

RWANDA: MYTH AND REALITY

Since April 1994 there have been two Rwandas. The first is the real Rwanda, a country in Africa, the second is the mythical Rwanda, a Western caricature.

The Rwanda in Africa has experienced the most debilitating war in its history. That war reached its peak following the assassination of president Habyarimana on 6 April 1994 and culminated in the Rwandese Patriotic Front's seizure of the capital Kigali in July. But this war is not over, only suspended, because its cause remains unresolved. That cause is the power shift initiated by Western governments in their relationships with sections of Rwanda's elite.

The country has been completely dislocated as vast numbers of its population have been turned into refugees. Large numbers have died as a result of the fighting and subsequent disease created by the squalor of the refugee camps.

The largest sector of the country's economy -- coffee -- has been devastated. The new government, formed by the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) after its military wing, the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) seized power, lacks the support of the majority. Furthermore, the members of the ousted regime have formed a government in exile which derives support from many refugees, mainly in the camps in Zaire.

The return of refugees and the reconstruction of Rwanda are obstructed by two things: the contest for control over the camps, and the mass arrests of genocide suspects for trial by either Rwandan courts or the International Tribunal for Rwanda (hereafter referred to as 'the Tribunal'). Both developments ensure the continued polarisation of Rwandan society and sow seeds for yet more bloodshed.

The other, mythical Rwanda is a caricature created by Western foreign policy-makers, non-governmental organisations, and the Western media. In the mythical Rwanda, all the different social conflicts are reduced to one terrible fact: genocide. The tale says that the genocide was planned and conducted by self-styled 'Hutu extremists' and executed against the ethnic Tutsi population in order to destroy the possibility of a democratic Rwanda once and for all.

In the mythical Rwanda, the scale of the genocide is due to the refusal of the 'international community' (i.e. Western governments) to meet their moral and legal responsibility to militarily intervene and end it. Credit for bringing the genocide to an end goes to the RPF. The return to normality in this Rwanda is frustrated by a lack of political will on the part of Western powers to provide the Tribunal with its required resources so that justice can be seen to be done. This is held to be the precondition to healing the mythical Rwanda's ills.

Two powerful prejudices underpin the caricatured version of Rwanda.

The first is about the nature of the 'Hutu extremist.' Many Rwanda analysts -- even some of those who consider the massacres to be a 'genocide' -- rightly assert that a centuries-old Hutu-Tutsi enmity cannot account for what happened last year. Many have pointed out that the very terms 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' have taken on different meanings at different times, and are political and social categories more than they are real ethnicities. It is also clear that, at the village level, the two groups, however constituted, have been socially integrated for a very long time. Peaceful cohabitation has been the rule, violence the exception.

For the period from the early colonial days through independence to the end of the Cold War, a fair degree of consensus exists about the meaning of these ostensibly ethnic terms. The demarcation line under Belgian colonialism was based on the number of cattle owned. This formed the basis for Tutsi privilege and Hutu oppression.

After the Hutu uprising which followed independence, Tutsi by and large meant the ousted educated elite.

When Hutu leader Juvenal Habyarimana assumed power in 1973, the focus of state patronage shifted from the southern to the northern section of the Hutus, based at Gisenyi. Consequently, a north-south distinction emerged within the Hutu polity. As a result, the differences between southern Hutus and the Tutsis became increasingly less significant. Both had lost out to an emerging northern Hutu elite. Increasingly, the term 'Tutsi' was becoming indistinguishable from the southern Hutu.

But in the caricature of Rwanda, the caricature of a country dominated by genocide, there are 'Hutu extremists' and 'Hutu-moderates.' It is as if the political outlook of Hutus was determined solely by how strongly they feel about their Hutu identity. The battle lines were in fact politically demarcated, with the 'moderate Hutus' being individuals who did not identify with the faction around the besieged regime and were therefore viewed as political opponents, potential or actual. In fact the divisions were already established in the consolidation of a northern-based Hutu elite.

The war against the Tutsis was actually a war against the RPF and perceived RPF supporters, in the face of its Western-supported invasion. That civilians were largely the object of attack does not contradict the political rationale behind the fighting.

By describing all these different social conflicts in terms of 'Hutu extremism', or 'genocide', their real character is obscured. All further

investigation of the forces at work in Rwanda is arrested: asserting the collective psychosis of the Hutus is deemed a sufficient explanation.

The second assumption that underpins the caricature of Rwanda is that, while they may have made mistakes in the past, Western powers are now perceived to have turned a new leaf. It is widely recognised that during the Cold War, the Western powers backed a variety of corrupt and murderous regimes. But today, Western policy towards Africa is assumed to be shaped by concern for democracy and 'good governance'. This assumption leads to the perception that through the 1993 Arusha Accords, which imposed a compromise leadership that combined RPF supporters and the Habyarimana government, the West was exercising a benign influence over events in Rwanda. The only fly in the ointment was the resistance of forces unsympathetic to this Western-imposed deal which, by definition within the caricature, are therefore hostile to democracy.

The carnage unleashed by the militias, notably the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi, was a last ditch attempt to stave off the rise of the RPA, which was being facilitated through the Arusha Accords. The ferocity of their attacks reveals the all-or-nothing character of the situation. The progressive undermining of Habyarimana's government by its erstwhile backers, Belgium and France, along with America, Britain and Germany, as well as the consolidation of Western backing for an RPF takeover, made war inescapable. Arusha was not a process of democratization -- ordinary Rwandans played no part in it. Instead, it was a mechanism for implementing a Western-imposed restructuring of Rwanda's elite. The fact that Habyarimana's men eventually reacted against being arm-twisted into relinquishing power, and took up machetes and whatever else came to hand, should surprise nobody.

Indeed, the report of the Economist Intelligence Unit on the first quarter of 1994, anticipated what was about to unfold with remarkable accuracy:

'If the president stubbornly refuses to concede to the pressure to use the original nomination lists [of members of the transitional government team, a stipulation of the Arusha Accords], hostilities between the Rwandan army and the RPF, particularly in Kigali, will resume. The ensuing violence will inevitably lead to politically-motivated ethnic massacres in the countryside, as have been seen in Burundi. The peace monitors are likely to withdraw under this scenario because their mandate is to implement the peace process, which will be nonexistent. The struggle will involve Burundian Hutu refugees, and will likely spread to Burundi.'

