

The Clinton Administration and the Rwandan Genocide

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I. Introduction

On June 1, 2014, twenty years after the 1994 Rwandan genocide, thirty-five men and women from more than a dozen countries gathered to discuss what had gone wrong and how it could have been prevented. These men and women were what the conference called “former peacemakers, peacekeepers, and peace monitors,” all of whom played a role in the decision making before and during the genocide.¹ The conference, sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, The Hague Institute for Global Justice, and The National Security Archive, took place from June 1 through 3 at The Hague Institute in the Netherlands. Some of the most vocal post-genocide activists were there: The former UNAMIR Force Commander Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Prudence Bushnell, and the Rwandan human rights activist Monique Mujawamariya all attended the conference.

Once in the same room for the very first time, the conference table was arranged with members of the UN Security Council on one side with architects of the 1993 Arusha Accords sitting across from them. Between these two sides sat the “peacekeepers” on one side and French and Rwandan officials on the other.² Once seated, the Belgian scholar and Rwanda expert Filip Reyntjens remarked to the other participants, “This is never going to happen again. We will never be again in the same room, so I think we need to seize this opportunity.”³

¹ The National Security Archive, Rapporteur Report, The Hague June 1-3, 2014, “International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide: Rwanda 1990-1994,” 1, accessed October 20, 2016, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB508/docs/Rwanda%20Rapporteur%20Report%20-%204-3-15%20FINAL.pdf>.

² Ibid., 5.

³ Ibid., 3.

But most who could have made the biggest difference were not in the conference room on June 1. From the United States, the country that was in the best position to help, only five former officials showed up: Prudence Bushnell, Joyce Leader, Michael Barnett, David Scheffer, and John Shattuck. While the conference boasted "senior US, French, Belgian and Rwandan officials," no senior officials from the U.S. attended. The closest American attendee to a senior official who could have made a difference was senior advisor to U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright. Albright herself did not attend the conference. The five American officials who did attend were midlevel officials whose presence would seem to confirm the theory of journalists that the Rwandan genocide constituted a "midlevel crisis" in Washington, where high-level policy makers left the day-to-day management of Rwanda policy to midlevel government officials.

Confidential White House documents obtained in recent years by the National Security Archive at George Washington University have confirmed these assertions but added a new layer to the story. The day-to-day policy may have been left to midlevel bureaucrats like Bushnell, but their higher-ups were actively pursuing ways to keep the U.S. out of Rwanda and the entire UN over which the U.S. held enormous sway. Behind these efforts was Richard Clarke, a special assistant to President Bill Clinton on global affairs in the National Security Council. Clarke began looking for a way to get UN peacekeeping troops, Roméo Dallaire's UMANIR force, of whom none were Americans, out of Rwanda even before the genocide began. Once the killings started, Clarke and other high-level Clinton Administration officials used it as an excuse to draw back Dallaire's 2,500 troops to just 270.

Other top officials involved in the attempt to withdraw Dallaire's forces from the UN were Secretary of State Warren Christopher, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright,

and President Clinton's first term national security advisor Anthony Lake. Instead of using U.S. influence to develop a coherent UN response to the genocide, these officials instead spent their political capital trying to keep the U.S. safe from what they viewed to be a potential political disaster. These officials, including Clinton himself, failed to condemn the killing and under a directive from Warren Christopher refused to use the word 'genocide' until mid-June, when the majority of the 800,000 genocide victims had already been killed. Only after the Secretary of State's directive was revealed in a June 10 *New York Times* article did Christopher allow his staff to label the killings a genocide.⁴

In all of this effort, one voice that could have made the biggest difference was noticeably absent: President Bill Clinton's. During a heated argument at the 2014 conference, Roméo Dallaire stated, "President Clinton did not want to know. I hold Clinton accountable. He can excuse himself as much as he wants to the Rwandans, but he established a policy that he did not want to know."⁵ While major papers like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* covered the early days of the genocide in a questionable manner, their coverage left no doubt that mass atrocities were being committed in Rwanda, even if they did excuse the inaction of the U.S. government. One of the reasons we know President Clinton knew about the killings in Rwanda is because he did take interest in them for a short time, if only to make sure one person was safe: the Rwandan human rights activist Monique Mujawamariya whom Clinton had met at a human rights celebration months before. After she was found safe, president Clinton apparently lost all interest in Rwanda.

⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story* (New York and Washington: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 642.

⁵ Colum Lynch, "Exclusive: Rwanda Revisited," *Foreign Policy*, April 5, 2015, accessed October 8, 2016, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/16/genocide-under-our-watch-rwanda-susan-rice-richard-clarke/?wp_login_redirect=0.

The purpose of this thesis is to reexamine the Clinton Administration's response to the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the Administration's role in the UN's decision to draw down their peacekeeping force from 2,500 to 270, a move that many agree cost tens of thousands of lives if not more.⁶ Starting in 2001, the National Security Archive has obtained over 20,000 declassified documents related to Rwanda through the Freedom of Information Act, with the latest batch of documents being released as recently as 2015. These include previously classified memos and intelligence reports that show the inner workings of the Clinton Administration during the genocide. Many of these documents have been examined before, but since Samantha Power's 2001 work on the subject no one had reexamined all of these documents together.

The documents link the disastrous UN Peacekeeping mission to Somalia more closely to Rwanda than previously thought. It is common knowledge that the death of 18 American soldiers under the UN banner in October 1993 drastically changed the Clinton Administration's attitude towards UN peacekeeping missions. To this effect, Somalia doomed the UN peacekeeping mission from the start. However, new documents reveal that Somalia actually forced the Americans to vote 'yes' on the Rwanda mission, meaning the U.S.'s involvement in Somalia determined both UNAMIR's end *and* its beginning. By the time the Rwanda operation was being discussed in September of 1993, the Clinton Administration had already grown wary of UN PKOs even before the death of the 18 Americans the following month. The National Security Council was looking for a chance to say 'no' to a PKO and thought Rwanda was the perfect case. The Rwanda operation was ultimately saved by Somalia in that the French demanded a 'yes'

⁶ These include force commander of UNAMIR Romeo Dallaire, Human Rights Watch, and a Carnegie Commission report by Scott L. Fiel titled *Preventing Genocide: How the Early Use of Force might have succeeded in Rwanda*.

vote in the UN Security Council from the Americans as a condition to keep French troops in Somalia where the mission was already heading south.

Almost as soon as the Clinton Administration voted 'yes' to authorize UNAMIR, members of the National Security Council began looking for an opportunity to end the mission, even though officials had good intelligence that something terrible was about to happen in Rwanda. But, as the discussion surrounding the notorious 'genocide fax' shows, the U.S. did not believe the Rwanda operation should stay in place if there was reason to believe any outbreak of violence would take place. Clinton officials like Richard Clarke in the National Security Council and Secretary of State Warren Christopher in the State Department believed the UN should not be in the business of *peacemaking*, but *peacekeeping* was acceptable. If there was no peace to keep, then the UN operation had no business there. Once the genocide began on April 7, 1994, the Clinton Administration immediately began lobbying to pull the mission.

Previously it was thought that the United States agreed to the pullout as a favor to the Belgians, who did not want to be seen acting alone, but new documents show that it was actually the U.S. that first lobbied for a complete pullout of UNAMIR. It was only a last-minute change of heart by Madeleine Albright, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, that caused her to reject Warren Christopher's directive to withdraw all UN troops and ask for a drawdown to 270 instead.

Historiography

The Clinton Administration's response to the Rwandan genocide and the documents obtained by the National Security Archive have both been written about before, though only in depth by one person: the journalist and former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power. Timed with the release of the first declassified documents obtained by the National Security Archive, Power published her investigative account of the Clinton Administration's actions during the genocide in *The Atlantic*'s September 2001 issue as an article titled "Bystanders to Genocide." Power was given access to the declassified documents before public release. Along with those documents, Power conducted over 60 interviews with U.S. officials, some of whom have not given interviews on the genocide since. This article and the research that went into it are the basis of a chapter in her 2002 book "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide" on the Rwandan genocide.

Power's work in both her article and her book were important in calling attention to the Clinton Administration's failures before they were widely recognized, but Power approached her work as a journalist rather than a historian. Power spends more time weaving a tragic story through the eyes of Roméo Dallaire than analyzing the documents and interviews themselves. Although Power had unprecedented access to high-level officials that other historians and journalists working on the subject have not, thousands of new documents have been released since 2001 that have altered the historical record along with the unprecedented 2014 Rwandan genocide conference which put international actors in the same room for the first time.

Another important work that touches on the Clinton Administration and Rwanda is "Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda," by the political science professor Michael Barnett, an attendee of the 2014 conference. Barnett was a political officer at the U.S.

Mission to the UN during the genocide. For years after the genocide, he remained convinced the United States had acted appropriately by voting to pull out UNAMIR and preventing further intervention. Only years later did he come to believe the UN had made a colossal mistake in Rwanda. His own exploration of self-guilt led him to write "Eyewitness to Genocide," which focuses on the moral responsibility of politicians and bureaucrats in cases like Rwanda. Barnett argues that the UN bears some moral responsibility for Rwanda, but excuses officials' actions by blaming the bureaucratic culture of the UN for corrupting them. The bureaucratic culture, Barnett argues, prevents well intentioned officials from taking risks that can save lives.

Samantha Power and Michael Barnett are the two authors who have focused most closely on the Clinton Administration and Rwanda, but two other works are important for this thesis as well. They are the 1999 Human Rights Watch report written by the American historian Alison des Forges titled "Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda," and Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire's 2003 memoir, "Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda." Human Rights Watch is a highly-regarded NGO that conducts human rights investigations in countries throughout the world. After publishing reports on human rights abuses, Human Rights Watch uses them to "name and shame" countries into reform. At the time of the Rwandan genocide, they were uniquely prepared to sound the alarm because they had a historian of Rwanda, Alison des Forges, on their advisory board. After the genocide, des Forges quit academia to work full time as a human rights advocate and researcher. Given her expertise and the thoroughness of its research, "Leave None to Tell the Story" is widely regarded as the definitive account of the Rwandan genocide.

II. Historical Background: Rwanda

Rwanda, the site of the twentieth century's most efficient genocide, lies in the Great Lakes region of central Africa, bordered by Uganda to the north, Tanzania to the east, Burundi to the south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west.⁷ Though the majority of its people live in rural settings, Rwanda has one of the highest population densities in Africa.⁸ Although Rwanda is smaller than Maryland, its current population is almost 13 million, 90% of whom make their living through agricultural work.⁹

Rwanda is home to three primary ethnic groups, the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Hutu make up approximately 84% of the population, while the Tutsi stand at a much smaller 15%. The Twa, a hunter-gatherer group of pygmy origins account for only 1%.¹⁰ Though they are often falsely labeled as tribes, Hutu and Tutsi are in fact ethnic groups, which live in integrated communities, speak the same language, and often intermarry. Tribes are micro-nations whose members live separately and share a common language, culture, and religion.¹¹

Colonial Period and Belgian Influence

When British explorer Hanning Speck, the first European to set foot in Rwanda, arrived in 1858, he found a highly-centralized kingdom with a rigid power structure that reached all the way to the most rural communities.¹² Highly centralized power structures are typical of states

⁷ At the time of the genocide the DRC was called Zaire. It is now commonly referred to as 'the Congo'.

