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# The US Response to Genocide in Rwanda: A Reassessment

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The US Response to Genocide in Rwanda: A Reassessment

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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## **Dedication**

I would like to thank my loving mom and my grandmother for their consistent support. My mom has always been supportive of my interest to help prevent future genocides. This thesis was not an easy task, and their support has given me the courage and willpower to succeed. I thank Dr. Kissi for his mentorship and careful guidance of this work from the beginning to the end. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Earl Conteh-Morgan and Dr. Abraham Khan, for their invaluable insight and support. My colleagues in the department of Africana Studies graduate program have been an invaluable support group throughout my journey in the Master's program. They always offered encouraging advice. Another form of support came from my friends Raymond Cabrera, Carrie Blaustein, Ronald Beasley, Luwanna Curry, and Shane Holman who helped proofread my thesis. To all who were involved in this process, words cannot sum how grateful I am for your help and support.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis analyzes the US response to the 1994 Rwandan genocide. It argues that in 1994, the US was retooling its stance on humanitarian intervention because of the disastrous US-led Operation Gothic Serpent in Somalia in 1993. Therefore, the American response to the genocide in Rwanda became a casualty of Washington's reassessment of its humanitarian intervention policy in the 1990s. The reason behind the US adoption of a more muscular humanitarian intervention policy was due in part to the end of the Cold War in 1991. Thus, the US was able to focus on other issues in international affairs, such as human security, which became a focal point of George H.W. Bush's *New World Order*. This policy plan outlined areas in which the US could assist the world with human rights issues through cooperation with the United Nations. In 1993, the Clinton Administration expanded the principles of Bush's New World Order to create a muscular American foreign policy platform that imposed US domestic ideas of human rights on international affairs. Subsequent polarizing events would force the US to retreat from humanitarian intervention. This resulted in a new, lukewarm approach to humanitarian intervention by the Clinton Administration. The new cautious approach to humanitarian intervention affected the US response to the genocide in Rwanda. This thesis aims to reassess how the US reacted to this particular genocide.

## **Introduction**

This research seeks to examine the factors behind the American response to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. It focuses on the transformation of the United States foreign policy platform from George H.W. Bush's New World Order in 1991 to Bill Clinton's "Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations," in 1994, and how these policies affected the US response to the genocide in Rwanda. By exploring the existing literature on the American reaction to the genocide in Rwanda, this research reassesses the Clinton Administration's hesitant response to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda

This work argues that because of the devastating US-led peacekeeping operation in Somalia, in 1993, which resulted in the loss of the lives of 18 American Army Rangers, the Clinton Administration reconsidered American foreign policy objectives. In 1993, Washington was pursuing an aggressive pro-humanitarian intervention policy that sought to impose Washington's ideas of human rights on international affairs. However, in the aftermath of the US involvement in Somalia, the US refocused its foreign policy objectives in 1994 to scale down its involvement in UN-peacekeeping operations. This work focuses on two areas. The first is the reassessment of US foreign policy considerations and priorities in the Post-Cold War era. The second is the series of foreign policy reassessments that led to the Clinton Administration's creation of the "Clinton Administration Policy on Reforming Multilateral

Peace Operations” (PDD-25), which was put to its first major test by the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

The first chapter is a literature review of the US response to genocide in Rwanda. In order to fully grasp the US reaction to the genocide in Rwanda, this review reassesses the work of scholars and policymakers from the Post-Cold War era (Bush Administration) to the Clinton Administration. From a discussion of the contrary assessments regarding the Clinton Administration’s lack of response to the genocide in Rwanda, this chapter concludes that further reassessment is needed. This reassessment builds upon the scholarly work that have examined the impact of the Somalia debacle on post-1993 US-peacekeeping operations. The chapter observes that the US response to the genocide in Rwanda was a casualty of changes that were taking place in US humanitarian intervention policy.

The second chapter focuses on the end of the Cold War, when George H.W. Bush gave his New World Order speech that highlighted cooperation with the UN to help protect violations of human rights. Due to the end of the Cold War, the US shifted its international policy from a focus on containment to a focus on human security. George H.W. Bush’s presidency, which oversaw Operation Desert Storm (1990-1991) and the Unified Task Force in Somalia (1991), broke American foreign policy out of the Cold War shadow. Somalia is a particularly good example of this shift because the Bush Administration’s action was based on concern for the well-being of the citizens of Somalia, whose food supplies were being high-jacked by armed gangs. Due to this concern for the humane treatment and safety of the people of Somalia, President Bush intervened, sending American troops to open up the roads so that humanitarian aid

could get in. When Bill Clinton took office in 1992, he expanded the US role in humanitarian intervention by asking the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to make recommendations for how the US could assist the UN with their Humanitarian Intervention missions. This was called an *An Agenda for Peace*. The US collaboration with the UN proved to be problematic for the first-term President because of the loss of American lives in Somalia in 1993. The Clinton Administration was in its infancy, but it was already vulnerable because of the political backlash that resulted from the intervention in Somalia. In order to salvage the Clinton Administration's foreign policy, PDD-25 was created in 1994.

The third chapter focuses on the US reaction to the genocide in Rwanda. The new position of the US was not its policy of expanding UN-peacekeeping operations. The major test case for PDD-25 was the Rwandan genocide in 1994. This chapter analyzes key government documents that reveal that in its response to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the US acted in the interest of upholding PDD-25. All of the actions that the Clinton Administration took through the UN were to reinforce their new policy of not expanding UN-peacekeeping operations. The US succeeded in its efforts to not be the "world's policeman," but it was at the expense of 800,000 Rwandan lives.

This thesis aims to demonstrate that because the Clinton Administration's stance on humanitarian intervention was not fleshed out when the disaster in Somalia occurred in 1993, the Clinton White House made significant revisions to the policy in an effort to protect American lives and correct a worrying reputation of the United States as the "world's policeman." However, this policy shift had significant consequence

## **Chapter 1: Historiography of the US Response to the Rwandan Genocide**

The “Rwandan Genocide” refers to the Rwandan government’s systematic elimination of the country’s Tutsi and moderate Hutu populations by government backed militia groups, and a large number of armed Hutu people during the summer of 1994. The genocide began on April 6, following the assassination of Hutu president Juvénal Habyarimana, and lasted for 100 days. By the end of the genocide, the Hutu perpetrators had taken 800,000 lives. The primary motive was to eliminate Rwanda’s Tutsi population because of years of resentment that preceded the country’s achievement of independence from Belgium in 1962.

The Rwandan Genocide is a well-studied subject. Not since the Holocaust of World War II and the Cambodian Genocide in the 1970s has there been such a definitive example of genocide. Much of the literature on the genocide in Rwanda summarizes how US policymakers did little to get involved when the genocide broke out. The literature does not explicitly examine the ethical dilemma of the Clinton Administration’s foreign policy agenda at the time. Early in President Bill Clinton’s first term, Presidential Review Directive 13 (PRD-13) had become a platform for the US to act in Africa, but the failure in Somalia, in the Horn Africa, suddenly halted all potential involvement on the continent. In 1999, Clinton established a doctrine of interventionism to justify US involvement in Bosnia, noting that the US had the right to intervene in world affairs to prevent human rights abuses.

In order to examine the literature on the Rwandan Genocide and the American response, a few research questions should be addressed: What role did the post-Cold War political reality have in Washington's decision to not intervene in Rwanda? How did US foreign policy principles affect that decision? What role, if any, did the US play during the genocide? What intelligence did the US have concerning the genocide in Rwanda?

Much of the literature that examines the US response to the Rwandan Genocide shares two themes. The first focuses on the evolution of US foreign policy after the Cold War and its shift from containment to protecting global human rights, which led to the failed mission in Somalia. The second theme examines how US policymakers grappled with the decision to intervene or not to do so in Rwanda during the genocide. It is clear that American foreign policy was going through a process of transition or reorientation after the disastrous US -led *Operation Gothic Serpent* in Somalia in 1993. The American response to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was therefore a casualty of post-1993 foreign policy revisions in Washington D.C.

### Post-Cold War US Foreign Policy

The end of the Cold War in the early 1990s shifted US foreign policy from an agenda of containing communism to the protection of human rights around the world. On 11 September 1990, President George H.W. Bush gave a speech (often called "The New World Order" speech) before a joint session of Congress that focused on human rights. The central message of this speech was a call for the US to help protect the rule

of law in the world, and for a revitalization of the UN. The US would act as an international police force, with the UN as the moral authority. Moreover, this speech solidified the US shift in US foreign policy principles from containing communism to focusing on the protection of human rights globally ([www.millercenter.org](http://www.millercenter.org)). As a result, the US began supporting the creation of global peacekeeping forces under the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in 1992. The relationship between the US and UN at that time also demonstrated the US new emphasis on human security in the post-Cold War US foreign policymaking. Michael Barnett sees this new phase of humanitarianism as a direct result of the US becoming the world's sole superpower (Barnett 2003: 190). Humanitarian intervention became viable, as multilateral action could be taken by the US and UN to ease human suffering or protect human rights when the home state could not. This new world of cooperation was explained in PRD-13, which laid out peacekeeping as the new US foreign policy priority.

