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Is there a market for humanitarian crisis interventions? International regimes for the prevention or ending of genocide seen from an institutionalist perspective

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Is There A Market For Humanitarian Crisis
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Ending of Genocide Seen From an
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Für den Inhalt der Papiere sind die jeweiligen Autoren verantwortlich.

I. Introduction: »On Behalf Of Humanity!«

In 1915 and 1916, at the height of World War I, the American ambassador in Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau Sr., struggled with his superiors in Washington to draw attention to an event taking place at the periphery of the European continent, in the shadow of the great battles: the attempt of the Ottoman Empire's government to exterminate the Armenian population living on Turkish territory. Reports from consular offices, missionary sources as well as from Armenians who had just escaped the massacres had convinced the ambassador that a »race murder« of unknown dimensions was going on in the country; the notion of »genocide« had not yet been invented. And he had come to the conclusion that the only way to stop violence from spreading further was by intervention of a third party.

I.1. The problem: Systematic failure to intervene in genocidal killings

Being well aware of the fact that no genuine U.S.-American interests were threatened by the killing of Armenians in the distant Ottoman Empire, he beseeched Washington's foreign policy makers to act »on behalf of

humanity«. Yet, this appeal to a universal ethics went unheard. The government of President Wilson stuck to previously formulated policy commitments: it was determined to maintain a neutral position in what was considered to be a European conflict (Power, 2003, 4-11).

Desperate about his impotence, Morgenthau left Constantinople in early 1916. Later, he commented that retreat:

»My failure to stop the destruction of the Armenians had made Turkey for me a place of horror – I had reached the end of my resources.« (cited in Power, 2003, 10).

The moral imperative to act, the sense of urgency had been defeated by the blunt considerations of *realpolitik*.

After the end of World War II, the creation of a number of international institutions and organisations, most importantly the United Nations, as well as the evolution and expansion of international law carried the promise that henceforth there would be a permanent structure to co-ordinate and arbitrate national interests for the good of humanity. Those structures were set-up in response to the experience of the military, economic and humane disasters of the two World Wars and the economic crisis of the inter-war-period. No more should the interests of »humanity« be sacrificed to national policy goals.

Some of those institutional and organisational structures, for example in the fields of trade and finance or in European co-operation, became great successes – at least by their own goals. Yet, when it comes to humanitarian crises, like the one experienced by Morgenthau in 1915, the existence of structures of transnational co-operation and arbitration seems to have changed but little on the ground. The U.S.-American Ambassador was not the last to despair about the non-responsiveness of his superiors to a human catastrophe he stood witness to:

In spring 1994, Roméo Dallaire, a Canadian commander in charge of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Rwanda urged for a reinforcement of his troops; for more than ten weeks, his requests were denied, as the corpses of those killed

by genocidal violence piled around him, and a medially globalised public watched in shock. About a year later, in July 1995, the Dutch commander Thomas Karremans, empty-handedly stood witness to the killing of 8,000 Bosnian boys and men in Srebrenica, the U.N. »safe area« he had been in charge to secure; his demands for NATO-reinforcements and the requests for a modification of the peacekeeper's mandate went unheard.

I.2. The research question:

How to explain the failure of international organisations in genocidal crises?

To the common sense, the hesitating attitude of the multinational bodies in dealing with an occurring genocide is stupefying. As controversial as U.N. interventions have become, moral intuition tells that if there exists one case where the need for intervention should be totally clear, where basic human rights should indisputably be enforced, it is the case of genocide. The reason is that genocides are political processes, in which pre-political attributes of persons – skin color, cultural identity, social status – to unilaterally divide a society in »us« and »them« and to attack the latter group.¹ Thus, genocidal violence targets a more or less defined aggregate of people, but not an organised group. »Membership« (cf. Luhmann, 1975; Luhmann, 1998, 826-847) does not result from choice, but from birth or chance. Hence, this »group« is not endowed with the organisational capacity to respond quickly to a violent political attack. In such a situation, the only way to stop violence from spreading is the intervention of a third (cf. Sofsky, 1996, 72-90).

In this thesis, I want to explore the repeated failure of the existing international institutions and organisations to set up intervention missions to

¹ Scholars who explicitly treat genocides as political processes initiated deliberately to achieve certain political ends are not numerous, see for example Bauman, 1993;

stop an ongoing genocide. The research question is: *why, despite the existence international organisations and unambiguous provisions in international law, why, in spite of what moral intuition and the logic of genocidal violence suggest, interventions to stop genocides from happening or from spreading fail to take place? And are there alternative to this situation?*

The central argument brought forward is that due to the constitutional dilemmas of international organisations, such as the United Nations or similar regional bodies, decision-making on crisis interventions does not take place in function of the judicial statutes of the respective organisations, but in function of political interests in the respective member states. Based on Mancur Olson's considerations about collective action in small groups, it is argued that decisive for the actual set-up of an intervention mission is the decision of the most important group member, in our case, the United States of America. Put differently, international interventions are bartered upon on domestic political markets. The outcome of this decision-making process is dependent upon three variables: first, political commitments made beforehand; second, the opportunity costs of the intervention, and third, the degree of public awareness to the crisis.

I.3. The conceptual approach: New Institutional Economics

In this thesis, the problem of third party intervention into genocidal crises will be explored in the theoretical framework of New Institutional Economics, in particular Public Choice and Constitutional Economics.² This approach focuses on institutional arrangements, i.e. systems of rules and mechanisms of rule enforcement as well as on processes of decision making. Accordingly, transnational co-operation has become an important issue within the NIE

DeFigueiredo Jr, Weingast, 1999.

² For a general introduction into the research area of NIE see Richter, 2005,

research agenda. For some time, however, research in this field has been focussed on the study of institutional arrangements in the field of economic cooperation, such as. This is partly due to the fact that some of the most influential theoretical writings in NIE have come from economists (see for example North, 1981; North, 1990), and have found their primary audience within the discipline. The dynamics has been further enhanced by the proliferation of market oriented economic systems on a global scale after the end of the Cold War. Being a neoclassical theory, NIE has been particularly apt to analyse these newly emerging structures.

In principle, however, the analytical instruments of NIE should be also applicable to other institutional arrangements in other fields policy making, such as security. Pioneering works in this field stem from the Cold War period, when researchers such as Schelling or Kronman conceptualised the strategic interdependencies in a world divided by the Iron Curtain (Schelling, 1960; Schelling, 1966; Kronman, 1985). Those works already forbore a tendency that should become most important in NIE research in the years to come: a rapprochement of institutional research and game theory.³ This approach has been particularly fruitful when it comes to the analysis of institutions in an evolutionary perspectives. Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal, for example, have used this approach in their work about the rational design of international institutions (Koremenos, Lipson,Snidal, 2001). Another interesting example are the works of Peter Bennett who expands game theoretical models to allow for the integration of important missing dimensions, such as differing perspectives, conflict dynamics and linked issues (Bennett, 1995).⁴ Along with the classical writings in New Institutional

especially chapters 6 and 9.

3 Andrew Schotter's *The Economic Theory of Social Institutions* (Schotter, 1981) is usually considered as the seminal in this regard (cf. Richter, 2005).

4 Together with Howard, Bryant and Bradley, he developed *drama theory*, an enlargement of game theoretical models that avoid the banalising connotation of *game theory* and call for greater complexity in the analysis of strategic interdependencies, incorporating for example emotions or the strategic use of arguments (Howard, Bennett et

Economics, those works provide important elements in the reconstruction of decision making on international crisis intervention.

Against the background of these theoretical consideration, the research question laid out in I.2 might be specified. We can now ask: what are the institutional structures and the decision-making processes in which decisions about interventions in humanitarian crises take place and why do they fail?

I.4. The central case study: genocide in Rwanda 1994

Although the research question is put generally, the considerations of this thesis are based on one central case study: the genocidal killings in Rwanda 1994. The main reason for this choice is that the case is so well documented. Since it was the first incident of systematic large-scale killings after the end of Cold War, it stimulated the interest of researchers and policy makers alike, leading to a large *corpus* on academic and non-academic literature on the issue, including collections of eye-witness accounts (see I.5).

The genocidal killings in spring 1994 started after the crash of the presidential airplane, on April 6. At about 8.30 pm, the plane had been coming low to Kigali airport for landing. It came from Dar-es-Salam, where the president had been participating at a meeting of several east African presidents and ministers. Although the summit had been officially dedicated to discussing the instable situation in Rwanda's neighboring country, Burundi, during the day the interest of the participants had been drawn to the even more precarious situation in Rwanda. The Rwandan president, Juvénal Habyarimana, had been urged by his colleagues – and this not for the first time – to finally undertake serious actions to implement the Arusha peace agreement which had been signed in August 1993 to put an end to three years of civil war in his country. On his flight home, he had been accompanied

al.,).

Burundi's President Cyprien Ntaryamira who's plane was much slower and who had gratefully accepted a lift (Prunier, 1995, 210).

Suddenly, two missiles had been fired from just outside the airport perimeter. The Falcon crashed into the garden of Habyarimana's residence and immediately burst into flames, killing all aboard . At 9.15 pm, there were roadblocks throughout the city, manned by members of the militia *interahamwe*, houses were being searched (Prunier, 1995, 211, 223), and it had begun what should enter the records of world history as Africa's very own version of the Holocaust.

Although, in the West the Rwandan genocide is often depicted as an "African tribal slaughter", it had been, from its early hours, a conflict of international dimension. Rwandan violence of spring 1994 did confine itself neither to Rwandan nationals nor to Rwandan territory, and generated human casualties and other burdens to third parties. Hence, it did not take long until the events in the east African country caught international attention – and immediately the claim was in the air that "something has to be done about that." But for more than two months, it seemed that nothing happened at all. At least nothing that would have saved the people threatened by genocidal violence from being killed. Between April and June 1994, the United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions concerning the escalated Rwandan conflict. But the first one did practically pull-out the peacekeeping force UNAMIR which had been in the country since September 1993, and it was only in the third one that the U.N. decision-making body even acknowledged that what was going on in the African country was a genocide.

But the United Nations were not the only organisation to consider the Rwandan events. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) undertook efforts to set up a mediating mission, headed by the South African President Nelson Mandela, but the project did not take of the ground. News media showed pictures of mutilated bodies and of people on the run, NGO activists in the

field and parliamentarians in different countries showed – as Morgenthau had done eighty years before – their desperation. And while the international and regional decision making bodies busied themselves with debates about what should be done, who should do it and, most importantly, who would be going to foot the bill, the corpses in Rwanda piled to heaven.

Finally, on June 22, more than ten weeks after the assassination of the Rwandan President had launched the mass killings, the United Nations Security Council authorized *Opération Turquoise*, a French led humanitarian intervention mission. Already the next day, the troops entered the country and started to establish a “save zone” within which 12-15,000 lives are estimated to have been saved (Klinghoffer, 1998, 88).

During spring and summer 1994, between 800,000 and 850,000 people were killed in Rwanda. Eleven percent of the population. Most of them belonged to the minority group of the Tutsi. Nevertheless, there was a considerable number (10-30,000) of Hutu, the majority group, who were killed because they had shown in one way or another disagreement with extremist politics (Prunier, 1995, 265). Of the minority Tutsi, hardly ten percent survived spring and summer 1994. The daily killing rate of the Rwandan genocide was at least five times that of the Nazi extermination camps (Prunier, 1995, 261); for more than two weeks, RPF soldiers camping on the Rwandan-Tanzanian border counted one body per minute floating down the Akagera river towards Lake Victoria (Prunier, 1995, 262).⁵

I.5. The data basis

For the reconstruction of the the events in Rwanda in spring 1994 as well as

⁵ In an interview with a French newspaper, the soldier testified that since he and his comrades had arrived there, on April 22, they had counted one body per minute, and that only the day before the interview, the flow had slowed down to 500 bodies per day

of the decision-making process about this issue primary as well as secondary sources have been consulted. The most important primary sources are documents issued by the United Nations as well as various bodies of the United States' government, which permit insights in the decision making process. For the reconstruction of the events on the ground, I had to rely on secondary sources, most importantly a collection of eyewitness accounts gathered by the London-based NGO *African Rights* (Rights, 1995) as well as newspaper articles. This reading has been complemented by academic literature, most importantly Gérard Pruniers meticulous account of the events (Prunier, 1995).

I.6. Structure of the thesis

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows: the subsequent chapter two will provide an overview into the central case-study, the genocide in Rwanda 1994 and the reactions of the international organisations to this situation. In chapter three I will then introduce, the basic theoretical framework and propose a theoretical model for the reconstruction of the decision-making process leading (or not) to humanitarian crisis interventions. Chapter four explores in some detail the political decision-making process in the U.S. in response to the genocidal killings in Rwanda. Chapter five then discusses this process in the light of the theoretical model introduced in chapter three. The thesis closes with a discussion of alternative institutional arrangements.

(Chatain, May 10, 1994).

II. Rwanda:

Brief Introduction to History and Society

II.1. Pre-colonial cohabitation and colonial disruption

Rwanda is situated in Eastern Africa, in the Highlands east of Lake Kivu. 7.8 million people live, most of them as cattle or crop farmers, on a surface of only 26,000 square kilometers. This makes Rwanda the most densely populated state on the African continent. The country shows a particular pattern of settlement which evolved from its geophysical conditions. From its dominant and most populated landscape Rwanda has been derived the epithet of the country: »*pays des mille collines* — land of the thousand hills«. And it is the hill that constitutes the focus of social life. The hill is the scene for all social events transcending the boundaries of the family household, from marriages and other festivities to political meetings and the coordination of collective work. The hill also represents the frontier of rural solidarity (Prunier, 1995, 1-3; Marx, 1997).

