its regular speed at approximately 550 km/h, and its slowest flying speed at approximately 144 km/h.<sup>17</sup> A DH-104 Dove is a twin-engine propeller aircraft, built to transport people and goods. Its maximum speed is approximately 370 km/h, its regular speed approximately 301 km/h, and its slowest flying speed approximately 120 km/h. A DO-28A is a twin-engine propeller aircraft, also built to transport people and goods. Its maximum speed is approximately 328 km/h,<sup>18</sup> its regular speed approximately 250 km/h, and its slowest flying speed approximately 65 km/h.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, speed cannot be used as a clue. Manoeuvrability, on the other hand, offers the first hint. All three planes had average to good manoeuvrability. Yet a DO-28A, as it is a Short Take-off and Landing (STOL) plane, is able to fly in very tight and abrupt curves with a speed of less than 100 km/h. It, therefore, is the most manoeuvrable of the three. After all, according to a UN report, not just KAT-93 but also at least one DO-28A was used by Avikat to intercept UN aircraft in 1961.<sup>20</sup>

Thirdly, the attacking plane had to bring down another plane on a dark night. This requires special technical navigation equipment. KAT-93, according to the 2017 UN report, lacked this technical equipment, even though a CM-170 Magister usually had a Lear radio compass and a Very High Frequency Omnidirectional Range (VOR) on board.<sup>21</sup> A DH-104 Dove usually was delivered with an Automatic Direction Finder (ADF).<sup>22</sup> The first DO-28A, KA-3016, is

---

<sup>16</sup> West German Foreign Office, 24 November 1961 (see note 13).

<sup>17</sup> Email from Laurent Rabier, Responsable des collections d'aéronefs et de toiles d'aéronefs, Musée Air + Espace, 23 May 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Bavarian Ministry of State for Economy and Traffic to Federal Ministry of Economics, 10 November 1961, BArch, B 102, 139598.

<sup>19</sup> 'DO 28 im Examen', in *Dornier Post* 3/4 (1962), pp. 12–15.

<sup>20</sup> UN General Assembly, document *A/71/1042*, 2017, pp. 32–33.

<sup>21</sup> Email from Rabier (see note 17).

<sup>22</sup> Email from Curator Alistair Hodgson, De Havilland Aircraft Museum, 16 May 2018.

reported to have been equipped with the radio compass Lear ADF 14-d-1.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, in the case of night flying equipment, a DH-104 Dove and KA-3016 would have been the most probable planes. However not one report of a night attack by a CM-170 Magister or a DH-104 Dove exists. This is in contrast to a DO-28A. Here, and only here, at least one night-time attack is reported.<sup>24</sup>

Fourthly, on the night of the attack, radio signals of the attacking plane were received by a British intelligence radio station in Cyprus.<sup>25</sup> To reach this station, radio signals from Ndola had to cover 5,300 km. Only High-Frequency (HF) radio signals can cover such a distance. Therefore, the attacking plane had to have HF radio equipment installed. A CM-170 Magister usually only had a radio for Very High-Frequency (VHF) and Ultra-High-Frequency (UHF) on board<sup>26</sup> and a DH-104 Dove usually was equipped with a VHF Mark VIII radio.<sup>27</sup> Both, therefore, would have needed a transmitter to cover the distance.<sup>28</sup> The Hammarskjöld Commission tried to solve this problem by declaring another plane, equipped with a transmitter, to be the radio signal's source. To me, this solution seems highly questionable and unlikely. KA-3016 had such HF radio equipment, namely a Narco Marc V, and the HF transceiver Sunair 5-T-R, specially designed for long-range communications.<sup>29</sup> Depending on the frequency used and the plane's altitude, radio signals sent with this equipment could have been received by a regular HF receiver at a distance of approximately 30 to 800 km by day and up to 4,000 km by night. Considering the advanced reception and amplifying possibilities of an intelligence radio station, it is highly likely that a radio signal from KA-3016, flying above Ndola, would have been perceived and intercepted by the Cyprus station's radio specialists.

Fifthly, and finally, the attacking plane would have had to be based close enough to its target area, Ndola airport. KAT-93 was based at Kolwezi. A CM-170 Magister has a maximum range of 925 km. The distance between Kolwezi and Ndola, there and back, is approximately 851 km. Therefore, an attack, well-timed to the minute, would have been possible. However, the

---

<sup>23</sup> ZFST, 21 December 1961 (see note 4).

<sup>24</sup> UN General Assembly 2017 (see note 20), p. 32.

<sup>25</sup> UN General Assembly, document *A/70/132*, 2015, p. 24.

<sup>26</sup> Email from Rabier (see note 14).