The obsession with genocide obscures all of these conditions that led to the massacres. It goes further than mere media sensationalism and exaggeration of the scale of the slaughter. By lifting the massacres from the context of

war altogether, and attributing them to a plan of evil. masterminded by 'Hutu extremists', those who insist on characterising the conflict in terms of genocide expose their own preoccupations. Rather than attempt a rational explanation for the war, their objective is to demoniac a section of African society in order to justify a Western moral crusade. This is the nineties version of Rudyard Kipling's call to take up 'the White Man's burden'. Africa needs civilising, they are saying, and at gunpoint if needs be. Archbishop George Carey's pronouncement that the carnage shows Rwanda's Christianity to be only 'skin deep' makes the point explicit. Evidently, no amount of missionary work can remove the beast from the Rwandan.

The violent upsurge unleashed in April 1994 was not an enactment of a preconceived plan of genocide. Whatever the cause of the plane crash which killed president Habyarimana and Burundian president Ndadaye, everyone understood that the point of no return had been reached. The talks were over and the question of state power could only be resolved by war.

To understand why war had become inevitable at this point, it is not necessary to investigate ethnic relations in the region over the centuries. Nor is it useful to attempt a psychoanalysis of the 'Hutu extremist.' What is needed is an examination of the tensions in Rwandan society at the end of the eighties, and how dynamics specific to the termination of the Cold War impacted on them.

The making of war

For sub-Saharan Africa, the 1980s has been dubbed the 'lost decade', because of the region's economic decline. Rwanda's experience of the decade was typical.

Rwanda's high degree of dependence on coffee exports, a legacy of colonialism which the country has been unable to overcome, was exacerbated by pressures to boost exports further in order to meet escalating import bills. Coffee receipts accounted for 80 per cent of foreign exchange holdings. In 1989 the world price of coffee plummeted to half its 1980 level. Until then, the government had been able to assure its coffee producers a guaranteed price of 125 Rwandan Francs a kilo. It responded to the crash by increasing subsidies. This practice became unsustainable, and with a currency devaluation of 67 per cent in 1990, the average coffee farmer found himself producing 45 per cent more, yet earning 20 per cent less. In 1989 real gross domestic product fell by 5.7 per cent. bringing it below the 1983 level.

At this critical juncture, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed a structural adjustment programme, and the RPF invaded northern Rwanda. Although these were unrelated developments, their combined effect was to set

off a downward economic spiral. According to the IMF, Rwanda's economy deteriorated in the last quarter of 1990 because of the war, by which time the GDP had fallen by a further two per cent (Economist Intelligence Unit Country Report, No. 2, 1991). The slide continued and, in 1993 alone, GDP fell by eight per cent (EIU Country Report, No. 1, 1994). By 1993 Rwanda's debt was estimated at \$941m, having been \$189m in 1980 (EIU Country Report, No. 1, 1994) It was estimated that 85 per cent of the population lived in poverty, with a third of all children malnourished (see L Martens 'Genocide in Rwanda' in N. Abdullai, (ed.), Genocide in Rwanda: Background and Current Situation). Rwanda's economic prospects had never seemed so bleak.

The RPF invasion precipitated a wave of refugees, and the sharpening of the polarisation of Rwandan society. For the majority of Rwandans, the RPF was seen as an exile Tutsi force hostile towards them.

Where did the RPF come from? It was not formed in Rwanda but in Uganda by a group of Rwandan Tutsi exiles, who were fighting as part of the Ugandan National Resistance Army (NRA). The NRA overthrew the regime of Milton Obote in 1986, installing its leader Yoweri Museveni as Uganda's president. These Tutsi exiles, most of whom had settled in Uganda in the wake of the uprising accompanying Rwanda's independence, played a significant role in the NRA's accession to power. Many RPF leaders had occupied senior positions in the Ugandan state apparatus. For example, Paul Kagame was NRA head of intelligence between November 1989 and June 1990; Fred Rwigyema was a major general; Peter Baingana was head of NRA medical services; and Chris Bunyenyezi was former commander of the notorious 306th Brigade (Economist Intelligence Review, August 1994). According to a US Committee for Refugees paper (February 1991), the RPF was founded in 1979 as the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity. It operated clandestinely until 1983, recruiting Rwandans for the Ugandan NRA.

From 1986 onward, after the NRA had seized power in Uganda, the Rwandese Patriotic Front operated openly. The large presence of Rwandans in the military became a focus of resentment among Ugandans, who regarded them as unfairly privileged foreigners. In addition, the size of the military was also attracting local and Western criticism, particularly after the threat to state security posed by northern dissident movements had largely been contained. As part of a Western-funded demobilisation exercise, distinct RPF battalions were created.

Rwandan soldiers, along with their Ugandan counterparts, received military training from the British at their base in Jinja. The Americans began training the RPF leadership, which also held top positions in the Ugandan military. Kagame received training at the US army and staff college at Leavenworth, Kansas.

From 1989 onward America supported joint RPF-Ugandan attacks upon Rwanda. Telegrams to the state department cited foreign military observers documenting Ugandan support for RPF attacks. There were at least 56 'situation reports' in State Department files in 1991. Between 1989 and 1992 the USA favoured Uganda, donating some \$183m in aid. double the amount given to Rwanda. As American and British relations with Uganda and the RPF strengthened. so hostilities between Uganda and Rwanda escalated. Between 1990 and 1993, Uganda blocked supplies to Rwanda from Kenya (see H. Marwitz, 'Another side of Rwanda's bloodbath', Washington Times, 11 August 1994).

By August 1990 the RPF had begun preparing an invasion with the full knowledge and approval of British intelligence. Rwigema toured the Banyarwanda exile communities in Europe and North America. Sections of the Kigali elite recognised that the squeeze on Habyarimana to share power with the RPF was a prelude to war, and were keen to switch allegiances in anticipation of the government being toppled. On 25 August Vincent Kajeguhakwa, a Tutsi businessman and former partner of Habyarimana, and Pasteur Bizimungu, a relative of Habyarimana -- and head of a state company. fled to Kampala, urging invasion.