While spatially, the Rwandan society is organized around the unit of the hill, it became politically organized around the distinction between 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi'. In pre-colonial Rwanda, 'Hutu' designated the group of crop farmers

who have always been the majority of the population, while ‘Tutsi’ referred to the cattle herders. The country was organized as a kingdom, with political power concentrated in the minority of the cattle herders. The king and most of the aristocracy belonged to this social group. But this distinction between farmers and cattle herders did not coincide with the spatial organisation of the society. Farmers and herders lived on the same hills, and — because intermarriage was not uncommon — belonged to the same families, households and clans. Until the turn of the 20th century, contractual economic relationships based on mutual dependence (clientship relations) were frequent between members of both groups, and, at least until the proclamation of the first Rwandan Republic in 1961, there was a certain permeability between the groups. Marriage or social ascension could bring a family to give up their attachment to the ‘Hutu’ group and adopt a ‘Tutsi’ identity; it also happened vice versa. Thus, primarily, the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi did not describe ethnic categories — Rwandans share one language, one religion and one culture — but referred to social identities or roles determined by professional occupation, socio-political status and family lineage (African Rights, 1995, 2-5).

This picture changed at the end of the 19th century. Under the influence of Europeans, arriving in the country first as explorers, later as colonialists, it came to an ontologization of the beforehand functional social categories. Germans and Belgians brought with them the semantic of race, a highly popular scientific idea at this time, they introduced it as the pattern of description for the Rwandan society and applied it as the framework of their policies, giving way to a political ethnization of Rwandan society (Prunier, 1995, 5-45). When the country gained its independence, in 1961, it proved that it had learned its lesson well.⁶ While, usually, the moment of

6 For a comprehensive analysis on how the semantic introduced by the colonialist changed the reality of the Rwandan society see Marx, 1997.

independence of a former colony is represented as the liberation of the indigenous population from foreign domination, in Rwanda, it appeared — in consequence of the strategies played by the Belgian colonial power in retreat (Prunier, 1995, 44) — as the republican liberation of the ‘Hutu’-majority from the monarchic and unjust domination of the ‘Tutsi’-minority. While the eruption of an ethnic semantic is an element not uncommon in liberation movements, in Rwanda it took on a somewhat perverse form. Usually, this semantic is employed to strengthen the idea of national unity of the indigenous population, it is used to intensify the distinction between ‘us’ and ›the rest of the world‹ (Nassehi, 1990, 274). But in Rwanda, it had a contrary effect. It confirmed, once and for all, the distinction between ‘Hutu’ and ‘Tutsi’ as the basic principle of political communication and action. In the Rwandan Republics⁷ coming into live after the independence, political power was almost exclusively represented by members of the ‘Hutu’-group. A system of quota was enforced to secure a proportional representation (with regard to the population in total) of the two groups in public organisations and institutions, most importantly in civil services and in the education system.

II.2. Radicalization of Politics and Civil War

The first major violent confrontations between ‘Tutsi’ and ‘Hutu’ occurred between 1959 and 1962, during the so-called November Revolution, the event that entered Rwandan history as the moment of political emancipation of the majority-‘Hutu’. 20,000 ‘Tutsi’ are estimated to have been killed during this period, more than 220,000 fled to neighboring and some of them later to Western countries, creating a community of diaspora Rwandans, for most of whom exile lasted longer than 30 years. In 1963, the country witnessed a first

7 In the literature, it is distinguished between the First Republic under Grégoire

wave of massacres; the number of people killed then ranges between 14,000 and 20,000 (Marx, 1997, 159-160). This renewed outbreak of violence intensified the 'Tutsi'-exodus, and according to the UNHCR, in 1964, 336,000 Rwandans lived in the neighboring countries of Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire.⁸ It is estimated that, due to population growth, by the early 1990s, the number had reached 600-700,000 (Prunier, 1995, 63).

Many Rwandan refugees did hold on to the idea that they would return to their country, one day, and beginning in the late 1970s, political organisations emerged pursuing this goal. In 1987, an army, the Rwandese Patriotic Front, is created and put under the command of General Fred Rwigema.⁹ It should be emphasized that, although the RPF originated from the community of exiled 'Tutsi', it was an opposition- rather than a 'Tutsi'-movement. From its early days, oppositional 'Hutu', either exiled themselves or still in the country, aligned with the RPF. On October 1, 1990, the RPF invades the country with the goal to overthrow the regime of President Juvénal Habyarimana, who, at this moment found himself already in a difficult political position. Due to internal conflicts and economic difficulties, his one-party regime had become fragile, in the course of the late 1980s, internal opposition developed and gained in influence. Six days before the RPF attacked the country and initiated a civil war, Habyarimana, in an attempt to save his power, had convened a commission charged with the elaboration of a constitutional reform in order to introduce a multiparty system (Prunier, 1995, 74-92; Marx, 1997, 161-162).

The civil war lasts three years, during which the President not only struggles to defeat the RPF but also to accomplish the constitutional reform. The RPF attack acted as catalyst on the already tense situation. The political landscape

Kayibanda (1961-73) and the Second one under Juvénal Habyarimana (1978-90).

8 *UNHCR Banyarwanda Refugee Census (1964)*, quoted in Prunier, 1995, 62.

9 The foundation of this military force was possible because a considerable number

of the country was drifting apart. In late 1990 and early 1991, four independent parties are created, undermining the single-party system which, at this moment, is still officially protected by Article seven of the 1978 Constitution (Prunier, 1995, 121-126). In the months to come, the formation of new political movements continued. This pluralization of the political arena was accompanied by an escalation of political conflicts. The civil war was grist to the mills of extremist movements. In March 1992, a radical 'Hutu' racist party, the Coalition pour la Défense de la République (CDR), working even on the right of the government party, is created as the now eleventh independent party in the country. One year later, from the political circle of this latest offspring of "democracy" the journalists are recruited who should run Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLMC), the radio station that became known during the genocide as the »vampire radio« calling for »Tutsi-blood« (Prunier, 1995, 128-129). Already in this civil war period, mass killings and assassinations of non-combatant members of the 'Tutsi' population and of moderate 'Hutu' occurred, echoing the growing influence of extremists in the political life and foreshadowing the events to come.¹⁰

On August 4, 1993, the Arusha peace agreement, named after the Tanzanian city hosting the negotiations, was signed in order to end the war after three years of fighting and more than one year of negotiations.¹¹ The agreement decreed the formation of a transitional multiparty government with

of exiled 'Tutsi' where military trained since they had served in the Ugandan army.

10 About 300 members of the 'Tutsi' group were killed, on March 3, 1992, in the region of Bugesera, after *Radio Rwanda* broadcasted report according to which the advancing RPF planned the elimination of the 'Hutu'-elite. On August 20, 1992, oppositional 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' are killed in Kibuye. On February 7 and 8, 1993, massacres of 'Tutsi' occurred in the Northwest of the country, which are responded to by the RPF with an retaliatory attack in the prefectures of Ruhengeri and Byumba (Marx, 1997, 164-165).

11 The final agreement has been preceded by a series of three accords: (1) July 1992, a cease fire accord between the Rwandan government and the RPF; (2) August 1992, an accord defining the constitutional foundations of the future Rwandan state; (3) January 1993, an accord decreeing the formation of a transitional government with participation of

participation of the RPF until the end of 1993. In December, by resolution 872, the U.N. Security Council deployed a peacekeeping mission of 2,700 troops, to the country in order to support the transition process.¹² But the implementation of the Arusha accord did not come off the ground. On December 28, 1993, RPF politicians symbolically enter the parliamentary building, however, the formation of a regular government fails; the only person that is formally sworn into office is the old and new President, Juvénal Habyarimana, on whom international pressure is increasing demanding him to undertake serious steps towards a stabilization of his country.

II.3. The Genocide

The assassination of President Habyarimana on April 6, 1994, the exact circumstances of which have never been entirely illuminated¹³, generated an escalation of violence in the country. The bloodshed began in the capital of Kigali, and its first victims were carefully selected. Among them were the

the RPF (Marx, 1997, 164-165).

12 The UNAMIR (United Nation Assistance Mission for Rwanda) force was commissioned »(a) To contribute to the security of the city of Kigali [...]; (b) To monitor observance of the cease-fire agreement [...]; (c) To monitor the security situation during the final period of the transitional government's mandate, leading up to the elections; (d) To assist with mine clearance, primarily through training programmes; (e) To investigate at the request of the parties or on its own initiative instances of alleged non-compliance with the provisions of the Arusha Peace Agreement relating to the integration of the armed forces, and pursue any such instances with the parties responsible and report thereon as appropriate to the Secretary-General; (f) To monitor the process of repatriation of Rwandese refugees and resettlement of displaced persons to verify that it is carried out in a safe and orderly manner; (g) To assist in the coordination of humanitarian assistance activities in conjunction with relief operations; (h) To investigate and report on incidents regarding the activities of the gendarmerie and police« (Council, October 5, 1993, 2).

13 The issue had been the object of many and sometimes wild speculations. What led to major confusions was the fact that the men who fired the missile on the plane have been white, which led some commentators to conclude that it had been agents of the former colonial power Belgium who were behind the assassination. Another, and a more plausible theory, claims that these men were mercenaries acting on behalf of political forces in the country that tried to prevent a democratization of the country.

Prime Minister in office, Agathe Uwilingiyimana; the president of the constitutional court, Joseph Kavaruganda; leaders of opposition parties like Landwald Ndasingwa (and his Canadian wife), leader of the democratic wing of the Parti Libéral, or Frédéric Nzamurambaho, chef of the Parti Social Démocrate; furthermore, known human rights activists like the businessman Charles Shamukiga or the journalist André Kamweya; as well as priests and clergymen at the Christus Center in Kigali who had publicly demanded a democratization of the country (Prunier, 1995, 230). These first acts of violence did not target ‘Tutsi’, but were selective assassinations of persons publicly known as being liberal and in opposition to the government in power. Most of them were belonged to the group of the ‘Hutu’. The execution commandos in the capital were headed by the Presidential Guard, 1,500 armed men who managed to eliminate all ›priority targets‹ in the capital within thirty six hours.

In the countryside, most of the victims died in large- or medium-scale massacres, organized everywhere in cooperation of the local or regional administration, the militia and the army. The weapon usually used was the machete, an agricultural tool of 45 to 65 centimeters with a wooden grip and a blunt metal blade; several hits are necessary to kill an adult man with this device. But contrary to the western representation of the Rwandan genocide as ‘wild slaughter’ and ‘unrestrained carnage’, the killing in the east African country was a highly organized process. It was usually coordinated by high ranking regional and local government officials who commanded the local police (gendarmerie) and the militia (interahamwe), instructed peasants to participate in the killings and were authorized to call for help upon the Rwandan army in situations where the resistance of the targets could not be

broken.¹⁴

On April 8, 1994, two days after the genocidal killings had started, the RPF intervened in the northeastern prefecture of Byumba, with the declared goal of stopping the killings and — once more — overthrowing a violent government. In the following weeks, the army advances towards the interior of the country, seizing the capital Kigali on July 4, and the prefectures of Butare in the south and Ruhengeri and Gisenyi in the northwest during the same month.

The Rwandan genocide was record-breaking in more than one sense. Not only did it produce a hallucinating number of people killed with relatively simple means within a time horizon of only four months. It also created one of the most dramatic waves of refugees the world has ever seen. With regard to their motives, the refugees can be divided into two different categories. The first group consisted of persons targeted by the genocidal killings, mainly ‘Tutsi’, who tried to escape the aggression by searching more secure places within the country or by fleeing across the borders, especially to Burundi. The second, much larger wave of refugees appears as the RPF advances into the interior of the country. It is composed of ‘Hutu’ fearing acts of violent retribution. On April 28 and 29, 1994, a quarter of a million of people cross the border to Tanzania, the UNHCR speaks of the largest and fastest exodus ever reported. In Benaco, 18 kilometers from the Rwandan border, the biggest refugee camp in the world raises (see Marx, 1997, 167). The progress of the RPF in the northwest of the country leads to a second mass exodus in the second half of July; within four days, 1.2 million people cross the border into the east-Zairian region of Goma (Marx, 1997, 167). By the end of July, Rwanda had

14 Already in pre-colonial times, the Rwandan state developed a highly differentiated administrative system. The country was divided into eleven provinces (headed by a *préfet*), which were subdivided into communes (headed by a *bourgmestre*). Communes were divided into sectors (headed by a *conseiller*) and those again into cells (coordinated by a *responsable*), covering about ten family households (Jackson, s.a.).

not only lost almost ten percent of its population in genocidal killings, but another 60 percent of it were either refugees or displaced within the country.¹⁵

In summary, it can be said that the attentive observer watching to Rwanda in spring and summer 1994, would witness three concomitant (and interrelated) processes: First, the systematic killing of members of a minority group, mostly in large- and medium-scale massacres, as well as the assassination of oppositional politicians. Second, a civil-war type fight between an insurgent army and government troops. Third, a wave of people crossing the borders and trying to leave the country.

After this sketch of the Rwandan events, I will now turn to the U.S.-American reaction to the crisis in the east-African country.

15 Refugees and displaced persons were distributed as follows (United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1994):

<i>In Rwanda</i>	RPF area	905,000
	French "save area"	1,500,000
<i>In Neighboring Countries</i>	Tanzania	475,000
	Uganda	10,000
	Zaire	1,400,000

	Burundi	117,300
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III. With the Voter in Mind: An NIE Perspective on Crisis Interventions

The claims to intervene into a genocidal crisis, as they are brought forward by NGO officials or news media, refer to an idealist conception of the United Nations and their action, a perspective that emphasizes the role of the U.N.-organisation as a promoter of the interest of humanity and as a bulwark against national governments disrespecting those values. The United Nations are conceived as a late offspring of the Enlightenment, which had discovered the value of a human life and advanced the idea of the universality of human rights. They appear as an attempt to translate those philosophical ideas into the political realm. According to this perspective, the United Nations are the institutional expression of what is commonly called »the international community« that uses the organisation to emanate a kind of »general will« on a global level.

The claim for international intervention into a genocidal crisis, as it is brought forward by NGO officials and news media and as it is suggested by moral intuition, echoes this idealist conception of the United Nations. It evokes the »responsibility« of the »international community« towards its »fellow humans«. The United Nations, as the incarnation of this community, is called upon to execute its will. In this perspective, the failure to set up an

intervention mission and to stop a genocide in progress appears as a dysfunctionality.