<sup>27</sup> Email from Hodgson (see note 22).

<sup>28</sup> UN General Assembly 2015 (see note 25), p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> <[http://www.sunairelectronics.com/web/workspace/uploads/t5d\\_t5r-1313017033.pdf](http://www.sunairelectronics.com/web/workspace/uploads/t5d_t5r-1313017033.pdf)> document accessed by author 20 June 2018

chances of running out of fuel during the mission would have been high. Furthermore, such an attack would have created another anomaly as, during Operation Morthor, KAT-93 only operated within a range of 140 to 240 km around Kolwezi. Certainly, the possibility exists that the plane was refuelled at another airport or airfield between Kolwezi and Ndola, even though reports indicate that no Katangese-held airport or airfield suitable for jets existed in that area. One airfield particularly comes to mind, Kipushi, where the Katangese government had raised its temporary headquarters. The distance between Kipushi and Ndola, there and back, is approximately 404 km. Nevertheless, even if KAT-93 could have handled the uneven runway at Kipushi, it would have needed about 1.5 km to land and take off. The Kipushi airfield was only 0.7 km in length. This was also too short for a DH-104 Dove. That plane needs a runway of about 1 km to reach a height of 15 m, but it does have a maximum range of 1.415 km.<sup>30</sup> Based at Kolwezi, a DH-104 Dove could have flown to Ndola, circled around for a while, attacked, and returned safely to its base. A DO-28A has a maximum range of 1.220 km. Yet, as a STOL plane, it does not need a long runway. It can take off and land in less than 0.3 km,<sup>31</sup> and so could have operated from the Kipushi airfield. Indeed, sources suggest that KA-3016 was not based at Kolwezi but was, rather, at Kipushi at the time of the attack. A report of a Dornier employee, Mr Sohn, to the Foreign Office states that KA-3016 was solely used to transport members of the Katangese cabinet.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, in a meeting with the West German Embassy at Washington, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs at the US State Department Woodruff Wallner mentioned a DO-28A, based at Kipushi.<sup>33</sup> KA-3016, therefore, could easily have reached Ndola, prepared, and finalized the attack and returned safely. Moreover, at Kipushi, on 17 and 18 September, KA-3016 would have been in the hands of the Katangese political hardliners, like Munongo. These were men who, fearing accountability for their dark political doings, were willing to make every sacrifice to secure Katanga's sovereignty and their own political future. For them, KA-3016 would have been an ideal tool to weaken the position of those who were willing to compromise and eliminate the person they saw as central to the UN's disapproval of Katanga's independence. This was not without good reason. After Hammarskjöld's death, the UN soon ended its occupation and the

---

<sup>30</sup> Email from Hodgson (see note 22). 'DO 28 im Examen' (see note 19).

<sup>31</sup> 'DO 28 im Examen' (see note 19).

<sup>32</sup> Federal Ministry of Economics to Federal Ministry of Economics, 30 October 1961, BArch, B102, 139598.

<sup>33</sup> West German Embassy in the USA, 21 October 1961 (see note 8).

Tshombe government was back in power.

To conclude: all three planes had the capability to attack Hammarskjöld's DC-6. However, KA-3016's abilities seem to fit best with the clues that were left behind on 18 September. What is more, a closer look at the transfer of the DO-28As brings some suspicious details to light which support the impression that there was something special about KA-3016.

## **Suspect details of a rather unusual delivery**

**B**y the summer of 1961, news of a possible deal between Dornier and Katanga had circulated in the international press. In the aftermath, the US State Department and the UN presented the West German Foreign Office intelligence regarding the deliveries and expressed their worries. Understandably, the West German Foreign Office was not amused. With the West German Ministry of Economics, it began an unofficial investigation which revealed some odd details of the delivery process.

Dornier employees had serious problems stating the number of planes that Katanga had ordered. Sales agents and employees sometimes stated five,<sup>34</sup> other times six.<sup>35</sup> When asked how the delivery had taken place, Dornier representative Otto Wien answered that the planes had taken off from the company airport at Oberpfaffenhofen,<sup>36</sup> even though the planes had taken off from the international airport of Munich-Riem, approximately 30 km to the east. Usually the pilot of a plane had to write a report regarding the market situation in the delivery area and a copy of this report was sent to the West German Foreign Office. Yet this time, no such copy was sent.

Finally, Dornier's management was not able to name the pilots who had delivered KA-3016 to KA-3020. For several months, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Economics had to investigate. Their focus regarding this issue lay on KA-3016 as it was this plane their investigation had started with. In early October, Dornier Representative Otto Wien mentioned 'a German pilot, who is

---

<sup>34</sup> Chief of the West-East Trade Division Klarenaar (West German Foreign Office) to West German Foreign Office, 25 October 1961, PA AA, AA, B 57, 65.