On 26 September 1990, while Habyarimana and president Yoweri Museveni of Uganda were attending the World Summit on Children in America, Rwandan NRA officers and ordinary soldiers began leaving their posts. A large troop movement towards the Rwandan border raised no alarm. The soldiers openly bade farewell to their families and friends. They travelled with their weapons for two days and assembled in Kabale soccer stadium, just north of the Rwandan border, about 200 miles from Kampala. Their weaponry included land mines, rocket-propelled grenades, 60 millimetre mortars, recoilless canons and Katyusha rocket-launchers. According to Western diplomats, international military observers, Ugandan army officers and other eye-witnesses who saw soldiers unloading crates of Kalashnikovs, Uganda willingly provided arms, food, fuel, batteries and ammunition to the RPF throughout the war (see Nation, 2 May 1994, E-mail nation-info@igc.apc.org).

The invasion began on 1 October 1990. Ondoga ori Amaza, NRA director of publications, gave the official line that the RPF was made up of deserters from the Ugandan army, and that Museveni learned of their desertion while in America. This position was also adopted by Oxfam (see G. Vassall-Adams, Rwanda: An Agenda for International Action, Oxfam, 1994, p. 21). However, other Ugandans, notably ax-president Godfrey Binaisa, poured scorn upon this version of events:

'We are further told by the Ugandan government that these returnees had already deserted from the Ugandan army. How many deserters were ever captured? What was the result of the trials? Did the Tutsi commissioned

officers in the Ugandan army ever take the oath of allegiance to Uganda when they were appointed? Why is it that the present rebel commander Major-General Paul Kagame formerly chief of army intelligence in the Ugandan army keeps on moving in and out of Uganda without fear of arrest? Only one conclusion remains to be drawn, that the present conflict was started by Uganda, and it would be a fiction to call it a civil war. For instance, the American Civil War did not start in Canada or Mexico but right here in the United States' (Open letter to the youth of Uganda, 8 June 1994).

Another source states that the RPF was established as a result of an NRA demobilisation exercise, for which Uganda received foreign funding. 'They demobilised by crossing the border in completely equipped units, taking their insignia off their shoulders as they crossed.' (Interview with British East Africa expert from Institute of Development Studies, Sussex; quoted in 'RPF is the Ugandan army, says expert', Economist Intelligence Review 19 August 1994)

The RPF's initial gains were reversed by the end of the month once the government forces were strengthened with Zairean and Belgian troops, and 1000 French paratroopers (in accordance with the defence pact signed between Habyarimana and the French President Valery Giscard D'Estaing in 1975). A ceasefire was agreed on 27 October. At this point Belgium terminated its support for Habyarimana and shifted allegiance towards the RPF, allowing it to set up office in Brussels. This left France as Habyarimana's sole Western supporter

The ceasefire proved to be short-lived and a prolonged war ensued. Its protracted character arose primarily from the fact that both sides received substantial Western assistance. After the 1990 invasion, the French reorganised the Rwandan armed forces. Under Lieutenant Colonel Chollet, the forces were expanded from 5000 to 30 000. Falcum 50 planes and pilots were supplied (see L Martens, 'Genocide in Rwanda', in N. Abdullai (ed.) Genocide in Rwanda,) France supplied, or kept operational, most heavy guns, assault vehicles, helicopters, Milan and Apila missiles They also gave Habyarimana his ill-fated Mystere-Falcon jet (New African. June 1994).

In contrast to the French, the American and British roles were indirect. Although both have trained RPF soldiers. their support has been mediated through Uganda. The RPF was overhauled under the new leadership of Paul Kagame. coming fresh from America. Hostilities were renewed using guerrilla tactics. Western supplies came through Uganda, delivered mainly through the army. By the time of the June 1992 ceasefire, the RPA controlled the whole of the border region with Uganda. International Red Cross personnel have alleged that Ugandan NRA trucks disguised with Red Cross insignia entered Rwanda with arms.

On 29 April 1991, three NRA officers publicly declared in an open memorandum addressed to Museveni that they had formed an underground movement to overthrow his government in Uganda. This factional conflict shed new light on Uganda's intervention in Rwanda. Among their grievances against the Museveni regime, the three NRA officers cited 'sinister secret plans for Rwanda operations'. According to them, Museveni had concluded a top secret meeting at Entebbe State House on 15 April 1991, in which plans were approved for clandestine action designed to provoke Rwanda's neighbours into taking action against the Rwandan government. Two crash course training camps, under the authority of Museveni's brother, Salim Saleh, would prepare 600 elite troops to disguise themselves as Rwandan soldiers, and terrorise Tanzanian and Zairean villagers along the borders with Rwanda during the last week of May. ('An open letter from Ugandan NRA officers and men', Kampala, 29 April 1991)

(This tactic has a precedent in the repertoire of Uganda's military politics. NRA guerrillas waging war against the Ugandan state were accused of adopting it in the Lowero triangle during the early stage of their war against Milton Obote's regime, implicating Obote in atrocities.)

Faced with mounting odds, Habyarimana continued to make concessions. In April 1992, the ruling party, the Mouvement Republicain National pour la Democratie et le Developpement (MRNDD), agreed to form a coalition government with four other parties for a year, until elections were held. In January 1993 another power-sharing agreement was made. Yet, at the same time, the RPF continued its offensive, interspersed with ceasefires. Uganda gave solid support for an RPF takeover. The Ugandan army sent troops in twice in July 1993 to fight alongside the RPF. Tanzanian authorities tape-recorded president Museveni as he was commanding the RPF soldiers not to sign a peace agreement with the Rwanda government. Rather, he said, the RPF should return to the battlefield and resume fighting immediately. In his own words, Museveni said: 'Don't sign the peace agreement. I want you back at Milindi immediately' (The Shariat, 6-12 September 1994 quoting Tanzanian newspaper The Mirror, May 1994, and the Ugandan Monitor).

By 1993 Rwanda was polarised by the war and by the impact of 'structural adjustment' austerity. The advancing RPF, the weakening Kigali government and rising economic tensions (defence was the only ministry to be spared massive lay offs), demarcated the battle lines. Sections of the MRNDD organised the militias to break with the negotiation process and prepare for the showdown. The RPF's territorial gains gathered pace, generating wave upon wave of refugees. Both sides were terrorising civilians and committing atrocities. In March an international commission of enquiry found both sides responsible for abuses including rape, summary executions, abductions of civilians and looting (Federation Internationale des Droits de l'Homme, 'Commission Internationale d'Enquete sur les Violations des Droits de

l'Homme Commises au Rwanda depuis le 1 Octobre 1990').