As important this idealist perspective on the United Nations and its interventions into violent crises is as a regulative idea and as a prescriptive principle, as impotent it is as an analytical tool. Because »the international community« as a somehow homogeneous group emanating a common will in the bodies of the United Nations is a fiction. Yet, how can be conceive differently of these dynamics? To approach an answer to this question, I will, in the first section of this chapter, introduce an NIE perspective on politics. In the second section, I will then explore the particularities of international relations. Based on these considerations, I will then attempt, in the third section, to conceptually reconstruct decision-making on international crisis interventions.

III.1. An NIE perspective on politics

Maybe the most important contribution of liberal economic theory since Adam Smith has been to demonstrate that social welfare can emerge from the exchange between individuals who act upon purely selfish motives (Smith, Glahe, c1978, book IV, chapter 2). This perspective, however, has also stimulated inquiries into the conditions and limits of such socially beneficial exchanges. It is here that the neoclassical theory of the political finds its roots: in this perspective, politics essentially responds to the problem that not always the socially optimal solution will be achieved by individual and selfishly motivated exchanges. In those instances, cooperation is needed to approach the social optimum; public goods provision and prisoners' dilemma-constellations are the examples most in point in this regard. Accordingly, in the neoclassical perspective facilitating socially beneficial cooperation is the central task and the basic justification for the existence of political institutions

(Mueller, 2003, 9-14).

Initially, neoclassical thinking about politics has been elaborated with the state and its institutions as major reference point. In its most simple version the state is conceived as a contract between a ruler and her constituents. At the core of this contract is the trade of certain public goods, most importantly protection,¹⁶ provided by the ruler in exchange for revenue provided by the constituents in the form of (compulsory) contributions. By virtue of this contract, the use of force is monopolised by the ruler, i.e. the institutions of the state, which become the supreme authority for the constituents. This contract increases social welfare as obtaining the public goods in question would be impossible or far more costly if provided by each individual herself. In its activities the ruler is constraint by the constituents ability to leave the respective constituency («exit») or to depose the current ruler and substitute her with a rival («voice»). Within this concept, the main task of the state is to develop and enforce a constitution which defines the property rights of the constituents. In this context, property rights are broadly defined, including not only the ownership of physical objects, but – in the tradition of Locke – also basic human rights such as the right to live, the right to self-determination or the right to nationhood (Richter, 2005, 89-90, 473, 475).

Constitutionally democratic states can be conceived of as relational principal-agent contracts with the constituents, i.e. the citizens, being the principal and the voted representatives the agent. As in any principal-agent constellation, commitment problems are at the core of the relationship: how can be guaranteed that the elected politicians (agents) do not *ex post* deviated from what has been *ex ante* agreed upon with the voters (principals) through the election process? Institutional arrangements play a decisive role in lending

¹⁶ Protection or security is always at the core of the neoclassical argument about the origins of the state. Depending on the author, other public goods may come into play; in North conception, for example, justice is the second public good provided by the ruler (North, 1981, 23).

credibility to commitments made by political institutions. Among those arrangements are not only formal institutions such as a codex of written fundamental rights (*Grundrechtekatalog*), but also informal institutions that are part, for example, of the organisational culture of certain government bodies (Richter, 2005, 473@476-473@482).

The process of political decision-making itself can be understood as a series of transactions with the objective to change (part of) the institutional framework of a given social relationship (Richter, 2005, 473@486). In a constitutional democracy, competition between political parties is a driving force of this process. Accordingly, within the framework of NIE, the political process is commonly conceived in analogy to the market place:

»Competition subjects politicians and political parties to the filter of the polling place, much as competitions subjects managers to the filter of the market place.« (Demsetz, 1982, 68)

Yet, differently from the realm of economics, where competition for economic advantages takes place on the basis of secure property rights, political competition is a struggle for an authority that includes the power to change these same property rights. Moreover, political competition is typically monopolistic competition. This means that strategic thinking and searching for alliances dominates the actions of political agents. Depending on the overall context, this might lead to frequent changes in the governing constellations as well as the institutional framework, as for example in Italy, or to apparent political stability which is achieved, as for example in Germany, at the price of economic inefficiency (Richter, 2005, 473@482-473@485).

Having explored the basic concepts of politics within a single state, let us now turn to the sphere of international relations.

III.2. International relations in an NIE framework

The basic concepts of NIE to describe politics in the international sphere do not vary much from the ones introduced to describe politics in a single state. There is, however, one major difference which lies in the nature of the subject: different from the nation state, where the ruler is the supreme authority, international relations do not know such a superior power which would guarantee an order. As each state is sovereign, it is an anarchical and self-organising systems with no supreme institution to enforce agreements. More than in contractual relationships in the context of the nation state, the efficiency of agreements depends on the ability to safeguard *ex ante* against opportunism *ex post* (Richter, 2005, 473@486-473@487). This can be done by *ex ante* safeguarding techniques as elaborated by Kronman (Kronman, 1985)¹⁷ or by a rational optimisation of membership and voting rules within international organisations with regard to the desired outcome (Koremenos, Lipson,Snidal, 2001).

Within this conceptual framework, the United Nations Organisation does not appear as the arbiter of the »interest of humanity«, as it does in the idealist perspective and in the discourses based on this view. Instead it must be conceived as an organisation composed of sovereign states whose operational principle is the strategic interplay between the interests brought forward by the member countries. Deliberation and decision-making processes — and this is true for the United Nations as it is for the European Union and any other organisation assembling several states — do not take place in an open space. They are necessarily structurally coupled to political processes in the member countries. In many cases, this interdependency is part of the organisation's constitution wherever the latter explicitly prescribes a political ratification of constitutional or even operational decisions on the national level. The U.N. Charter, for example, demands that any commitment of

17 Kronman describes four of those safeguarding techniques: hostage taking,

military troops to U.N. missions

»shall be subject to ratification by the signatory states in accordance with their respective constitutional processes.«

(United Nations Organisation, 1948, ch. VII, art. 43, sec. III)

In consequence, the failure to meet a goal formulated in the U.N.-Charter or in one of the numerous conventions – as it occurred in the Rwandan case – is not a dysfunctionality in the proper sense of the word, but, on the contrary, the direct outcome of the functional principles of the organisation.

The U.N. is thus faced with a constitutional dilemma which is at the origin of the organisation's inability to meet its goals: being the only voluntary organisation comprising nearly all recognised states on this planet, the U.N. is, on the one hand, the only political organisation which could legitimately act on a global level. Yet, on the other hand, decision making within this organisation responds not primarily to its founding judicial principles, but is dependent upon the actions of its member states.

Against the background of this general considerations, let us explore in the following how this structure affects decision making on crisis interventions.

III.3. A NIE approach to international crisis interventions

Genocides are destructive processes striking at the spiritual and physical foundations of a society. Moreover, genocides can destabilize entire regions, not only because of the political disruption in the country, but also because they generate waves of refugees that create burdens to third-party countries. Therefore, from the perspective of regional or global social welfare, actions to prevent or stop genocide are always desirable not only to the threatened population in the country but also to third parties outside of it.

Once an intervention is launched, its (beneficial) effects can be enjoyed by

collaterals, hands tying and union building (Kronman, 1985, 12-21).

everyone, exclusion being technically impossible. Moreover, the results of the intervention – in general non-violent regional stability and the economic and political options it provides – can be enjoyed by an infinite number of people. Expressed in terms of economic theory, the outcome of a U.N. authorized and coordinated intervention into a genocidal crisis can be conceived as a collective good.¹⁸ It has to be emphasised, however, that the good is not the intervention itself but the outcome it generates.¹⁹ The intervention has to be conceived of as the costs of obtaining the collective good.

For a long time, sociological group theory as well as economic theory has assumed that the provision of collective goods occurs in an almost natural way, by rational agents noticing that in acting together they can not only save costs but realise gains that never could be achieved in acting alone; collective water supply systems and police corps as well as labor unions, political parties and lobbying organisations were among the classical examples for this type of goods. It was the American economist Mancur Olson who, in its seminal work *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965) (Olson, 1965), challenged this hypothesis. Why, he asked, if once a collective good is provided and no one can be excluded from its consumption, should anyone contribute to its provision in the first place? Everybody could wait for others to provide the good and then freeride on their efforts. Olson's favorite example were labor unions which negotiate wage increases that become effective for all workers of an industry, regardless of their membership in the union.

Olson emphasized that in deciding whether a collective good will be provided or not, the decisive unit is not the collective, but – as in the provision of

18 According to neoclassical economic theory, non-excludability and non-rivalry in consumption are the standard criteria for a collective good (see for example Cornes, Sandler, 1996).

19 It goes without saying that there are always profiteers of the mass killings. To them the intervention will appear rather as a »bad«, as a cost imposed upon their behavior, a negative externality.

private goods – the individual. He pointed out that it does not suffice that everyone in the collective gains somehow from the provision of the collective good, but that it must be rational for an individual member to invest in the provision. Olson shows that, rather than being »the natural thing to happen«, the production of collective goods must be considered as the exceptional case, since usually organisations and associations will have to invent an institutional structure furnishing incentives to engage in the production of the good (cf. Olson, 1965, 22-36).

Olson suggests, and this is the major insight of his work, that the problem of collective goods provision stems from the fact that, although everyone profits from a collective good, everyone profits to a different degree. For example, although all property owners are better off with a property tax rebate, the benefit is more significant to owners of large fortunes than it is to owners of only modest properties. Olson shows that the fraction an individual member of the group holds in the expected group gain in relation to the cost of its provision will determine whether or not, and if yes to which extent, an individual player will engage in the production of the good (Olson, 1965, 23-24).

While traditional theories of group behavior focus exclusively on the size of the overall group gain, Olson's work emphasizes that the decisive factor is the size of the fraction of that gain going to an individual group member. The larger and the more homogeneous the group, the more trivial that fraction tends to be, which is why the production of collective goods is difficult in those cases. Although in small groups it is more likely that the provision of a collective good can be realised, another difficulty occurs. There might be players holding fractions large enough to invest in the production of a certain amount of the collective good, regardless of what her fellow group members are doing. In those cases it is likely that the good will be provided only by the member(s) holding large fractions of the group gain, although the outcome for

the group could be increased if members with smaller fractions also made their contribution. Small groups therefore tend to a suboptimal provision of collective goods.²⁰

Olson remarks that a more detailed analysis of small group behavior of the kind just outlined »could help to explain the apparent tendency for large countries to bear disproportionate shares of the burdens of multinational organisations, like the United Nations and NATO, and could help to explain some of the popularity of neutralism among smaller countries« (Olson, 1965, 36). In this vein, I will in the following use his model to explore decision-making on international crisis interventions.

Against the background of Olson's conception, we have to reformulate once more the problem of U.N. authorised international interventions into genocidal crises. The question is no longer, how the international decision-making body, such as the U.N. Security Council decides upon the issue; instead the focus shifts to individual member states, especially to the most powerful ones. To understand, why the U.N. decides to intervene in a genocidal crisis, we have to understand how the most powerful member countries in the Security Council come to a decision on this issue. In the historical context of 1994, this most powerful member was indisputable the United States.

Rational politicians in this country will decide upon the intervention considering the ratio between its costs and the expected gains. They will assess those parameters from a domestic perspective. This means that relevant to their decision-making are only those costs and gains which occur to their constituents and in consequence to themselves. The fate of the people targeted by the genocide or other third-party agents play a role only in so far as they affect the domestic constituency.

²⁰ Olson, 1965, 27-29. He calls this dynamic a »*systematic tendency for 'exploitation' of the great by the small*» (Olson, 1965, 29, italics in the original).

From the perspective of a single government, the economic costs of the intervention are the efforts that have to be undertaken and the resources that have to be employed to contribute to the U.N. mission. Usually, the size of this contribution will be chosen voluntarily. Only for permanent members of the Security Council, the financial constitution of the United Nations stipulates mandatory shares; for the United States, for example, the obligatory contribution is fixed in mid-term at 31.7 percent of all peacekeeping costs.

The economic gains from the intervention are the prevention of damage to the interest of domestic constituents, be it the damage to their capital or their lives. This negative formulation (which is due to the destructive character of the genocidal process and the restorative intention of the intervention) points to the fact that the size of the possible gain, depends upon the involvement of the domestic constituency in the conflict country prior to the genocide. As it is outlined by Olson, a government assessing those costs and gains would promote the establishment of an intervention force in the Security Council, if its expected individual gain from the operation were large enough to exceed the expenditures necessary to set it up the mission; it then would, if it should become necessary, carry the financial burden alone.

But things are not this simple, since a government operating under the rules of a representative democratic political regime cannot confine its considerations to the economic profits or losses of an intervention. Its main interest will be in the effects of these economic parameters in the political realm. A government will explore which political gains and losses – in terms of votes secured/won or votes lost – the intervention might create. Three factors are decisive in determining how the economic parameters are translated into the political sphere.

The first factor is the political opportunity costs of a government's participation in the international intervention. The more intensely a government becomes involved in dealing with the genocidal conflict, the less

resources – attention, money, time – are available to deal with other societal or political issues and problems that might seem important to its constituency. This neglect might lead to a loss of votes in those parts of the constituency holding significant stakes in the neglected policy field.

The second important factor which affects the pure economic reasoning is the importance of policy commitments which have been made prior to the genocidal crisis. Three different categories might be relevant. The first category comprises commitments that have been made with regard to the country in which now the crisis occurs, for example an openly expressed alliance with the government or with oppositional forces, but also a threat to intervene if certain conditions in a country prevail. A second category are commitments concerning general foreign policy strategies, for example a commitment to neutrality or isolationism. The third one is associated to the opportunity costs of the intervention. It consists of commitments concerning actions in other policy fields that might be endangered by an intense involvement in the foreign crisis. In a representative democratic system, the commitment to certain policy strategies is the basis upon which a government comes into power. Faithfulness or unfaithfulness to commitments of the first and second category primarily affect the credibility of the government, for commitments of the third category not only general credibility but also the votes of constituents holding stakes in the policy field the commitment had been made to are at stake. The importance of antecedent policy commitments in deciding whether or not to support an intervention mission should not be underestimated. Genocides, as the ones occurred in Rwanda and ex-Yugoslavia, demand quick responses. There is no time for broad societal debates or convincing the constituency of one strategy or another. That is why governments generally will be inclined to deduct their position from historic facts, i.e. to stick to political guidelines, strategies or principles already formulated.