In the early 1990s, Somalia was a country in crisis. At the time, President Ali Mahdi Muhammad had little power over the country's warlords, especially Mohamed Farrah Aidid who ruled large parts of Somalia (*The New York Times* 21 November 1991). This anarchical situation was a byproduct of the Somalian Civil War (1986-1991), which was waged as a resistance to the longstanding dictator Siad Barre's regime. In 1992, the *New York Times* reported that Somalia was experiencing a large scale level of starvation due to these warlords high-jacking food convoys sent by Western relief agencies. The American response to what was happening in Somalia at this time was groundbreaking, as it was one of the first interventions abroad by the United States based purely on humanitarian reasons following the Cold War. George

H.W. Bush had just established the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), and as one of its earliest missions, he ordered US troops (under a UN mandate) to open up the streets of Somalia for food convoys to safely enter the country's cities that needed food. This mission took place in December 1992 and was generally viewed as successful. In light of this success, a *The New York Times* article titled, "Choosing Wars of Conscience," (published in 17 December 1992), explained the connection between the end of the Cold War and why the US now had a responsibility to intervene in such global crises:

President Bush, in a valedictory mood, told a Texas audience on Tuesday that despite its victory in the Cold War against Communism, America must be prepared to wage lesser wars to secure global stability. Don't abandon countries like Somalia when disaster strikes, he pleaded, and be prepared to intervene when the stakes 'warrant' and where limited force can be effective ( *The New York Times* 17 December, 1992).

When President Clinton took office in 1993, he expanded Bush's interventionist operations in Somalia. He searched for a permanent solution to Somalia's political crisis, and his administration agreed that the removal of General Aidid from power would be the solution. With the UN, Clinton established the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II), in March of his first year in office. The operation was a US-led multilateral mission with the goal of bringing stability to Somalia. Unfortunately, the operation ended in a disaster—the troops had failed to capture General Aidid, and 18 American soldiers lost their lives during what came to be known as the Battle of Mogadishu. Afterward, the appalling images of the battle's aftermath were shown in the media, and this shocked many US policymakers into pushing for a stricter nonintervention policy. Following this failure, Clinton distanced himself from non-strategic peacekeeping operations. The Battle of Mogadishu has often been cited by

Yvonne C. Lodico as one of the primary reasons for Washington's inaction during the Rwandan Genocide. Samantha Power and Michael Barnett label the failure in Mogadishu as the watershed moment that revived the Vietnam Syndrome in the minds of US policymakers. The aftermath of the Somalia debacle ultimately persuaded the Clinton Administration to tone down its support for peacekeeping policy. This policy reassessment led to the creation of a new presidential directives particularly, PDD-25, which reversed many of the directives in PRD-13, thus reducing US interest in global peacekeeping operations.

In 1996, William Durch edited several essays in *UN Peacekeeping, American Policy and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, to provide insight into the US peacekeeping operations during that time. The edited book provides noteworthy perspectives on why many of the US and UN peacekeeping operations were not successful. One essay in particular is relevant to the policies of the US after the Cold War: Ivo Daalder's "Knowing When to Say No: The Development of US Policy for Peacekeeping."

Daalder's essay claims that the US early support for humanitarian interventionism on the basis of human rights violations was a ploy to distract the world from Clinton's domestic politics. In the chapter that focuses on US peacekeeping policies, Daalder mentions PRD-13, Multilateral Peacekeeping Operations, to reveal what criteria was needed for the US to intervene in any foreign crises. According to Daalder, the directive asked four basic questions:

When to engage in peace operations?

Who should conduct peace operations—the UN, regional organizations, or ad hoc coalitions?

How can UN peacekeeping be fixed

How can the US system to support operations be improved?" (Durch 1996: 25)

These questions reveal that the United States was becoming more conscious of the importance of human security through multilateral engagements. The US commitment to a stronger UN reveals that the US wanted to be more conscious of protecting human rights, because human security was becoming synonymous with international security. Daalder conjectures that peacekeeping was a central platform of Clinton's foreign policy. Since the US was pushing for more peacekeeping operations, it had to push the UN, which was barely able to manage such complex peacekeeping operations since its Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) was still nascent. Daalder's article demonstrates that the Clinton Administration pushed for this directive to overshadow its domestic policies. Clinton was more concerned with his campaign promises during his first term of adjusting the military policy for allowing homosexuals to serve in the US armed forces and completing work on the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The lukewarm response of the United States to the Rwandan Genocide is not a debate over the definition of genocide, because there is a consensus in the literature that what happened in Rwanda was a clear case of the term. One of the first books to address this issue, *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century*, by Alain Destexhe (1996)—was published two years after the genocide occurred. The book examines the concept of genocide and its application in the twentieth century by using Rwanda as a

case study. In this short book, Destexhe notes that the genocide in Rwanda fits the definition of genocide as established in the UN Genocide Convention. The author points to Article II of the 1948 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* which defines genocide as:

Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (Destexhe 1996: 15).

It is clear that Rwanda's Tutsi population was a target for extermination, which follows the above definition of genocide. Clearly the Hutu population used the Hutu army and the *Interahamwe* militia as a means to destroy the Tutsi ethnic minority. Destexhe states that the United States blamed its failure to act on the international community because of the lingering impact of the Somalia conflict in 1993. Destexhe notes that the United States, as a superpower, was able to coax the United Nations into enforcing its post-Somalia foreign policy principles of nonintervention. When Destexhe does mention Somalia, he calls it "The Shadow of Somalia," and the "Mogadishu Line." These terms were not new to the US but merely re-echoes of lingering memories of the Vietnam War.

Like Destexhe, Daalder notes that the American botched efforts in Somalia created a version of the Vietnam Syndrome that lasted throughout the 1990s. The primary

motive of intervention was the thought of young children carrying large weapons. In reality, the people of Somalia were being ruled by a warlord, and there was widespread starvation.

Yvonne C. Lodico's article, "The Justification for Humanitarian Intervention: Will the Continent Matter?" (2001), examines the rationale for the evolving international interest in humanitarian intervention with the use of force. Lodico argues that regions such as Africa, which she assumes do not provide significant strategic interest to the West, do not spur the interests of the international community. Prior to Washington's reluctance to intervene in Rwanda, the New World Order initiative renewed interest in the United Nations. The UN had clear support from the US to provide American peacekeepers, since the US had made peacekeeping its key foreign policy priority with the implementation of PRD-13. This article is relevant to the US response to the genocide in Rwanda because it set the international climate after the US experience in Somalia. Lodico correctly deduces that the US failed involvement in Somalia led to a more pragmatic approach to multilateral peacekeeping operations (Lodico 2001: 1028). It is important to note that the United States intervened twice in Somalia. The first peacekeeping operation was purely humanitarian and its success was met with acclaim for the effectiveness of its peacekeeping operations. The second operation in 1993 was a disaster because 18 American Army Rangers lost their lives, and the mission's objectives—to remove Aidid from power—failed. This created a selective isolation culture in Washington. "Clinton Administration Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations" (PDD 25) was then created as an effort to remove the US from such militaristic peacekeeping operations. This isolation was felt more in Africa. Lodico

speculates that the Somalia experience, and the evolving shifts in the criteria for humanitarian interventions most likely excluded Africa as a region. (Lodico 2013:1045).

Lodico points out that during the same year the Rwandan Genocide took place, the US provided guidance for a peacekeeping operation in Haiti codenamed Operation Uphold Democracy (19 September 1994 – 31 March 1995). It was an intervention operation designed to remove the Haitian military regime installed by the 1991 Haitian coup d'état that overthrew President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The US was concerned about Haiti's proximity to the US, in that it might cause a "politically volatile situation in the United States" (Lodico 2001:1044). There was also grave concern about an influx of refugees from Haiti to the US. The official rationale from the UN Security Council was that Haiti was a "humanitarian crisis," that had created a "climate of fear and persecution," which would be a threat to international security. Ultimately, Lodico demonstrates effectively the selective nature of US peacekeeping operations during the Clinton years.

The US involvement in Somalia is vital in understanding how the US acted as a supporter of humanitarian intervention but also how the aftermath diminished its policy toward such intervention, as American policymakers now disregarded non-strategic places such as Rwanda. Juxtaposing Somalia and Rwanda reveals a connection that led to the US bailing out on Rwanda. Lidwien Kapteijns' article "Test-Firing the New World Order in Somalia: The US/UN Military Humanitarian Intervention of 1992–1995," (2013) mentions that the aftermath of the Cold War saw a resurgence of protecting human security. Kapteijns postulates that George H.W. Bush's involvement in Somalia was part of his efforts to establish a New World Order, a term that Bush coined to

describe the post-Cold War era of close international cooperation. Kapteijns calls the US involvement in Somalia a “military humanitarian intervention,” or the use of force to help stabilize regions around the world. Somalia, as Kapteijns notes, held no “national interests (strategic or energy related)” for the US from a Western perspective. It was just a black third-world country (Kapteijns 2013:422). Kapetijns’ claim suggests that the US did not find Africa of strategic value. The first wave of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) intervention in Somalia in 1993 was purely humanitarian, because its goal was to open up roads for relief aid. The success of this US-led, UN-sanctioned operation was met with optimism for UN Chapter VII peacekeeping operations. Chapter VII of the UN Charter allowed the Security Council to take appropriate action to protect international peace. As Kapteijns notes, after the euphoria that followed the success of UNITAF, Clinton authorized UNOSOM II in 1994. Even though this was considered a peace enforcement operation, Clinton also wanted to capture Somali warlord General Aidid, which the Clinton White House projected would give Somalia more political stability

### **The US Response to the Genocide in Rwanda**

Scholars who have studied the American response to the genocide in Rwanda have offered similar noteworthy perspectives. In *The International Dimension of Genocide in Rwanda* (1998), Arthur J. Klinghoffer’s book explores various ways in which the international community was ineffective in preventing the genocide in Rwanda. Klinghoffer is one of the first scholars to examine how the international community as a whole responded to the escalating conflict in Rwanda. Most notably,

Klinghoffer argues that several international actors besides the United States did in fact intervene, but their efforts were ineffective in stopping the genocide.