The RPF failed to win support among people living in the areas it captured. Its relationship with these people was well described by Ludo Martens leader of the Belgian Labour party: 'The RPF is conducting a war for the people and not a people's war.' But, as revealed in a comment by one of the RPF's own commanders at the time, 'the people' were not convinced of this role as liberator: 'Here, once members of the population sight you they just give the alarm and welcomed you with a machete in their hands. (New African, September 1994) Although the RPF grew in size as the war progressed, it did so in large part with Rwandan Tutsi refugees from Burundi. Its advance across the country generated no social base for itself among local inhabitants. It placed severe restrictions on the populations under its control, and made no attempt to establish civilian administration. Most of its captured regions became depopulated spontaneously. Evidently, most Rwandans chose to leave these areas and risk the actions of the militias rather than accept RPF authority.

A major RPF offensive was launched in February 1993. Again, thanks to French assistance in the form of 680 troops. Habyarimana's regime survived. But his bargaining power was exhausted. In August 1993, the Rwandan government capitulated, signing the Arusha Accords. Under the accords it was agreed to create a transitional government of 22 ministers, five of whom were to be RPF supporters; to set up a commission to oversee the return of the refugees and to ensure their security; to establish new armed forces, with the RPF contributing 40 per cent of new troops and 50 per cent of the high command; and to organise legislative and parliamentary elections in 1995. How two armies engaged in three years of warfare could be fused and placed under joint command was not detailed. It is doubtful that it was intended to happen. The Arusha Accords were the cumulative impact of a three-year Western assault which broke the back of the Habyarimana government. The RPF was let in for the kill.

Under the agreement that pretended to resolve the conflict, the polarisation of Rwanda was complete. On the one side was the beleaguered Rwandan government, its National Guard (boosted with weapons worth \$5.9m from South Africa and \$5m from Egypt), the militias (including the infamous Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi), and France. On the other side was the RPF, Uganda, Britain, the USA, Belgium, the United Nations, the IMF, World Bank and most of the Western media.

The government distributed Kalashnikovs among municipal authorities. These authorities then joined forces with the militias to attack civilians suspected of being RPF supporters. Killings and mass arrests followed. For its part, the RPF executed suspected government collaborators, displaced thousands from their villages, and press-ganged people into becoming porters

and labourers (Nation, 2 May 1994).

The abrogation of the Arusha Accords was hardly surprising -- the Rwandan government had not prepared for suicide. By February, only one of the institutions agreed to in the Accords, the presidency, was in place. The United Nations and Western governments began to wield the big stick again. The French forces departed Rwanda in December -- signalling the government's complete isolation. A 1000-strong United Nations force entitled Unamir arrived in the same month. Unamir had 370 Belgians as its major contingent. To underline Belgium's switch of allegiances for Habyarimana's benefit, the Belgian contingent escorted an RPF battalion into premises given by the UN in Kigali. This battalion was to be used ostensibly to protect RPF parliamentarians. In practice, the UN was handing Rwanda over to the RPF on a plate. Then came one last squeeze: Habyarimana was threatened with a Unamir pull-out and a final RPF offensive if he did not comply immediately with all the accords.

On 3 April the ambassadors of France, Belgium and Germany met Habyarimana. The German ambassador expressed satisfaction with the result: 'We can no longer talk of stumbling blocks. I think everything is on the right path. I personally expect the establishment of institutions in the course of this week.' (BBC summary of world broadcasts AL/1963 A/2, 5 April 1994. quoted in African Rights, Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance. p. 87). Two days later the UN Security Council voted to extend the Unamir mandate. The next day Habyarimana was assassinated, his plane shot down as it approached Kigali airport. The most bloody chapter of the war had begun.

The International Tribunal for Rwanda: a Western show trial

According to John Shattuck, the American Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, 'the establishment of criminal responsibility for genocide is crucial if we are to differentiate victims from aggressors, foster social reconciliation and overcome the cynical argument that ethnic conflicts cannot be resolved' (Testimony before the House of Representatives subcommittee on Africa, 22 February 1995)

In fact, the effect of the Tribunal, from the first, has been to accelerate developments in the opposite direction, with the emergence of revenge killings, the criminalisation of the refugee population, and the reconstitution outside Rwanda of the former government. The distinction between victims and aggressors has become useless. Instead of reconciliation, Rwanda is polarised to an unprecedented degree. In place of social reconciliation and the establishment of the base for a unified national identity, the differences between Hutu and Tutsi have been made stronger and more sharply delineated than ever.

The United Nations holds to its own dogmatic interpretation of the bloody strife unleashed in Rwanda in 1994. According to the United Nations Commission of Experts report, extremist militias from the majority Hutu tribe attempted in a three-month campaign to exterminate the Tutsi minority before they were defeated by a Tutsi-led guerrilla force (see J. Preston, Washington Post, 11 November 1994). Why the militias suddenly decided to do this, and how the Tutsi-led guerrilla force arose, are not explained. In the United Nations' official interpretation, the context of the war -- a struggle for state power between opposing political forces -- is ignored altogether. Instead of trying to understand what happened, the United Nations has adopted the sanctimonious and inflammatory terminology of 'extremism' and 'genocide', in order to forestall any real investigation of the conflict with swift punishment. Mandating the Tribunal to prosecute the alleged orchestrators of the genocide, the United Nations Security Council is conducting a show trial in order to serve interests which are far removed from those of the people of Rwanda.

The Tribunal's official title is something of a mouthful, for reasons which are explained below: 'International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States, between 1 January 1994 and 31 December'. It was established by the United Nations Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of its Charter. While the initiative has the support of all the permanent Security Council members (although China's support is somewhat tacit), it is one in which America has the highest profile. According to John Shattuck: 'We fought hard and successfully for the creation ... of the Tribunal.' (Testimony before the subcommittee on Africa, 22 February 1995)

America threw its weight behind the establishment of the tribunal, but only after a certain amount of soul-searching about the charge of genocide. The allegation that the massacres constitute a genocide is important because it shapes the way that the international community can respond under the United Nations Charter. Consequently the question of whether the conflicts constituted a genocide is not a simple question of interpretation of past events, but also a political statement of intent about what response is preferred and justified. Although non-governmental organisations (aid organisations, charities and the like) as well as the RPF insisted that there had been a genocide within weeks of the sudden and vicious resumption of war in April 1994, it was not until August that America endorsed the term officially.