The third factor acting upon the pure economic parameters of the decision is the degree of public awareness of the genocidal crisis. It was the U.S.-American political scientist Elmar Schattenschneider who pointed out that the outcome of a political conflict is influenced by the degree to which the conflict is socialised (Schattenschneider, 1960; see also Miller, 1993). The less attention the genocidal conflict gets as an issue in the domestic public, the less significant will be the political costs or gains that might arise from an intervention into the conflict. Politicians are free to decide in order to satisfy certain particular interest but also free not to decide at all. But as soon as the domestic public becomes aware of the conflict, politicians will politically gain or lose by acting or not acting, the stake rises proportionally to the increase of public attention.

Yet, awareness to the genocidal crisis only evolves once the genocide has begun and enters the domestic agenda. Contrary to the other parameters of decision-making introduced so far, the scope of this factor can hardly be assessed in advance. Moreover, public awareness is a manipulable factor. By strategically distributing information, public attention can be directed and attentiveness increased; by strategically withholding information, it might be possible to prevent the development of public awareness and the formation of an »issue«. Government agents as well as the political opposition or civil society movements can take advantage of this manipulability in order to pursue their organisational goals. In this sense, the genocide enters the domestic political arena as »political issue« as any other. But public awareness is not only a manipulable variable, but also a function of time, since public attentiveness cannot be sustained over extended periods. As important as an issue might appear in the first place, it will undergo a cycle in which after having reached a peak level, attention will fall and eventually come back to a (near) zero level (cf. Downs, 1972).

The implications of this analysis of the problem of intervention can be

summarised as follows: an international intervention into a genocidal crisis can be conceived of as the provision of a collective good; the organisational process of setting up a mission exhibits the typical problems of collective goods production in small groups which usually leads to a suboptimal outcome. A government of a U.N. member country represented in the Security Council and faced with the decision of whether or not to support an intervention mission will evaluate its expected political and economic costs and benefits. According to Mancur Olson's theory of small groups, a government will support the mission as soon as its individual gain from the operation exceeds the costs of setting up the intervention force, regardless of the size of the contribution of other member countries. The basic cost of the intervention is the individual countries contribution of financial and/or other resources to the U.N. mission. The size of the gain a country can expect primarily depends upon the economic and political involvement of constituents in the conflict country prior to the genocide. The more extensive this involvement had been and the more significant the interests of constituents in this country, the greater the incentive to the government to act in order to protect those interest (and to secure the associated votes). But the ratio of those basic costs and gains is affected by factors in the domestic political environment. Political opportunity costs and the threat of loosing the associated votes increase the overall costs of the intervention and reduce the expected net-profit of an intervention. Policy commitments made prior to the genocidal crisis, which usually reflect preferences of the constituency, might narrow the options a government can chose without losing credibility and the votes associated to actions in certain policy fields. Public awareness to the genocidal conflict magnifies the political consequences of the government's decision. It increases the probability of being punished by the voters for undertaking unpopular measures as well as the probability of being rewarded for a succeeded mission which has been supported by the constituency.

In the remainder of this thesis, I will adopt this perspective to explore the

belated intervention into the genocidal crisis in Rwanda in spring 1994. Since the analysis of the domestic policy positions of all U.N. member countries that were party to the decision-making would be far beyond the scope of this paper, I will confine myself to the study of the largest member country, the United States. In the following chapter four, I will explore the reaction in the United States to the events in Rwanda in spring 1994. Chapter five will then provide an interpretation of the events in the light of the theoretical model introduced in section III.3.

IV. A Show At No Risk: The U.S. and the Escalation of the Rwandan Conflict

The plane crash on April 6, 1994 and the subsequently fast-spreading killings demanded a quick response from all governments with some involvement in Rwanda. The U.S. government acted in three steps to the escalation of the Rwandan conflict: first, it evacuated U.S. nationals from the country; second, it engaged, in preventing a U.N. military intervention; in a third step, the U.S. government became engaged in providing humanitarian relief to refugees who had sought shelter in Rwanda's neighbouring countries. In the following I will trace these successive steps, starting with an overview of U.S. politics towards Rwanda prior to spring 1994.

IV.1. Guerillas in the Mist: The Pre-Genocidal Period

Prior to the genocide, the minuscule east African country of Rwanda was no issue to the U.S.-American public. It had a meaning only to a handful of Africa-specialists, to zoologist specialized in the study of primates and maybe to travel agents organizing off-mainstream safari trips. At the end of the 1980s, Hollywood had helped the region to some popularity, when Michael Apted's movie "Gorillas in the Mist" (1988), starring Sigourney Weaver,

draw attention to the fact that a rare, fascinating and endangered species of mountain gorillas lived on this spot on earth. Tourism had profited from this sudden interest of the West in the Rwandan highlands. But the curiosity was short lived and the country almost forgotten again by the mid-1990s. The involvement of the United Nations in the country following the signature of the Arusha peace-agreement brought Rwanda back to the foreign affairs pages of national newspapers, but reporting remained fragmentary, notes written for an already informed public or extremely vulgarized representations of the Rwandan conflicts. To somebody unfamiliar with the historical background of the events, the articles appearing in U.S.-American newspapers provided a diffuse image of just another African region the most outstanding characteristics of which seems to be its astounding natural beauty and its persistent violence. Headlines like »Seeking Gorillas Among Guerrillas«²¹, mirror this strange and eclectic image of Rwanda in the U.S. (and in the West in general), as well as articles reporting about the conflict as most of all a danger to the wildlife in the country:

»Rwandan combatants signed a peace accord today, ending nearly three years of civil war in their tiny central African nation. The conflict spilled into national park preserves, and troops apparently killed some of the rare mountain gorillas and nearly wiped out tourism, which had grown significantly after the movie ›Gorillas in the Mist‹.« (“Accord Ends 3-Year Civil War in Rwanda”, August 5, 1993)

But being uniformed and unaware of the political conflicts in Rwanda or even of the existence of this country was not only a state of mind of the U.S.-American public, but also of many of its foreign policy officials and bureaucrats. Pentagon staff officers are quoted to have been asking »Is it Hutu and Tutsi or Tutu and Hutsi?« when they learned about the assassination of the Rwandan president (quoted in Power, 2003). As the Belgian foreign minister remembers, the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, first took out a map to locate the east-African country, when Claes had come to discuss the

21 Hammer, July 19, 1993; this article appeared in the live-style section of the journal.

Rwandan issue with him. The tiny bit of expertise on Rwanda was concentrated in the least influential segments of the U.S.-American political system. Some low-ranking U.S. intelligence analysts were keenly aware of the hazardous situation in the east-African country. A CIA report of January 1993 warned of the likelihood of large-scale ethnic violence. A study of December 1993 indicated that 40 million tons of small arms had been transferred from Poland to Rwanda, a suspiciously huge quantity for a country implementing a peace accord (Organisation of African Unity, 2000, ch. 9). But these information were only another two reports among a vast number of intelligence news published daily, and did not provoke any action in U.S. government agencies. The probably best-informed American observer of the Rwandan events was the historian and human rights activist, Alison Des Forges, a board member of Human Rights Watch, who had tried to draw the attention of U.S. foreign policy officials to the events in the country – but without great success.

When, in fall 1993, the Security Council debated about setting up a peacekeeping force for Rwanda, the U.S. government was reluctant. As General Roméo Dallaire, the Canadian who would be in command of UNAMIR, expressed his believe that he would need 5,000 troops for his mission, U.S. officials declared that their government would not send troops to this country and was, furthermore, not willing to pay for a troop of 5,000. Reluctantly, Dallaire trimmed his finally written request to 2,500 (Power, 2003, 341). And on October 5, 1993, the Security Council authorized the UNAMIR mission with the vote of the United States.

IV.2. Getting Our People Out!: The Evacuation

The first reaction of the U.S. government to the outbreak of violence in Rwanda is the evacuation of U.S. nationals from the country. In a memorandum, dated April 6, 1994, Prudence Bushnell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs and State Department's number-two official for Africa matters, informs Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, of the assassination of the Rwandan and Burundian presidents. The memo points out that the Rwandan military is taking over control of several sites in the capital, and emphasizes that a spread of violence is likely (Bushnell, April 6, 1994). On April 12, President Clinton informs the Congress that he had ordered the evacuation of the approximately 240 U.S.-Americans living in the country. Due to the fighting around Kigali Airport, bringing the people out of country has to be organized by overland convoy (Clinton, 1994). The U.S. joins into the efforts of France and Belgium, which had the largest expatriate communities living in Rwanda and had been the first to undertake measures. On April 8, 1994, two days after the plane crash, 190 French paratroopers had landed as part of Operation Amaryllis, an evacuation mission. The next day, 250 Belgian soldiers had arrived with a similar assignment.²² Their mission was to evacuate all foreign nationals — not Rwandans — who wanted to leave, and both countries were eager to assure that the only function of the deployed troops was to protect their citizen from harm and that beyond this, they had no intention to play the policeman in the east-Africa (Riding, April 11, 1994, 12). With the evacuation order of the U.S.-American President, the French-Belgian operation was backed by 300 U.S. Marines, based in Bujumbura, Burundi. Yet, the American troops never entered the country but confined themselves to receive the escapees after they had crossed the border.

The evacuation convoys did not only take U.S.-Americans and other Westerners out of the country, but with them the stories of what they had

22 Prunier 1995, 234

witnessed prior to their rescue. The interviews with the evacuated published by U.S. newspapers opened a first window through which the dimension of the violence breaking out in Rwanda started to become visible. Their accounts transported the atmosphere of fear that had captured the country and the despair of the rescued about having left behind people — friends, employees, even family members — to fall victim to a secure death (Lorch, April 11, 1994). Most importantly, these reports gave an account of the genocidal nature of the violence. One article, headlined »Evacuation: American Evacuees Describe Horrors Faced by Rwandans«, cites an American official with the Centers for Disease Control, who »said members of the Tutsi ethnic group were among the worst hit in the first night of fighting.« (Lorch, April 11, 1994)

IV.3. Hands Off: U.S. Politics in the U.N. Security Council

From the beginning, the escalation of the Rwandan crisis had spill over effects to other countries. Spill over effects so severe that, before long, the “Rwandan case” had to be treated in the U.N. Security Council. The event that initiated this U.N. attention were attacks on Belgian members of UNAMIR occurring from the early hours of the genocide: Immediately after the plane crash, on April 6, 1994, the Rwandan military had disarmed the Belgian peacekeepers stationed at Kigali airport (Bushnell, April 6, 1994, 3). On April 7, the prime minister in office, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, was attacked and killed in her residence which was protected by ten Belgian UNAMIR soldiers. Apparently, the Belgian soldiers were unprepared for such an assault on their protégée. Faced with an infuriated crowd accompanied by the Presidential Guard, they were hesitant what to do — and eventually dropped their weapons. They were brought to a nearby military camp and killed (Prunier, 1995, 230). In what later became known as the “genocide

fax”, the Canadian commander of the UNAMIR force, General Roméo Dallaire had informed U.N. peacekeeping officials — Major General Maurice Baril, military adviser to Secretary General, and Kofi Annan, at the time Under Secretary General for peacekeeping operations — something like this was very likely to happen. He had informed his superiors that a breakout of violence was prepared in Rwanda the goal of which was to eliminate large numbers of Tutsi. The attacking Belgian peacekeepers was part of the plan, and should secure a pull out of the U.N. troops.

Belgian troops were to be provoked and if Belgians [sic!, TKB] soldiers resorted to force a number of them were to be killed and thus guarantee Belgian withdrawal from Rwanda. (Dallaire, January 11, 1994)

But Dallaire’s warnings were ignored by his superiors, and his plan to raid the arms caches stopped.

Without the killings of the U.N. peacekeepers, violence in Rwanda might have remained just another African conflict. But with the death of U.N. soldiers, it immediately attained a transnational dimension. The West had to violently realize that it was holding stakes in the Rwandan conflict. It had become impossible to ignore the events. During the first two days following the plane crash, Belgian representatives at the United Nations urged for the formation of an U.N. emergency intervention force (Prunier, 1995, 234). But since they could not obtain any decision, they unilaterally, without authorization of the Security Council, pulled out all of their 450 blue-beret soldiers, on April 14, arguing that their presence would be useless. The U.N. could not avoid decision any longer. The Security Council had to make clear its position in the matter. On April 15 and 16, the Council held official sessions to debate on the next steps in Rwanda. On April 21, it voted Resolution 912, reducing UNAMIR from 1,700 to 270. According to the resolution, the significantly reduced force was now mandated

»(a) To act as an intermediary between the parties in an attempt to secure their agreement to a cease-fire;(b) To assist in the

resumption of humanitarian relief operations to the extent feasible; and (c) To monitor and report on developments in Rwanda, including the safety and security of the civilians who sought refuge with UNAMIR.« (United Nations Security Council, April 21, 1994)

The decision was based on a report of the Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, dated April 20, 1994, which suggested that, after the escalation of Rwandan conflict, the U.N. force should be either substantially strengthened or reduced to a symbolic size. These extreme proposals were motivated by the acknowledgement of the fact that with the escalation of violence in the country, there was no peace left to keep. Maintaining a “peacekeeping” mission would therefore be a pointless undertaking. Either the U.N. members would have to engage in an effective operation to stop the violence — or they would have to admit their incapability to do so by practically pulling out their troops. Boutros-Ghali himself strongly favored the first of the alternatives, and with him the African and other (third world) members of the Security Council, but they were unable to win the necessary majority, and, most importantly, did not manage to convince the veto powers.²³

When the Belgian government had pulled out its troops, the Belgian foreign minister Willie Claes had asked Washington to cover his government’s decision. »We are pulling out«, he said, »but we don’t want to be seen to be doing it alone.« (quoted in Power, 2003, 367) With this request to join a support of a full U.N. withdrawal, Brussels jammed open doors in Washington. In a briefing cable to the diplomats in the U.S. Mission to the U.N. in New York, the State Department had laid out the U.S.-American policy guideline (United States. Department of State, April 15, 1994): The government expressed its

»[...] believes that there is insufficient justification to retain a

23 For further details on the U.N. proceedings in the Rwandan case, especially in relation to the U.N. *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, see Shabas, 1999, 459-462.

