

## Epilogue: 1996"

A series of invited meetings and conferences took place between mid-1995 and early 1996 designed to review the events that took place in Rwanda before and during the Genocide. Various of these meetings were attended by General Dallaire, by members of the United States Department of State, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the National Security Council and members of the UN Secretary-General's office, as well as by researchers. During these meetings (at all of which I was fortunate to be present), three extremely significant pieces of information became available which quite dramatically substantiate the argument of the preceding pages written in the fall of 1994. They are as follows:

(1) Some time in the first month or two of 1994, a senior officer of the Interamwhe militia approached General Dallaire, the UNAMIR commander, and provided him with the following information:

- The Interamwhe militia were distributing and stockpiling weapons.
- They were exercising--practicing--the procedures to be followed for a genocide, and had calculated that they would be able to carry out killings at the rate of 10,000 people per hour.
- They had drawn up lists of those to be killed, which included Hutu members of the government and politicians who favored carrying out the Arusha Accords.

General Dallaire cabled this information to the Office of the Secretary-

General at UN headquarters in New York, as well as a request by the Interamwhe informer that the UN bring him and his family out of Rwanda, and provide them with safe haven. (General Dallaire's cable has since become available to researchers.) Officials in the UN Secretary-General's office did not think that the information was reliable or that it should be acted upon in any way. They rejected the specific request for safe haven for the informant. A copy of the cable also reached officials in the US Department of State. It sat on the desk of an Assistant Secretary for approximately one month before he read it, and when he did, although the Department of State accepted that some level of killing might eventually take place, he also judged the information contained in the cable to be "out of the ball park," that is, not credible.

(2) General Dallaire also requested authority from the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations to have UNAMIR collect the weapons from the locations at which they were being deposited by the Rwandan government for the Interamwhe. The request was denied. There is no indication that the question was put to the members of the Security Council.

(3) In the last days of February and the beginning of March 1994, a USAID assessment mission was in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. In several days of discussions with UNAMIR staff and with Rwandans, they obtained a general--and correct--understanding of what was taking place and became apprehensive of the danger of an outbreak of killing similar to that which had taken place in Burundi only a few months before. They returned to the US Embassy and suggested to the ambassador that they should discuss these developments with

a view to devising initiatives for the US government to intervene in what was otherwise taking place unimpeded. The US ambassador, sympathetic to the Hutu government, directed them to drop the issue and to summarily return to Washington, which they did.

Subsequent developments have also borne out the error made by the UNHCR which was touched on in the paper, namely to maintain the refugee camps in Zaire, and in particular, to permit the former Hutu military to play a role in managing the camps and acting as the receivers and distributors of food aid. On July 23, 1994, the Economist published a letter from Alain Destexhe, the Secretary-General of Médecins Sans Frontières, who wrote:

"In the 1980s, the Khmers Rouges were allowed to shelter in (and in some cases administer) the refugee camps on the Thai border. This tactic must not be allowed in Rwanda, or those responsible for the genocide will never be made to answer for their crimes--a fact that will be borne in mind by other potential tyrants."

Yet, only one month later, that was precisely what was done, and for two years the former Hutu military have dominated and terrorized the refugee camps and killed refugees desiring to return to Rwanda. What is more, permitted to rearm by the government of Zaire and permitted to profit from incoming aid, they have mounted cross-border raids into both Rwanda and Burundi to kill Tutsi, have been killing Tutsi who settled in past decades in the Masisi border region of Zaire, and have even been killing Hutu villagers inside Rwanda who either remained or returned to Rwanda and were willing to

seek accommodation with the present government. It has also become clear that the massive exodus of Hutu in 1994 was not altogether spontaneous, but was forced by the Hutu army and the Interamwe as they moved into Zaire.<sup>2</sup>

The number of people who were murdered in Rwanda is now variously estimated at between 800,000 and "up to one million," in a period of three short months.<sup>3</sup> Much, if not all, was foreseen, and forewarned. The "international community" chose to do nothing, including after the Genocide had started, and while it was in progress. A senior UNHCR official recently commented that the UNHCR has no financial problems, as "...we are the fig leaf for nations not to do anything: countries give [us] the money 'to save peoples' lives'....There is no political will in the international community to deal with Rwanda or Burundi." Eighty percent of "Rwanda" assistance is being spent in Zaire, and the refugee camps are a breeding ground for a new Hutu military, and are being supported and maintained by UN agencies. The Burundi situation has been festering for a year and a half, with again no international action. Once more it is not passive, disinterest, but active rejection, the decision not to respond.

It is astonishing that major Western nations are willing to accept financial costs for humanitarian aid after the killing has taken place that are ten times higher than would be required to mount an early military intervention to prevent the killing, in order not to incur domestic political costs associated with deploying military forces which could affect domestic electoral outcomes. It is for that reason, in fact, that "Never Again" becomes "Again and Again."

## NOTES

1. Letters: "Genocide and Justice," The Economist (July 23, 1994) 331:7873.
2. Two superb book-length studies have become available to which the reader is directed: Gérard Prunier, The Rwandan Crisis: History of a Genocide, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, and The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons From the Rwanda Experience, Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, March 1996, 3 volumes.
3. Ibid.