The clamour for official recognition for genocide in Rwanda was intended to invoke the 1948 Genocide Convention in order to establish as quickly as

possible an international intervention force. Lord Eric Avebury, British parliamentary chair of the Human Rights Group, expressed his frustration over the issue to Baroness Chalker: 'It is indeed a matter of shame to the international community that not a finger has been lifted to stop the genocide, and that none of the member states have been prepared to use the term genocide because of fear that they may be called upon to honour their commitments under the Genocide Convention ...' (Letter dated 2 May 1995, reprinted in N. Abdullai (ed.), *Genocide in Rwanda: Background and Current Situation*, 1994).

To the American government, the moral imperative of intervening in an African country was not a decision to be taken lightly. It looked like Somalia all over again, and the Americans knew all too well the possible pitfalls of an 'Operation Restore Hope in Rwanda'. As a result, the Americans were initially cautious about using the word genocide. David Rawson, US ambassador to Rwanda, expressed his reservations: 'As a responsible government, you don't just go round hollering genocide'. You say that acts of genocide may have occurred and they need to be investigated.' (*Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, p. 696). But the hollering did not abate. On 10 July, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher conceded: 'If there is any magic in calling it genocide, I have no hesitancy in saying that' (*Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, p. 696).

What appears to be a semantic debate is in fact an important part of the reorientation of US foreign policy. At first the Americans were reluctant to endorse a full-blown UN mission in Rwanda, happy that their chosen instrument, the RPF would safeguard their interests in the country. But the various non-governmental organizations, as well as the RPF itself, were lobbying for a more direct UN role, by calling on the international community to recognise the massacres as a genocide. Within the terms of the debate it seemed that the US administration was reluctant to act and reluctant to assume its responsibilities to the Rwandans.

However it is important to emphasise here that the non-intervention of which America was accused at the time was more apparent than real. The various phases of the war in Rwanda were to a great extent products of Western intervention all along. American backing for the RPF had been particularly important. There is no evidence to suggest that once the fighting had resumed in April 1994, the rapid advance of the RPA and its final seizure of the state apparatus were not to America's wishes. But the particular form of the discussion about genocide made it appear that, in agreeing to demands to act over the 'genocide' issue, the USA was, truculently, bowing to the popular pressure to intervene coming from aid agencies and charities.

In fact, Christopher and others in the American administration were soon to develop a great affinity for the term 'genocide', as it justified a new, and

more extensive involvement in Rwanda, this time through the instrument of the United Nations Tribunal. France's military intervention into Rwanda, named 'Operation Turquoise', served to highlight America's inability to respond to the clamour for action. America did in fact send in troops, as did Japan and other powers, but military intervention on a scale required to exercise control over Rwanda was never on the agenda. The reason that laying the charge of genocide against Hutu 'extremists' began to look increasingly attractive to the US administration was nothing to do with any sense of justice. The Tribunal would serve to emphasise the role of the 'international community', largely dominated by the USA. in resolving questions of domestic politics in Rwanda. American and European solicitors and investigators would be laying charges against Rwandans in their own country. The charge of genocide justified an international tribunal And the Tribunal had the effect of making US policy in the country seem both measured and appropriate, in contrast to the militaristic French intervention. This was a policy which offered significant rewards by way of shoring up Western moral authority without a massive engagement or the bloodying of Western hands.

By persuading the public that the conflict in Rwanda was not a war with competing forces, but an act of cold-blooded genocide, the Western powers were able to assert that the essential form of intervention required was of a new and different kind. Instead of the usual military intervention, this was to be a moral intervention. Irish president Mary Robinson, who had visited Rwanda and the refugee camps in Zaire in October, stated that 'the genocide committed in Rwanda is a very big moral challenge to the world community'. (Reuters. 14 October 1994) In practice what moral intervention meant was that Western action in the country would go beyond any consideration of security or defence of legitimate interests. Instead the Western powers were claiming to be acting in the interests of justice in Rwanda itself on the grounds that Rwandans were not capable of doing so on their own behalf. Moral action meant that the West had assumed responsibility for the justice system in Rwanda -- a new frontier in post-colonial Western intervention.

Moral intervention could only be justified by having a moral problem of great magnitude to contend with. Genocide had to be established. The numbers of people the Hutu militia are supposed to have killed in their 'three-month campaign' grew with each successive estimate, from 200 000 to 500 000 to 'at least a million'. No adjectives or metaphors seemed adequate to describe the horrors unleashed by the Hutu extremists. John Shattuck did his bit to top them all with his own bizarre report: 'I travelled to the countryside of Rwanda. Farms were abandoned. villages were totally deserted. It was like the machetes were one big neutron bomb which devastated the land.' (Reuters. 9 August 1994) It is a wonder that America did not insist upon inserting a clause on machetes in the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Tribunal is a self-serving exercise in proving 'genocide'. Its brief is not to investigate war crimes, but to pin the charge of genocidal killers' on hapless combatants. In fact the context of war is removed altogether in the Tribunal's perverse reading of events. It is also clear that the genocidal killers are to be sought for among 'Hutus' only. While the war began with the invasion of northern Rwanda at the end of 1989 by the RPF, and culminated in the RPF's assumption of state power in July 1994, the Tribunal's time span of investigation is different: from 1 January 1994 to 31 December 1994. That is one of the reasons why the Tribunal's terms of reference are so precisely and verbosely drawn. While there is ample evidence to show that atrocities were committed on both sides, only those committed by the Hutu militias are being investigated, since, the argument goes, only they constitute 'genocide'. The time span of the Tribunal is designed to enable the prosecutors to show how the genocide was planned, and, since the militias regrouped after the RPF victory and consolidated their position in the refugee camps in Zaire, that the plan remains.

The reason for the militias' massacres being treated as qualitatively different from those carried out by the RPF is supposedly due to the militias' massacres having been planned and systematically executed against an ethnically defined group. By contrast, it is argued, the RPF's massacres (when admitted) were excesses which were unplanned, non-systematic, nor targeted at ethnically defined groups. In fact, the RPF, as the invading force, was clearer in its goals than the outgoing regime -- but that is of no consequence to the investigators. One of the more grotesque consequences of the differential treatment of RPF and Hutu militia massacres is that the corpses at the sites of militia massacres have been left as found 14 months ago as a permanent display for fact-finding missions, while those resulting from RPF atrocities, for example at Kibeho, were hastily disposed of in all-night burial sessions.