Klinghoffer claims that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was a peacekeeping force—not a peacemaking one. The chief goal of the UNAMIR was to ensure the implementation of the Arusha Accords that brought an end to the Rwandan Civil War in 1993. The Arusha Accords represented the peace agreement between the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the Hutu-led government under Juvénal Habyarimana. The Arusha Accords gave a timeline when the RPF would hold equal power in the Rwandan government. He also explores US foreign policy principles that were challenged by the conflicts of the 1990s. Since the Clinton Administration championed Clinton's optimism in foreign policy, his presidency took a realist approach by using humanitarian aid as a tool for promoting peace. However, in the case of Rwanda, there was a limit to what humanitarian aid could achieve, and it should have been supplemented with military support. Klinghoffer's examination of the conflict is mostly wide-reaching, but he mentions potential reasons behind the failure of the UN and US to intervene in the Rwandan genocide. He goes into great depth about the Genocide Convention, but fails to mention ways that the West could have intervened. For example, the United States had received a series of important cables about the impending Rwandan conflict, but Washington did not act on the intelligence received. Klinghoffer does not examine how the US government might have provided assistance to the Tutsi population, for example, by jamming Rwanda's radio frequencies, which were used to incite the genocide.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali's memoir, *Unvanquished: A U.S.-U.N. Saga*, provides valuable insight into the influence of United States foreign policy on the United Nations. This primary source shows the UN's decision-making process on a macro level, and reveals the organization's subsequent clash of ideas with the US. An important point that Boutros-Ghali makes is that he tried to draw attention to the problems in Africa by highlighting two big failures: Somalia and Rwanda. Boutros-Ghali blames the US for not stopping the genocide, making a direct connection between the US debacle in South Mogadishu, the US policy toward UN peacekeeping under PRD-13, and the United States' refusal to stop the genocide in Rwanda. Boutros-Ghali, as the UN Secretary-General at the time of the genocide, shifted most of the blame on the US for the UN's inaction in Rwanda, contending that the US had been struggling with its identity in foreign affairs following the end of the Cold War. The UN Secretary-General at the time of the Rwandan Genocide recounted in his memoir:

On April 20, I reported to the Security Council that UN personnel could not be left at risk indefinitely when there was no possibility of their performing the tasks for which they had been dispatched. I offered three options: (1) immediate and massive reinforcement by several thousand additional troops mandated to coerce a ceasefire, which was my preference; (2) leaving a small group behind under Dallaire to attempt to mediate a cease-fire; or (3) complete withdrawal, or which I said I did not favor (Boutros-Ghali 1998: 133).

Overall, Boutros-Ghali's memoir provides insight into the UN's relationship with the US and how that affected international relations. The US relationship with the UN stemmed from the post-Cold War US emphasis on human security. Thus, the US had to utilize the UN because of its PDD-13 platform. Boutros-Ghali uses the Rwandan genocide as evidence of how the US strong-armed the UN to ensure the protection of

American interests. The chief concern for US foreign policymakers in 1994 was not to get involved in conflicts where US troops would have to be utilized. However, even though the US did not send any peacekeepers to Rwanda at the time of the genocide, it placed conditions on how other countries should use their peacekeepers. According to Boutros-Ghali, the US required the countries that provided peacekeepers to inform the Security Council: about their "troops, funds, and equipment as well as their exit strategy" (Boutros-Ghali 1998: 135) On 9 May 1994, Boutros-Ghali requested an increase in the number of UN peacekeepers, calling it "a possible mandate and force structure for an expanded UN force, capable of providing support for displaced persons and assisting in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need" (Boutros-Ghali 1998:135).

Boutros-Ghali makes it clear that the US did try to limit the extent of the peace-enforcement force in Rwanda. What his memoir omits is the equally unhelpful way in which the United States obstructed any UN characterization of what was transpiring in Rwanda as a "genocide." In fact, the US refused to call what was happening in Rwanda a genocide until late May 1994, roughly 60 days after the fighting had begun. Regardless of this flaw, Boutros-Ghali's memoir is a valuable asset in understanding the dynamics of the UN's decision-making process about the evolving situation in Rwanda. The US tried to dictate how the UN handled the situation in Rwanda by blocking the organization's attempt to call the conflict a genocide. The US knew that calling it a genocide would oblige all members in the UN Security Council to address the matter with military force.

In *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide*, a book published in 2000, Linda Melvern examines how Western nations reacted to the

looming genocide in Rwanda. The core of her book is a critical study of the UN Security Council and it highlights the reaction of the United States to what was happening in the US. Melvern carefully paints a picture of the United States' involvement in Rwanda leading up to the genocide. In January 1993, President Clinton was prepared to commit US troops to UN peacekeeping operations. But, as Melvern notes, Clinton's commitment changed when 18 US Army Rangers were killed in Somalia. Images of the soldiers' bodies being dragged on the streets in Mogadishu were repeated on American television. Shortly thereafter, the US ordered a withdrawal from Somalia and soon distanced itself from UN peacekeeping operations. The US anxiety after this incident in Somalia was felt at the UN. US troops had been called out of the operation in Somalia just days before a vote was reached at the UN to send peacekeeping troops to Rwanda. As the Rwandan genocide broke out in April 1994, the United States tried to undermine and pull out of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda.

Alan Kuperman's article, "Rwanda: In Retrospect," published in 2000, focuses on three scenarios about how the US could have intervened to stop the genocide in Rwanda, coupled with lessons that could be learned from the genocide. This was the first publication to actually break down the exact number of deaths during the crisis. This data is important because it shows that most of the killings occurred over the course of April, underscoring the speed at which the genocide occurred.

By April 21, 1994, it was quite obvious that any efforts to continue the UNAMIR mandate would be counterproductive, since the killings had reached the level of an actual genocide. Kuperman notes that there was an intelligence gap in the information

that the US and UN were both receiving. Moreover, the information they did receive was inaccurate. In Kuperman's view, the US did not have the most accurate information in deciding whether to intervene, and offers scenarios on how the US could have taken action. Kuperman lists three potential interventions: the first comprising 15,000 troops, the second comprising 6,000 troops, and the last comprising 2,500 troops, which would have mainly comprised airstrikes (Kuperman 2000: 105). The first potential intervention would have saved the most lives, with an estimate of 125,000 Tutsis. The United States did not have the military capability to end the violence and stop the genocide, but it is important to understand why it did not even make an effort. Kuperman does not mention the changing positions of the US on peacekeeping operations at this time. Also, Kuperman does not mention why the United States refused to admit that a genocide was occurring in Rwanda when all the available evidence, in early April 1994, pointed to that fact.

Published in 2003, Michael Barnett's book *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* references the American role in the Security Council as dictating the UN response. Barnett debunks the claim by the Clinton Administration that the US opposed intervention because of ignorance of the situation, and argues that the UN's nonintervention policy was not the consequence of insufficient knowledge but rather a clear political choice. Barnett argues that the chaotic bureaucratic culture of the United Nations led to such diabolical inaction. Prior to the start of the genocide, Barnett contends that the UNAMIR was not capable of adhering to the Arusha Accords because of Rwanda's lack of resources on the local level. In drafting financial support for the

operation, the US was concerned about having to justify \$20 million for the support of UNAMIR. Even though the Clinton Administration supported the Rwandan operation, it did not want Congress to frustrate Clinton's foreign policy, hence, the US recommended only 2,548 peacekeeping troops (Barnett 2003: 71). That recommendation was made as a compromise because the initial troop size was 500. Therefore, when the UNAMIR was established by the Security Council, the number of peacekeepers ended up totaling 2,500 (Barnett 2003: 71).

Similar to Kuperman's intelligence gap argument, Barnett states that Washington did not believe that the conflict in Rwanda had descended into a genocide. Thus, the US did not take Dallaire's cables that were sent to the UN and recommendations seriously. The US did not believe Dallaire when he proposed that military action would be vital. In the same week that the plane carrying President Habyarimana was shot down, the United States was on the verge of shutting down operations in Rwanda.

Barnett states:

Only the week before, during the discussions regarding extension of UNAMIR's mandate in early April 1994, the United States favored closing the operation because the transitional government still had been established; the policy was partly motivated by a desire to show Congress that the Clinton administration could be tough on failing operations. And now the administration was ready to make Rwanda sacrificial lamb if that might keep Congress quiet (Barnett 2003: 101).

As the genocide proceeded through April, the United States was leaving the UNAMIR, despite media reports of systematic violence against the Tutsi population. Barnett notes that then Secretary of State Warren Christopher gave instructions to Madeleine Albright to protect US interests by supporting a complete withdrawal, citing

“insufficient evidence” that the UN peacekeeping mandate was making progress (Barnett 2003: 106).

Barnett also believes the Clinton Administration acted under the shadow of what had taken place in Somalia, and provides clear evidence to support his claim. Clinton was still serving his first term and was up for reelection, but his foreign policy had been marred by the debacle in Somalia. Barnett points to PDD-25 which weakened US support for international peacekeeping operations. According to Barnett, the Clinton Administration had to show its strength to Congress by taking a hardline stance on Rwanda. Barnett discusses how many UN decisions were made based on the recommendations of the US. He concludes that the US shares some moral responsibility for the genocide in Rwanda.

In 2003, Samantha Power’s book *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* explored the history of US response to genocides over the twentieth century. It offers a full chronological analysis of how US governments reacted to such crises. Concerning the Rwandan genocide, Power reveals just how much intelligence the US had on the embryonic situation in Rwanda. She also highlights the actions of key players in the US government who decided on what to do about the genocide, such as Prudence Bushnell, Warren Christopher, and Madeleine Albright, and how the US responded to certain events during the genocide.