⁸ Encyclopedia Britannica, "Rwanda: History," accessed January 10, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Rwanda>.

⁹ CIA World Fact Book, "Rwanda," accessed January 10, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rw.html>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 5.

¹² BBC News, "Rwanda Profile: Timeline," accessed January 10, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14093322>.

with high population densities, but Rwanda has always stood out as among the most hyper-organized. This power structure and the enormous amount of social control its officials exercised has largely remained in place up until today. The organization of state and local governments helps explain how the genocide was carried out in the highly efficient manner it was. It meant that the ruling Hutu Power party was able to pass commands down to the smallest rural communities in an extremely short amount of time. Local officials then relayed the genocide organizers' commands to the civilian population who were already conditioned to obey authority figures.¹³

While Speck and other Europeans were intrigued by the Rwandan state structure, more captivating still were the Rwandan Tutsi. Though they had lived together since the Tutsi migrated to Rwanda in the 14th century, the Hutu and Tutsi were still easily identified by their physical features. The Tutsi were on average taller than the Hutu, with thin figures and sharper facial features that somewhat resembled those of European.¹⁴ This led race-obsessed European explorers and anthropologists to wildly speculate about the origins of the Tutsi. A Catholic prelate once conjectured, "Their intelligent and delicate appearance, their love of money, their capacity to adapt to any situation seems to indicate a Semitic origin."¹⁵ A Dominican Priest suggested they originated from the Garden of Eden. A Belgian administrator even labeled them the last survivors of the lost city of Atlantis.¹⁶

¹³ Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story* (New York, Washington, London, Brussels: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 222.

¹⁴ Prunier, 5.

¹⁵ Jason K. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The Collapse of the Congo and the Great War in Africa* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2012), 23.

¹⁶ Prunier, 8.

While theorists disagreed about the origin of the Tutsi, they all agreed on one thing: the Tutsi were of superior racial stock than the Hutu, and thus meant to lead their inferiors. Germans may have been the first Europeans to establish a colony in Rwanda in 1890, but their rule had little lasting impact.¹⁷ The Belgians, however, were experienced colonizers who knew how to turn thoughts into actions. Before colonizers came to Rwanda a delicate power structure existed between the Tutsi king and local chiefs who ruled under him. While the king was always a Tutsi, many of the chiefs were Hutu. When struggles over leadership occurred, they did so between clans, not ethnic groups. This nuance was lost on the Belgians, who saw Rwandans only by their Hutu or Tutsi identity. After taking Rwanda from the Germans by military conquest in 1916, the Belgians kept the Rwandan power structure largely in place, but replaced all Hutu chiefs with Tutsi.¹⁸

The Belgians doted on their new ruling class whenever they could. Most importantly, they gave Tutsi priority access to education in a system that could support only a small number of students.¹⁹ Better education meant higher paying jobs, further solidifying Tutsi's first class status. In an act that would have devastating consequences, Belgian officials issued identity cards beginning in the 1930s listing a person's ethnicity as either Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa to ensure their designated ruling class stayed pure. Even after the Belgians left Rwanda, the practice of including ethnicity in government issued ID cards stayed in place up until the 1994 genocide.²⁰

The changes to Rwandan society were not only structural but psychological as well. The myths Europeans had spread about Rwanda's history and origin of its people influenced both

¹⁷ BBC News, "Rwanda Profile: Timeline."

¹⁸ Prunier, 26.

¹⁹ Prunier, 33.

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, 37.

Western thinking and more importantly native Rwandans views of themselves. The Tutsi naturally accepted the myth that they were superior to the Hutu. In turn, Hutu began to believe the Tutsi were a different race, but instead of viewing them as natural rulers, they saw them as foreign invaders who didn't belong.²¹

The importance of these myths cannot be understated. Before colonial presence in Rwanda, no systematic ethnic violence occurred. Only after years living with Western myths and systematic oppression institutionalized by Belgian rule did Hutus revolt and throw out the Tutsi king, causing tens of thousands of Tutsis to flee the country after the 1960 Hutu revolution. Most of these refugees resettled to neighboring Uganda where the memories of their exile were passed down to their children, who would in 1990 take up arms and invade Rwanda as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) to take their country back from the Hutu government that had ruled since Rwanda's independence in 1961.²²

Invasion and Genocide

In the years of the Hutu Republic between Rwanda's independence and the 1990 invasion, waves of anti-Tutsi violence drove increasing numbers of Tutsi into exile. At first, Tutsi refugees were relatively welcome in Uganda, but by the mid-1980s the Ugandan president increasingly viewed their presence as a liability. Feeling increasingly unwelcome, young Tutsi men like Paul Kagame, the future leader of the RPF, came to believe Tutsi refugees would only ever be safe in their parents' homeland.²³

²¹ Prunier, 37.

²² Encyclopedia Britannica, "Rwanda: History."

²³ Prunier, 73.

On October 1, 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front invaded Rwanda, beginning a full-scale civil war that drew international attention. In 1992, an internationally negotiated ceasefire brought the military conflict to a halt. The French, American, and Belgian governments along with Rwanda's African neighbors Tanzania and Burundi helped negotiate a permanent peace agreement the following year. The 1993 Arusha Accords called for the establishment of a broad-based transitional government of both Hutu and Tutsi political parties and the demilitarization and integration of both RPF and Hutu government forces.

At the time, international actors like the U.S. and France really believed the Accords they had helped negotiate would succeed. Now, most historians and negotiators of the peace agreement agree it was unworkable from the start.²⁴ Perhaps most importantly, Rwanda's president, Juvenal Habyarimana, was likely never committed to the Accords but simply used them to buy time while he searched for a way to stay in power.²⁵ Habyarimana was a right-wing Hutu military man who had come to power through a coup in 1973. After signing the Arusha Accords in 1993, Habyarimana pushed back the agreed date to form the transitional government multiple times while the RPF grew increasingly frustrated with his actions.

Meanwhile, as the peace process, however problematic, was taking place, Hutu military and government officials even more right wing than Habyarimana began to believe that the only way for Hutus to remain in power in Rwanda was to completely rid their country of Tutsi through mass extermination. As early as 1992, these men began planning their 'final solution' in earnest, importing weapons and training young Hutu men to wield them under the auspices of protecting Rwanda from the RPF should the civil war resume. Events abroad, including the

²⁴ This was one of the topics discussed at the 2014 National Security Archive-sponsored conference in which important negotiators of the Arusha Agreement took part.

²⁵ Prunier, 194.

murder of the first democratically elected Hutu president of Burundi by a Tutsi military officer in October 1993, and the creation of hate radio stations to spread the 'Hutu Power' movement's anti-Tutsi propaganda, helped turn ordinary Hutu against their Tutsi neighbors and boosted recruitment into government trained *Interahamwe* militia groups.²⁶

On April 6, 1994, after Habyarimana had yet again pushed back the deadline to transfer power, he flew to Tanzania to meet with the presidents of Uganda, Tanzania, and Burundi, who tried to convince him to finally give up power. On the return flight, just before the plane landed at the Kigali airport on the night of April 6, Habyarimana's plane was shot down. Both Habyarimana and the president of Burundi who was also on board were killed.²⁷ Hate radio stations immediately blamed the president's murder on the RPF and asked loyal Hutu to go out and avenge their president's death. Shortly following Habyarimana's death, the *Interahamwe* and government forces began setting up road blocks inside Kigali. By the next morning, they began targeted assassinations of moderate Hutu-politicians and Tutsi civilians whose names, addresses, and license plate numbers were read over radio, making them easier targets. The pre-prepared lists of Tutsi sped up the genocide in Kigali, but once the killing spread to Rwanda's rural communities lists were no longer needed; ordinary Hutu had joined in the killing and already knew who the Tutsi in their community were.

The government-sponsored genocide continued until mid-July when the RPF had taken over most of Rwanda, stopped the killings, and announced the formation of a new national government, all without international assistance.²⁸ Estimates of the number of victims vary. The

²⁶ Prunier, 73.

²⁷ Prunier, 211-212.

²⁸ Holly J. Burkhalter, "The Question of Genocide: The Clinton Administration and Rwanda," *World Policy Journal* 11 no. 4 (1994): 44, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, accessed October 8, 2016, 53.

most commonly used death toll is 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu, but other estimates range between 500,000 and one million. After reviewing these estimates, Human Rights Watch researchers concluded that at least 500,000 were killed with an estimated three-quarters of Rwanda's Tutsi population among the dead.²⁹

III. The Clinton Administration and Rwanda

Rwanda is often referred to as a 'mid-level crisis' within the Clinton administration in which mid-level members of the State Department's Africa Bureau fought for the White House's attention and against the money conscious Pentagon. For the most part this is true. The efforts of those fighting for Rwanda in and outside of government were important but had little effect on decision making. As an example, no one did more within the U.S. government to help Rwanda than Prudence Bushnell, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. But as Bushnell herself said in the 2014 Rwanda Conference, she was a "senior midlevel or a junior senior person." Bushnell continued, remarking, "I was way down the totem pole and I had responsibility for the Rwanda portfolio. That shows you how important it was in the U.S. government. It sank [makes crashing, sinking sound, *Poooooooohw*] until it came to my desk."³⁰

Despite being responsible for the Rwanda portfolio, Bushnell never managed to affect the United States policy on Rwanda. The top policy makers who did had almost no knowledge of the

²⁹ Human Rights Watch, 16.

³⁰ The National Security Archive, "International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide: Rwanda 1990-1994: Annotated Transcript, Day 1," The Hague, June 1-3, 2014," 1-133, accessed October 20, 2016, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB508/docs/Rwanda%20Final%20Transcript%20Day%201.pdf>.

situation on the ground in Rwanda and only paid attention to the UN PKO during the processes of its creation and its withdrawal, both of which Washington had a heavy hand in. The decisions to vote 'yes' on UNAMIR in October 1993 and to draw its numbers down to 270 in April 1994 were both made without thought for UNAMIR's actual purpose or for the people it was protecting during the genocide, even though the U.S. possessed the intelligence to both know the mission was doomed from the start and the devastating effect a UNAMIR pullout during the genocide would have. Despite the clear differences between the Rwanda and Somalia PKO's, no conversation about Rwanda took place without the specter of Somalia hanging over it. The U.S.'s predicament in Somalia twisted the Clinton Administration's arm into voting 'yes' on the Rwanda operation in the Security Council before causing UNAMIR's downfall less than a year later. Not until the genocide was over, did the Clinton Administration realize that Rwanda was its own ballgame and was capable of becoming a major political headache all on its own.