The UN commissioned 'independent' investigations into allegations of systematic atrocities conducted by the RPF. The first allegations were made by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in a report published in September, subsequently supported by Amnesty International. It held that the RPF had conducted revenge killings after taking power on a systematic basis, with at least 30 000 casualties. The second allegation, made by journalists and NGO workers, was that the RPF killings of refugees at Kibeho camp were unprovoked massacres. Both investigations established that the RPF was responsible for killings, but, in the tortuous logic of the- Tribunal, that the killings were neither systematic nor planned attacks upon an ethnic group, and therefore outside the remit of genocide.

The Tribunal's definition of genocide is self-serving. In Article 2 genocide 'means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole

or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. as such:

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

In addition. the Tribunal has wider powers in terms of Article 3 to prosecute against individuals guilty of crimes against humanity, which are 'committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population on national, political, ethnic, racial or religious grounds.'

Proving that the war in Rwanda had an ethnic component and that atrocities against civilians were committed, does not prove genocide. With criteria like these it would be difficult not to attach the genocide label to most of the wars that have occurred over the past century. Were the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki not planned and systematically executed acts of barbarism upon a racially defined group?

The establishment of the genocide line and the implementation of the Tribunal as the practical method of dealing with the issue has important consequences.

Firstly. culpability for the terrible death toll and refugee crisis is located squarely upon an African society, while the behind-the-scenes manipulation of the various Western governments that provoked the conflict is entirely removed from the picture. In the characterisation of genocide a simple causal link between ethnic hatred in the minds of Hutu extremists and the deaths is established. Meanwhile the war fomented between the RPF and the Hutu regime. the part played by British and American advisers and trainers. and the polarisation of Rwandan society under the Arusha Accords are all left out of the account as beyond the remit of the Tribunal. The 'Hutu extremist' is a post-Cold War caricature as convenient to Western intervention as the Somali warlord, the Serbian guerrilla, and the Islamic fundamentalist. These are the fictitious demons against which the 'international community' now defines itself.

As 'Hutu extremists' are demonised in Western accounts, the ordinary population of Rwanda are rendered as compliant accomplices to the massacres

. 'Hate radio' is held to be responsible for the ethnic conflict as Rwandans are presumed to be fairly mindless people, who do whatever they are told as long as the language is bloodthirsty enough. The real sources of tension in Rwanda are all obscured in this late twentieth century morality play of dark forces in the Dark Continent.

Nelson Mandela's statement that 'Rwanda is a rebuke to Africa', made at the last Organisation of African Unity summit in Tunis, added weight to the notion of African culpability. The question of any Western culpability is conveniently ignored. Western powers are seen, perversely, in the role of hapless onlookers.

The appointment of a largely African judiciary should not obscure a Western agenda. The shots are called by the Tribunal's paymasters: the largest being America, with three million dollars and an additional four million for Rwanda's judiciary. The Tribunal is staffed with American prosecutors and investigators, and assisted with American intelligence information.

For the RPF, the irony is that, having exploited the argument that the war was a genocide for all it is worth, it is now finding its relationship with the Western world increasingly problematic. The RPF used the genocide argument to legitimise its military takeover of Rwanda, presenting its seizure of state power as a genocide-relieving exercise. Yet while the Tribunal has largely excused the RPF of atrocities, its implementation has also stripped away Rwanda's sovereignty, and made the new government little more than an adjunct of Western policy. Back in May 1994, RPF vice-chair Patrick Mazimpaka grovelled before the American House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa:

'Mr. Chairman, civilised society is shocked by the sight of dead children, mutilated babies, and the bodies of children, men and women floating down river Kagera and wonder how our society could reach such a level of barbarism. What is an answer. The Rwandan typically obeys authority ... (t)he US government is a signatory to the Geneva Convention on Genocide and we beg you to urge your government to assume its leadership role in this regard' (Statement before the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, 24 May 1994, quoted in *Genocide in Rwanda*, pp. 34-35).

Yet the RPF government cast the only dissenting vote when the Tribunal was debated at the United Nations Security Council on 8 November and adopted as UN Resolution 955 of 1994. Its stated reasons were that there was no provision for the death penalty; that the Security Council has fixed the period considered as all of 1994, whereas the RPF wanted it to cover all ethnic killings from November 1990 to 17 July 1994, (thereby retrospectively legitimising its military intervention); that the RPF wanted the tribunal in

Kigali instead of Arusha (again, to legitimise it as Rwanda's government); that it wanted a say in the nomination of the six trial judges; and that it was opposed to a clause in the resolution giving the international tribunal the right to retry those already tried by national courts under certain circumstances (A. Kelly, Reuters, 9 November 1994).

The Tribunal has cast the finger of suspicion against all Hutu men, and cleared the way for mass arrests. The RPF government has been arresting people at a rate of up to 2000 a week. Arrests are carried out mainly by RPA soldiers on the basis of verbal statements by one or two accusers. By June 1995, Rwanda had around 45000 prisoners awaiting trial, stuffed into Prisons designed to hold 4500. On 26 April 1995, 28 prisoners died of suffocation in a jail in the commune of Rusatira. According to a Medecin Sans Frontiers report, one prison, Gitarama, which was built to hold 400 prisoners, held over 7000 by May 1995. Between September 1994 and May 1995, 902 prisoners had died as a direct result of inhumane living conditions due to the lack of space' (Health status of the inmates of Gitarama Prison, Rwanda, June 1995). United Nations troops have joined in the fight for control over refugee camps, with 24-hour swoops in order to arrest genocide suspects and hand them over to Kigali. On 15 November 1994, 2000 UN troops mounted predawn swoops on two camps in south-western Rwanda, capturing 47 Hutus (Independent, 16 December 1994).

It is hardly surprising that the refugees have been resisting pressures to leave the refugee camps. In the wake of the Kibeho massacre, the numbers returning declined to almost none. The Tribunal has made any Hutu man fair game.