Power disagrees with Kuperman, who contends that the US lacked viable intelligence about Rwanda’s escalating crisis. She postulates that the US had reliable reports from different offices of the government, such as the Department of Defense, the State Department, and the National Security Council. There are documented

sources that are now available in National Security Archives, and they all reveal that the US government had knowledge of the massacres taking place in Rwanda. Power even notes that, in 1993, the US Department of Defense sent a report to the US intelligence community stating that the conflict could potentially evolve into an ethnic slaughter. If the US were to acknowledge the human rights crimes in Rwanda, then by virtue of the Genocide Convention, they would have had to intervene. Due to the tense climate of US foreign policy decision-making at the time and especially what happened in Somalia, however, the Clinton Administration was trying to prove to the American people that it could say no to particular peacekeeping operations.

Power discusses the often ignored role of Prudence Bushnell who was the acting Assistant Secretary for African Affairs in the Department of State. Power notes that the US did have other options for stopping the violence instead of supporting troop reinforcement in Rwanda. Hate propaganda was a powerful tool the Hutus used via radio to instigate violence against the Tutsis—in fact, the Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) presenters encouraged their fellow Hutus to take genocidal action against their Tutsi neighbors. Bushnell held discussions with various government officials in Washington to urge them to stop the broadcasts (Power 2003: 371). Power notes that the United States was the only country with the necessary technology “to prevent the genocide planners from broadcasting murderous instructions directly to the population.” Additionally, the United States government could easily have jammed RTLM’s broadcast signals or counter-broadcast information urging Rwandans to resist the perpetrators of the genocide (Power 2003: 371).

Published in 2003, Madeleine Albright's memoir contributes to the discussion on the American reaction to the genocide in Rwanda. Her writings while she was the ambassador to the UN provide insight into how the US spearheaded the discussions on Rwanda during the conflict. Albright gives a candid appraisal of the Clinton Administration's PDD-25, and explains the directive's purpose through the lens of what took place Somalia:

Its purpose was to put Americans squarely on the side of strengthening UN peacekeeping operations, with the understanding that we would henceforth make the chain of command clearer and insist that such missions be carefully planned, with a precise mandate, efficiently implemented, and preceded by a significant period of consultations with Congress. We were determined not to have another Somalia" (Albright 2003:146).

Albright observes that the creation of PDD-25 was not about strengthening UN peacekeeping operations but for pursuing American interests. She claims that PDD-25 was established in an effort to avoid another Somalia, thus limiting US interest in executing future peacekeeping operations. The UNAMIR was established on 5 October 1993, two days after the US Army Rangers were killed in Somalia. Albright states in her memoir that she knew that Dallaire had received information in January 1994 concerning the Hutu extremists' plan to kill the Belgian UN peacekeeping soldiers and a huge movement of violence against Rwanda's Tutsi population. During the first week of April, Albright contends that Rwanda was not on the list of US or UN priorities until President Habyarimana's plane was shot down on 6 April 1994. Albright states that the UN Security Council only saw the death of the president as an opportunity to launch

a coup against the civilian authorities. On 7 April 1994, the day the ten Belgian peacekeepers were murdered, the UN felt the same panic that the US had felt in Somalia (Albright 2003: 149). Albright claims that the UN was receiving little information about the killing of civilians; thus, the organization had assumed that it was a contained fight between the Hutu and Tutsi militias. The course of action for the UN was to evacuate the embassies of Western countries. For a few weeks in April, Albright saw this conflict as a parallel of what had happened in Somalia, and this frightened the US into supporting a full-troop withdrawal from Rwanda. This was coupled with the concern that the UN peacekeeping force was poorly equipped to restore order. As the Rwandan conflict started to fit the UN definition of genocide, Albright states that she tried to suggest to Congress and to the White House that the US was on the wrong side of the conflict (Albright 2003: 150).

The UN Security Council was receiving reports that the Hutu militia was targeting only Tutsi people, which was clearly at odds with the definition of a civil war. In his memoirs, Boutros-Ghali claims that Albright led the charge on trying to limit the scope of Western intervention, but Albright states otherwise. On 3 May 1994 the US revised its policy for PDD-25 in order to accommodate this limitation (Albright 2003: 152). Even though it was evident that the violence in Rwanda was a one-sided affair, the US still did not want to commit troops to quelling the bloodshed. On 17 May, the Security Council agreed to a resolution to create humanitarian areas "where feasible" (Albright 2003: 153). After the May resolution, the US continued to fight requests from other nations to send troop reinforcements. In hindsight, Albright states that "the lessons we thought we had just learned in Somalia simply did not apply to Rwanda" (Albright 2003).

Romeo Dallaire's memoir, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (2004), provides a day-to-day account of his tenure in Rwanda. Dallaire served as the force commander of the UNAMIR during the outbreak of the genocide. At the onset of the UNAMIR mandate, he was very enthusiastic that Rwanda could benefit from a traditional peacekeeping operation, and that the UNAMIR could provide stability for the implementation of the Arusha Accords that had ended the country's civil war in 1990. Dallaire argues that the UNAMIR was doomed from the start. The Hutu-led government was not supportive of the peacekeeping mission, and the mission suffered from lack of basic military equipment resources, such as trucks. Dallaire states that the limits of the UNAMIR were tested when he received intelligence from an informant in January, 1994, claiming knowledge of an impending attack on the UNAMIR force and on the Tutsis from the Hutu extremists. The informant also stated that the Hutu extremists were stockpiling weapons for use in the impending massive attack. In what is now a famous cable, Dallaire wrote to the UN Department of Peacekeeping, whose head was Kofi Annan, to request permission to raid the government's cache of weapons. Dallaire ran into a brick wall when he received a reply from Kofi Annan telling him that intervening would be exceeding the UNAMIR's mission and that he should hand over the information to the Hutu government. When the violence began in Rwanda, Dallaire noted that the West had a "fundamental indifference" in dealing with Rwanda. Dallaire is unapologetic in his criticism of how the US reduced its ground forces following the murder of the Belgian peacekeepers who were assigned to protect the Rwandan Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Dallaire's firsthand account supports the position that the US was acting in Somalia's shadow in its decision-

making. He even states that in order to achieve the complete withdrawal of its troops, the US downplayed the true nature of the conflict as only a continuation of the civil war which did not warrant a full-fledged intervention.

Kofi Annan's memoir, *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace* (2013), describes the interventions that he witnessed during his time as the UN Secretary General. Annan was responsible for UN peacekeeping operations at the time the genocide broke out and was a key player in the organization's decisions on Rwanda. In the chapter, "Rwanda: In the Shadow of Somalia," Annan explains that at the start of 1994, the UN had thousands of troops working in different peacekeeping operations, and the political climate had changed due to the recent events in Somalia. The emphasis on peacekeeping operations had died down because the Clinton Administration had taken the blame for what had happened in Somalia. It was Annan's office that told Romeo Dallaire not to go through with the raid, which could have seized weapons that the *Interahamwe* had stockpiled. Annan states that the greatest fear of the UN was the failure of another humanitarian intervention operation similar to Somalia's. Annan argues that in "the post-Somalia international climate, there was no appetite in the international community for taking even the slightest risks with the lives of peacekeepers, certainly not in the United States" (Annan 2013: 54).

Clearly, the American failure in Somalia had widespread international ramifications. Subsequent events such as Dallaire's failure to receive permission from Annan to raid an Interahamwe militia compound full of weapons in January 1994 is proof. In hindsight, Annan wished he had lobbied more governments to help stop the violence in Rwanda. Like other scholars and writers who have analyzed the Rwandan

Genocide of 1994, Annan states that the order to intervene had to come from the UN Security Council, and the US, at the time, was steering the actions of the organization. By 21 April, it became clear that the killings in Rwanda were becoming more organized and systematic. In early May, the UN was calling the conflict in Rwanda a genocide, and by mid-May, the UN reestablished the UNAMIR. However, no country stepped up to provide troops to combat the genocide as the crime has been defined in the 1948 UN Genocide Convention. What eventually brought the genocide to an end was a victory by the Tutsis against the Rwanda Patriotic Front, an armed part to the Rwandan Civil War that led to the genocide.

There is no consensus in the literature on the Rwandan genocide on what the US knew and this has led to disagreements about why the US did not intervene. When PDD-25 was established, it became clear that the consequences of Somalia had paralyzed Clinton's optimism for humanitarian interventionism. The questions that remain to be answered which this essay attempts to address are: In what specific ways did the "Rwandan genocide" become an unfortunate casualty of the Somalia debacle and the reassessment of America humanitarian interventions that emerged in its wake?

In order to fully address these questions, it is also important to look at the state of American foreign policy principles before the genocide took place, and the evolution of new foreign policy ideas following the Cold War, when the US emerged as the world's de facto superpower in a unipolar world.

## **Chapter 2: Reassessing American Foreign Policy, 1991-1993**

### **From State Security to Human Security**

To understand why the Clinton administration struggled with its decision-making during the Rwandan genocide, it is important to understand the evolution of US foreign policy immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, US foreign policy shifted its focus from containment to human security. The US no longer felt the burden of protecting itself from another superpower, so it was free to engage in missions designed to protect human rights in other countries, working closely with the UN in order to achieve a “New World Order,” a term coined by George H. W. Bush. The shift to humanitarian intervention in foreign policy, however, came to an abrupt end after the US suffered heavy casualties during a peacekeeping mission in Somalia. This failed mission became the first test of the United States pro-humanitarianism agenda. The outcome of the US-Somalia debacle sheds light on how the Clinton administration struggled with the political repercussions of humanitarian intervention.