The Major Players

To President Clinton, foreign policy was domestic policy. As a former governor and attorney general of Arkansas, Clinton had no experience as a foreign policy-maker in Washington and more importantly, no interest. The American electorate in 1992 held the same priorities as Clinton, and elected him for it. They chose Clinton, whose campaign promises prioritized fixing the recession, over the incumbent George H.W. Bush whose strength was his foreign policy record. After his success in the First Gulf War, President Bush's approval rating shot to an incredible 89%, but fell to a disastrous 29% once the economy dipped into a

recession.³¹ Clinton believed so heavily in this idea that domestic policy was foreign policy that he described Bush's lack of attention to domestic policy as the largest foreign policy mistake of Bush's presidency.³²

Once in office, Clinton focused on the development of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and his health care law, the 1993 Health Security Act. In order to focus on these domestic priorities, Clinton had to assemble a foreign policy team that was independent enough to handle minor international issues. When Bill Clinton assembled this team, he was not picking people to advise him, but to make foreign policy for him in many cases. George H. W. Bush's criticism of Clinton's habit of handing off important foreign policy issues to subordinates was not far off from the truth.³³

With one exception, the team that Clinton assembled was less experienced than George H. W. Bush's. The exception was Warren Christopher, the first Secretary of State in Clinton's administration.³⁴ Christopher was to many a confusing choice. Although he had been in politics for over forty years, Christopher rarely talked publicly about his own views. Many even doubted he had any. Instead, he defended the positions of the democratic presidents he worked for, Jimmy Carter and Lyndon B. Johnson. As a successful lawyer, Christopher knew how to speak carefully and was always conscious of the legal implications words could have.³⁵ This played a large role in his reluctance to use the word 'genocide' during most of the Rwanda crisis. Despite the doubts of many, Warren Christopher's appointment did come with benefits. He was a centrist

³¹ P. Edward Haley, *Strategies of Dominance: The Misdirection of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 66.

³² *Ibid.*, 70.

³³ Thomas L. Friedman, "A Broken Truce: Clinton vs. Bush in Global Policy," *The New York Times*, October 17, 1993, accessed January 20, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/17/world/a-broken-truce-clinton-vs-bush-in-global-policy.html?pagewanted=all>.

³⁴ Haley, 67.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

who had avoided making enemies in his forty years of government service, among both liberals and conservatives.³⁶ His experience, political centrism, and caution made him an appealing choice to Clinton, who wanted nothing more than an experienced captain to steer the foreign policy ship while Clinton focused his attention at home.

Clinton's pick for National Security Advisor was another experienced statesman, albeit a more opinionated one, Anthony Lake. Lake entered the State Department as a foreign service officer in 1962.³⁷ During the Vietnam war, Lake served as a special assistant to the U.S. Ambassador in Vietnam. He later served under Henry Kissinger in the National Security Council during the Nixon administration until he resigned in 1970 after the U.S. invaded Cambodia.³⁸ In the Carter Administration, Lake served as head of policy planning at the State Department, during which time he gained experience in international development as director of International Voluntary Services.³⁹ He also had experience with Clinton, serving as one of his foreign policy advisors during the 1992 presidential campaign. After the end of the Cold War, Lake shared Clinton's belief in the development of democracies and enlargement of international trade as strategies for peace and security.⁴⁰ Unlike Clinton, Lake had a strong grasp on how to develop policy to make those beliefs a reality.

Perhaps the member of Clinton's team with the least government experience was his pick for Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright. As a woman in the running for a top foreign policy post, Albright was a rarity, which likely helped her be chosen for the UN post in a

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ UNICEF Press Centre, "Anthony Lake Biography," accessed February 11, 2016, https://www.unicef.org/about/who/media_53427.html.

³⁸ Haley, 68.

³⁹ UNICEF Press Centre, "Anthony Lake Biography."

⁴⁰ Haley, 70.

democratic administration.⁴¹ Albright, a Georgetown professor with a PhD in public law and government from Colombia University, was a successful academic. More important for Clinton was her ability to raise money for political causes. Albright fundraised heavily for the Democratic party including for senator Edmund Muskie's failed 1972 presidential campaign.⁴² Her reputation as a loyal democrat no doubt made her appealing to Clinton who valued loyalty to the party. As a woman in Washington's foreign policy arena, Albright had to be tough to ward off accusation of softness on account of her gender. Still, Albright hated brutalities against civilians and often spoke out against them when her male colleagues did not.⁴³

These four players were the most visible, but it was members of National Security Council who made the most consequential policy decisions regarding the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in the early weeks of the genocide. At the top of the hierarchy was Richard Clarke, a special assistant to President Clinton on global affairs in the NSC. Together with Susan Rice, the 29-year-old director of international organizations and peacekeeping on the Council, Clarke and his subordinate were the primary actors attempting to spark UN withdrawal of UNAMIR, before and during the genocide. Other voices in the NSC were those of Eric P. Schwarz, a human rights specialist, and Donald Steinberg the NSC's director for African Affairs.

Finally, any list of major players would not be complete without the voices who stood up for the Rwandan Tutsi being murdered in the genocide. The biggest advocate for Rwandan civilians inside the Clinton administration was Prudence Bushnell, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Bushnell accepted the post in 1992 after turning down an

⁴¹ Ibid., 69.

⁴² Encyclopedia Britannica, "Madeleine Albright," accessed February 11, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Madeleine-Albright>.

⁴³ Haley, 69.

offer to serve as Ambassador to Rwanda in 1992 for family reasons.⁴⁴ Bushnell was the highest-level U.S. official making phone calls to government leaders of the genocide in Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front in an attempt to negotiate a ceasefire. She knew this was a hopeless strategy, but tried anyways while other U.S. officials mocked her behind her back.⁴⁵ Bushnell famously woke up at 2am Washington time every morning during the genocide to call Colonel Theoneste Bagosora and beg him to stop the killing. Bushnell's strategy of "naming and shaming" was not assigned to her but one she assigned herself.⁴⁶ Her phone calls and a handful of White House statements are the sum total of the U.S. government's attempts to stop the killings during the genocide.

Outside of government, non-profits like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International were at the forefront of the call for action. Both put out numerous press releases detailing the rising death tolls and calling international governments to intervene. Human Rights Watch was the best positioned non-profit because it was research based and had strong ties to Rwanda through its board member Alison des Forges, an American historian of Rwanda who had been making trips to Rwanda since the 1970s. Des Forges was also close friends with the Rwandan human rights activist Monique Mujawamariya who famously was the source much commotion in the State Department when she went missing during the early days of the genocide.

Last but certainly not least, was Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire, Force Commander of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda, 1993-1994. When General Dallaire was offered the

⁴⁴ National Security Archive, "Key Diplomat's Personal Notebook Sheds Light on Inner Workings of US Government Response to Genocide Unfolding in Rwanda," January 30, 2015, accessed October 8, 2016, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB500/>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

UN post he jumped at the chance even though he did not know where Rwanda was.⁴⁷ Once Dallaire arrived in Rwanda on August 19, 1993 he quickly realized the situation on the ground was not as stable as his superiors had let him to believe.⁴⁸ General Dallaire was in the best position to warn the UN and United States that something was seriously wrong in Rwanda and he did, often and loudly, even when it appeared no one was listening. Once the genocide began on April 7, 1994, Dallaire witnessed firsthand both the brutality of the killings and the powerful deterring effect the simple presence of foreign observers had on the militia carrying out the genocide.

The Clinton Administration, Somalia, and the United Nations

Much of President Bill Clinton and his senior officials' view of the UN involvement in the Rwandan genocide was linked to the drawn-out UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia. The same can be said of the United States Congress and the American public's view as well. When the United Nations' 2,500-man mission to Rwanda jumped to the headlines on April 7 1994, the U.S. and UN's failure in Somalia was very much on the minds of policy makers and the American public alike. The Rwanda mission, unlike Somalia, was short staffed, underbudgeted, and did not contain a single American troop. Still, any discussion of UN involvement in Rwanda, during and before the genocide, in and outside of government, could not escape Somalia's specter and thus, the story on the Clinton Administration's Rwanda policy begins there.

⁴⁷ Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2003), 43.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 57.

President Clinton and his foreign policy team did not begin the U.S. involvement in Somalia, but inherited it from President George H.W. Bush. Only a month before Clinton took office in January 1993, President Bush sent 26,000 American troops to assist a UN peacekeeping mission deliver food and relief supplies to a nation suffering from famine under control of the warlord General Mohammed Farah Aidid.⁴⁹ Most agreed with the original purpose of the mission: on purely humanitarian grounds, safeguard the supplies from attacks by Aidid's forces and deliver them to starving Somalis. No involvement in Somalia's civil war was planned and American troops were meant to be out within a few months of their deployment. Many even thought the mission would be easy. Shortly after Clinton took office, however, the UN forces and American troops supporting them were drawn into the war. What Bush had started quickly became Clinton's mess to sort out.

Both Congress and the press criticized the new administration's handling of Somalia as lacking direction and giving American sovereignty away to the UN. For their part, Clinton and his foreign policy team invited criticism by campaigning on a moral driven foreign policy to be achieved through strengthened ties with the UN.⁵⁰ The U.S. would put its military strength behind United Nations driven interventions when both agreed action was necessary. During his campaign, Clinton even went as far as advocating for the idea to build a "rapid-deployment force" that essentially amounted to a UN standing army.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Michael R. Gordon, "New Strength for U.N. Peacekeepers: U.S. Might," *The New York Times*, June 13, 1993, accessed December 22, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/13/world/new-strength-for-un-peacekeepers-us-might.html>.

⁵⁰ Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Where is Our Foreign Policy?" *The Washington Post*, August 30, 1993, accessed February 20, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (140822719).

⁵¹ Ruth Marcus, "Clinton Seeks Limits on Peace Keeping," *The Washington Post*, September 28, 1993, accessed February 11, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (140747035).

Both Secretary of State Warren Christopher and U.S. Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright espoused this policy in public. Warren Christopher once clarified this policy as, "taking the lead in passing the responsibility to multilateral bodies."⁵² During his confirmation hearings, he even seconded President Clinton's idea for an international standing army under UN command.⁵³ While Christopher spoke of policy directives, Albright often spoke of moral responsibilities. At her swearing in ceremony, she declared the guiding principle of her job to be "the inescapable responsibility... to build a peaceful world and to terminate the abominable injustices and conditions that still plague civilization," a statement which conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer described as "noble, foolish Utopianism."⁵⁴ In his August 1993 column for the *Washington Post*, Krauthammer further accused the administration of not being able to resist temptation, "especially the temptation to do good."⁵⁵ Clinton's reputation as a "do-gooder" and his decision to turn control of the Somalia mission over to the UN in March 1993 led many to believe his "weak kneed" foreign policy was slowly giving away U.S. sovereignty to international governing bodies.⁵⁶

At the same time, congress was becoming increasingly wary of its responsibility to pay 30% of UN peacekeeping costs.⁵⁷ Clinton addressed this concern directly in his first speech to the UN General Assembly on September 27, 1993. In the speech, Clinton attempted to ward off criticisms by promising to reign in peacekeeping spending and dial back U.S. approval for UN

⁵² Kirkpatrick, "Where is Our Foreign Policy?"