<sup>35</sup> West German Foreign Office to West German Foreign Office, 5 October 1961, PA AA, AA, B 130, 374a.

<sup>36</sup> Representative Wien (Dornier) to Chief of the Aircraft Manufacturing Division Beauvais (West German Ministry of Economics), 4 October 1961, PA AA, AA, B 57, 65.

not an employee of Dornier'.<sup>37</sup> Later, Dornier Export Director Mr Leander<sup>38</sup> and Dornier employee Mr Sohn<sup>39</sup> mentioned a German pilot who was not known to them. By the end of October, the Dornier sales agent responsible for the Belgian market, Mr Delattre, even identified the Belgian buyer himself, Jean Cassart, as the pilot.<sup>40</sup> Fortunately, in November a staff member of the Ministry of Economics contacted the traffic department of the Munich-Riem airport, which Otto Wien had falsely denied as the point of departure. Here, the airport chief of traffic Kurt Bartz was finally able to name the pilot of the first delivery: Heinrich Schäfer who, according to Bartz, was Dornier's chief test pilot.<sup>41</sup>

However, this information was only partially accurate. The pilot of KA-3016 had been Heinrich Schäfer but on 1 March 1960 Schäfer had quit his job at Dornier. He continued to work for the company, but as a freelance pilot.<sup>42</sup> Bartz also identified the four pilots of KA-3017 to KA-3020 who had taken off at Munich-Riem around 7 October: Mr Boutet, Mr Paire, Mr Fouquet, and Mr Bertaux. All of them were of Belgian nationality.<sup>43</sup> Be that as it may, in the context of this paragraph only the German pilot of KA-3016 is of further interest. The fact that a former employee, well-known to the company's management, had been involved in its delivery raises one serious question: is it probable that all the men involved in the process of selling the first DO-28A to Katanga had not known when they were asked, and were unable to come to know in the following days and weeks, that their former colleague Schäfer had made the delivery?

Doubts are justified as clues even indicate the implementation of a staged cover-up story by somebody. As already mentioned, on 6 November, the British tabloid newspaper the *Daily Express* published a report, written by an unnamed eyewitness.<sup>44</sup> According to this witness, five DO-28As took off at Munich on 16 October. He or she claimed that these planes had been flown by

---

<sup>37</sup> Representative Wien (Dornier), 4 October 1961 (see note 36).

<sup>38</sup> Chief of the West-East Trade Division Klarenaar (West German Foreign Office), 25 October 1961 (see note 34).

<sup>39</sup> Federal Ministry of Economics, 30 October 1961 (see note 32).

<sup>40</sup> West German Embassy in Belgium to West German Foreign Office, 31 October 1961, PA AA, AA, B 130, 8371A.

<sup>41</sup> Federal Ministry of Economics to Federal Ministry of Economics, 24 November 1961, BArch, B 102, 139598.

<sup>42</sup> 'Chefpilot Heinrich Schäfer jetzt freier Mitarbeiter', in *Dornier Nachrichten*, 4 April 1960.

<sup>43</sup> Federal Ministry of Economics, 24 November 1961 (see note 41).

<sup>44</sup> 'I Took Planes to Tshombe' (see note 9).

British, Belgian and French pilots, marked with the aircraft registration codes KA-3016 to KA-3020. As a proof, the witness had added a photograph, showing KA-3016 and KA-3020 on an airfield. Was this fake news? Had this statement been published to mislead the still ongoing investigation? Was it trying to prove that no Dornier plane had been in Katanga earlier than late October 1961?

Another clue strengthens this assumption. Let us return to the already mentioned US complaint about the four DO-28As flying through Gabon airspace in mid-October for a moment. According to this complaint, a US informant had recognized the aircraft registration codes of two of the four planes: KA-3015 and KA-3017.<sup>45</sup> Now, 3015 was the production number of a DO-28A that the West German Ministry of Defence had bought for its special air mission wing in 1961. It was marked with the aircraft registration code CA+041 and decommissioned in the late 1960s.<sup>46</sup> It is, therefore, rather unlikely that it had been seen near Gabon, let alone marked with a Katangese aircraft registration code. It is much more plausible that KA-3016 has been misread or falsely reported by the US-American informant as KA-3015. Yet if so, it would have been the second DO-28A, marked KA-3016, crossing Gabon airspace in autumn 1961. Therefore, up to this point, one thing should have become clear: efforts had been made to cover up the delivery of KA-3016 in late August. At least so far, it is the only plane in the Hammarskjöld case for which such a cover-up can be noted.