US foreign policy during the early 1990s centered on humanitarian interventionism, defined as a state’s use of military force to end human suffering. As the sole global power, the US was capable of solving conflicts that other nations could not. The United Nations as a body wasn’t sure what to make of the US newfound dominance in the world, and wondered especially to what extent it should engage in global conflicts.

In post-Cold War international relations, the United States re-evaluated its definition of national security. The protection of human rights was now recognized as a vital part of both US national and international security. The end of the Cold War also meant an end to the “Vietnam Syndrome” that plagued US foreign policy, which underscored the doctrine of noninterventionism. The “Vietnam Syndrome,” started following the closure of the Vietnam War in 1975. It was the American public distaste for US involvement in foreign conflicts (Jacobson: 2001: 4182). The preference for noninterference was over as the Cold War came to a close; thus, a new focus on domestic policy commenced. The end of the Cold War ushered in a new era focused on global peace operations, thrusting the UN and the US in the international spotlight. As Barnett states,

... new security threats called for new security remedies. If domestic conflicts were a security threat and a potential source of regional instability, then these societies had to be reconstructed and redirected in ways that eliminated the roots of these conflicts. Domestic stability was essential for international stability (Barnett 2003: 26).

The view of domestic conflicts as global security threats was that they could undermine international security, so the UN and the US established policies of humanitarian intervention. The ideal of world peace felt closer than ever, and the path toward it would be the protection of human rights.

The US began working closely with the UN, to the point of setting the world organization’s agenda. After the Cold War’s end, the United Nations found peacekeeping as the best instrument available to maintain international peace and security. Therefore, it is important to review the condition of US foreign policy after the

fall of the Soviet Union, along with its relationship with the United Nations, to better understand how the US strong-armed the UN over the Rwandan Genocide in April 1994.

The US emerged from the Cold War as a powerhouse in international affairs, and this fundamentally shifted American foreign policy agenda. The conclusion of the Cold War did not just see the end of a nuclear arms race but a resurgence of idealism. Operation Desert Storm effectively wiped away the Cold War's shadow over the US while the Soviet Union was still a functional state. The prevailing justification of the US involvement in the invasion of Iraq was that Iraq had violated Kuwait's territorial sovereignty, taking freely the country's oil reserves. This helped to define the US role in the world after the Cold War as a police state, sending troops overseas to end conflicts and stabilize governments. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush made a passionate speech to a joint session of Congress about establishing a New World Order, built on world peace and nations working together to end domestic conflicts. Although the speech was geared towards Operation Desert Storm, this speech reveals Washington's shift of its foreign policy following the Cold War. It is vital to note that Bush stressed the point of the UN maintaining a "moral authority" in the world with the United States being the superpower ([www.millercenter.org](http://www.millercenter.org)). The key point of analysis during the US involvement in Iraq in 1990 was that the Cold War was still in effect. However, the US was able to gain political support in stopping Saddam Hussein's invading forces. It was a watershed moment in US foreign policy that shifted the US commitment from containment to intervention.

The US success in Operation Desert Storm, with help from the UN, provided the US confidence to collaborate further with the UN. George H.W. Bush enlisted the help of then UN General Secretary Boutros-Ghali by requesting that he make some recommendations about how the international community could help develop the peacekeeping capabilities of the United Nations. In Boutros-Ghali's memoir, *unvanquished: A US-UN Saga*, he outlines his agenda for peace, stressing that preventative measures are key for peacekeeping. As an example, Boutros-Ghali proposed that countries make an effort to have one thousand troops ready to serve as a standby force, in case a global threat arose and the UN required a fighting force. Boutros-Ghali received positive feedback from the American media and government. The US State Department agreed with Boutros-Ghali's views, and The Washington Post newspaper responded on 21 June 1991 that, "Mr. Boutros-Ghali is committed to an expansive internationalist vision of the United Nations." The agenda put forth by the United Nations would be just a mere extension of what the United States wanted to accomplish with its own foreign policy. The US was enhancing the capabilities of the UN so that it could have the support it needed to sustain peace-enforcing military operations. The UN's active support of peace enforcement operations aligned with what the Bush administration was trying to accomplish with its New World Order.

George H.W. Bush can be credited with setting US foreign policy on a path that embodied the idea of humanitarian interventionism. This was a new, idealistic endeavor for the US, but ultimately the idea had not been fleshed out thoroughly.

## US Foreign Policy Identity Tested in Somalia, 1993

Before President Bush lost the general election to Bill Clinton in November 1992, one of his final acts in foreign policy decision-making was sending aid to Somalia a country in the Horn of Africa that was mired in domestic war and famine.

In 1991, Said Barre, the military dictator and president of Somalia, was ousted from power by a coalition of rebels. This political vacuum led to conflict between the country's leaders, exacerbated by a major food shortage in 1992. So the US sent convoys of trucks packed with food and supplies to help alleviate the crisis. Unfortunately, this aid was often hijacked by militia groups. The Bush Administration decided to send in troops to protect these convoys, and this peacekeeping operation continued under the Clinton administration.

The US-led peacekeeping operation to open up and secure the roads leading in and out of Somalia so that humanitarian aid could get into the country commenced on 5 December 1992, and was led by the Unified Task Force (UNITAF). The US sent 28,000 troops and the mission was to last three days. The operation is credited with saving 10,000 lives. The peacekeeping force was a success in helping to combat Somalia's starvation problem, although the early analysis of the peacekeeping operation indicated that the US did not go far enough to disarm the warring factions in Somalia. As stated, Bush wanted to use humanitarian prevention not to change the political climate of Somalia but to help with feeding its citizens. According to *The New York Times*, Boutros-Ghali was lukewarm about the US success with UNITAF, and was concerned that as soon as the Americans withdrew, the war would continue. In a letter, he says, "It

would be a tragedy if the premature departure of the Unified Task Force were to plunge Somalia back into anarchy and starvation and destroy the fragile political progress of recent weeks" (New York Times 22 December 1992). Boutros-Ghali's ambivalence about the US-led UNITAF peacekeeping operation reveals that, to some, the US could have done more to transform the political elements within Somalia to fully stabilize the country. This sentiment fueled the Clinton administration's more aggressive approach to human interventionism.

The United Nations outlook on handling the Somalian crisis was to provide humanitarian assistance. Initially, the Organization of African Unity did not favor UN troops on the ground. The first plan of action in Somalia was the deployment of massive humanitarian aid in which 28,000 US troops were to be deployed. The crimes that finally persuaded George H.W. Bush to engage in Somalia involved armed gangs hijacking international relief cargo intended to curb Somalia's famine. As President Bush stated in a public speech about Somalia, the US mission was "humanitarian" with no with tolerance for

armed gangs ripping off their own people, condemning them to death by starvation... To the people of Somalia, I promise this. We do not plan to dictate political outcomes...We respect your sovereignty and independence (Address on Somalia 4 December 1992).

President Bush knew the limits of the US humanitarian endeavor in Somalia; his focus was not to change the politics of the country. The operation had also been triggered by the murder of Pakistani peacekeepers in the region who were trying to deliver humanitarian aid. The end goal was simply to remove the barrier for the humanitarian aid to get through to Somalia. To the rest of the world, this was a moral

operation that was intended to help provide aid to the starving people of Somalia. President Bush summarized the US involvement by saying, "The US alone cannot right the world's wrongs, but some crises in the world cannot be resolved without American involvement." The operation in Somalia was a continued success for Bush just like Operation Desert Storm, which was a quick military endeavor. Once completed, the US handed control back to the United Nations. These military operations helped erase the stigma of the Vietnam War. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Bush was a moral realist who advocated conscious intervention practices. In reality, these operations gave a "sugar rush" to policymakers who would try to replicate their success.

The US response to the Somali food crisis under George H.W. Bush was ultimately hailed as a success, despite criticisms that the US could have done more to end the civil war in the country. In 1992, the new United Nations General Secretary, Boutros Boutros-Ghali made the United Nations' new platform clear by introducing a report titled, "An Agenda for Peace." This report outlined the UN's stances on human security and highlighted the limitations of peacekeeping, which were central to maintain domestic security through the UN. What made the new stance on human rights crystal clear was the creation of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

After the election of Bill Clinton in 1992, the focus of US foreign policy shifted once again. In his early years as president, Clinton carried on with the post-Cold War New World Order doctrine of George H.W. Bush, vowing to maintain focus on human security. Bill Clinton adopted parts of George H.W. Bush's foreign policy principles during his first term of office in 1993. At the United Nations, Clinton called the policy, the "New Covenant for American Security," based on one crucial assumption: "Our

definition of security must include common threats to all people." The issues that Clinton inherited at this crucial time included "Bosnia, Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, and Russia." During the Clinton administration, the emphasis on foreign policy was on the protection of human rights, and this stance was made clear at the 1993 World Conference for Human Rights in Vienna, Austria, when the Clinton administration said it had little patience for those who violated human rights. At the conference, Secretary of State Warren Christopher stated that the "universality of human rights set a single standard of acceptable behavior around the world, a standard Washington would apply to all countries" (New York Times 12 June 1993). The key result of the conference was the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which subsequently led to the creation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The OHCHR mission was established to promote and guarantee the protection of human rights around the world, which was covered under international law. The goal of the US at the 1993 World Conference for Human Rights was to reaffirm the foreign policy struggles that now included the protection of human rights, and that human security was vital to international security. The conference provided some political rhetoric for the US position on the protection of human rights.