⁵³ Elaine Sciolino, "The Somalia Mission: Analysis; The U.N.'s Glow is Gone," *The New York Times*, October 9, 1993, accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/09/world/the-somalia-mission-analysis-the-un-s-glow-is-gone.html>.

⁵⁴ Charles Krauthammer, "Playing God in Somalia," *The Washington Post*, August 13, 1993, accessed February 11, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (140909955).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Kirkpatrick, "Where is Our Foreign Policy?"

⁵⁷ Robert C. Byrd, "The Perils of Peacekeeping," *The New York Times*, August 19, 1993, accessed December 20, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/19/opinion/the-perils-of-peacekeeping.html>.

peacekeeping missions.⁵⁸ The president promised to pay the \$400 million in peacekeeping costs while asking for a reduction of the 30% rule to 25%. In a statement radically different from his earlier campaign rhetoric, Clinton famously declared, "If the American people are to say yes to UN peace keeping, the United Nations must know when to say no."⁵⁹

Just as Clinton and his foreign policy team began singing a different tune, disaster struck in Somalia. In a 15-hour battle against General Aidid's militia fighters 12 American soldiers were killed, 78 wounded and 6 more taken hostage.⁶⁰ To make matters worse for the Clinton White House, videos of American soldiers' bodies being mutilated and dragged through streets by laughing Somali militia members spread through the press like wildfire. A hostage video showed an American Black Hawk helicopter pilot shaking in fear. Still worse reports made their ways into the press in the following weeks as the death toll rose from 12 to 18. The same television screens that had garnered American support for Bush's humanitarian mission by showing starving Somali children now showed images of mutilated American soldiers, forever changing Americans' image of UN peacekeeping.

Criticisms poured in for the Clinton Administration's handling of Somalia. Most blamed the administration for handing off control of the U.S.-led mission to the UN in May, arguing that the United States should never allow its military to operate under foreign command.⁶¹ Even George H.W. Bush voiced his disapproval. Though he had promised not to criticize President Clinton for one year, Bush accused him of running what was a sound operation under Bush into the ground. He further stated that Clinton was foolish for believing he could hand off foreign

⁵⁸ Ruth Marcus, "Clinton Seeks Limits on Peace Keeping," *The Washington Post*, September 28, 1993.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Keith Richburg, "Somalia Battle Killed 12 Americans, Wounded 78," *The Washington Post*, October 5, 1993, accessed February 11, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (140835729).

⁶¹ Elaine Sciolino, "The Somalia Mission: Analysis; The U.N.'s Glow is Gone."

policy affairs to subordinates and only focus on domestic policy.⁶² President Bush even went as far as criticizing Clinton's handling of foreign affairs in front of children at an elementary school. In what the *New York Times* deemed a "foreign policy equivalent of a food-fight among principled diplomats," the Clinton team shot back, claiming the Bush team had left them with "ticking time bombs" in Bosnia, Haiti, and Somalia.⁶³ Despite this criticism, Clinton amazingly claimed his administration was off to a "pretty good beginning" in world affairs because on "the biggest issues affecting the future and the security of the United States we have a good record."⁶⁴ To anyone outside the White House, this statement seemed greatly out of touch, given the death of 18 Americans less than two weeks before.

Rwanda: Warning Signs

The body of literature on the Rwandan genocide is full of disagreements on how much Clinton Administration officials knew about the genocide and when. At what point is it reasonable to expect that Clinton and the people who could have made a difference knew genocide was occurring in Rwanda? How far in advance, if at all, should they have taken steps to prevent it? Hardly anyone expects Bill Clinton, Christopher Warren or Anthony Lake to have followed the day to day happening of a small African country in which the United States held little interest. What people can and should expect is the United States to have proper intelligence channels established in order to alert the right people when atrocities are likely. And, because western civilization has deemed genocide the worst of all crimes since 1945 we can and should

⁶² Thomas L. Friedman, "A Broken Truce: Clinton vs. Bush in Global Policy."

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ruth Marcus, "A 'Pretty Good Beginning': That's how Clinton Rates Foreign Policy Record," *The Washington Post*, October 17, 1993, accessed February 11, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (140865726).

expect a government which promises to do its part to end genocide, to intervene when it does occur to a reasonable degree. The question of whether or not the Clinton Administration should have anticipated the genocide is a broad debate, but their actions once genocide was apparent are easier to judge. Still, it is hard to argue as writers like Michael Barnett have, that “there is no evidence... that anyone in Washington imagined that a breakdown in the political process would lead to genocide.”⁶⁵ Whether the Clinton team knew is debatable, but whether anyone in Washington knew is not.

The historian and Human Rights Watch board member Alison des Forges sums up this point by stating in HRW’s 1999 extensive report of the genocide “Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda,” that “the warnings of catastrophe were many and convincing; although international decision makers did not know everything, they knew enough to have understood that disaster lay ahead.”⁶⁶ Des Forges includes a lengthy chapter of warning signs in HRW’s report with warnings listed chronologically, almost one per day from November 1993 till April 1994. For the purpose of this thesis, two State Department cables unknown to des Forges at the time of her writing should suffice to show the State Department had enough evidence to recognize the genocide for what it was within days of the April 6 plane crash and beginning of the genocide.

In August of 1992 the U.S. Embassy’s deputy chief of mission in Kigali, Joyce Leader, wrote a diplomatic cable to Washington warning that Hutu extremists linked to the ruling party

⁶⁵ Michael Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 88.

⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch, 142.

were calling for the extermination of all Tutsi. Leader wrote that the CDR, an extremist political party,

is particularly feared by members of the opposition for its Ku Klux Klan-like approach to ethnic relations. Its repeated call for recognition of differences between Tutsi and Hutu is widely interpreted as a call for extermination of the Tutsis. Many people have told us that the CDR is nothing more than a mouthpiece for the president, saying what he would like to say but cannot.⁶⁷

Leader continued to describe the relationship between the Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana, the right wing political parties and their increasing connection to local militias who carried out intermittent killings of Tutsi throughout the country.

Not long after Leader's cable, an analyst for the State Department drafted an analysis of the current political climate in Rwanda on September 23, 1992. That analysis predicted that "Hutu chauvinists" might be willing to play the "genocide card" to maintain their hold on Rwanda as the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front became closer to achieving political integration in the broad-based transitional government called for in the Arusha Accords.⁶⁸ The analyst further stated that, "credible reports of official participation in anti-Tutsi communal violence are disturbing in a small country with such a centralized administrative and security system... The threat of genocidal violence is likely to remain despite formal political arrangements."⁶⁹ More simply put, the establishment of an inclusive government in Rwanda necessitated by the Arusha

⁶⁷ August 1993 Joyce Leader confidential Department of State cable retrieved by Foreign Policy Magazine and published in Colum Lynch's April 5, 2015 article "Exclusive: Rwanda Revisited" accessed October 8, 2016, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1501933-footnote-245-kigali-03478.html>.

⁶⁸ Department of State analysis drafted by Rick Ehrenreich, September 23, 1992. NSArchive, accessed February 10, 2017, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB458/docs/DOCUMENT%202.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Accords was unlikely to stop attacks against Tutsi in which the government itself was participating. The identification of the government as a perpetrator of the violence is key. During and after the genocide, the U.S. and UN both claimed to have been unable to see the genocide through the civil war.

Warnings in the forms of reports cataloguing human rights violations, public political assassinations, and intermittent murders of Tutsi by Hutu militia throughout Rwanda continued to surface almost daily until the most damning of all, the January 1994 'genocide fax' sent by General Dallaire left no doubt that Rwanda's government was planning the systematic extermination of Rwanda's Tutsi population. Unlike the 'genocide fax', these two reports were sent to the State Department before the United States voted in favor of the creation of UNAMIR, meaning the United States had good reason to know the mission was doomed from the start if it cared to.

The Creation of UNAMIR

After the Rwandan government and RPF signed the Arusha Accords on August 4, 1993, turning their ceasefire into a plan for an inclusive transitional government, the UN began developing a chapter VI peacekeeping mission to oversee the process which the accords called for. On October 5, 1993, the UN Security Council passed a resolution establishing UNAMIR, the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda, for which General Dallaire was officially appointed force commander.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Dallaire, 96.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, the United States' vote was required to pass the resolution, but it did not vote yes on humanitarian grounds. Even though the vote took place only two days after the deaths of 18 Americans in Somalia, the Clinton administration and U.S. Congress had already lost their taste for the UN and peacekeeping missions. When Susan Rice, Richard Clarke and Anthony Lake became aware of the imminent creation of a peacekeeping mission for Rwanda in early August, it was one of five possible missions brought to their attention. In a memo for the NSC, Rice wrote on August 4 that "The U.S. has some interest in resolving each of these conflicts; however, we do not have the funds to pay for them."⁷¹ Acquiring the funds from congress would require, "at a minimum, high-level Administration lobbying," which there was little hope for.⁷² As the Rwanda vote drew nearer, Richard Clarke began to single it out as "the case the NSC is looking for to prove that the U.S. can say 'no' to a new peacekeeping operation."⁷³ Rwanda was especially fit for this job because there was a "great lack of enthusiasm in the rest of the government for the Rwanda operation."⁷⁴ The Rwanda mission was all but doomed.

Ironically it was Somalia that saved the Rwanda operation. As the U.S. operation in Somalia spun further out of control, the U.S. needed to assure the continued presence of its western allies' troops in Somalia, particularly those of the French. One way to assure the French's help was to support the upcoming Rwanda operation, favored by the French. The establishment of a UN-led operation in Rwanda would allow the French to withdraw their 400

⁷¹ Confidential National Security Council memorandum for Anthony Lake drafted by Susan Rice, "Five Imminent New U.N. Peacekeeping Operations," August 2, 1993, NSArchive, accessed February 10, 2017, http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB511/docs/2014-0278-M_19930802.pdf.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Confidential Department of State cable to USUN drafted by Nick Rasmussen, "Rwanda Peacekeeping Operation," September 29, 1993, NSArchive, accessed February 10, 2017, http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB511/docs/2014-0278-M_19930929.pdf.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

troops from Kigali that were providing security for French citizens.⁷⁵ In a memo from Madeleine Albright to Warren Christopher and President Clinton, Albright wrote, "If we take the step of vetoing the French draft resolution, thereby forcing the French to maintain their battalion in Kigali, we can almost certainly write off the possibility of French troops remaining in Somalia," establishing a clear link between the Rwanda operation and French presence in Somalia.⁷⁶

Still, the Clinton Administration was not ready to say 'yes' to the operation as it was. To further haggle with the French to decrease the cost of the mission, the U.S. delayed the Security Council vote until October 5. After French President Francois Mitterrand wrote a letter to Clinton urging him to support the mission, Clarke and Lake drafted a reply. In a memo for the president discussing the reason for a 'yes' vote, Lake relayed reports from their UN mission that, "when the French voted for the UN resolutions on Liberia and Haiti, they indicated an expectation that their support would be reciprocated by a U.S. vote for a Rwanda operation."⁷⁷ Lake also assured the president that U.S. troops would not participate in the Rwanda operation.