The demonisation of Hutus has had regional and international ramifications. The Burundian military has literally been getting away with murder in its repression of its own 'Hutu militia' -- a term loosely used against any group of Hutus. Recent reports indicate that most Hutus have been driven out of Bujumbura, Burundi's capital. Had these attacks been directed against Tutsis, there is no doubt that the Western world would have brought charges of ethnic cleansing against the Burundian armed forces.

Not content with the Tribunal, individual Western powers have been detaining Rwandans on charges related to genocide, and preparing their own judiciaries to handle the cases. On 27 February this year, the Security Council 'urged' member states to arrest and detain suspects. The Belgian public prosecutor has interviewed 20 Rwandans who lost relatives, and detained Alphonse Higaniro and Vincent Ntezimana (Human Rights Watch/Africa, 11 May 1995). Leon Mugesera, former senior adviser to Habyarimana, is being investigated by police in Canada, where he now lives, under Canada's War Crimes Act which permits the prosecution of anyone on Canadian soil who has committed or counselled any person to commit an act that is a 'crime against humanity'.

He is accused of making a speech in November 1992 in Kabaya province, allegedly inciting acts of genocide against Tutsis (Guardian, 17 August 1994). Thus one of the extraordinary consequences of the demonisation of the Hutus is that a Rwandan politician is to face trial in Canada under the War Crimes Act for making a speech in Rwanda.

Proving 'genocide' in Rwandan courts is the justice of the new victors of Rwanda. Proving 'genocide' through an international Tribunal and within the judiciaries of individual Western powers is justice which reflects the power relationship between the West and the rest. It is designed to give maximum force to the idea that people like the Rwandans need to be policed and judged by Western agencies for their own good.

The Tribunal is the last thing Rwanda needs. Western intervention has brought about yet another undemocratic regime, and fuelled Rwanda's bloodiest war to date. The Tribunal has targeted all Hutus and polarised Rwandan society further. The demonisation of Hutus has exacerbated conflicts in Burundi. Another war in Rwanda, war in Burundi and war in the wider inter-lacustrine region are now on the agenda and will remain there for as long as Western interference persists.

Who is to blame?

The analysis in this paper locates the dynamic for war in the shift in Western policy towards Rwanda after the Cold War. The new policy was intended to reconstitute Rwanda's elite, by terminating the monopoly of state control enjoyed by that section of Rwanda's elite under Habyarimana. An accommodation with the RPF and other smaller parties was to be achieved at Arusha. In a society where state patronage meant survival for a great many, and which was already reeling under a succession of economic shocks, this policy could only destabilise society further. In addition, rival positions taken by different Western powers contributed enormously to both the inevitability and scale of conflict.

The enormous differences between Western clout and the impoverished society in Rwanda meant that Western intervention of any kind would have dramatic consequences. For elite factions in such underdeveloped countries, making links with the West is often the only guarantee of stability and success. The sheer desperation of Rwandan society meant that the contest for Western patronage would be bloody. The fact that the Western powers themselves were at odds meant that those conflicts would assume new dimensions of viciousness when played out on the Rwandan stage.

On the one hand, Habyarimana faced the threat of a US/British-backed RPF military overthrow. on the other, continued Belgian and French backing encouraged him to tough it out. By the time Belgium and France ditched

Habyarimana there was no possibility of a return to a negotiated settlement. The piece of paper signed by the desperate Habyarimana and glorified as the Arusha Accords could not carry the support of his followers, since they had recognised that the Accords were not an agreement. but a capitulation. Habyarimana's supporters could hardly be expected to follow him into the abyss without a fight.

The Arusha Accords were therefore not products of a negotiated settlement, but the outcome of Western coercion. As such they served only to fan the flames of war. The assassination of Habyarimana, however it was carried out, must be seen in this context. Once it was evident to all that the question of state power was going to be settled by war, the West wanted an RPF takeover to be achieved as quickly as possible.

Renewed Western intervention at the end of the Cold War is primarily to blame. But the very different way in which the war in Rwanda was perceived in the West was influenced by the outlook of the non-governmental organisations.

The ensuing war was called anything but war. The consensus around genocide obscured altogether the destabilising role of the West, the effect upon the Rwandan population of the RPF's military advance across the country, and the legitimacy crisis experienced by the RPF in government. The genocide consensus is a rewriting of history. According to this version, a noble Western attempt to promote democracy foundered in the face of an implacable Hutu hatred; and the RPF was not a section of the Rwandan elite with an extremely narrow social base engaging in a war for state power, but the only force at hand willing and able to rid Rwanda of genocidal killers.

The massacres committed by the Hutu militia, repugnant as they were, must be seen in the context of the all or-nothing situation that had been created. What is achieved with the term 'genocide' is not an understanding. but a label. The attraction of this label to those who attach it is that it takes investigation away from the arena of politics to that of morality. Instead of trying to understand the war in Rwanda, the task in hand becomes one of psychoanalysing Hutu hatred.

If the genocide consensus had been confined to the corridors of academia. it would be of little consequence. But the wider belief that what had taken place was really an act of genocide became a problem because this interpretation did not attribute the war in Rwanda to Western intervention. but to a supposed absence of Western intervention. Furthermore, the belief that the conflict was an act of genocide gave shape to a moral imperative for further intervention. The establishment of the Tribunal is a direct consequence, and has made matters much worse. Through criminalising Hutus, the Tribunal has polarised Rwandan society further still, and sown the seeds

of war in the future.

While the RPF sought to persuade the Americans that the conflict was really a case of genocide, the primary advocates of this approach were Western 'non-governmental' organisations (NGOs). The most comprehensive case for the genocide interpretation was presented by African Rights, with its publication *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, released in September 1994. Oxfam, Amnesty International, and indeed virtually every single one of the 150-odd NGOs operating in Rwanda have endorsed the genocide interpretation.

It is worth noting that most NGOs recognised that the RPF was fighting a war in Rwanda, and therefore not everything could be attributed to genocide, at least during the first few months after April 1994. This is how African Rights put it:

'The RPF was not responsible for the genocide; moreover it was largely responsible for halting the genocide. These are facts that cannot be disputed. At the same time, it is beyond dispute that the RPF invasion of 1 October 1990 was the single most important factor in escalating the political polarisation of Rwanda, and plunging it into a war that displaced hundreds of thousands of people' (p. 628).