U.N. peacekeeping presence in Rwanda and that the international community must give highest priority to full, orderly withdrawal of all UNAMIR personnel as soon as possible.« (United States. Department of State, April 15, 1994, 2-3)

The language was plain and ruled out any doubts. State Department instructed its U.N. diplomats to make clear

»[...] that we will oppose any effort at this time to preserve a UNAMIR.« (United States. Department of State, April 15, 1994, 3)

»[...] Our opposition to retaining a UNAMIR presence in Rwanda is firm. It is based on our conviction that the Security Council has an obligation to ensure that peacekeeping operations are viable, that they are capable of fulfilling their mandate, and that U.N. peacekeeping personnel are not placed or retained, knowingly in an untenable situation.« (United States. Department of State, April 15, 1994, 5)

This position pronounced by the State Department was not a marginal opinion, but echoed beliefs widespread in the U.S.-American public. The same day the instructing cable had been transmitted to the U.S. mission at the U.N., the Republican leader of the U.S. Senate, Robert Dole, declared in an interview in the CBS television program Face the Nation:

I don't think we have any national interest here [in Rwanda, TKB]. I hope we don't get involved there. I don't think we will. The Americans are out. As far as I'm concerned in Rwanda, that ought to be the end of it. (quoted in Sciolino, April 15, 1994)

The refusal to maintain a UNAMIR force was justified by pointing out that the violence in the civil war torn country left no place for a peacekeeping mission in the country. U.S. officials insisted that a cessation of violence must be prior to any renewed involvement of U.N. troops. From the beginning, the expression of this conviction had been — carefully — accompanied by the suggestion of a mediating mission between the civil war parties. The same State Department policy guideline paper that so firmly insisted on the U.S.-American demand to withdraw all U.N. troops, also pointed out the usefulness of mediation efforts

»There may be a role for the U.N. to play in facilitating negotiations among the warring parties but that is a role for a representative of the Secretary General, not for UNAMIR. We are willing to support and encourage a political initiative by the Secretary General to promote reconciliation among the parties.«
(United States. Department of State, April 15, 1994, 6)

From the beginning, it was part of the U.S.-American policy strategy to urge for a regional solution of the conflict. When, in their perspective, the focus of the foreign activities should be on obtaining a ceasefire between the RPF and the Rwandan government, the priority candidate for mediating such an agreement was not the Secretary General, but the organisation of African Unity (OAU). A White House press release of April 22, 1994, that became notorious for being the only one in which a Western politician explicitly names high-ranking Rwandan officials responsible for the (genocidal) violence and calls them to end it, synthesizes the U.S.-American position on how foreign countries should contribute to a de-escalation of the Rwandan conflict

»We call on the Rwandan army and the Rwandan Patriotic Front to agree on an immediate ceasefire and return to negotiations called for and facilitated by the Government of Tanzania. We applaud the efforts of regional leaders who are actively engaged in the search for peace and call on the people of the region to support their quest. The United States is prepared to participate, as in the past, in renewed negotiation in the context of the Arusha Agreement of August 4, 1994.« (United States. White House. Office of the Press Secretary, April 22, 1994)

That the U.S. government gave up this uncompromising position and finally agreed to a U.N. resolution ordering only a significant reduction and not a complete withdrawal as requested in the policy guideline cable was a consequence of pressure from third world member countries in the Security Council, and of the efforts of U.N. representative Madeleine Albright to convince their superiors in Washington that the proposed position was untenable (Lewis, April 30, 1994). Nevertheless, the U.S.-American position highly influenced the rhetoric of the Security Council decision. Resolution 912 echoes the ideas synthesized in the White House press release when it

»[...]demands an immediate cessation of hostilities between the forces of the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front.« (United Nations Security Council, April 21, 1994, 2), mandates the reduced UNAMIR force »[t]o act as an intermediary between the parties in an attempt to secure their agreement to a cease-fire« (United Nations Security Council, April 21, 1994, 2) and »calls on the leaders of the region, especially the facilitator to the Arusha peace process, to persevere and intensify their efforts, in cooperation with OAU and the United Nations.« (United Nations Security Council, April 21, 1994, 3)

The decision to withdraw the peacekeeping forces did not remain the final word spoken on the Rwandan conflict. And again, it was a particular turn in the Rwandan events generating spill over effects to other countries that forced the Security Council to reconsider the issue. When in the first stage of the conflict, it were the bodies of ten killed blue-helmet soldiers that had necessitate a decision, by end of April 1993, it was a wave of refugees streaming into Rwanda's neighboring countries. As I have already outlined, the outbreak of violence generated two different fugitive movements, the first one of Rwandans fleeing the genocidal massacres, the second one of Rwandans fearing retributive violence on the part of the RPF. The situation culminated when, on April 28/29, 1994, due to the advance of the RPF, a record-breaking 250,000 Rwandan refugees crossed the Tanzanian border within twenty-four hours. Again the Rwandan conflict had, in an unignorable way, spilled over the national borders, creating burdens to third parties, spelling headlines for newspapers all over the world.²⁴ Again the violence had transformed observers into players, generated stakeholdership in the conflict in countries that, in the first place, had nothing to with it. A handful of

24 One factor that should not be underestimated is the fact that news media are a key catalyst in directing public attention. It must be kept in mind that television channels and newspapers are economic enterprises that have to face problems of costs and resources. Reporting from a UNHCR managed refugee camp is easier, less risky and less expensive than reporting from the inside of a country in violent conflict. This was one important

nonpermanent members of the Security Council pressed the major powers to send a new beefed-up force to Rwanda. The question had to be answered whether the Rwandan mission should be altered from a Chapter VI to a Chapter VII operation.

In the discussions, two proposals emerged. UNAMIR commander Dallaire demanded to reinforce his force by an additional 5,000 troops that would first secure Kigali and later fan outward to create safe havens for the Rwandans gathered in large numbers in churches, schools and hillsides all over the country. The U.S. was among the few countries that could facilitate a quick deployment of the reinforcement troops to the region. But to the senses of U.S. foreign policy strategists, Dallaire's project was too dangerous (because of heavy fighting in and around Kigali), too expensive, and because of that not very likely to incite material and personnel support of U.N. member countries. The counterproposal developed in the U.S. National Security Council envisaged another type of operation. Safe havens should be established not within the country, but at Rwanda's borders, imitating the strategy used in 1991 during Operation Provide Comfort for the Kurds of northern Iraq. On May 13, 1994, a cable was telegraphed as a negotiation guideline to the U.N. mission of the United States in New York, explaining the U.S. concerns about the project proposed by Dallaire, expressing a refusal to lift, in the given situation, heavy equipment and troops into Kigali, and proposing as an alternative the strategy just outlined (United States Department of State, May 13, 1994). Apparently, the proposal of the U.S. government was no response to the needs of the people most vulnerable to genocidal massacres were clustered together in churches, schools, hospitals or stadiums surrounded by the 'Hutu' militia or the military, and would not make it to the borders. And the cable is clear about the fact that the intention of this mission would not be to stop a genocide:

reason why news media so gratefully jumped on the record-breaking exodus.

»The mandate of this expanded UNAMIR force would be to establish safe zones along the Rwandan border for refugees and displaced persons and to provide security for the provision of the assistance by humanitarian agencies to those persons and security for the humanitarian assistance efforts.« (United States. Department of State, May 13, 1994, 5)

But as discussions wore on, the United States finally acceded to a version of Dallaire's plan. On May 17, 1994 the Security Council voted resolution 918 decreeing a reinforcement of UNAMIR to 5,500 troops. But the consequences of this new resolution were near to zero. The major powers in the Security Council were not inclined to make a move. At least, Vice President Al Gore committed the U.S. to provide armored support if African countries provided soldiers. But only few African countries stepped forward to offer troops. And when two days later the U.N. formally requested fifty armored personnel carriers (APCs) from the U.S. government, their delivery was delayed by squabbles about who would be going to pay for the provision of the vehicles and whether the latter would be subject to buying or leasing. In consequence, it was already mid-June, when the U.S. started to transport the vehicles, and they did not arrive in Rwanda until July (Power, 2003, 379-380; Shabas, 1999, 461).

Those debates about the appropriate military strategy for dealing with the Rwandan conflict were only one of two battles fought in the Security Council on the Rwandan case. Parallel to those discussions, a debate was going on about what would be the appropriate term to specify the Rwandan violence. The question was far from being trivial since if what was going on in the country was a genocide, the member countries of the Security Council would have been legally obliged to act, according to article 8 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

U.S. foreign policy officials were well aware of that. In a DOD discussion paper documenting a debate about the feasible options in response to the

Rwandan crisis, one paragraph proposes to call “for an international investigation of human rights abuses and possible violation of the genocide convention”. The comment noted underneath this proposal says:

»Be Careful. Legal at State was worried about this yesterday— Genocide finding could commit USG to ‘do something’.« (United States. Department of Defense, May 1, 1994, 1)

At the same time, the paper testifies how well informed the officials were about the nature of the conflict:

»The U.S. will continue to seek an embargo on Rwanda (i.e. weapons, arms ect.) we do not envision it will have a significant impact on the killings because machetes, knives and other hand implements have been the most common weapons.« (United States. Department of Defense, May 1, 1994, 3)

For many weeks, the U.S. administration opposed the use of the term genocide and forbade its officials to use it. And this opposition against formally acknowledging the fact that a genocide was under way in Rwanda highly influenced the language of the resolutions voted in the Security Council. Resolution 918 which had been voted on May 17, 1994 and decreed the reinforcement of UNAMIR did this without naming the violence in Rwanda genocide. It confines itself to a quote from the Genocide Convention when it recalls *»that the killing of members of an ethnic group with the intention of destroying such a group, in whole or in part, constitutes a crime punishable under international law*« (United Nations Security Council, May 17, 1994).

It was not until May 21, 1994, that State Department officials were authorized to state publicly that “acts of genocide have occurred” in Rwanda, and that U.S. delegations to international meetings were permitted to agree to resolutions referring to “acts of genocide” in Rwanda (United States. Department of State, May 21, 1994). But still then, the permission was basically restricted to the employment of those particular terms. The reluctance to state that, in general, the killings in Rwanda are genocide, remained (Power, 2003, 362-364).

In 8 June 1994, when already almost 800,000 people have been killed in Rwanda and the facts could no longer be concealed by diplomatic speech, the Security Council finally voted resolution 925 which noted »with the gravest concern the reports indicating that acts of genocide have occurred in Rwanda« (United Nations Security Council, June 8, 1994, 1). With this resolution, the U.N. body had obligated itself to action. In mid-June, the French government decided its plan to send troops in order to establish safe zones in the Southwest of the country. Again, the motive of this sudden and somehow surprising decision – the French government had entertained warm relationships with the Habyarimana government and delivered weapons to the country – was not the determination to stop a genocide (most of the people were already dead), but the growing concern of Paris about the advance of the RPF in the country and the fear to lose a French zone of influence to an Anglophone movement.²⁵ The following steps were a proof of the pace at which a determined government could move. On June 21, 1994, the Security Council voted resolution 929 authorizing Opération Turquoise. The French mission was designed to be a bridge-action until the new U.N. intervention force decreed 6 weeks before had arrived in the country.

IV.4. Restore Hope: The Humanitarian Mission

With the mass exodus occurring in late April 1994, Rwanda had become “a case” for international relief agencies. Under the auspices of the UNHCR, refugee camps had been set up in northern Burundi, western Tanzania, southwestern Uganda and eastern Zaire. In the following weeks, the UNHCR, non-governmental humanitarian relief organisations and different donor

25 Because during the exodus in the late 1960s, most refugees settled in Uganda, as most other states in the region an Anglophone country, and because later, the major base of the RPF was established there, English and not French had become the language of the RPF see Klinghoffer, 1998, 82; (Prunier, 1995, 285-291).

countries undertake efforts to provide shelter, food and medical care to the refugees; they construct water supply systems and fight a cholera epidemic. By August, as the first efforts of repatriation had failed, it became apparent, that this emergency intervention would not end after a couple of weeks. It silently transformed itself into a long-term engagement.²⁶

It was only in late July, almost a month after the French intervention Opération Turquoise had been launched, and after the RPF had declared, on July 17, 1994, the end of the civil war, that U.S. began to decisively engage in the relief operations. The agency in charge was the Office of Humanitarian and Refugee Affairs of the Department of Defense (DOD) and the main concern was with the ‘Hutu’ refugees in the UNHCR administrated camps in Rwanda’s neighboring countries. In the first place, the goal was to stabilize their situation, that means to secure food and water supply as well as the provision of medical care. By July 25, 1994, 300 metric tons of supplies had been delivered to the camps, mainly rice, grain and cooking oil, but also plastic sheeting, vehicles, medicines and other sort of medical gear. Principally, they came from other governments and private volunteer organisations. But the major difficulty was not the quantity of food available — according to DOD officials there was enough to feed the refugees — but its transport and proper distribution, as well as the supply of clean water

26 From the beginning, the situation in the camps was highly problematic. Especially in Zaire, they became the main base for the defeated Rwandan Armed Forces and members of the militia *interahamwe*, two organisations highly involved in carrying out the genocide. The life in the camps was strictly organized and controlled by those militia-men and soldiers. Tents in Goma for example were grouped by *secteur*, *commune* and *prefecture*, mirroring the administrative organisation of the country the refugees had just left. This situation created serious security problems for the refugees—especially as they belonged to the ‘Tutsi’ or were known as members of the political opposition—as well as difficult moral dilemmas for the relief workers (UNHCR, 2000, 246-247). After the RPF had overthrown the government in Kigali the ‘refugees’ who had been participating in the genocidal killings had little incentive to go back, even more so, after the U.N. had decreed, in November 1994, by resolution 955, brought into being the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. By November 1994, the problem of the politisation/militarisation of the camps had become so flagrant that major non-governmental relief organisations threatened to quit cooperation since the UNHCR was obviously without political control over the camps (Prunier, 1995, 313).