In Bill Clinton's final draft sent to Francois Mitterrand of France, the President thanked Mitterrand for his patience with the U.S. and agreed to support the Rwanda mission after cost concerns had been addressed.⁷⁸ He agreed with Mitterrand "that the international community needs to support the Arusha Accords so that efforts to bring peace to Rwanda are not compromised," before expressing his hope for continued French support of the Somalia

⁷⁵ Richard Clarke, "Draft Message from the president to Francois Mitterrand on Rwanda Peacekeeping," October 2, 1993, NSArchive.

⁷⁶ Madeleine Albright, "Rwanda and Criteria for New PKO," 28, September 1993, NSArchive.

⁷⁷ Richard Clarke, "Draft Message from the president to Francois Mitterrand on Rwanda Peacekeeping."

⁷⁸ William Clinton, "Message from Clinton to Mitterrand," October 5, 1993. NSArchive.

operation in a subtle hat-tip to the unspoken quid-pro-quo agreement between the two western powers.⁷⁹

Once Clinton Administration officials accepted the Rwanda operation as a necessary exchange for French troops' continued presence in Rwanda, their collective view of the operation transformed dramatically. Instead of viewing it as an opportunity to say 'no', many instead saw it as an opportunity to show how a peacekeeping operation was done right: low cost, low risk, without putting U.S. troops in harm's way. They even thought the mission would be easy. In a memo through Richard Clarke to Deputy National Security Advisor Sandy Berger, a NSC staffer wrote that "If approved, a UN peacekeeping operation for Rwanda stands a good chance of being a success," because both sides had shown their commitment to peace and desire for UN observers to oversee the peace process.⁸⁰

A day later on September 30, an intelligence report was passed around that agreed the Rwanda operation would be highly successful if approved. In fact, it would be the easiest peacekeeping mission in all of Africa.⁸¹ As to why this is likely, the report focuses on logistical factors like the small size of the country, the quality of the roads, and the "mild and pleasant" climate "well suited to troops from almost every country."⁸² The report also agreed with the State Department memo that the signing of the Arusha Accords in August meant both the RPF and Hutu government were committed to peace. They couldn't have been more wrong. In fact, two of the reasons it listed why the PKO would succeed helped the Hutu government carry out the genocide more efficiently instead. The report stated that "the dense population makes covert or

⁷⁹ William Clinton, "Message from Clinton to Mitterrand."

⁸⁰ Nick Rasmussen, September 29, 1993 Memo for Samuel R. Berger, NSArchive.

⁸¹ Intelligence Report September 30, 1993, NSArchive.

⁸² Ibid.

surprise military movement difficult” and “combatants are all ... well organized, controlled, and disciplined.”⁸³ The dense population and discipline of government troops helped the 1994 genocide become the fastest of the twentieth century.

Despite the miscalculations of the report, it did offer an ominous warning of what would happen if the operation failed. The intelligence report states in the last paragraph that the

failure of the peace process in Rwanda, for any reason, would greatly increase the likelihood of increased regional ethnic violence. Tutsi-Hutu conflict could quickly spread to Zaire, Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda. Other ethnic groups could and would retaliate, compounding social and political instability, generating international political crises in Burundi and Uganda, ethnic slaughter in Zaire, and continued civil war in Rwanda.⁸⁴

Regardless of this warning, both the NSC memo to Sandy Berger and this intelligence report focused on economic concerns as their top priority. One of the report’s top conclusions was that the Rwanda PKO was “sound with room for some economies,” meaning the cost of a mission it admits is important to regional stability could be cut even further.⁸⁵

One last but important consideration for the NSC and State Department was whether or not the Rwanda operation fit with the guidelines of Presidential Review Directive 13. The directive was an unpublished white paper prepared by Clinton Administration officials for the president in the early weeks of his presidency when optimism for UN cooperation was still

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

high.⁸⁶ PRD-13 was originally intended to help Clinton decide when it was appropriate for the U.S. to support UN peacekeeping operations. By fall of 1993 the report was almost finished, but was reworked after the deaths of eighteen U.S. soldiers in the Somalia operation.⁸⁷ Rwanda was the first real test for PRD-13 after the Somalia disaster even if the vote did come less than two days after. Still, the U.S. was already tiring of UN PKOs before the American soldiers died. By the end of September when the Rwanda PKO was being seriously considered by the Clinton Administration, PRD-13 had already shifted from its original purpose to, in the words of a white house official, "a framework for deciding when our interests are at stake."⁸⁸

The September 29 memo from the NSC to Sandy Berger explicitly lists how the Rwanda PKO lined up with PRD-13 guidelines.⁸⁹ As factors lining up with those guidelines, the memo lists the ceasefire, established objectives and endpoint, and most importantly, "a clear understanding that this is a peacekeeping, not peace enforcement mission."⁹⁰ According to PRD-13 guidelines, the U.S. was no longer in the business of making peace in countries where the U.S. held no national interest, but would 'okay' UN PKOs to countries where there was an established peace to keep and a pre-determined exit strategy. If the peace process broke down, then as far as the Clinton Administration was concerned, UN peacekeepers had no business there.

⁸⁶ Stanley Meisler, "World View Keeping the Peace: U.N. Gets Mixed Reaction to Goal Clinton Agrees with Idea but Intends to Strictly Limit U.S. Involvement in Missions," *Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 1994, accessed February 5, 2017, http://articles.latimes.com/1994-05-03/news/wr-53201_1_u-n-peacekeeping-mission.

⁸⁷ Newsweek Staff, "The Clinton Doctrine," *Newsweek*, February 27, 1994, accessed February 5, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/clinton-doctrine-190212>.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Nick Rasmussen, September 29, 1993 Memo for Samuel R. Berger, NSArchive.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

The 'Genocide Fax'

This mindset in the Clinton Administration had devastating consequences for Rwanda, starting with their reaction to the famous "Genocide Fax" of January 1994. The fax from General Dallaire in Kigali to the head of the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations, General Maurice Baril on January 11 was a report on a conversation one of Dallaire's subordinates had had with an informant known only at the time as Jean-Pierre. The informant claimed to be the chief trainer for the *Interahamwe*, a militia group made up of young men created under the auspices of protecting Kigali and the surrounding area from the RPF if combat resumed.⁹¹ He also stated that he reported directly to the president of the MNRD party, the leading government party in Rwanda. Jean-Pierre claimed to know the location of weapons caches around Kigali and was willing to show Dallaire where they were in exchange for protection for himself and his family.

Once UNAMIR arrived in Rwanda, reported Jean-Pierre, the MNRD president instructed him to command *Interahamwe* members to make list of all the Tutsi in their home villages. Jean-Pierre suspected these lists were being made in preparation for the extermination of all Tutsi. While he hated the RPF, he did not hate all Tutsi and wanted no part in the highly efficient extermination he saw being planned before him.⁹² According to Jean-Pierre, the death squads would be capable of killing 1,000 Tutsi every 20 minutes in Kigali. Upon receiving this information, writes Dallaire in his memoir, he "was silent, hit by the depth and reality of this information. It was as if the informant, Jean-Pierre, had opened the floodgates on the hidden

⁹¹ Dallaire, 142.

⁹² Ibid.

world of the extremist third force, which until this point had been a presence we could sense but couldn't grasp."⁹³

Not only were the Rwandan MRND party and its rightwing allies planning to kill Tutsi, reported Jean-Pierre, but the Belgian UNAMIR officers as well. The president of the MRND party believed the murder of Belgian peacekeepers would cause the Belgian government to withdraw all of its peacekeepers who made up a substantial portion of UNAMIR's force.⁹⁴ As the force commander of UNAMIR, Dallaire felt responsible to protect his men. In the January 11 fax, Dallaire wrote to the DPKO in New York that he would seize the weapons Jean-Pierre had informed them of within 36 hours. He concluded the message by writing, "Where there's a will, there's a way. Let's do it."⁹⁵

Before Dallaire could carry out the search, he received an unexpected reply from New York. The response, with the signature of Kofi Annan, head of peacekeeping operations, forbid Dallaire from carrying out the search and instructed him to discuss Jean-Pierre's claims with President Habyarimana and the ambassadors of Belgium, France, and the United States.⁹⁶ Furthermore, UNAMIR's chapter six mandate did not allow it to conduct its own independent investigations. A chapter six mandate meant UNAMIR's purpose was to oversee a peace process agreed upon by two independent actors, not make sure the peace held. In other words, the peaceful transition of power was up to the Rwandan government and the rebel RPF to make happen, not UNAMIR.

⁹³ Dallaire, 142-143.

⁹⁴ Human Rights Watch, 151.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 152.

But what was Dallaire to do now that he had good reason to suspect the peace was about to fall apart? Describing this predicament in his memoir, Dallaire writes,

The November massacres, the presence of heavily armed militias, a rabid extremist press screaming about Tutsi *Inyenzi* and demanding that blood be shed, the political impasse and the resultant tension – all were signs that we were no longer in a classic chapter-six peacekeeping situation. Jean-Pierre simply connected the dots, revealing that the mission – and the Arusha Peace Agreement – were at risk. Something had to be done to save us from catastrophe.⁹⁷

The situation in Rwanda had clearly reached a point where disaster was just around the corner, and even casual observers had good reason to suspect a genocide was a real possibility, even without Dallaire's information. Those who had it, top UN officials, the French, Belgians, and Americans, were particularly poised to sound the alarm. Instead, top officials who had access to the fax largely ignored it and even kept its existence hidden from the rest of the UN Security Council, an act that's significance has been hotly debated.

One arena for this debate was the 2014 National Security Archive-sponsored conference on decision-making during the genocide, where participants including Roméo Dallaire, Michael Barnett, Prudence Bushnell and John Shattuck, the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor debated what effect the fax would have had if the Security Council and mid-level Clinton Administration officials had been aware of its existence. Not only did the few U.S. officials who knew about the fax, including Secretary of State Warren Christopher and

⁹⁷ Dallaire, 146.

UN Ambassador Madelaine Albright, refrain from informing the Security Council about the fax, but also kept it from mid-level U.S. officials in the State Department including Bushnell and Shattuck.

