

Summary of Talk -- April 3, 2008
Peace & Conflict Studies Center
Talk by Dr. Cissa Wa Numbe, Secretary General
United Nations Association of the Democratic Republic of Congo

This is a summary of the highlights of a talk by the guest speaker, Dr. Wa Numbe, who was invited to speak on the subject, “*The Dem. Rep. of Congo and the Conflict in Africa's Great Lakes Region.*”

Dr. Wa Numbe opened his talk with an illustration showing that the Dem. Rep. of Congo (DRC), is of great importance due to its influence geographically (being centrally located with nine neighboring countries). He displayed a map of Africa, and rotated the map sideways, 90 degrees, and displayed that Africa can appear as a revolver, with DRC located at the trigger. He then quoted the French Writer, Franz Fanon, "[Africa is like a revolver, and the trigger is the Congo.](#)"

Other main points were:

- Congo is also important due to its rich resources; in particular, coltan (Columbite-tantalite) which is in extreme demands as this mineral is a vital component in the capacitors that control current flow used in numerous telecommunication devices such as cell phones, satellites, PCs, pagers, night-vision goggles and much more.
- Coltan is found in only three countries: Australia, Canada, and DRC. DRC is the ‘weakest’ link as Canada and Australia have strong governments and mining regulations; DRC is where most of the mining is done as the regulations are not upheld.
- The Carter Foundation published research recently citing that of the 60 major corporations mining resources in DRC, none meet international mining laws and regulations.
- Corporate profits from mining in DRC has net 600% profits; however, the Congo government has only received 5% profit from the mining of its resources.
- Conflicts in DRC are not ethnic, but rather conflicts over its resources; the areas of conflict are always in areas where there are rich natural resources. The UN’s largest peacekeeping mission is in DRC.
- The people of DRC earn about \$1 per day. DRC has a population of 60 million.
- Dr. Wa Numbe read an excerpt from Martin Meredith’s book “The State of Africa.” He also donated a copy to the Peace & Conflict Studies Center library.
- Dr. Wa Numbe raised the question – How does the United States affect the Dem. Rep. of Congo – for good or for bad; and he added, usually, it’s not positively.
- Some sources for more information: The Carter Center Foundation; Freedom From Fear; Monuc.org; International Rescue; Amnesty International; Human Rights Watch; UN.org;
- The DRC government has taken recent steps to [advance the review](#) of natural resource contracts negotiated during and immediately following its years of deadly conflict. Excerpts of the report can be found at the [CarterCenter.org](#) (as well as links to the full reports, in French).
- What we can do to help change: Write letters, lobby, and voice our opinion.