(United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1994, 4-5). The U.S. Army deployed five ARL ships with trucks in response to the shortage of vehicles, and U.S. personnel worked to enlarge the capacity of Goma (Zaire) airport that constituted the primary hub for support flights as long as the security situation in the Rwandan capital remained hazardous (United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1994, 11, 13-11, 14). In the refugee camps in Goma and Bukavu (Zaire), U.S.-American relief workers installed high-performance water filtration systems, provided by the San Francisco Fire Department. While the short term goal was the stabilization of the situation of the refugees, the long term objective was to prepare their repatriation. According to General John Sheehan, DOD responsible for the Rwanda operation, the most important task in late July was to encourage the refugees to go home. On July 25, 1994, following the example in Bosnia-Herzegovina, U.S. airplanes in cooperation with the UNHCR launched a series of airdrops of food supplies over Rwandan territory. The goal was to discourage people still on the run from streaming out of the country and into the camps (United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1994, 11, 15-11, 16).

On July 29, 1994, in support of the humanitarian relief operations, the Department of Defense deployed 2100 U.S. military personnel to the region as part of a Joint Task Force named Support Hope. Headquarters being at Entebbe (Uganda), the force ran logistical operations in Goma and Bukavu, (Zaire), Nairobi and Mombassa (Kenya), as well as in Kigali. With the situation in the capital stabilizing after the declared end of the civil war, the focal point for the coordination of the relief activities moved from the Zairian Goma to Kigali, at International airport of which U.S.-American troops sustained an 24-hour expanded air-logistics site that now became the hub for all relief flights in support of humanitarian operations. At the height of the operation, there were about 200 U.S. military personnel in Kigali, including a Civil-Military Operation Center, a large U.S. Air Force Tactical Airlift

Liaison and Control Element, other staff and logistical personnel, and a Military Police detachment for force protection of U.S. military personnel. The administration was eager to assure publicly that those troops would be deployed for the sole purpose of humanitarian relief, not for peacekeeping (United States. White House, July 29, 1994). Nevertheless, Congress expressed its disregard of the mission: From the \$320 million requested by the president, the U.S. Senate authorized only \$170 million and wrote into the legislation that all forces have to be withdrawn by October 1, 1994 unless congress specifically approved a longer stay (Power, 2003, 381). However, a review of peace operations' costs made in 1996 by the General Accounting Office reveals that spending in this year went up to \$261 million (United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1994, 17).

When UNAMIR II was finally set up, U.S. decisions remained consistent with the strategies announced. Adhering to the principle that supporting Rwanda's regional peers in their efforts to settle the conflict was to be preferred over a direct U.S.-American involvement, they never committed own personnel to the operation, but adopted the Ghanaian battalion (about 800 troops) in the new UNAMIR II force. Adoption meant that the U.S. government provided the Ghanaian troop, on a reimbursable basis (leasing or sale), with the equipment it used in the U.N. peacekeeping operation. By July 25, 1994, the Ghanaian battalion was the only one of the projected UNAMIR already in place; 50 APCs (Armored Personnel Carriers) and other equipment, had been provided (United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services, 1994, 17).

This chapter has shown that, despite the moral pressure that resulted from the mediatisation of the Rwandan genocide, the United States government was more than hesitant to become militarily involved in this African conflict. Until the end, the Clinton government avoided to make considerable financial contributions and especially to contribute U.S.-American military personal. In

the following chapter, I will trace the political reasons for the adoption of this hesitant strategy, based on the theoretical model developed in III.3.

V. Outlines of an Interpretation

In understanding those actions undertaken by the U.S. government when faced with the Rwandan genocide, two factors are decisive. First, the specific historic situation after the end of the Cold War and the conditions it created in the political system and the U.S. society. Second, certain general features of the U.S. American constitutional system. I will turn to those latter first, before examining the specific historic conditions.

It must be remarked, however, that the discussion provided in this chapter does not imply that given the constitutional and historic circumstances, the reaction of the United States government could not have been otherwise. History is contingent as choices are made by humans, and if, at one point in time, the road would have taken another turn, the world might have witnessed a different end of the Rwandan conflict.

V.1. Constitutional Obstacles

Already early political scientists have pointed to the fact that the principles of democratic governance are incompatible with the necessities of foreign policy making. »For my part«, declared the admirer of the U.S. constitution, Alexis

de Tocqueville, »I have no hesitation in saying that in the control of society's foreign affairs democratic governments do appear decidedly inferior to others.« (Tocqueville, 1959, 226) The principle argument states that, because of the principle of participation, democracies are dependent upon the wisdom of their citizens; while it can plausible assume that those citizens are competent in dealing with questions of domestic governance, considering the problems foreign affairs is beyond their capability (Tocqueville, 1959, 228). In his Second Treatise, John Locke makes a similar argument when he notes that foreign policy powers should always been associated with the executive (and not with the legislative) since a division of those two would invite »disorder and ruin« (Locke, 1987, 146-148).

This type of questioning of the wisdom of the popular masses and the discussions about the feasibility of »good« policy-making is known since antiquity and the validity of the arguments on both sides can be discussed ad infinitum. But there is another, namely a structural, difficulty of foreign policy-making in democracies which stems not from the participative but from the representative feature of this type of government and which is particularly prevalent in the political system of the United States. Contrary to the voting-list systems employed in several European countries, popular representation in the U.S. is organized around the rule »One district, one vote.« This means that the support of the constituents in the home district is the only way to be (re)elected as a member of Congress. Promoting the interests of one's electoral district is therefore the major goal of any candidate/representative and the central expectation of voters. Once in Congress, the strategies of the member will depend upon the standing she has in her district: If she has won the elections only with a slight margin, she will be propelled to spend more time engaging in his district, as if he had no serious opposition to face. The insecure members of Congress will seek for involvement in policy fields, and most importantly committee assignments, related to constituency interests, while only more secure members are free to

follow their own policy interests. This means that for a member of the legislative branch, the incentive for an involvement in foreign affairs is weak, since the instances where international issues affect an electoral district to such an extent that the constituents will demand of their representative to engage in this field, instead of dealing with domestic problems, are few. Among those cases are southern districts facing the problem of illegal immigration or districts hosting military bases or defense related industries. But even then, the representative is expected to advance the interest of her constituents, and not the interests of some people in a foreign country. Generally, in balance of power game among the branches, Congress can act as a promoter of a certain issue, raise public support for certain positions and even impose the policy preferences of its constituents against the once articulated by the Executive.²⁷ But in the case of foreign affairs decisions, this is not very likely to happen, since in many cases Congress will not have any specific position, which deprives it of its capacity to act as a counterpart against the presidency.

V.2. Opportunity Costs

Preference Changes: The early post-Cold War Period

The end of the Cold War, which brought the hope of freedom and even peace to many people in the world, brought a spiritual crisis to the U.S.-American democracy. For decades, the country had engaged as the »leader of the free world«, and over decades, in a slow but continuous process, the political system of the United States had changed in order to serve this goal. First, because the preeminence given to security and foreign policy issues had

27 See for example Mueller, 2003, 391-405 and Kieweit,McCubbins, 1988.

introduced substantial changes in the constitutional setting, leaving the President an almost imperial status in foreign policy, and especially in military actions. Second, because significant economic and political resources had been dedicated to secure and to strengthen the U.S.-American foreign policy position. With a yearly budget of \$250 billion, the United States entertained the largest military in the world; fighting the operation Desert Storm against Iraq, which is the fourth largest military worldwide, only demanded as much as twenty percent of the U.S. military capacity (Borosage, 1994).

While as long as the Cold War wore on, any criticisms of this development had been easily rejected by pointing to the imperative of serving national security interests, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the enormous domestic opportunity costs of the Cold War foreign policy strategy could no longer be concealed. Barbara Ehrenreich, a popular social scientist, describes this U.S.-American state of mind in the early 1990s:

»We began to see ourselves as a militarily overdeveloped superpower in an advanced stage of domestic decline – a heavily armed warrior living, Mad Max-style, in a dilapidated hovel. We could accomplish almost anything abroad, it seemed, but at home the young were undereducated, the infrastructure rusted and rotted, jobs were scarce, crime worsened, and beggars multiplied in the streets. [...] The Los Angeles riots in April 1991 showed what the price could be for the neglect of the urban poor. Even Hurricane Andrew joined a growing list of ‘wake-up calls’: The United States could mobilize a mighty military presence to beat back Iraqi forces in Kuwait, but it could respond only falteringly to a natural disaster on its own shores. We could house hundreds of thousands of American men and women in the Arabian desert but not in our own ruined cities.« (Ehrenreich, 1994, vii)

Polls document this dramatic change in foreign policy preference patterns: In the early Cold War period until 1960, the majority of U.S.-Americans unanimously considered foreign affairs, namely the threat of international communism, the most important problem facing the nation; thus, in 1951, 82

percent opposed reductions in defense spending after the end of the Korean War, and support for the use of U.S. forces abroad was high. This position was modified in after the 1960s and the Vietnam debacle perceptions of threat weakened and a greater plurality of societal perspectives on foreign and defense policy became possible, but the leading and pro-active role of the United States in the international arena remained a central topic (Nincic, Rose, Gorski, 1999, 181-182). After the end of the Cold War, this kind of internationalism has not simply been replaced by staunch isolationism. Alvin Richman analyses a series of polls executed between 1974 and 1994 to evaluate the public attitude towards international involvement (Richman, 1996). The data is represented using four dimensions: Global altruism (e.g. promoting human rights abroad), U.S. Global Interest (e.g. improving the Global Environment), Domestic Issues factor bearing on foreign policy (e.g. protecting the jobs of American workers, stemming the flow of illegal drugs into the U.S.), Military Security (e.g. use of U.S. troops abroad). The polls analyzed show that to the American public military security and the promotion of global interests of the United States are as important after the end of the Cold War as they were before. The inclination towards actions dealing with foreign policy problems with direct impact on domestic issues even rose above the 1980s levels. Only in the dimension of Global Altruism, the measures sharply declined. Particularly significant are the changes in attitudes towards the promotion of human rights abroad, the protection of weaker nations against aggression and towards actions to improve the living standards in the least developed countries.²⁸ Not isolationism, but sensibility

28 Richman, 1996, 307-308. His findings are based on a series of surveys executed between 1974 and 1994 by the Chicago Council of foreign relations. In the questionnaire, five questions are relating to the dimension of Global Altruism: 1. Goal of “combating world hunger”, in 1994 rated “very important” by 56 percent – slightly below the previous levels; 2. Goal of “promoting human rights abroad, in 1994 rated “very important” by 34 percent, nearly 10 percent below 1980s level; 3. Goal of “promoting democratic governments abroad”, in 1994 rated “very important” by 25 percent, – slightly below the previous levels; 4. Goal of “protecting weaker nationals against aggression, in 1994 rated “very important” by 24 percent, about 10 percent

for the domestic opportunity costs of international involvement is the key feature of the post-Cold War pattern of foreign policy preferences. People oppose international involvement when they believe that international challenges can be met only on the expense of domestic needs.

Policy Changes: Hostility Against International Peacekeeping

It had belonged to the rules of the Cold War power game that it was always possible to make the argument that the outcome of political or military conflicts in Asia, South-America or Africa would have impacts on the division of power in the international arena, and that an intervention in a foreign country might become necessary to secure one's own sphere of influence. Now, with the Cold War over, political or military interventions on behalf of others could no longer be justified domestically by pointing to the national interest. U.S.-Americans became more sensible as to why their sons and daughters should day in battles fought in a foreign country.²⁹

below 1980s levels; 5. Goal of "improving LDC living standards, in 1994 rated "very important" by 22 percent, about 15 percent below 1980s levels. Another survey asking for the reasons that would justify U.S. military actions has similar implications (quoted in Nincic, Rose, Gorski, 1999, 194).

29 A Harris Poll of February 1991 actually shows how support for U.S. ground combat in support of Kuwait declined with the level of casualties (quoted in Nincic, Nincic, 1995, 424).

Consequently, from the diverse foreign policy fields, it was in the attitude towards international peacekeeping where the impact of this change in preferences was most vitally to be felt.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Security Council had authorized eighteen peacekeeping missions, which was more than the total of operations launched in the 40 years since the end of World War II. 70,000 U.N. peacekeepers were posted in missions around the world. But the financial constitution of the United Nations stipulated that the United States had to carry 31.7 percent of the overall peacekeeping costs, money that had to be paid from the U.S. federal budget. In 1994, the year of the Rwandan genocide, the financial support to major peacekeeping missions reached an unprecedented peak of more than \$2,5 billion (United States. General Accounting Office, 1996). According to a polemic argument, American citizens were paying for missions in very often in countries they might have hardly ever heard of and the problems of which did not affect them. The missions enjoying some popular awareness at this time, Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti, did not serve as encouraging examples. The most extreme form of this critique was expressed by populist movements that demonized the United Nations and stigmatized foreign policy as »social work«. ³⁰ Therefore, in late 1993, Congress took serious measures to force the Clinton administration to work for a significant reduction of the U.N. peacekeeping costs – by reducing the number of missions as well as by reducing the U.S. shares in it. While in his address to the U.N. General Assembly, on September 27, 1993, President Clinton had promised that

»[...] within the next few weeks, the United States will be current in our peacekeeping bills. I have worked hard with the Congress to get this done.« (Dumbrell, 1997, 44)

the same Congress, two weeks later, released a bill unmistakably expressing its hostility against peacekeeping operations. The bill not only killed a proposed

30 One of the most popular proponents of this type of »America-first!« position was Pat Buchanan, republican candidate in the Presidential primary campaigns of 1992 (Dumbrell, 1997, 44).