While discussing the fax, Michael Barnett weighed in on what would have happened had the U.S. showed the fax to the council. Barnett strongly believed that the knowledge of the fax in the Security Council would have meant the end for UNAMIR because, "By January, the United States was headhunting peacekeeping operations... [top Clinton Administration officials] are making clear that, if there is no peace to keep, there will be no more peacekeeping."⁹⁸ If the fax had been shown to the council, conjectured Barnett, the United States would have immediately began lobbying to shut down UNAMIR. As evidence, Barnett said that, "By March 1994, the United States is beginning to use the threat of withdrawal as a way of trying to put pressure on the Rwandan government," showing that the U.S. was serious about pulling UNAMIR even before the genocide when it appeared peace would soon break down.⁹⁹

John Shattuck responded to Barnett by stating he believed only part of Barnett's hypothesis to be true. He agreed that decision-makers in the Clinton Administration were looking to end peacekeeping missions, but disagreed that the knowledge of the fax would have been detrimental to UNAMIR. Referring to the administration's decision to keep the 'genocide fax' hidden from mid-level officials like himself, Shattuck stated that knowledge of the fax would have given mid-level officials in the State Department, including himself in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and Prudence Bushnell in the African Affairs Bureau, fuel

⁹⁸ The National Security Archive, "International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide: Rwanda 1990-1994: Annotated Transcript, Day 1, The Hague, June 1-3, 2014," accessed October 20, 2016, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB508/docs/Rwanda%20Final%20Transcript%20Day%201.pdf>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

to fight the "straightjacket" put on peacekeeping operations by PRD-13 and impact the intense debate surrounding peacekeeping in the administration.¹⁰⁰

Shattuck also disagreed with Barnett's assessment that the entire administration opposed peacekeeping. Shattuck and Bushnell's departments were very much in favor of UN PKOs but had their voices drowned out by their higher ups who felt the outside political pressure more intensely and were less connected to countries that benefited from these operations. Bushnell chimed in, agreeing that, "As someone who was looking at Rwanda, I never got a cable referring to the General's warning. Never. I would have seen it, I would have done something."¹⁰¹

The mid-level officials in the State Department were not aware of the fax, but there is evidence that Madeleine Albright was indeed briefed on the fax and cabled the info to Warren Christopher in Washington. In the cable obtained by the National Security Archive from Albright to D.C., it is clear that Albright took Dallaire's warning seriously and that she believed the Rwandan government was passing out arms to Hutu militia and was actively involved in training them. Albright relayed the UN's plan to deal with the situation through the involvement of "friends of Rwanda": France, Belgium and the United States to Washington as well. Belgium would approach the Tutsi rebels in the RPF, while France would discuss the accusations with their allies, the Rwandan government. Albright's cable relayed the UN's request to Warren Christopher that the U.S. approach both sides of the Arusha Accords and attempt to resolve the political stalemate through dialogue.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 1-120-1-121.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 1-122.

¹⁰² Cable from Madeleine Albright to Secretary of State on January 24, 1994, NSArchive.

The debate at the 2014 conference and the Albright cable confirm that top level-Clinton Administration officials knew about the deteriorating situation in Rwanda and highlight their reluctance to be pulled into a more active role in Rwanda. It is impossible to know if Michael Barnett's assertion that the U.S. would have lobbied to shut down UNAMIR in January is accurate, but we do know that they had the opportunity to show the Security Council themselves and chose not to, presumably because showing the cable, then lobbying to shut UNAMIR down would have looked particularly cruel. The cable also shows that at least Albright took Jean-Pierre's claims seriously. It is not known if anyone else in the administration who was aware of the fax did. Even if they did not take it seriously at first, the fax should have left them with little doubt about the nature of the killing that began immediately after Habyarimana's plane crashed on April 6.

The Genocide and the Fate of UNAMIR

Shortly after the plane carrying the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi was shot down on April 6, 1994, the organized killing of Rwandan Tutsi and moderate Hutu politicians began. The lists Jean-Pierre reported on were read over radio as members of the Presidential Guard and *Interahamwe* militia went door to door in Kigali in search of their victims. Members of the Tutsi rebel army stationed in Kigali began fighting back, giving the appearance to casual observers that the civil war had begun anew, masking the genocide beneath.

As we now know, the Americans were not casual observers. Both before and during the genocide, policy makers in the Clinton Administration had access to intelligence reports that provided detailed analysis of the situation on the ground in Rwanda. For example, we now know

the U.S. had reconnaissance surveillance over Rwanda on the first day of the genocide because of a newly released April 8, 1994 report from the National Photographic Interpretation Center that detailed the presence of roadblocks around the Kigali airport and their absence around the U.S. embassy.¹⁰³ Despite their knowledge of the threat facing all Rwandan Tutsi, the Clinton White House only ever put effort into protecting one: the Rwandan human rights activist Monique Mujawamariya. In the first days of the genocide, finding Monique became one of the Clinton Administration's top three priorities along with the evacuation of American citizens in Rwanda and the termination of UNAMIR.

The presence of Americans in Rwanda caused the Clinton Administration to pay special attention to Rwanda during the first few days of the genocide. By the night of April 7, the day after the president Habyarimana's plane was shot down, the U.S. State Department had already begun planning the evacuation of all 258 Americans in Rwanda according to a confidential memo from Donald Steinberg, the National Security Council's director for African affairs.¹⁰⁴ Steinberg also wrote in the update that the NSC had been in touch with the French and Belgian governments who were also planning to evacuate their citizens. By the next day an agreement between the U.S. and Belgium was almost complete. A memo to Anthony Lake on April 8 informed him that Warren Christopher had "agreed to respond positively to the Belgian Prime Minister's request that the U.S. authorize cooperative emergency planning...providing that the military action pertains to evacuation only."¹⁰⁵ In other words, a joint evacuation force was acceptable, but a joint military operation to end the slaughter of Rwandans was not.

¹⁰³ National Photographic Interpretation Center report, "runway blocked," April 8, 1994, NSArchive.

¹⁰⁴ Donald K. Steinberg memorandum, "Update on Rwanda," April 7, 1994, NSArchive.

¹⁰⁵ Marc Grossman, "Response to Belgian Request," April 8, 1994, NSArchive.

The evacuation of foreign citizens in the early days of the genocide is widely seen as both a symbol of western apathy towards Rwanda and a missed chance to end the killings within a week of their beginning. The evacuation force that arrived a few days after the start of the genocide consisted of approximately 900 elite Belgian and French troops, and an additional 300 U.S. marines stationed in Burundi as backup.¹⁰⁶ Eighty Italian troops also arrived shortly after. According to Human Rights Watch, "Had these troops been combined with the 440 Belgian and the 200 Ghanaian UNAMIR soldiers they would have made a force of nearly 2,000 capable soldiers" who would have likely been able to defeat the Rwandan government forces of the same number who constituted a serious force, a claim supported by military observers familiar with the situation and UNAMIR Force Commander Roméo Dallaire himself.¹⁰⁷

Once the evacuation force arrived, they worked with UNAMIR to ensure the safety of foreign nationals as they were either flown or driven in convoys out of Rwanda. Troops from all three countries, including the United States, were instructed to only transport foreign nationals to safety, not Rwandans. In some cases, troops of various nations chose to disregard orders and shuttled Rwandans to safety but, as Human Rights Watch details,

In most cases, the evacuation troops, like the UNAMIR forces, did not intervene when they saw Tutsi being attacked. Nor did they make any systematic effort to escort Tutsi from their homes to places of greater safety. During the days when some 4,000 foreigners were evacuated – few of whom were actually at risk – some 20,000 Rwandans were slain.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch, 606.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Human Rights Watch, 613.

The images of foreign soldiers looking away as Tutsi were killed in front of them were the first signs to the perpetrators of the genocide that the international community would not intervene.

In certain cases, Rwandans fortunate enough to have friends abroad who would repeatedly call their governments or the UN and demand the rescue of their Rwandan friend or employee were saved.¹⁰⁹ Such was the case for the Rwandan human rights activist Monique Mujawamariya who had the most powerful friend of all: President Bill Clinton. Clinton had met Mujawamariya at a small White House gathering of human rights activists in December the previous year. Whether it was the human rights issues she championed or Mujawamariya herself that caught Clinton's attention, he remembered enough about their meeting to realize she was in danger once President Habyarimana's plane was shot down on April 6.

Unlike other friends of Rwandans calling governments of their behalf, President Clinton had the entire U.S. foreign policy team at his disposal. By April 7, both the National Security Council and the State Department were involved in the search for Mujawamariya, with updates on her whereabouts included in daily reports on the situation in Rwanda. In addition, Monique Mujawamariya was also the sole subject of multiple classified memos from Donald Steinberg and Eric P. Schwarz in the NSC to Anthony Lake in the White House. It appears both Steinberg and Schwarz, the NSC's Africa and human rights specialists, were directly instructed by either Clinton or Lake on his behalf to personally handle the search for Mujawamariya at a time when thousands of other Rwandan Tutsi were in danger.

The State Department's Africa bureau felt similar pressure from the White House during the earliest days of the genocide. When asked about the preoccupation with Monique at the 2014

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 612.

conference, Prudence Bushnell responded, "Oh my god, all hell is breaking loose, and I am getting calls, 'Where's Monique?' ...The greatest pressure from the White House during the entire Rwandan affair was finding Monique."¹¹⁰ To make clear that she was not overstating the matter, Bushnell told the conference room that she had looked through a personal notebook she kept during the genocide and found that every other page included annotations about the search for Mujawamariya.¹¹¹

The third and most devastating priority of the United States in the first days of the Rwandan genocide was the complete withdrawal of UNAMIR. Within two days of the start of the genocide, Richard Clarke at the NSC, with the help of Susan Rice, began working on a strategy to get UNAMIR out of Rwanda. On April 9, Clarke sent out a memo titled "Rwanda: Next Steps, For Sunday and Beyond" in which he asked three main questions to the memo's recipients: "How do we get the remaining Americans out? Do we help the Belgians get in? Do we pull the UN force out?"¹¹² Clarke already had a plan to achieve his third goal. Under the header "Terminating the UN Force," Clarke suggested, "We make a lot of noise about terminating UN forces that aren't working. Well, few could be as clearly not working. We should work with the French to gain a consensus to terminate the UN mission."¹¹³ Two days after the April 9 memo, Clarke sent another, indicating he had already brought other UNSC members on board. "The UN is planning to pull out the UN peacekeeping force, according to USUN," reported Clarke, adding "if the UN asks for help getting out, USAF transports standing in Kenya

¹¹⁰ National Security Archive, "International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide: Rwanda 1990-1994: Annotated Transcript, Day 2, The Hague, June 1-3, 2014," accessed October 20, 2016, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB508/docs/Rwanda%20Final%20Transcript%20Day%202.pdf>.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Richard Clarke, "Rwanda: Next Steps, for Sunday and Beyond," memo, April 9, 1994, NSArchive.