The first year of the Clinton administration (1993) was characterized by a Wilsonian foreign policy of idealism, democracy and the protection of human rights for everyone. Clinton fully supported the United Nations in their peacekeeping efforts around the world. Ivo Daalder supports this evaluation of Clinton's foreign policy, which was designed by Warren Christopher, when he states that the Clinton administration

had “a new emphasis on promoting multinational peacekeeping and peacemaking” (Durch 1996: 41).

Consecutive American administrations in the second half of the twentieth century took a pragmatic approach to human rights, placing more importance on traditional notions of the national interest and responding to concerns that the United States should not forfeit its national sovereignty by allowing international institutions to impose a foreign version of rights on US citizens. When Clinton took office in 1993, he expanded the US foreign policy platform to include more support for UN peacekeeping activities, going so far to publish a new directive: Presidential Review Directive 13 (PRD-13), which recognized that with the Cold War over, nations expected the UN to authorize peace enforcement operations. The premise of PRD-13 was to examine the US role in multilateral peacekeeping, and its goal was to determine how US interests could be met by conducting multilateral peacekeeping operations. Clinton wanted his foreign policy to match his domestic policy, which was idealistic. PRD-13 essentially made peacekeeping a priority for the US.

Thus, the first plan of action for Clinton was humanitarian intervention. When Clinton came into office, he inherited the Somalia crisis. The key difference in the approach between Bush and Clinton was that Clinton not only wanted to provide humanitarian aid but eradicate the impediments to the prevention of humanitarian aid. Thus, Clinton’s objective was beyond humanitarian intervention—it became a mission of peace enforcement, since the operation was to eradicate the roots of the civil war. In early 1993, according to Madeleine Albright, “The UN would recruit a force of 28,000 peacekeepers. The United States would keep roughly 4,000 troops in the area,

including a 1,300 member Quick Reaction force under U.S. command, as insurance against emergencies.” The operation would be the second phase of UNITAF, under United Nations Security Council Resolution 814, adopted on 26 March, 1993. The operation was titled “Operation in Somalia II” (UNOSOM II) and would have broader political goals that would last from March 1993 to March 1995.

The goal for the multilateral, US-led UNOSOM II was to facilitate Somalia’s nation-building process by disarming the country’s warring factions, restore order, and help the people set up a representative government. The goals were:

- (a) assist in the provision of relief to Somalia in accordance with the rehabilitation programme drawn up by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs;
- (b) assist in the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons within the country;
- (c) promote political reconciliation, including the re-establishment of national and regional institutions and civil administrations through broad participation of all sectors of Somali society;
- (d) facilitate the re-establishment of the Somali police and restoration of law and order, including investigations into violations of international humanitarian law;
- (e) assist in demining and in the development of public information services;
- (f) Create conditions under which Somali civil society may have a role at every level in the process of political reconciliation (United Nations Resolution 814)”

It is clear that the US wanted to intervene to change the political climate in Somalia. The peacekeeping description mirrors what the US wanted to accomplish in the previous months with its human rights stance. These broader political goals for Somalia established UNOSOM II’s goals—to target members of the dangerous United

Somali Congress, led by Mohamed Farrah Aidid. Operation Gothic Serpent was a UNOSOM II mission led by the US with the goal of capturing Mohamed Farrah Aidid. The operation commenced on 3 October 1993, when the US deployed its Army Ranger Unit to capture Aidid. During the first few moments of the operation, one of the two US Black Hawk helicopters deployed for this mission was shot down by a Somali rocket-propelled grenade. This incident started a chain reaction of failures during the raid, resulting in 18 US Army Rangers killed and 73 wounded. The situation in Somalia had taken a turn for the worse.

### **Retreating From Humanitarian Intervention**

The aftermath of the failed mission in Somalia had wide-reaching implications. Immediately, the US tried to distance itself from the United Nations. In the wake of the battle, Clinton started a new dialogue about US foreign policy by asking the following questions in an address to the American public on 7 October 1993:

Why are we still there?  
What are we trying to accomplish?  
How did a humanitarian mission turn violent?  
And when will our people come home? (*The New York Times* 8 October 1993)

The new policy of employing peacekeeping operations for the protection of human rights was a new initiative in the Clinton administration, but because of the aftermath of the Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia, Clinton went on the defensive. The Battle of Mogadishu exposed the weak points of the humanitarian intervention platform in Clinton's foreign policy agenda. The Clinton administration was forced to revamp its

humanitarian interventionism policy, taking criticism from Congress and from the American public. Senator Ernest F. Hollings, a Democrat from South Carolina, called the situation in Somalia, "Vietnam" all over again (New York Times 5 October 1993). The American public wanted the Clinton administration to withdraw from Somalia and let the people of Somalia deal with their own conflict. The UNOSOM II mission was a disaster for Clinton, and he quickly wanted to distance himself from the policy of humanitarian interventionism. UNOSOM II set a new course for its goals, which would now be more selective in its peacekeeping operations. The debacle in Somalia was a turning point that slowed down non-strategic humanitarian operations led by the US and UN. The US now needed to show restraint in choosing which operations to engage in. As the US Permanent Ambassador to the UN Madeline Albright stated:

As the experience in Somalia reflected, there was an urgent need for discipline in establishing mandates for peacekeeping operations, especially in situations where armed opposition might be anticipated. This discipline had to come from the United States. (Albright 2000: 142)

Public sentiment appeared to be less in favor of exacting revenge and more in favor of simply leaving Somalia and letting the Somalis deal with their own violent factions. The Clinton administration was only in its infancy when the tragedy in Somalia occurred in October 1993. The casualties from the disastrous peacekeeping operation in Somalia soon led to less cooperation with the United Nations. The US would now have to rethink its priorities in foreign policy. Can the United States impose its own views on domestic politics abroad? What is the role of the US in the world? These questions shaped subsequent foreign policies of the Clinton Administration, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the Somali experience. A revamped policy that will steer the US away from non-strategic peacekeeping operations would be born out of the

ashes of the disastrous US-led peacekeeping operation in Somalia. The Clinton administration's stance on humanitarian intervention would affect how the US reacted to the genocide in Rwanda.

### **Chapter 3: The US Response to the Genocide in Rwanda**

The goal of this chapter is to examine the United States' response to the genocide that took place in Rwanda in April 1994. The genocide occurred during a period when US foreign policy was shifting away from an emphasis on humanitarian interventionism due, in part, to the perceived failure of the US-led peacekeeping operation in Somalia in 1993. But, the US lukewarm reaction to the genocide in Rwanda was not only because of the US lack of commitment towards Africa but also because of Rwanda's lack of strategic value in US foreign policy at this time. US foreign policy in 1994 was much more cautious about humanitarian intervention, focusing solely on providing security in countries whose economies mattered directly to the US. After what happened in Somalia, the Clinton administration was forced to retract a lot of its earlier pro-human rights stances, as the administration took a lot of criticism during this period. As a result, the US first act after the botched Somali operation was to end the UNAMIR peacekeeping mission in Rwanda. Further, when the killings in Rwanda reached their peak in mid-April 1994, the US persisted in avoiding the use of the term "genocide" to describe what was happening in the country. Consequently, the US was not obligated to provide assistance or counter offensives to stop the mass killings.

After the failure in Somalia, the Clinton administration faced criticism at home and abroad. For the members of the 103rd United States Congress, such as Democratic Senator Ernest Hollings, it meant a return of fears of being embroiled in a long, costly war. Hence, the president adopted a more flexible foreign policy doctrine. In May 1994, the White House drafted the "Clinton Administration Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations" (PDD-25), designed to reshape the Clinton Administration's policy on humanitarian intervention. In essence, it was meant to scale down US support for military operations around the world in order to avoid another such failure. According to Madeleine Albright, PDD-25 "endorsed UN peacekeeping as an option while establishing criteria to make it more successful abroad and supportable at home" (Albright 2003: 147). However, the text of the document states clearly that "It is not U.S. policy to seek to expand either the number of UN peace operations or U.S. involvement in such operations" (PDD-25 1994: 3). Essentially, the directive halted any future non-strategic peacekeeping missions abroad by creating a long list of criteria that had to be considered before the deployment of troops, including the types of US interests at stake, a clear mission goal, acceptable costs, Congressional support, public support, allied support, a clear command and control arrangement, and an exit strategy (Power: 2003: 378). The critical test of PDD-25 should have been how to deal with the escalating violence in Rwanda. However, PDD-25 clearly marginalized any US military response during the mass killings, even when it was clear that a genocide was taking place. This marginalization was not because of a lack of will to intervene but because the Clinton administration was retooling its foreign policy to limit its exposure to possibly catastrophic peacekeeping operations.

## **Support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda**

Rwanda has long been the battleground between two dominant ethnic groups: the Hutus and the Tutsis. Following the conclusion of World War I, as part of a mandate of the League of Nations, Germany was forced to transfer its colonial power over Rwanda to Belgium, which then colonized the region and adopted the racial identification policies of the Nazis ( Barnett 2003: 34). This expanded Europe's color-conscious idea of ethnicities into Africa, classifying varying shades of skin tone. Belgium's official policy in regard to their treatment of Africans was to particularize their ethnicities by issuing identity cards to each ethnic group. In Rwanda, people who were taller and had lighter skin were labeled as Tutsi, while the darker-skinned with a wider nose were labeled as Hutus. While the Belgians governed Rwanda, the Tutsis ran the government, while the Hutus were treated as second-class citizens. When the Belgians pulled out of Rwanda in the early 1960s, the Hutus were able to come to power since they had been the majority population. The Rwandan independence movement of 1962 solidified Hutu place as the ruling group in Rwanda, but unrest between the two groups persisted for decades (Straus 2008: 64). This eventually led to a civil war in 1992 between the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the Hutu government, which ended with the Arusha Accords, put together by the US, France, and the Organisation of African Unity and supervised by the United Nations' Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). The Accords effectively ended the fighting, acting as a peace agreement between the Hutu government and the RPF by establishing a power-sharing agreement between the two political factions. In addition to presiding over the accords, UNAMIR's

mission was to oversee the entire peace process by adhering to the following guidelines:

- (a) contribute to the security of Kigali [the capital city of Rwanda]
- (b) monitor the ceasefire which called for the establishment of cantonment, assembly zones and the demarcation of the new demilitarised zone;
- (c) monitor the security situation during the final period of the transitional government's mandate in the lead up to elections;
- (d) assist in demining;
- (e) investigate non-compliance with the Arusha Accords;
- (f) monitor repatriation of Rwandan refugees and resettlement of displaced persons;
- (g) assist in the co-ordination of humanitarian assistance;
- (h) investigate and report on incidents regarding the activities of the gendarmerie and police (UNAMIR 1993).

