

Rwanda, 20 Years On - “100 Percent American Responsibility”

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“...essential reading.” Edward S. Herman

April 6, 2014 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the shooting down over Kigali of a plane carrying two African heads of state, Juvénal Habyarimana of Rwanda and Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi. We know that that terrorist crime—surely the worst of the 1990s—triggered unending war, destruction, and massacres in Rwanda and Congo. Yet it has never been elucidated and nobody has been brought to justice. Despite the wilful blindness and amnesia about the most critical crime in the Rwandan and Congolese tragedies, politicians, diplomats, pundits, intellectuals, and retired presidents, prime ministers and generals, constantly invoke “Rwanda” as though the word alone confers some supposed truth and moral authority on the political, military and imperial positions they defend. “Rwanda” has been used specifically to justify violent military “humanitarian” intervention in Libya, Sudan, Mali, Syria, and the Central African Republic. “Everywhere is Rwanda for the humanitarian imperialist,” noted Max Forte in his book *Slouching Towards Sirte: NATO’s War on Libya and Africa*:

The official and deafening narrative behind the use of the word “Rwanda” holds that:

- 1) horrible Rwandan Hutu génocidaires planned and executed a satanic scheme to eliminate nearly a million Tutsis after a mysterious plane crash killed the former president of Rwanda on April 6, 1994;
- 2) that the Rwandan Patriotic Front led by the brilliant military political strategist Paul Kagame, now president of Rwanda, swept down from the North, stopped the genocide and took power on July 19, 1994;
- 3) the international community stood idly by while Nazi-like killers virtually eliminated the Tutsis of Rwanda’s; and
- 4) Paul Kagame has transformed that genocide-torn country into an African miracle thanks to his visionary, though tough, political leadership. We have thus learned from “Rwanda” that in the future and in the name of humanity, we—meaning the armies of North America and Europe—must intervene militarily to prevent these peoples from killing themselves.

“100 percent American responsibility”—Boutros Boutros-Ghali

One of the first to put a crack in the official narrative was Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who was Secretary General of the UN during the Rwandan war. He declared to me that, “the Rwandan genocide was 100 percent American responsibility.” The man whom US State Department officials called “Frenchie” before they unceremoniously ejected him from the UN explained: “The US effort to prevent the effective deployment of a UN force for Rwanda succeeded with the strong support of Britain.”

Declassified Clinton administration documents confirm that then US Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright was instructed by the State Department on April 15, 1994 to do everything necessary to have the UN withdraw all UNAMIR forces from Rwanda and to ensure that there would be no more discussion and no more resolutions. Thus after the Rwandan Patriotic Front resumed war on April 6 with the downing of the presidential plane, Washington’s policy was not to obtain a ceasefire. Yet that would have been the only logical, just, and legitimate policy under the 1993 Arusha Peace Accord, which Washington, along with London and Paris and others, had initiated and oversaw under UN auspices.

All serious evidence and testimony also points directly to Paul Kagame and the RPF as the perpetrators of the April 6 assassination of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi. That attack combined with the blitzkrieg-like resumption of war—revealing total preparation and knowledge of the assassination—belies the tale that the RPF swept down to stop genocide. It was more like “Shock and Awe” on Kigali.

Washington’s policy, which flew in the face of the very Peace Accord they were stewarding, was to create conditions for a decisive victory for the army of Rwandan Patriotic Front—whatever the cost may be. There was to be no power-sharing as called for in the Peace Accord because that would have left the RPF hamstrung, unable to achieve military domination in Central Africa’s Great Lakes Region. Whereas the US and the UK actually blocked attempts to achieve peace and stop the killing, the official story would be that all of us, the entire “international community” as they call “us,” simply abandoned the Rwandan Tutsis; thus we should all collectively join in the chorus led by Bill Clinton and Madeleine Albright and say, “*Mea culpa, mea culpa, Never Again.*”

Former Kagame aids have dispelled any doubts about Washington’s and the RPF’s policy of Washington. Theogene Rudasingwa, who was a Rwandan Ambassador to the United States and Paul Kagame’s chief of staff, wrote: “RPF could sense that an international peacekeeping force would freeze the situation and take away its military initiative. Gerald Gahima and Claude Dusaidi articulated this position in the Washington, D.C. and New York meetings.” Then Rudasingwa added that, on the other hand: “In RPF’s media campaign, and on Radio Muhabira, our strategy was to attack the international community for abandoning Rwanda.” (*Healing a Nation: Waging and Winning a Peaceful Revolution to Unite and Heal a Broken Rwanda*, Createspace, 2014, p. 156).

The “supreme international crime” swept under the rug

Another crucial truth that the deafening narrative has buried is the war that preceded the shooting down of the presidential plane on April 6, 1994. The invasion of Rwanda on October 1, 1990 by 4000 Ugandan uniform-bearing troops that would become the army of the Rwandan Patriotic Front was not only a breach of international law, it was the crime against

peace, the “supreme international crime” as Nuremberg Judge Birkett described it. (In its unfathomable wisdom, *The New York Times Magazine* in a glossy 2002 feature described that invasion as simply “increased tensions.”) Nobody who invokes “Rwanda” to justify humanitarian intervention ever mentions or wants to hear of that invasion or the military occupation and the murderous war that ensued for three and a half years.

In 2010, a United Nations Mapping Report confirmed the genocidal nature of the Rwandan Army’s killing in the Congo following the invasion of Congo (then Zaïre). This should be a hint about the nature of the RPF. In fact, a close look at the war on Rwanda between 1990 and 1994 shows that the massive killing began well before April 1994 and that the perpetrators were the RPF led by Paul Kagame. What has occurred in the Congo also occurred in Rwanda before April 6, 1994.

Victors’ justice fails to provide facts

What about the alleged planning to exterminate Tutsis? Though nobody disputes the fact that there was massive killing in Rwanda in 1994, the problem for the defenders of the popular narrative is that they lack adjudicated facts to back their claims. Although a victors’ justice court—the ad hoc International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda—was established in 1995 with all the means necessary, on the fundamental allegation, “Conspiracy to Commit Genocide,” the man who has been constantly accused of being the “brains” behind the massacres, the “biggest fish,” Théoneste Bagosora, along with his three co-accused were all acquitted of that charge. Despite some eighteen years of trials with masses of sworn testimony and evidence, the facts simply do not support the official narrative about Rwanda.

The Rwandan military and the police, who were the only one able to stop the killing in April, May and June 1994, were simply unable to do so because they were engaged in a war to the finish with a powerful and fully-equipped military machine known as the Rwandan Patriotic Front. That army also enjoyed the political, diplomatic, and military backing of two very powerful countries, the United States and the United Kingdom.

The cynical operating of those two major powers along with their minions thus provoked death and destruction on an unequalled scale in Central Africa. Yet these same powers and their stellar former leaders—Bill Clinton and Tony Blair—have the gall to transform that terrible tragedy into a useful imperial fiction used to justify further military intervention, mainly in Africa.

Robin Philpot is a Montreal writer, translator and publisher. [Rwanda and the New Scramble for Africa, From Tragedy to Useful Imperial Fiction](#) was published by Baraka Books in February 2014.

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