\$175 million fund for unforeseen peacekeeping costs, but also withheld 10 percent of its regular contributions until Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali would have appointed an Inspector General to fight waste and corruption; in addition, it canceled the fourth of five special payments planned to eliminate existing arrears and told the administration to cut the United States share of new peacekeeping bills from 31.7 to 25 percent (Lewis, October 10, 1993). The passing of this bill significantly limited the discretionary leeway of the President. Not only was it that by “power of the purse” the Congress had effectively reduced the possibility of the President to commit U.S. resources to U.N. peacekeeping mission, the bill was also strong in its symbolic character. Its passing was a clear sign that costly U.S. involvement abroad was now rated low among the policy preferences of the American people.

The Pivotal Event: The Somalia Debacle

Although according to the polls introduced at the beginning of this chapter, support for peacekeeping missions eroded as soon as the Cold War was over, it was not simply this general change in preferences that led to Congress’ harsh decision in late October. The parliaments position was strongly influence by and event which, three weeks before, had traumatized the U.S. American public (Klinghoffer, 1998, 95)::

In 1992, against the background of a growing Congressional and media interest in the humanitarian catastrophe in Somalia, the Bush Administration began to consider initiating a U.N. relief operation in Somalia. On 25 November 1992, Bush told the NSC that he was determined “to do something about Somalia”. His plan was to launch an U.N. backed operation within a tight timetable so that at the day of the inauguration of his successor, Bill Clinton, 19 January 1993, the mission would by accomplished. Without

public announcement, he contacted U.N. Secretary Boutros Boutros-Ghali with the offer of US forces. The decision was made while the Congress was in recess. Congressional leaders were formally briefed and approved the decision of the President. The authorizing resolution passed the UN Security Council on 3 December. One day later, Bush addressed the nation and announced the deployment of 28.000 troops. In his speech, he emphasized that »the United States alone cannot right the world's wrongs«. Nevertheless »we also know that some crises in the world cannot be resolved without American involvement, that American action is often necessary as a catalyst for broader involvement of the community of nations« (United States, 1993, 2174-2175). From the beginning, a number of high-ranking foreign policy officials and military experts had been uneasy about the deployment which, to their senses, invoked the »Vietnam syndrome«, worries about US forces being sucked into a quagmire (Dumbrell, 1997, 197-200). Time showed that their concerns were justified.

Against the predictions of the leaving President Bush, the mission could not be accomplished until the date of his successor's inauguration. While from December 1992 till April 1993, the mission had provided a degree of safety for the relief work, and public support for the intervention remained high, the situation destabilized after the Security Council, in April 1994 had voted a »nation building² resolution on Somalia and taken over control of the operation. On 3 October 1993, three weeks before Congress voted the peacekeeping-bill, 18 US soldiers were killed in a Mogadishu firefight. A camera team happened to film the event, and, the same day, pictures of the dying »U.S.-boys« were shown in the prime time news. The dying of American soldiers during this mission provoked outrage among the US public and Congress; the President was accused for dangerously amateurish behavior. Under intense pressure, he announced the withdrawal of the troops. In a document titled *Explaining Somalia to the Congress*, the President sums

up the events with the phrase

»Ours was a gesture of a great nation, carried out by thousands of American citizens, both military and civilian.« (Clinton, 2000, »Explaining Somalia ...«, 146)

This heroic language violently points to the fact, that the Somalia mission could in no ways be justified by any genuine U.S.-American interest. The 18 soldiers did die for some diffuse and unspoken “higher task”. The Clinton administration had to carry the severe political consequences of this humanitarian mission it had not decreed itself. Relating to Rwanda, one U.S. official remembers:

»Anytime you mentioned peacekeeping in Africa, the crucifixes and garlic would come up on every door.« (Power, 2003, 340)

It was three days after the Mogadishu firefight that the first vote in the Security Council about the deployment of a peacekeeping force to Rwanda took place, and the newly attained strict position of the United States became visible immediately.

V.3. Commitments

Clinton’s Promise: Domestic Investment of the “Peace Dividend”

Already the vote for Bill Clinton, an unknown governor from the small state of Arkansas, at the Presidential elections in 1992 – the first presidential elections after the end of the Cold War – had mirrored the different

importance that U.S.-Americans attributed to foreign policy and defense issues in the »new world«. In sharp contrast to his competitor, President George W. Bush Sr., a political grand seigneur with decades of experience in national politics and a weakness for foreign policy issues, Clinton was the first U.S. president who had been born after World war one, he had never served in the military and, as a student, had even been involved in the anti-Vietnam War movement (Barret, 1997, 79). His inexperience in international affairs was not a secret. But all this had not been an impediment to his been elected the new President. Clinton had won the elections with a program whose ambitions were with domestic reforms. In his presidential campaign, he had promised to focus »like a laser beam« on the economy and other domestic issues (quoted in Barret, 1997, 80), and, given the grave societal, infrastructural and economic problems of the United States in early 1990s, it was this strong commitment to the domestic concerns of the U.S. that brought him into office.

A central *topos* in the rhetoric of the young Clinton administration was the idea of a post-Cold War “peace dividend” which would finance the planned reforms.³¹ In his campaign manifesto Clinton proclaimed:

We have a historic opportunity. The human and physical resources we once dedicated to winning the Cold War can now be rededicated to fulfilling unmet domestic needs.

And he pledged to transfer savings from defense »dollar for dollar« into »investments in the American economy« (Clinton, Gore, 1992, 75-76).

During his first weeks in office, Clinton called for \$170 billion new investments and tax incentives over four years, which were to be paid for by taxes (from high income groups) and, most importantly, by spending cuts

31 This rhetoric had been widely employed, although as soon as in 1993 studies written on demand of government agencies had indicated that not only this Cold War peace dividend is relatively small (compared to other post-World War II peace dividends), but that in addition the federal government’s fiscal deficit restricted the application of the dividend for increasing expenditures in public investment, since it demanded that at least a portion of the savings is directed to deficit reduction (see for example Mann, February

from the military. Over four years, defense spending should be decreased by \$88 billion from the Bush projections (Office of Management and Budget, February 17, 1993), so that by 1998 defense expenditures would be 40 percent lower than at their Cold War heights.

Facing Reality: In need of a Foreign Policy Strategy

But as often the case, those electoral promises did not survive in the cold breath of everyday politics. The defense spending cuts that were destined to pay for the necessary domestic investments encountered serious opposition, not only from military officials, but also from labor unions and representatives of congressional districts hosting military bases or plants of defense related industries. Up to 2 million job losses were projected.³² Moreover, the Clinton administration had to realize that abstention from foreign policy and especially from international security politics was not viable. The reasons for that were multiple. Pressure came from the international policy arena, since for decades the leading role of the United States had been one of its central variables and remained a major expectation among countries all around the world. But most of all, pressure came from within the United States itself. First, because with the Cold War being over, the physical involvement of U.S. government agencies did not stop at once. U.S. military and intelligence units were posted all over the world and decisions about their future had to be taken. And second, because, after a hope for durable peace had flamed up after the fall of the Berlin Wall, polls in the in the early 1990s showed that U.S.-Americans became, again,

1993).

³² Mann, February 1993, 21. A major problem was that cuts in defense spending sports disproportionately affected high-wage, high-skilled manufacturing jobs that the administration generally wanted to protect.

increasingly worried about national security,³³ since all over the world emerge what became known as »the new conflicts«.

Thus, the young Clinton administration faced the task to develop a medium-term foreign policy strategy that would satisfy U.S.-American security needs and would be as consistent as possible with the general policy principles the new democratic president stood for. The outcome was a kind of retrenched and economist Wilsonianism: a combination of selective engagement, modest democracy promotion and prioritization of foreign economic policy. In a speech given on September 13, 1993, at the Johns Hopkins University, the National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, explained the cornerstones of this new strategy (Lake, 2000, 20-27):

»The successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement – enlargement of the world’s free community of market democracies. [...] We must not allow this overarching goal to drive us into overreaching actions. To be successful, a strategy of enlargement must provide distinctions and set priorities.« (Lake, 2000, 22)

He enumerated the four central components to this strategy of enlargement: strengthening of the community of major market democracies; helping to foster and consolidate new democracies and market economies; countering the aggression of states hostile to democracy and markets; and pursuing a humanitarian agenda (Lake, 2000, 22). In this context, he did not disguise his belief that the focal points of U.S. foreign policy at this moment (Bosnia and Somalia) were ill chosen. Strengthening democracy in Northern America, Europe and Japan, consolidating and enlarging democracy and markets in key places, as well as addressing backlash states such as Iran and Iraq should be at the core of future U.S. foreign policy (Lake, 2000, 25). »I believe strongly«, he concluded, »that our foreign policies must marry principle and pragmatism. We should be principled about our purposes but pragmatic about our means.« (Lake, 2000, 26)

33 “Americans talk security”, May 18, 1993; quoted in Borosage, 1994, 65

This new agenda unambiguously focused on the economic aspects of international cooperation and left little room for peacekeeping or conflict resolution issues that affected economic interest only indirectly or in the very long term. In the newly formulated strategy, this gap was filled by attributing a strengthened role to the United Nations. In his 1993 address to the U.N. General Assembly, President Clinton assured the representatives that he did not plan to give in to isolationist tendencies in his country:

»[W]ith the Cold War over, I know many people ask whether the United States plans to retreat or to remain active in the world and, if active, to what end. Many people are asking that in our own country as well. Let me answer that question as clearly and plainly as I can. The United States intends to remain engaged and to lead. We cannot solve every problem, but we must and will serve as a fulcrum for change and a pivot point for peace.«
(Clinton, 2000, “Globalism and interdependence ...”, 16)

As the three main fields of prospective U.S. engagement he enumerated nonproliferation, conflict resolution and sustainable development (Clinton, 2000, “Globalism and interdependence...”, 17). He pronounced his belief in the importance of U.N. peacekeeping missions and tried to show that the latter were necessarily in the interest of the U.S.

»UN peacekeeping holds the promise to resolve many of this era’s conflicts. [...] Peacekeeping cannot be a substitute for our own national defense efforts, but it can strongly supplement them.« (Clinton, 2000, “Globalism and interdependence ...”, 18)

At the same time, Clinton admitted that U.S. contributions to those missions would not be without limit:

»If the American people are to say yes to U.N. peacekeeping, the United Nations must know when to say no.« (Clinton, 2000, “Globalism and interdependence ...”, 19)

Weak Commitments

But those commitments to U.N. peacekeeping and international conflict resolutions were weak, since they were not backed by public and

congressional opinion. Clinton's U.N. speech was held six days before the death of U.S. soldiers and almost a month before the Congress voted the peacekeeping bill – but the reluctance against those missions and the opposition to their costs were in the air since the early 1990s. Once, the Congress had passed the bill, there was no leeway left for president to contribute resources to such missions in discordance with popular opinion, even if he would have wanted to. It was clear that the major commitments of the Clinton government were to domestic needs and to the international promotion of the economic interests of the U.S.

A month into the genocide, the government issued a document which should institutionally cement the U.S.-American reluctance against international peacekeeping missions. The Presidential Decision Directive 25 (United States, May 3, 1994) was the product of more than one year of interagency discussions and became the formal expression of the new U.S. peacekeeping doctrine. The directive enumerates sixteen factors that policymakers had to consider when deciding whether or not to support peacekeeping activities. The first seven of them define criteria that have to be met if the U.S. was to vote in the Security Council on a U.N. peace-operation carried out by non-American soldiers. The first consists in the demand that the U.N. involvement should advance U.S. national interest and that a community of interest for the particular problem exists. Furthermore, it is stated that the condition for a peacekeeping operation is a ceasefire in place and the consent of the opposing parties, while for peace enforcement operations the threat to international peace and security has to be significant. In both cases, action is justified only when the consequences of inactivity are unacceptable to the international community. A further condition for action is that the financial and personal means to accomplish the mission are available (United States, Department of State, May 1994, 4). The directive notes that against the background of those factors, the U.S. government will not only decide about new operations but also scrutinize the existing ones when they come up for

renewal in the Security Council (United States. Department of State, May 1994, 4-5).

If the U.S. was to participate in a U.N. operation, six additional and even more stringent conditions had to be met: The participation advances U.S. interests and the risks to American personnel are acceptable. Personnel, funds and other resources are available. U.S. participation is necessary for the operation's success. Clear objectives and an endpoint for U.S. participation can be identified. Domestic and Congressional support exists or can be marshaled. Command and control arrangements with the U.N. are acceptable (United States. Department of State, May 1994, 5). A third additional catalog enumerates another three factors that will be applied if U.S. troops should participate in Chapter VII operation which are likely to involve combat: There exists a determination to commit sufficient forces to achieve clearly defined objectives, furthermore a plan to achieve those objectives decisively, and a commitment to reassess and adjust the size, composition and disposition of the U.S. forces to achieve the objectives (United States. Department of State, May 1994, 5).

The directive emphasizes the role of the United Nations as the primary international body with the authority to conduct peacekeeping operations, but it also stresses the importance of regional organisations. It announces that the U.S. will continue to support efforts to improve regional organisations' peacekeeping capabilities and, under certain conditions, support the request of such organisations and groups to carry out peacekeeping missions endorsed by the U.N. Security Council (United States. Department of State, May 1994, 6). The paper reaffirms that a reduction of U.N. peacekeeping costs – with regard to the costs in total and to the U.S.' share in it – is a foremost condition for the U.S. government to support those missions in the long run (United States. Department of State, May 1994, 6-7).