Yet the polarising effect of the RPF's offensive between April and July which culminated in the capture of Kigali and the seizure of power is not raised for investigation. The implication behind African Rights' argument is that the offensive was not warfare as much as intervention to prevent Hutu militias slaughtering civilians. Oxfam also makes the same, forced distinction between RPF atrocities and Hutu atrocities:

'There are two linked conflicts going on at once -- the relatively "conventional" civil war between government forces and the RPF; and the "ethnic cleansing" of Tutsis by the youth militias. The militias also targeted Hutus who opposed the former government, were in favour of sharing power with the Tutsis, or involved in human rights organisations. This targeting has been called 'political cleansing' (Oxfam, *Rwanda: Questions and Answers July-August 1994*).

In this perverse interpretation, one kind of killing is downplayed as 'conventional,' as though that made dying at the RPF's hands all right, while another kind of killing is 'ethnic cleansing' to make it especially wicked. And when the facts do not suit the argument that the killings are ethnically inspired, because the victims are of the same ethnic background as their killers, Oxfam arbitrarily widens its definition of ethnic cleansing by calling it 'political cleansing'. But if the killings are politically inspired, how are they different from the invasion of Rwanda launched by the RPF?

The refusal of the NGOs to examine the conflict in its totality creates this partial and duplicitous presentation of events. It is not just that the NGOs present the RPF as 'the good guys', even where the evidence does not do so. The real problem is the way that they sensationalise the crimes of the 'bad guys'. The effect of this gross distortion of the real conflict is to justify further Western intervention, when Western intervention is the source of the conflict in the first place. For the NGOs, the advantage is that they get to bask in the reflected glory of the clean-up operation, secure in the knowledge that they have fulfilled their moral duty to tell the world about 'genocide.'

The most ridiculous consequence of the portrayal of the war as a genocide was the reluctance and in many instances refusal of the NGOs to recognise the two million people who fled their homes and ended up in refugee camps as bona fide refugees. The refugees are overwhelmingly Hutus, as would be expected after an RPF invasion. But the NGOs did not regard Hutus as the victims of ethnic hatred. So what made them refugees? When the NGOs and Western media asked them why they had fled their homes, they were told that they had fled from the RPF. This raised uncomfortable questions. If the RPF was saving Rwandans from genocide, why did their military advance generate Rwanda's worst refugee crisis in its history?

The NGOs attempted to resolve this problem by questioning the veracity of the refugees' accounts. As the aid agencies tell it, people fled their homes and lands en masse, not because of their own experiences of RPF atrocities, or reasonable anticipations of them, but solely on the basis of rumours, often spread by Hutu militias. We are asked to accept that through interviewing Rwandans, irrefutable proof has been established for genocide, yet when it is the RPF that is being accused, suddenly the accounts of Rwandans are seen as untrustworthy, or downright mendacious. African Rights draws this out:

'Those who have attempted to conduct serious investigations [into allegations of RPF atrocities! all report the difficulties of disentangling fact from fiction.' (p. 647).

A report by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees last September, that did acknowledge RPF atrocities was endorsed by one NGO, Amnesty International, but was pilloried by virtually every other. The point is that NGOs were determined to downplay RPF atrocities as regrettable excesses of war, and sensationalise Hutu militia atrocities as genocide.

The NGOs gave the lead to the media, which changed their reports on the killings from being the outcome of irrational tribal passions, to the master work of a genocidal plan. The NGOs also promoted the idea that the refugees

were to be treated with suspicion. At best their lies about their experiences were selfishly inspired -- they wanted to receive whatever aid was on offer: at worst they were genocidal killers themselves engaging in a cover-up.

The sheer callousness of the NGOs and aid agencies when faced with the real suffering caused by the RPF advance was breathtaking. Organisations that purported to be concerned with refugees, with hunger and with justice refused to see the evidence before their eyes. The refugees created by the RPF advance just did not fit the pat explanations of the NGOs. And rather than reconsider their actions, these organisations and agencies ignored the suffering of the refugees, denouncing people in the most desperate conditions as Hutu extremists.

By the time other reports surfaced about RPF killings and the continued political crisis experienced by the new government, the genocide consensus had hardened and become a catch-all explanation for the conflict. No attempt to understand the conflict in Rwanda that countered the official interpretation could be allowed to stand unchallenged. African Rights expressed this dogmatic approach most clearly:

'It is impossible to understand the current situation in Rwanda or make a contribution to resolving some of the acute problems without recognising the reality of the genocide, the huge crime that profoundly colours every individual and every event in Rwanda.' (Africa Rights, A Waste of Hope, May 1995)

Of course the fact that a large proportion of refugees refute this reality is easily dismissed by the NGOs.

Because of the NGOs dogmatic interpretation of events in Rwanda a vast population of refugees is denied refugee status, and is under continuous suspicion. It is no surprise that the mounting antipathy between the refugees and the NGOs has been put down to the influence of the militias. This seamless logic of the 'genocide' interpretation of the conflict also removes any responsibility the NGOs have for exacerbating the appalling conditions in the camps.

Thanks to the highly ideological interpretation of the Rwandan conflict, 'Hutu extremism' has been estate. fished as yet another beast in the jungle of the Dark Continent which the NGO missionaries of the West have to deal with.

Lessons from Rwanda

- 1) The Western powers are getting away with the presentation of their policies towards Africa as a promotion of democracy, because nobody is challenging their authority to intervene. The idea that the West has turned a new leaf after the Cold War must be challenged.
- 2) While the genocide label might initially have seemed plausible, it tells us nothing about the cause of the war, or its consequences. But it does tell us a great deal about the prejudices of non-governmental organizations. These prejudices have the full weight of Western foreign policy behind them. For this reason they tend to dominate popular debate. It is essential to get behind the superficial explanation of conflict.
- 3) The fight for democratic rights in Africa can only be fought by Africans within their societies. Democracy is not something which can be imposed on negotiations from without. The problem facing Rwanda and the rest of Africa is not the lack of a democratic culture, but the Western intervention that frustrates self-determination.
- 4) The Hutu extremist is a Western-inspired caricature, as pernicious as the 'black terrorist' was in South Africa and the 'warlord' was in Somalia. Similar caricatures are to be expected wherever the West is promoting intervention. It is important to get to grips with the demonisation of people in Africa and the rest of the Third World, and with the reasons for Western establishments always locating problems 'over there.'

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