¹¹³ Ibid.

could be available.”¹¹⁴ The U.S. was willing to help withdraw UNAMIR, but not to protect the Rwandans falling victim to genocide that UNAMIR was protecting.

These memos, released by the National Security Archive in 2015 change the historical record as told by scholars of the Rwandan Genocide like Samantha Power who believed it to be the Belgians who first demanded the full withdrawal of UNAMIR. In her 2002 book, *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*, Power writes, “The bodies of the slain Belgian soldiers were returned to Brussels on April 14. One of the pivotal conversations in the course of the genocide took place around that time, when Willie Claes, the Belgian foreign minister, called the State Department to request ‘cover.’”¹¹⁵ Power includes a quote from Claes in which he recalls the phone conversation: “We are pulling out,” said Claes, “but we don’t want to be seen doing it alone.” In Power’s narrative, the U.S. only agreed to support a full withdrawal at the behest of the Belgians. The new documents, however, reveal that high-level U.S. officials had already been discussing a complete withdrawal by the time Claes called.

Given new evidence it is doubtful that Claes’ call swung the U.S. position. The April 9 Clarke memo makes no mention of the Belgians’ request for “cover,” nor does the April 11 memo. Ultimately, the decision to withdraw was made by Warren Christopher who most definitely knew of Clarke’s wishes before Claes made the call. By April 13, Christopher and even President Clinton would have known about Clarke’s plan in detail because the president’s national security advisor Anthony Lake did. In a memo from a NSC official to Anthony Lake on April 14, the official mentions a teleconference the previous day in which Clarke participated.¹¹⁶ “As Dick Clarke might have told you from his teleconference yesterday,” wrote the official,

¹¹⁴ Richard Clarke, “Rwanda: Decision May be Required,” memo, April 11, 1994, NSArchive.

¹¹⁵ Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 367.

¹¹⁶ MacArthur DeShazer, “Rwanda Update,” memo April 14, 1994, NSArchive.

“there will be a short delay while we seek a mechanism to terminate UNAMIR while attempting to maintain a UN political presence in or near Rwanda. We will keep you posted,” indicating Lake’s end was already on board with the NSC’s position and both sides were communicating efficiently.¹¹⁷ The most likely scenario given this information is that those in the Clinton Administration like Clarke and Christopher who wanted to withdraw UNAMIR used the Belgians’ plea for cover to hide their own wish to pull the UN troops.

Regardless of the process that brought Warren Christopher to his conclusion, by April 15 his position was firm. That day, Christopher sent a cable to Madeleine Albright and the U.S. mission at the UN instructing them to inform the other members of the Security Council that given the current situation in Rwanda, the U.S. now believed a full and orderly withdrawal of all UNAMIR troops was warranted. The U.S. would only be willing to reconsider whether a new force could be deployed “when the parties demonstrate that they are willing and able to work in the interests of the Rwandan people toward a lasting resolution of their conflict,” a highly unlikely event.¹¹⁸

Upon receiving the cable, a shocked Albright immediately attempted to change his decision. “As I listened to the informal debate led by Nigerian Permanent Representative Ibrahim Gambari,” writes Albright in her memoir, “I became increasingly convinced we were on the wrong side of things.”¹¹⁹ Albright cabled back to Washington, writing that

While Belgian concerns are understandable, they should not dictate to the council on the future of UNAMIR. UNAMIR should not [repeat] not withdraw.

¹¹⁷ MacArthur DeShazer, “Rwanda Update”.

¹¹⁸ U.S. Department of State memo to U.S. Mission to the United Nations, New York, “Talking Points for UNAMIR Withdrawal,” April 15, 1994, NSArchive.

¹¹⁹ Madeleine Albright, *Madame Secretary* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 150.

Both sides want the UN to stay, since they are providing a measure of order in a chaotic situation. No other troops contributors indicated a wish to withdraw...the OAU [Organization of African Unity] wrote to say UNAMIR is essential to the restoration of peace, and to appeal to the SC to ensure the continued effectiveness of UNAMIR.¹²⁰

Albright then called Richard Clarke directly, apparently unaware that it was Clarke who had first wanted a full UNAMIR withdrawal. "I described what was going on in the council and reported that the American position was being viewed as obstructionist," writes Albright in her memoir, adding, "I first asked for more flexible instructions, then yelled into the phone, demanding them. I was told to calm down. The NSC would look into what to do."¹²¹

At Albright's behest, the U.S. changed its position, but not by much: instead of demanding a full withdrawal of the roughly 2,500 UNAMIR troops, the U.S. would settle for a reduction to the infamous 'skeleton crew' of just 270.¹²² Once the U.S. was on board, the negotiated resolution was passed by the UN Security Council on April 21. The resolution tasked the remaining UNAMIR troops with negotiating a ceasefire and did not guarantee protection to the tens of thousands of Rwandans UNAMIR troops were protecting. Despite the order for all but 270 UNAMIR troops to evacuate, roughly 540 remained for the duration of the 100-day genocide including General Dallaire. As Alison des Forges put it, "They somehow never found the right time for a plane to land to evacuate the troops in excess."¹²³ Although the United

¹²⁰ Madeleine Albright to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, "TERWOL: US Drops Bombshell on Security Council 4/15," April 15, 1994, NSArchive.

¹²¹ Madeleine Albright, *Madame Secretary* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 150.

¹²² Human Rights Watch, 632.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

Nations would not guarantee their safety, Dallaire and his remaining troops did their utmost to continue providing safety for Rwandan Tutsi under their protection.

Albright was not the only Clinton Administration official who was against the full withdrawal. In fact, many mid-level officials like Prudence Bushnell in the State Department's Africa Bureau stood opposed the decision. Even members of the NSC, coworkers of Clarke, were shocked by their higher-up's stance on UNAMIR. Eric P. Schwartz, the human rights specialist at the NSC personally tasked with finding Monique Mujawamariya, sent a memo to Susan Rice, a close associate of Clarke's on April 19, inquiring about the U.S.'s position on UNAMIR. Schwartz reported to Rice,

I just heard from Human Rights Watch, pleading that we oppose a quick UNAMIR pull-out from Rwanda. Human Rights Watch seemed to indicate that UNAMIR is protecting thousands (25,000?) Rwandans and if they pull out, the Rwandan will quickly become victims of genocide. Is this true? If so, shouldn't it be a major factor informing high-level decision making on this issue? Has it been?¹²⁴

The next day, he raised the question again to Donald Steinberg, the other NSC official tasked with finding Mujawamariya. By April 19, Mujawamariya had been found and together with Human Rights Watch's Alison des Forges was in Washington D.C. pleading for the U.S. government's help in ending the genocide. Steinberg and Schwartz assumed President Clinton would want to meet with her and scheduled a White House visit. In order to have a successful visit, the issue of UNAMIR had to be cleared up. "If we don't look at the question urgently,"

¹²⁴ Eric Schwartz, "Pull-Out of UNAMIR," memo to Susan Rice and Donald Steinberg, April 19, 1994 NSArchive.

wrote Schwartz, “the visit with Monique could turn into more of an embarrassment than an opportunity.”¹²⁵ Steinberg agreed with Schwartz, adding, “I think it’s vitally important that the president at least drop by a meeting with Monique. We need to do everything we can to keep the tragedy in the public eye, and this visit would give us the opportunity to make public our continuing concern over the killings.”¹²⁶

What neither Schwartz nor Steinberg could believe was that the high-level decision makers mentioned by Schwartz did not want to keep the genocide in the public eye. The president did not attend the meeting with Monique Mujawamariya, the woman he had directed Schwartz and Steinberg to find because doing so would have publicized an issue he did not want to involve himself in politically. Instead, Mujawamariya met with Clinton’s national security advisor Anthony Lake, who directed her away from the White House, to Congress. The White House, Lake claimed, did not have free reign to make decisions on foreign policy matters.¹²⁷ What Lake did not tell Mujawamariya, was that the president, if he set his mind to it, had the ability to cut through red tape like no one else in Washington. President Clinton simply chose not to.

Many observers consider a single April 22 press release to be the sum total of the White House’s public condemnation of the genocide during its course. A day after the UN voted to pull the majority of UNAMIR’s forces, the statement by the press secretary proclaimed that the White House believed, “the U.N. Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) has an important continued role to perform in Rwanda in attempting to secure a ceasefire between the parties,

¹²⁵ Eric Schwartz, “Monique,” memo to Donald Steinberg, April 20, 1994, NSArchive.

¹²⁶ Donald K. Steinberg, “Rwanda: Meeting with Monique,” confidential memo to Eric P. Schwartz et. Al, April 20, 1994.

¹²⁷ National Security Archive, “Rwanda Final Transcript Day 2,” 2-51.

assisting humanitarian relief operations and protecting Rwandans under their care,” adding that the reduction of troops “must not put at risk the lives of Rwandans under UN protection.”¹²⁸ How exactly the remaining 270 troops were supposed to continue protecting every Rwandan the pre-draw down 2,500 troops had, was not specified.

Additionally, the press release did not call what was happening in Rwanda a genocide, nor did any other public statement from a Clinton Administration official until mid-June after every other major power had begun using the term by early May. Only after it was revealed in a June 10 *New York Times* article that Secretary of State Warren Christopher had expressly forbid the use of the term publicly, did an embarrassed Christopher reverse the directive.¹²⁹ Christopher feared using the term could force the U.S. to intervene as was mandated for signatories of the 1948 genocide convention, which the U.S. was. A few days later, Christopher brushed off mounting criticism, remarking, “If there is any particular magic in calling it genocide, I have no hesitancy in saying that.”¹³⁰

Failure to Act

For most of the genocide, the person best positioned to call global attention to the genocide stayed silent: President Bill Clinton. No one in Washington and perhaps the world was better positioned to cut through red tape than the President of the United States. There is no doubt Clinton knew what was happening in Rwanda. In the earliest days of the genocide

¹²⁸ Statement by the Press Secretary on April 22, 1994, NSArchive.

¹²⁹ Human Rights Watch, 632.

¹³⁰ Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. to Supply 60 Vehicles for U.N. Troops in Rwanda,” *The New York Times*, June 16, 1994, accessed February 3, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/06/16/world/us-to-supply-60-vehicles-for-un-troops-in-rwanda.html>.