## Conclusion

**T**his article makes the point that a Dornier DO-28A might be the plane that was used in a night-time air-to-air attack on UN General Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld on 18 September 1961.

This does not mean that the company Dornier had actively participated in the planning, preparation or execution of such an attack. It is highly likely that the timing of the arrival of KA-3016 in late August, between Operation Rum Punch and Operation Morthor, was pure coincidence.

The same applies to freelance pilot Heinrich Schäfer. Nevertheless, the investigation of KA-3016 is still at an early stage and nothing should be ruled out without more research. An analysis of Avikat's usual combat strategy and tactics shows quite clearly that the attack on Hammarskjöld's DC-6 was an anomaly. Avikat's pilots seemed to lack the experience required to bring down

---

<sup>45</sup> West German Embassy in the USA, 21 October 1961 (see note 8).

<sup>46</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y9va2gzt>> or <<https://www.klassiker-der-luftfahrt.de/geschichte/flugzeuge/einsatzgeschichte-der-dornier-do-28-ab/653592>>, document accessed by author 23 July 2018.

another plane. UN planes were intercepted while airborne but were destroyed only while on the ground. The downing, therefore, formed one anomaly; flying in a dark night was another. Something must have been different in September 1961. Schäfer comes to mind. He was an experienced German Luftwaffe fighter pilot, trained for night-time air-to-air combat operations and had participated in more than 60 World War II combat missions over Soviet and North African combat zones.<sup>47</sup>

Yet, this fact is a clue, not evidence. Currently, there is no concrete evidence for any active involvement of Schäfer in the Hammarskjöld case. Nevertheless, not just for this reason further research on Schäfer might be promising. On 29 August he arrived at Katanga. Usually delivery pilots stayed for some time at their place of destination to instruct local pilots and mechanics. According to Dornier's representative at Bonn, Otto Wien, the German 'non-Dornier' delivery pilot of KA-3016 returned to the company right after the delivery.<sup>48</sup> Yet, on 2 October the US Embassy at Bonn informed the Foreign Office that a DO-28A, obviously KA-3016, armed with machine guns and bomb brackets, had been seen at a Katangese airfield accompanied by a 'Dornier technician'.<sup>49</sup> About two weeks later, US intelligence added that the parts of the sixth disassembled DO-28A had been put together in Kolwezi with the help of a 'Dornier employee'.<sup>50</sup> As Otto Wien declared that no Dornier personnel was based at Katanga<sup>51</sup> and Schäfer also had been a technical officer at the German Luftwaffe,<sup>52</sup> he may very well have been the technician US-American intelligence had falsely identified as a Dornier 'employee'. Therefore, further research on Schäfer's stay might deliver new insights into the situation of Katanga's available planes and pilots, perhaps even into the situation of the exiled government at Kipushi in September 1961.

Be that as it may, at least one thing can be said definitely: if the crash of Hammarskjöld's DC-6 was caused by an air-to-air attack, KA-3016 has to seriously considered as the attacking plane. As the former Katanga Gendarme

---

<sup>47</sup> Schäfer to Central Verification Authority (Federal Archive) and Wehrmacht Information Authority (WASSt), 3 November 1965, BArch, Pers6, 190806.

<sup>48</sup> Chief of the West-East Trade Division Klarenaar (West German Foreign Office) to West German Foreign Office, 5 October 1961, PA AA, AA, B 57, 65.

<sup>49</sup> Representative Wien (Dornier) to Claudius Dornier Junior (Dornier), 2 October 1961, PA AA, AA, B 57, 65.

<sup>50</sup> West German Embassy in the USA, 21 October 1961 (see note 9).

<sup>51</sup> Chief of the West-East Trade Division Klarenaar (West German Foreign Office), 5 October 1961 (see note 48).

<sup>52</sup> Schäfer, 3 November 1965 (see note 47).

Victor Rosez confirmed to me: 'About the 5 Dorniers [KA-3016 to KA-3020], I can tell you that the very first was flown by their own pilots and arrived in Katanga by end of August 1961. This aircraft could be modified easily in a light bomber and possibly used in an attack on another plane.'<sup>53</sup> To definitely prove or rule out this possibility, further research is necessary.

*Torben Gülstorff is a German freelance historian. In 2016 he earned his PhD in contemporary history. The history of West and East German activities in Africa after 1945 forms one of his special subjects. He supports the ongoing UN investigation into the death of former UN General Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld as a voluntary researcher.*

---

<sup>53</sup> Email from Victor Rosez (former member of the Katanga Gendarmerie), 25 February 2018.