The leaders of the UNAMIR mission, which Kofi Annan noted was the UN's first peacekeeping mission after the US-led disaster in Somalia, included Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, from Cameroon, and the force commander, Romeo Dallaire, from Canada. Before being assigned as the force commander, Dallaire was well aware of the political landscape that took form after the US pulled out of Somalia (Dallaire 2004: 24). The US was already showing signs of reluctance to engage in peacekeeping operations, pulling its troops out of Africa and showing much more caution in cooperating with the UN. This new operation in Rwanda would follow the UN's Chapter VII guidelines, which included peace enforcement with troops on the ground.

The Battle of Mogadishu, which had claimed the lives of 18 Americans in Somalia, took place a few weeks after UNAMIR was established. With this background,

the future of UN peacekeeping operations seemed bleak. Despite the tense climate, Dallaire knew going in that he would not get a Chapter VII peacekeeping operation because of the US loss of troops in Somalia, but remained convinced that one would be necessary in Rwanda. Citing budgetary concerns, the United States tried to limit the number of troops to a mere 500, a request that would foreshadow their subsequent actions when the main wave of killings occurred during the genocide in Rwanda.

### **Hesitation to Respond**

The US was a strong supporter of UNAMIR and its peace process in Rwanda, but this peace process between the Hutu-led government and the Tutsi-led RPF occurred after the US had re-evaluated its role in global peacekeeping operations. Therefore, the US showed hesitation to engage in non-strategic humanitarian intervention operations in Rwanda.

The US had an opportunity to intervene in Rwanda before the major wave of killings began, but the Clinton administration feared the possible military consequences. In January 1994, Dallaire received word from an informant about an impending attack from the Interahamwe militia, a pro-Hutu paramilitary group complicit with the government in killing most of the Tutsi population during the genocide in April 1994. The informant provided key information about an Interahamwe weapons stockpile. The informant also revealed a wide-scale plan of massacre that would end with the killing of all the Tutsis in the country. Even though the Interahamwe was the main agent of genocide, the Interahamwe received aid through the Hutu government. General Dallaire cabled UN Headquarters for authorization to raid the warehouse but was met with

opposition from then Deputy Secretary of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping: Kofi Annan. Kofi Annan stated on 11 January 1994:

We have carefully reviewed the situation in light of your MIR-79. We cannot agree to the operation contemplated in paragraph 7 of your cable, as it clearly goes beyond the mandate entrusted to UNAMIR under resolution 872 (1993) (UN Cable to Romeo Dallaire from Kofi Annan).

Kofi Annan has since clarified his response in his memoir. His decision not to intervene was in part because of the political climate set by the US. Annan was acting out of fear of another debacle similar to what happened in Somalia, and the US had no “appetite” for problematic interventions. Therefore, it was deemed that a raid on the Interahamwe warehouse would have been outside of the UNAMIR mandate. Annan’s response seemed to signal a transformation in the decision-making of the UN brought on by the US experience in Somalia. Annan’s deputy, Iqbal Riza told Annan, “Not Somalia again” in a discussion on the escalating situation in Rwanda (Power 2003: 344). Even Annan was concerned about the “post-Somalia international climate” and he saw Dallaire’s mission to raid the warehouse as another potential disaster like the mission in Somalia (Annan 2012: 53). Moreover, if the raid had occurred, then authorization would have had to come from the UN Security Council and the Secretary-General. The US, a member of the Security Council, was in the middle of altering its foreign policy to provide more diplomatic solutions to world problems instead of using peace enforcement. Moreover, the climate in the Security Council was grim and the US was not supportive of any initiatives from the Secretary-General. The US made it clear in PDD-25 that it did not want a muscular UN. In addition to alerting the Hutu government, Dallaire had to give his findings from the informant to the ambassadors of France, Belgium, and the United States (Boutros-Ghali 1999: 130). The countries that

Dallaire informed about the Hutus stockpiling a large cache of weapons could have taken action, but each country chose not to. These reports by Dallaire were the warning signs of an impending genocide in Rwanda.

Before the start of the genocide on 6 April 1994, Dallaire frequently sent reports to the UN that were shared by the US National Security Council about the deteriorating situation in Rwanda. Dallaire could not investigate these events not only because of the backlash from the Interahamwe but because of the lack of support from the UN. The spark that ignited the genocide in Rwanda was the assassination on 6 April 1994 of Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana, who gave the Hutu government legitimacy and branded the Tutsis as cockroaches that needed to be eradicated. Immediately after Habyarimana's death, the Interahamwe established roadblocks throughout the country, which would later serve to aid in organizing the genocide, and Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana sought to take lawful control of the country. Dallaire sent ten UN Belgian soldiers to protect the Prime Minister, but, due to the limitations of UNAMIR's rules of engagement, the troops and prime minister were overpowered by the Hutu army and subsequently murdered. Kofi Annan called the killing of the ten UN Belgian soldiers "Somalia all over again", and it was apparent that the UN wanted to evacuate Rwanda (Annan 2012:122). The death of the UN peacekeeping troops gave not only the UN cause to withdraw but gave the Clinton administration the political justification to do the same.

Signs of a genocide, rather than the beginnings of another civil war, were apparent. In 1994, *The New York Times* reported that the Hutu government seemed to be carrying out a series of selective political assassinations that targeted moderate

Hutus who did not fully support the regime (*The New York Times* 24 February 1994).

Furthermore, Dallaire reported in a telegram to New York on 9 April 1994, which is partially quoted below, that ethnicity was a primary motivation for the killings in Rwanda because the Tutsis were the primary target.

When we arrived, I looked at the school across the street, and there were children, I don't know how many, forty, sixty, eighty children who had all been chopped by machetes. Some of their mothers had heard them screaming and had come running, and the militia had killed them, too. We got out of the vehicle, and entered the church. There we found 150 people, dead mostly, though there were still some groaning, who had been attacked the night before. The Polish priests told us it had been incredibly organized. The Rwandan army had cleared out the area, and the gendarmerie had rounded up all of the Tutsi, and the militia had hacked them to death (Power 2003: 349).

In April 1994, when most of the killings were taking place, the UN's course of action was being marginalized by the United States. American media outlets were creating the image that this crisis was just two tribes fighting each other and that it should be viewed as an extension of the 1992 civil war. On April 10, it became clear that anyone who held a Tutsi identity card would be killed. This evidence now proved that a genocide was indeed taking place, because it was a one-sided war against the Tutsi population.

### *The Intelligence Debate*

A contested topic in the debate over why the US didn't respond to the genocide in Rwanda has been an issue of intelligence. Authors such as Samantha Power, David Kuperman, and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, offer different perspectives on how much intelligence the United States was receiving at the time. This debate on Rwanda reveals insightful details about how the US reacted to the genocide in Rwanda. A consequence of the US claiming that it did not have enough intelligence to call the violence in

Rwanda a “genocide” may have led the rest of the world to turn a blind eye to what was happening in that country. But, how much intelligence did the US have about the conflict in Rwanda and, why did the US refuse to call the conflict in Rwanda a genocide?

The intelligence gap is first mentioned by David Kuperman in his article, “Rwanda in Retrospect.” To sum up his views on the intelligence gap, he states:

Although U.S. intelligence reports from the period of the genocide remain classified, they probably mirrored those of the international news media, human rights organizations, and the U.N. -- because U.S. intelligence agencies committed virtually no in-country resources to what was considered a tiny state in a region of little strategic value.

But other analysts offer more compelling arguments regarding precisely what the US did and did not know. The US had good-working knowledge of the internal security problems in Rwanda before the genocide erupted, but was shaping its foreign policy to focus more on international matters of strategic relevance.

Samantha Power debunks claims that the US did not have current intelligence reports about the violence in Rwanda. As the violence was growing and being portrayed as a tribal conflict by the media, Power concluded that, based on declassified National Security Council documents, the US had plenty of intelligence about the genocidal intent of the Hutu government in Rwanda. She reports that the US government had useful information as early as January 1993 when a CIA report warned that “four million tons of small arms had been transferred from Poland to Rwanda” (Power 2003: 338). A complementary report in January 1994 stated that if the violence continued in Rwanda, one million people would be killed.