President Clinton oversaw both the evacuation of U.S. personnel from Rwanda and the search for Monique Mujawamariya. By the beginning of May, most foreign leaders and newspapers had begun labeling the killing a genocide. It was not till the end of July, when the genocide was over, that Clinton personally involved himself with the U.S.'s Rwanda policy, committing 4,000 U.S. troops to assist relief efforts for Rwandan refugees in neighboring Zaire.¹³¹ Clinton rejected accusations that the U.S. had waited too long to act, saying publicly, "I think now is the time to concentrate on the people there and what we as Americans, as citizens of the world, can do to keep as many of them alive as possible." Clinton added, "there will be plenty of time for rational assessment of whether more could have been done" once the crisis was over.¹³²

Why did Clinton fail to act earlier? The answer, in part, is that the Rwandan genocide did not occur in a vacuum. Although it was undoubtedly the most pressing humanitarian crisis in the summer of 1994, it was not the only one. Clinton, primarily focused on domestic policy priorities did not care to involve himself in every foreign crisis, especially after critics blamed the deaths of American soldiers in Somalia on his administration. Domestically, Clinton was focusing all his efforts on passing his 1993 health care plan, the Health Security Act, which was on its last legs in Congress. In addition, Clinton was also working on welfare reform and his 1994 crime bill. In the midst of these policy battles, Clinton only turned his eye to foreign policy matters after receiving considerable blowback. In the spring and summer of 1994, the foreign crisis which posed the biggest threat to Clinton politically was Haiti.

In 1994, Haitian refugees were landing in droves on the coast of Florida, fleeing the rule of Raoul Cédras, a military general who had come to power after ousting the Haitian president

¹³¹ Mary Jordan, "Clinton Disputes Allegations of Inaction; Vows to do More," *The Washington Post*, July 24, 1994, accessed March 20, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (751048067).

¹³² Ibid.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide in a 1991 coup. After his ousting, Aristide continuously lobbied the U.S. government to help return him to power. The Congressional Black Caucus, whose numbers had grown from 26 to 40 after the 1992 election, and TransAfrica, a liberal lobbying group, put increasing pressure on President Clinton to change U.S. policy towards Haitian refugees.¹³³ In 1994 President George H.W. Bush's policy of repatriating Haitian refugees picked up at sea by the U.S. Coast Guard was still in place. During the 1992 presidential campaign Clinton had condemned Bush's repatriation policy as "appalling" but failed to reverse it once in office, making the policy and an even easier target for critics of the democratic president.¹³⁴

In April of 1994 the Haitian refugee crisis jumped into the spotlight when members of the CBC were arrested after staging a sit-in in front of the White House and the president of TransAfrica began a hunger strike that gained national attention. Both worried the president, but more concerning still were the accusations of racism which were deeply unsettling for the democratic president. On the same day the UN Security Council voted to draw down UNAMIR, the ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide made headlines by labeling Clinton's policy of refugee repatriation as racist at a Washington news conference, saying it was contributing to a genocide in Aristide's home country.¹³⁵ To top it off, Florida, the landing point of most Haitian refugees, was as it is today, a swing state. In the spring of 1994, President Clinton was already planning for his reelection in 1996 in which Florida could play a crucial role. More pressing still

¹³³ Steven A. Holmes, "With Precision and Muscle, Black Caucus Reshapes Haiti Policy," *The New York Times*, July 14, 1994, accessed March 23, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/07/14/world/with-persuasion-and-muscle-black-caucus-reshapes-haiti-policy.html>.

¹³⁴ Steven Greenhouse, "Aristide Condemns Clinton's Haiti Policy as Racist," *The New York Times*, April 22, 1994, accessed February 3, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/22/world/aristide-condemns-clinton-s-haiti-policy-as-racist.html>.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

were the 1994 midterm elections. This meant that any issue the American electorate deemed pressing had to be dealt with quickly. Haiti was one of these issues. Rwanda was not.

There was no public outcry calling for the U.S. to intervene in the Rwandan genocide. There were no sit-ins or hunger strikes. And there was no concerted effort by members of Congress to change the U.S. position. Constituents were not calling their representatives demanding action. The few who did were concerned for the safety of Rwanda's mountain gorillas and not its people. The Congressional Black Caucus is not responsible for calling attention to African issues just because its members have the same skin color as most Africans but in most cases it is the one section of congress that generally does, just as it did for Haiti which has an overwhelmingly black population. In the case of Rwanda, the CBC did not put nearly as much effort into changing U.S. policy as it did for Haiti.

The U.S. media did cover the genocide, albeit in a questionable manner. Front page news articles sensationalized the killings, with headlines like "Terror Convulses Rwandan Capital as Tribes Battle" and "Rwanda's 'Sad, Sad, Sad,' Self-Immolation" and framed the genocide as a uniquely African event. Terms like 'tribal carnage' and 'tribal bloodletting' painted the killings as primitive, but not unexpected acts committed in equal proportion by both sides. Once the killings were eventually recognized as genocide in late April and early May, editorials lamented the murder of Rwanda's Tutsi, but excused the Clinton Administration's inaction. An April 23 article in the *New York Times* opened by saying, "What looks very much like genocide has been taking place in Rwanda," but concluded, "the world has little choice but to stand aside and hope for the best."¹³⁶ An article by Robert D. Kaplan in the *Washington Post* offered "A Moral

¹³⁶ "Cold Choices in Rwanda," *The New York Times*, April 23, 1994, accessed October 15, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/23/opinion/cold-choices-in-rwanda.html>.

Pragmatism for America in an Age of Mini-Holocausts,” in which Kaplan likened Rwanda’s killers to “wild animals in khaki fatigues” before citing Rwanda’s population growth as a reason to curb concern for the central African country. Moreover, the U.S. should not intervene in any African country because “Morality does not intersect with our economic and strategic interests anywhere in Africa.”¹³⁷

Only once the genocide was coming to a close did public sentiment begin to change. As the historian Gérard Prunier points out in his 1995 book on the genocide, despite the fact that articles on the killings were published readily early on, “in contemporary Western society events not seen on a TV screen do not exist.” Since it was almost impossible to film the killers in the act, the American public was not exposed to the extent of the killings and their brutality. The refugee crisis after the genocide was a different story, because “the refugee exodus to Zaire and the cholera epidemic later in July and August *were* covered by TV,” meaning the American public took notice.¹³⁸

As the refugee crisis grew, Americans’ calls for action grew with it. With public support on his side, Clinton decided to act, cutting through red tape almost immediately to send in 4,000 U.S. troops to aid in the relief effort, a move that was largely celebrated. Little thought was given to the fact that it was mostly Hutu who were being helped, some of whom had participated in the genocide. Three-quarters of Rwanda’s Tutsi had been killed in the genocide, meaning the amount of Tutsi refugees among those being supported by U.S. troops and humanitarian aid were only a fraction of those being helped. Nonetheless, the refugee crisis was seen by some as an

¹³⁷ Robert Kaplan, “Into the Bloody New World: A Moral Pragmatism for America in an Age of Mini-Holocausts,” *The Washington Post*, April 17, 1994, accessed October 20, 2016. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (751033990).

¹³⁸ Prunier, 274.

opportunity for Clinton to reassert the United States' ability to be a positive force in Africa. In August of 1994, an article by Jim Hoagland in the *Washington Post* suggested that a "well-managed relief campaign in Rwanda would give second wind to the concept of international humanitarian intervention, which was badly damaged by the bitter Somalia experience."¹³⁹ To Hoagland, the refugee crisis was an opportunity for Clinton. "Rwanda, in all its horror," wrote Hoagland, "represents a fresh chance for humanitarian intervention and for the Clinton administration's role in Africa... Clinton is right to plunge into a second act in Africa but with his eyes wide open this time."¹⁴⁰

IV. Conclusion

The Rwandan genocide was the first real test for members of the international community who swore "never again" to let a genocide happen after 1945, yet no one intervened. At the 2014 Rwanda conference, Monique Mujawamariya offered a poignant answer for why this was the case. On the last day of the conference, when asked for her final thoughts, Mujawamariya answered,

I would like to say that I no longer believe in the international community. It is like a mythical dragon which everyone fears but which does not actually exist. No one knows what it does. However, I do believe in great powers. They certainly exist. I believe it was the great powers who abandoned Rwanda. Why did the great powers abandon Rwanda? Because the officials who could have

¹³⁹ Jim Hoagland, "A Second Act in Africa," *The Washington Post*, August 2, 1994, accessed February 11, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post (751087953).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

done something to make sure that great powers would be involved did not do anything. There is a kind of professionalism without soul, without sensibility.

People sitting in offices cease to be human...I think that this is what sentenced Rwanda.¹⁴¹

The United States was one of the great powers that abandoned Rwanda. When pressed why, those most responsible for the United States' failure to intervene have either answered that they did not understand the gravity of the situation or that that they were trying to save UN

Peacekeeping by preventing another Somalia type disaster that would have prevented the United States from funding any other peacekeeping operations.

As a U.S. government official in charge of making or influencing foreign policy, there was little excuse for any high-level Clinton official to not have known the severity of the situation in Rwanda during the 100-day genocide. If officials arguing the second point really do believe their argument, then Monique Mujawamariya's comments ring true. In political rhetoric, it is often the case that any emotional appeal is shut down as irrelevant to policy making. If the failure of the United States to intervene in the Rwandan genocide can teach us anything, it is that there needs to be some room in policymaking for politicians and government officials to think of the human costs of their policies, not just the political consequences without being labeled emotional or impractical.

In perhaps no other example is this clearer. Ignoring the Rwandan genocide posed almost no political consequences for the Clinton Administration. Intervening, or even allowing others to intervene under the UN banner, did. The human cost of these actions was catastrophic. It is

¹⁴¹ The National Security Archive, "International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide: Rwanda 1990-1994: Annotated Transcript, The Hague, June 1-3, 2014," 2-65.

important to remember that out of the 2,500 UNAMIR troops, none were American. At no point throughout the genocide was there a serious push for the U.S. to contribute troops to halting the genocide. All that was asked was the U.S.'s permission to allow other countries to keep their troops in Rwanda or send additional troops in. Even as a UNAMIR II force was being formed to halt the genocide in May, the U.S. was slow to give it support in the security council. Madeleine Albright's staff defended the U.S. delay in approving UNAMIR II till the very end of the genocide by claiming it would be inappropriate for the U.S. to allow its allies to deploy troops in a situation the United States itself would not.¹⁴² Not only did the U.S. refuse to take a risk by sending in troops to stop the genocide, but it refused to allow other to take that risk on their own, setting its own political priorities above those of its allies, and the lives of the Rwandan people.

The United States government under the Clinton Administration did involve itself in UN policymaking during the genocide, but the policies it influenced were extremely consequential for those directly affected: the Rwandan people. Research into this subject is far from over. The work by the National Security Archive shows the difficulty of obtaining classified documents from presidential administrations who actively try to keep them secret. New documents that will provide insight into the Clinton Administration's actions during the Rwandan genocide will almost certainly be released in the coming years. Continued research and advocacy can also help bring the Rwandan genocide into the public sphere of debate surrounding humanitarian interventions and prevention of genocide where it has largely been forgotten or accepted as a tragic, but unstoppable event.

¹⁴² Holly J. Burkhalter, "The Question of Genocide: The Clinton Administration and Rwanda," *World Policy Journal* 11 no. 4 (1994): 44, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, accessed October 8, 2016, 49.

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