PDD 25 was a Janus-faced policy directive and one of the most controversial

documents issued by the Clinton administration's first term. On the one hand, the restrictive checklist seemed to be a formalization of an already decided "Hands off!"-attitude towards international peacekeeping. In the words of Representative David Obey of Wisconsin, it tried to satisfy the American desire for »zero degree of involvement, and zero degree of risk, and zero degree of pain and confusion« (quoted in Power, 2003, 342). On the other hand, the directive might be understood as an attempt to save the very idea of U.S. foreign involvement in the new era. As Richard Clarke, member of the National Security Council and charged with the development of the new doctrine put it:

»Many say PDD-25 was some evil thing designed to kill peacekeeping, when in fact it was there to save peacekeeping. Peacekeeping was almost dead. There was no support for it in the U.S. government, and the peacekeepers were not effective in the field.« (quoted in Power, 2003, 342)

The foreign policy practice of the Cold War years, especially the almost exclusive concentration of foreign policy power in the executive branch and the high domestic opportunity costs, had to a significant extent discredited foreign involvement of U.S. governments. The Vietnam debacle in the 1970s, and the Iran-Contra Affair in the 1980s had become symbols of presidential foreign policy practices which despised the rules of democratic governance and had nothing to do with the interests of U.S. citizens. Those affairs stood for an intransparent system foreign policy making where one hand could never tell what the other was doing, where sometimes even the president was unaware of actions executed by his intelligence or defense units. The decision of the new government to commit itself to a published catalogue of criteria which narrowly defined under which conditions a foreign military involvement was permissible, was a clear break with those practices of Cold War governments and a signal of its willingness to democratize foreign policy making. As the final section of the directive states:

»Traditionally, the Executive branch has not solicited the

involvement of Congress or the American people on matters related to UN peacekeeping. This lack of communication is not desirable in an era when peace operations have become more numerous, complex and expensive. The Clinton Administration is committed to working with Congress to improve and regularize communication and consultation on those important issues.»
(United States. Department of State, May 1994, 14)

To the people in Rwanda, however, PDD 25 was fatal.³⁴ The conflict did not even meet the criteria necessary for the U.S. to support any mission to the country: No U.S. national interests were involved, there was no powerful alliance of stakeholders that would speak up in favor of an intervention, and – as cynical as this sounds – the threat this conflict in an already conflict torn and unstable region generated to international peace and security might have been neglectable. The only reason that was there to intervene into this conflict was to save the lives of almost a million non-combatant individuals which could not be saved otherwise as by the intervention of an outside force. But this case did not figure among the conditions listed in PDD 25. The U.S. governments' reaction to the Rwandan crisis – its the hard-line position in the Security Council, the emphasis given to a regional solution of the conflict – appears like a text-book example for the application of the new doctrine to a »real case«.

One of the most dramatic consequences of PDD 25 was that it sterilized the diplomatic efforts of foreign policy officials who would have liked to see a more active role of the United States. Not because it would have directly restricted or even forbidden their activity. But because Rwandan officials could be assured that, whatever some high-ranking U.S. official told him, it

34 Although the final version of the paper had been issued only one month into the genocide, the considerations encapsulated in the doctrine were around the corner in the weeks preceding its publication.

was improbable that the U.S. would interfere with Rwandan violence on a large scale. Prudence Bushnell, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs, for example, had almost daily phone contact with Rwandan government officials. In those phone calls, she tried to set pressure upon those politicians and military leaders to stop the killings. She confronted them Rwandan officials with eyewitness accounts of the genocide and told them that their actions would not be unpunished. But the answers she got were cynicism and lies. Confronted with the mass killings that had occurred, Theoneste Bagosora, cabinet director in Rwanda's Ministry of Defense and the coordinator of the genocide, told her that the massacres were organized by the RPF (United States. Department of State, April 29, 1994). She later also recalls that when she announced to Augustin Bizimungu, the Rwandan military chief of staff, that President Clinton would hold him accountable for the killings, the former's only answer was »Oh, how nice it is that your president is thinking of me« (quoted in Power, 2003, 370). The Rwandan officials knew that they had nothing to fear. There was a Rwandan embassy in the U.S. capital, and, by irony of fate, Rwanda at this time held one of the rotating seats in the Security Council. Both positions provided enough insights for the Rwandan representatives in Washington and New York to assure their government at home, that the U.S. government had committed itself to a strict non-intervention policy.

Studies in strategic interaction have shown that one agent bringing forward a threat is not enough to influence the behavior of another agent. The compliance of this second agent to the demands of the first one will depend on whether or not the threat is backed by a credible commitment of the first agent to enforce its will and to punish the second agent in the case of non-compliance (see for example Schelling, 1966, esp. chs. 1 and 2). The diplomatic efforts of Bushnell and other U.S. officials who undertook actions in order to stop the Rwandan killings were not backed by such a kind of commitment. On the contrary, with the publication of the Presidential

Decision Directive 25, the U.S. government had publicly committed itself not to intervene in a case like the Rwandan one.

V.4. Awareness

Beside from a general hesitance of the U.S.-American society in regard to peacekeeping operations and the policy commitments of the Clinton administration it generated, awareness – or more correctly: unawareness – to the Rwandan conflict was a central factor in the decision making on the issue. As it had already been outlined, prior the genocide, Rwanda did not constitute an “issue” – neither to the U.S.-American public, nor to its foreign policy officials. A glance at the newspapers shows this relative insignificance of the country. During the whole year before the genocide, the New York Times, the U.S. daily national newspaper with the most extensive international affairs coverage, published 19 pieces relating to Rwanda. The Washington Post, another national daily, printed as much as 8 articles mentioning the countries name. According to the problems described and the responsibilities suggested, the pieces can be classified into three categories:

The majority of the articles relates to Rwanda as a genuine foreign issue, in which the American public is a mere observer. In the focus is the Rwandan civil war and the role of the country in the generally conflict torn region of the Great Lakes. There are two anchor points to the reporting. The first is the final stage of the Arusha peace-talks, motivating correspondents to shed some lights on the background of the conflict; Rwanda is portrayed as a country with a history of ethnically underpinned political violence.³⁵ The second anchor point of the reporting is the refugee problem that is created by the

35 See for example “Accord Ends 3-Year Civil War in Rwanda”, August 5, 1993; Lorch, July 8, 1993; “Clashes in Rwanda”, March 14, 1993.

persisting violence in the region.³⁶ The second cluster of articles and reports represents Rwanda as an issue on the United Nations' agenda. In June and October, short messages occur on the occasion of the deployment of U.N. peacekeeping troops.³⁷ In November, the nomination of a U.N. special representative to Rwanda, Jacques-Roger Booh Booh from Cameroon, is worth a notice (“U.N. Names Rwanda Envoy”, November 13, 1993). The remaining small number of articles mentions Rwanda in the domestic policy context. In this domestic debate about new guidelines for foreign policy, the country sometimes serves as a prototypical example of the “new conflicts” the U.S. has to deal with — or not to deal with — in the post-Cold War era. In this context, the name of the unknown country even makes it to page one of national newspapers (Binder, Crossette, February 7, 1993; Lewis, October 10, 1993; “U.S. Pays the U.N. \$533 Million in Arrears”, October 7, 1993).

When in April 1994, after the death of the ten Belgian soldiers, the escalation of violence in Rwanda and the future of the UNAMIR force became an issue in the Security Council, the U.S. government had a strong interest in keeping the matter as low as possible. Therefore, in its guideline paper to the U.S.-American representatives to the U.N., the State Department not only urged for a withdrawal of the troops but also expressed its conviction that this pull out should be the task of the Secretary General and would not necessitate a resolution of the Security Council. The Department was well aware of the fact that a formal decision of the Council would draw public attention to the Rwandan crisis and provoke international criticism of the U.S.-American position. The apprehension was well founded. While the resolution must be judged fatal with regard to the lives at stake in Rwanda, the decision and the preceding debate significantly pushed U.S. public attention to the conflict. To

36 See for example Lorch, July 8, 1993.

37 See “U.N. Votes to Send a Force to Uganda-Rwanda Border”, June 3, 1993 on the deployment of a blue-helmet force commissioned to prevent arms smuggle between Uganda and Rwanda in order to prevent a further intensification of the civil war; and “U.N. Approves Troops for Rwanda”, October 6, 1993 on the deployment of a peacekeeping

different sets of players beforehand unaware of the events — journalists and editors as well as NGO activists or politicians — the vote in New York provided reason and incentive to direct their interest to the unknown country in eastern Africa.³⁸ Ironically, it was exactly the decision to not assist the people dying in the country that made the foreign public aware of what was going on there and raised voices calling for an intervention.³⁹ »For West, Rwanda is Not Worth the Political Candle« was to be read, for example, in a New York Times piece commenting on the Security Council resolution (Sciolino, April 15, 1994). With the vote in the Council and the controversial U.S. position in the preceding debate, Rwanda ceased to be a “foreign issue” to which the U.S. public was a mere observer. It now involved decision-making of domestic politicians, creating some kind of U.S. stakeholdership in the conflict. This push in attention and, most of all, the change in perspective provided a chance. No promoter of a pro-active U.S. role in stopping Rwandan violence appeared. Thus, reporting never gained momentum, did not evolve into a veritable public debate. On April 21, 1993 the human rights activists Alison Des Forges and Monique Mujawamariya (the latter had just escaped the Rwandan massacres), in a meeting at the White House, asked Security Adviser Anthony Lake how they might alter U.S. policy, and he told them »If you want to make this move, you will have to change public opinion. You must make more noise« (Des Forges, 1999, 624-625). But in a hearing of the House’s Subcommittee on Africa, scheduled on May 4, 1994, they spoke to an almost empty auditory. Most of the Representatives had sent their assistants (United States Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Africa, 1995).

force charged with overseeing the Arusha cease-fire agreement.

38 A simple factor supporting this dynamic is that while only few medias entertain correspondents in the Great Lake Region, all major newspapers, radio stations and TV channels have political correspondents in New York.

39 See for example “Cold Choices in Rwanda”, April 23, 1994, an editorial which became famous for being the first article published by a major American newspaper to call the Rwandan events a genocide; and “Aid Groups Assail U.N. Pullout in Rwanda”, April

The reaction of the U.S.-American government, Congress and other societal forces to the Rwandan genocide was not blind. It was not based on a lack of information or a general unawareness of the conflict. The political decisions were taken clear sighted and well informed. They were backed by foreign policy preferences of the U.S. public that told the agents in power that, having considered the nature of the Rwandan conflict, they must come to the conclusion that the U.S. has to stay out.

VI. Conclusion: Towards Bureaucratic Representation

The Rwandan genocide and the failure of its foreign witnesses to stop it has become a symbol of the incapability of the international community, and especially of the United Nations, to protect the most basic of all human rights, the right to live. Journalists as well as researchers blamed the United Nations for its paralysation in the case (Barnett, 2002). Studying the proceedings and actions of the U.N. organs and some of its member countries in the Rwandan question, this reproach seems somehow surprising, since, from the beginning of the events, there has been considerable activity on the part of the international observers. The statement that the ›international public‹ did nothing does not seem to hold. The disturbing conclusion that has to be drawn from the analysis of the reactions is that of the measures proposed and the actions undertaken none did respond to the core of the Rwandan violence which was the attempt of an extremist regime threatened by political change to save its power by initiating large scale massacres against a minority group – in short: a genocide. But for months, not the genocide, but a civil war was represented as the central Rwandan problem. Reactions did not respond to the massacres but to an overwhelming refugee wave streaming into Rwanda's neighboring countries. And, in fact, this situation did not substantially change

after the end of the genocide, since, while it might be true that the Rwandan killings have triggered the interest of a number of journalists and social scientists, the institutional attention is not with the survivors of the genocide. Still in 1995, the human rights organisation *African Rights* complained that still considerable amounts of money and resources flew into the refugee camps in the neighboring countries which were largely populated by former executors and collaborators of the genocide, while the victims of the violence within the country are being forgotten (African Rights, 1995, xxix).

Government documents and testimonies of foreign policy officials rule out that those outwardly badly conceived reactions of the United States and other U.N. member countries to the Rwandan genocide were not due to a lack of information; they also prove that officials were well aware of the fact that a third-party intervention was the only means to stop these massacres. But if it was not ignorance or miscalculation, how can the misguided international reaction to the Rwandan genocide be explained.

I suggest that, beside from personal failure that is not the subject of my study, a structural feature of the international political system is a major factor behind the representation and decision-making pattern in the Rwandan case. The two focal points of foreign action — dealing with the refugees and mediating between the civil war parties — have one thing in common. Both problems are not new, and since the end World War II, dealing with them has become a frequent practice. In consequence, highly specialized national and international agencies as the UNHCR evolved with professional and experienced staff. Over time, organisational routines developed in dealing with certain issues. It is common sense that the risk of an action declines with the degree of experience in executing this action. In the social realm, experiences can transcend the individual as they become embedded in institutions and organisational processes. In this sense, the existence of organisational routines and of specialized bureaucratic agencies discharges

political decision-making, because they make it easier to delegate problems, since responsibilities are easy to assign with a relative stable expectation about the quality of the outcome, they create stakeholderhood for a problem that is insensible to the consequences of preference changes in a representative system and sometimes they might even reduce the need for political decision making.⁴⁰ The political risk involved in dealing with issues for which organisational routines or specialized agencies exist, are lower than if dealing with an issue that has never occurred before.

When the Rwandan refugees streamed into Rwanda's neighboring countries, the UNHCR immediately took up the lead for organizing the set up of refugee camps. When the RPF started to fight the Rwandan Army, U.S. officials could resort to several cases in which U.S. governments had involved in foreign civil wars. But in response to the pictures of the mutilated bodies floating into Lake Victoria, no such easy resort was available.

The analysis of the U.S. reaction to the Rwandan genocide has outlined the constitutional and historical conditions which prevented U.S. support for an intervention mission. But the general findings are applicable not only to the United States but to all popular representative systems. Since on the one hand foreign involvement always has domestic opportunity costs, but on the other, governments in democracies depend upon the support of their constituents which in most cases will assign higher importance to domestic than to foreign issues, active support of an intervention mission – not only in words but in deeds – will be an exceptional case. In consequence, it is more than unlikely that there will ever be a case in which the cumulated preferences of the states represented in the U.N. Security Council will lead to a quick and determinate intervention to stop genocide. The findings of this paper suggest that if the community of U.N. member states had the intention of preventing »another Rwanda«, »another Bosnia«, »another Auschwitz«, the only effective

40 It goes without saying that those features of bureaucratic organisations are not

measure to implement this goal would be to create powerful institutional stakeholdership for the issue of genocide, i.e. some kind of agency monitoring conflicts and authorized to certain actions, within the organisation of the United Nations itself.

necessarily advantages in every case.

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