After the assassination of the Hutu president in Rwanda, US officials were already looking at the intent of the perpetrators to target Tutsis. Joyce Leader, head of the US embassy in Rwanda, reported on 8 April 1994 that there was selective targeted violence ensuing. She recalls that “By 8 am, the morning after the plane crash, there was systematic killing of Tutsi” (Power 2003: 354). A memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Prudence Bushnell to the Deputy Assistant Secretary shows the Clinton administration having intelligence about the plane crash. The memo states that there could be widespread violence in both Rwanda and Burundi. The US had firsthand knowledge from Rwanda about the on-going violence. Leader confirmed the reports given by Dallaire about the moderate Hutus being killed, because in early April the moderate Hutus were being targeted by the radical members of the Hutu government. In April, US foreign policy analysts believed that the killings would only increase. Washington had clear knowledge of the violence in Rwanda, not like in New York where the UN Security Council was arguing whether the killings sprang from spontaneous violence or a continuation of the country’s civil war. A declassified document from the US Department of Defense concerning the state of Rwanda mentioned that “Unless both sides can be convinced to return to the peace process a massive (hundreds of thousands of deaths) bloodbath will ensue that would likely spill into Burundi”

There is clear evidence that the Clinton administration received accurate intelligence about the situation in Rwanda. The US knew that growing violence in early April could lead to massive deaths. Furthermore, contrary to Madeline Albright’s claims that the fighting was an extension of the country’s civil war, the US acknowledged that

the RPF and the Hutu government had disengaged from the peace-making process. Moreover, Kuperman's assessment that the US did not have credible intelligence is wrong. The US possessed information that it could have used in a counter assault to stop the one-sided violence against the Tutsis by the Hutu government. Instead, US officials claimed that Rwanda could handle its conflict on its own. In a statement Madeline Albright said:

The United States has been a driving force in the provision of humanitarian assistance, in condemning the violence and in trying to organize a U.N. mission designed not simply to promise, but to deliver what it promises. Sending a U.N. force into the maelstrom in Rwanda without a sound plan of operations would be folly ... If we do not keep commitments in line with capabilities, we will only further undermine U.N. credibility and support. The actions authorized last night will help. They may save lives. But ultimately, the future of Rwanda is in Rwandan hands (Barnett 2003: 227).

On 11 April 1994, the US State Department wrote a memorandum titled "Talking Points on Rwanda/Burundi." This document made it clear that the US wanted to settle the conflict in Rwanda only through diplomatic means, in order to redirect the Hutu Government and the RPF toward peace talks. In this confidential section of the memorandum, it is revealed that Washington's top priority was to ensure the safe withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping troops in Rwanda. The Clinton administration failed to understand the internal conflicts of Rwanda's two ethnic groups, and this contributed to their hesitation to intervene. Due to the conflict evolving into a genocide, the marginalized Tutsis were not capable of protecting themselves since the Hutu government was the aggressor. The Clinton administration failed to grasp the vulnerability of the Tutsis because they were looking at the conflict in Rwanda through a political lens.

The US did have a number of resources to prevent further loss of life in Rwanda if it wanted to do so. A particular area that the United States could have assisted was jamming the hate radio stations in Rwanda. During the conflict in Rwanda, the government-backed Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLHC) served as a propaganda machine in rallying Hutu's to kill Tutsis. This intervention option had been suggested by National Security Advisor Anthony Lake who thought the US could jam the hate radio broadcast of the RTLHC. This idea was discarded by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Frank G. Wisner who in a memorandum in May 1994 had stated that radio jamming was "ineffective," and expensive. He went on to state that the US could focus on the relief efforts in Rwanda, such as delivering blankets.

Throughout the crisis in Rwanda, the US position was not to acknowledge the violence as a genocide. Official communication danced around the word "genocide" because if a conflict warranted the term, the UN would have had to react in compliance with the 1948 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. Since the US was a part of the UN Security Council, the US would have been expected to contribute to the endeavor of stopping the genocide since the US was seen as the sole world leader after the Cold War. On the contrary, in 1994, the US stepped back from such conflicts and acted as a referee. The media was also slow to call the conflict a genocide. The situation in Rwanda was presented to the world as a civil war while reports from Dallaire were clearly indicating that the conflict was a genocide. Article II of the UN convention clearly defines "genocide" as certain acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, but the United States would not describe the conflict as a genocide until June of 1994.

The Clinton administration knew the political consequences of calling the conflict a genocide. Susan Rice, who worked for the National Security Council in 1994, posed a telling question during an interagency conference call: “If we used the word ‘genocide’ and are seen as doing nothing, would that affect the November Congressional election?” (Power 2003: 359). This reveals that Washington was worried about the conflict in Rwanda, but only as a political liability that could, potentially, cause the Clinton administration harm in subsequent elections. Thus, out of these reservations, Washington created PDD-25, which weakened the US ties with the UN. The conflict in Rwanda became a pivotal situation for the Clinton administration to prove to Congress and the American public that the US could turn down the opportunity to intervene in international conflicts.

The Clinton administration’s dilemma with the use of the word genocide is demonstrated in a memorandum to Warren Christopher. The goal of this memorandum was to come up with an explanation about when the US should use the term genocide, and in what context the word should be used. This conversation was brought up because of the media and public wondering if genocide was indeed occurring in Rwanda. The discussion was to use either of two terms, “genocide” or “acts of genocide.” This memorandum to the State Department makes it clear that the US was aware that genocide was taking place in Rwanda; for example, one statement reads: “there is a strong basis to conclude that some of the killings and other listed acts carried out against Tutsis have been committed with intent of destroying the ... group in whole or in part” (Cohen 2007: 139). The memorandum ends by deciding that the US should only use the term “acts of genocide.”

The Clinton administration made avoiding the term “genocide” general policy in all situations, and made it appear that Rwanda was simply an illustration of that policy. Throughout the genocide, Washington tried to determine what legally constituted genocide. At a State Department briefing, on 10 June 1994, spokesperson Christine Shelley and a journalist engaged in the following dialogue:

How many acts of genocide does it take to make genocide?

That's just not a question that I'm in a position to answer.

Well, is it true that you have specific guidance not to use the word 'genocide' in isolation, but always to preface it with these words 'acts of'?

I have guidance which I try to use as best as I can. There are formulations that we are using that we are trying to be consistent in our use of. I don't have an absolute categorical prescription against something, but I have the definitions. I have phraseology which has been carefully examined and arrived at as best as we can apply to exactly the situation and the actions which have taken place (Powers: 2003: 213)

In this exchange, Shelley reveals the thought process of the US State Department. The US purposely played word games in order to downplay the situation in Rwanda. By the end of April, the intelligence that Romeo Dallaire had already sent to the UN Security Council had expressly called the conflict a genocide. The United States did not want to publicly denounce the continuing massacres of the Tutsi people as genocide because that would have forced the UN into a position of intervention.

The use of the word “genocide” permeated discussions about Rwanda in the Security Council during this time, but the Council enabled the US non-intervention stance by addressing the conflict in Rwanda as either a “civil war,” or an “ethnic conflict” (Barnett 2003: 120). By 8 April 1994, the UN Security Council was using the term “ethnic cleansing” to describe the situation. The UN definition for ethnic cleansing is the

forcible removal of an unwanted ethnic group in order to create a homogenous society. However, in a phone call to New York during the first week of April, Dallaire noted that these killings were much more organized and ghastly than the actions outlined in a standard definition of ethnic cleansing (Barnett 2003: 126). The first time that any UN official used the term “genocide” to discuss the situation in Rwanda was during Boutros-Ghali’s 5 May 1994 appearance on ABC’s Nightline news program (Barnett 2003: 152). Once the majority of killings had already ended, the Security Council began to suspect that the conflict in Rwanda might merit the label “genocide.”

## Conclusion

This thesis has argued that the lack of a decisive US response to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda was a purely political decision based on the failed humanitarian intervention policy of 1993. 1994 was a retooling year for US foreign policy regarding humanitarian intervention, and Rwanda suffered from this process. Scholars have long debated why the US did not respond immediately to the impending genocide in Rwanda. To reconstruct and reassess the US response to the genocide in Rwanda, this thesis project used primary and secondary sources, including: interagency government memoranda, newspapers, presidential speeches, articles, and books. The evidence from these sources supports the argument that the US was going through a foreign policy transformation in the early 1990s that affected the US response to the genocide in Rwanda. It is important to understand that the Clinton Administration did not just fail to intervene because of non-strategic reasons, but also because of congressional criticism of Clinton's handling of the US-led peacekeeping operation in Somalia. This left the Clinton Administration politically exposed and vulnerable at a time when President Clinton knew he was going to have to run for reelection in 1996.

Consequently, in 1994, the US response to the genocide in Rwanda became a casualty of shifting humanitarian intervention policies. At the beginning of 1993, the US was trying to be a world policeman in the unipolar Post-Cold War Era. However, the loss of American Rangers in Somalia later that year forced the Clinton Administration to

retreat from its previous platforms. Based on the declassified interagency memoranda and interagency discussions regarding the crisis in Rwanda, every decision was made in an effort to reinforce PDD-25. The Rwandan Genocide unfortunately became a kind of sacrificial lamb for the Clinton Administration's foreign policy agenda of the 1990s. The US response was purely political, and not racial in its motivation. Hopefully, this essay will renew research interest in President Clinton's foreign policy reassessments in the 1990s and the response of the United States to post-1994 genocides in other parts of the world.

This thesis draws attention to the hitherto unexamined American dilemma of rethinking its humanitarian foreign policy, and readjusting to contentious domestic politics, at a time when a humanitarian catastrophe was developing in Rwanda. It reassesses some of the major interpretations in the historiography on the US response to the Rwandan genocide. Far from indicating a calculated policy motivated by racial prejudice, or the lack of concrete information on developments in Rwanda, the Clinton Administration's reaction to the genocide in Rwanda appears to have stemmed from the hesitations of American policymakers to commit the United States to another humanitarian mission in Central Africa soon after experiencing a disastrous one in East Africa.

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