



Behind the Decisions of Intervention: The Neglects of the Rwandan Genocide

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Behind the Decisions of Intervention: The Neglects of the Rwandan Genocide

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for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

My research is centered on the Clinton Administration and the United States' lack of involvement during the Rwandan genocide. The research begins with identifying and defining the concept of American exceptionalism, which gives a brief look into America's obligation to preserve democracy and protect human rights. The thesis summarizes the events that took place in Rwanda, and the violence that claimed 800,000 lives. Parts of the thesis use other scholars' criteria as to when to intervene in global conflict. These support my own research and my assertions as to why the United States declined to provide military aid. The key issue is that the United States chooses when to be exceptional in a time of global conflict, which questions the concept of American exceptionalism altogether.

My research uses secondary sources and draws from other studies on intervention and American foreign policy to answer the question of whether or not the United States uses military aid when it offers political and economic returns.

Author's Biographical Sketch

Courtney Henderson is a political strategist and community leader in the South Shore area of Massachusetts. Since her move to Massachusetts in 2016, Courtney has organized workshops for women with the Brockton Area Branch NAACP, and symposiums and community events with the South Shore chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Not only is Courtney a leader for the Women in NAACP (WIN) Committee, but she also serves as the Vice President and Social Action Chair for her local chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho.

Courtney is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Develop & Empower Consulting LLC, a political campaign management and public relations boutique firm. For the past seven years, Courtney has worked closely with municipal leaders in developing city plans that promote and encourage diversity, inclusion, and constituent engagement.

Her academic work includes writings on African American voter participation and the adverse effects of voter ID laws.

Courtney, a Columbus, Ohio native, graduated *Magna Cum Laude* from Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, in 2016 earning a Bachelor's degree in political science and Spanish. Upon completion of this thesis, she earned a Master's degree with a concentration in international relations from Harvard University.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my supportive parents, Mark and Dawn Henderson, and to my grandparents, Daisy Roberts, Dorothy Henderson and Walter Henderson. Their guidance, support, and prayers have kept me going during a challenging, yet rewarding time.

I also dedicate this thesis to those who have been a bright light in my life and to those who have shown me love and taught me lessons I will always remember. To those watching over me from above, I send my love to the skies.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The United States has long been considered a country that is first to respond to global crises and a promoter of global peacekeeping. The United States has also been a country that prides itself on protecting human rights and defending democracy. This concept of the United States being a “beacon on the hill” is not new. In fact, the notion began even before the United Nations was created. The United States played a huge role in founding the United Nations in 1945 and played a significant role in the drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (UN, 1948a). The United States’ role in both is noteworthy because it demonstrated the nation’s desire to end global conflict and strife, which the world endured during both World War I and World War II.

America’s exceptionalism and its influence in global politics has been a much-debated topic. From the lenses and perspectives of many Americans, the United States is and will always be exceptional. From the eyes of those who have been wronged or neglected, that could be argued. Through this research I can contribute further to existing research, seeking to determine whether the United States is as influential and remarkable as it claims to be in the global economy and in global politics.

Even now, we live in a moment of global uncertainty and confusion on the topic of exceptionalism. We live in a time where confidence in the Western order and its American backing has diminished. Scholars like Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and Robert Keohane make this argument, along with others. It can be argued that the world is transitioning to a

multipolar dynamic from a once unipolar world. Unfortunately, or fortunately, limiting the United States' involvement has become a new tradition.

As new opportunities arise for conflict and tension, the current debate about America's role in this uncertain world is dominated by two options. The first draws on the tradition of American exceptionalism, which focuses on U.S. military intervention. The second is a form of neo-isolationism. In the past we have seen U.S. intervention in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, and many more—although some argue that it may have been for national interest and not necessarily from a humanitarian standpoint. Robert Keohane made the point in his paper titled *When Should the US Intervene? Criteria for Military Intervention in Weak Countries*. He identifies countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, as ones that lacked clear objectives and effective exit strategies, thus pointing to national interest and motives (Keohane, 2011, p. 11) While the initial intervention may have started off as just and necessary, other factors played a key role.

The President of the United States holds great world power. A sitting president not only controls the strongest military, but also inherits a responsibility—one that the United States chose for itself—which is to use its economic, political, and military might to deter and prevent wars between major powers, which had already consumed the early part of the 20th century. With the creation of the United Nations, the United States utilized its power to avoid another world war. It is no secret that the bulk of American military power was deployed in Asia and in Europe to preserve the security of these regions' democracies and avoid outbreaks of active hostility. American power is crucial to the continuing peace which the United States has enjoyed since the end of the World War II. History has proven that the result of the United States' spending less effort to

keep the peace means that threats will mount and become less manageable, which will eventually become too large to ignore, which is similar to the incident of the Rwandan Genocide.

When world leaders from the United Nations fail in their mission of peacekeeping, the alternative is the United States. American foreign policy has never stumbled on a justification for its extensive role in the Middle East that squares with the notion of American exceptionalism, responsibility, or the basic concept of keeping the peace.

However, there was a stumble in Rwanda. We can credit the United States for preventing a number of wars, but Rwanda is one that the United States cannot pride itself on. This thesis covers the historical events that took place in Rwandan, and the reactions from global leaders during the violent war. I discuss American exceptionalism and how it ties in with the Rwanda genocide, citing multiple correspondences between foreign leaders, White House advisors, diplomats, and President Bill Clinton.

This research relies heavily on secondary sources, and as part of my research I used those sources to back my assertions. After discussing the multiple efforts pursued to persuade the United States to provide assistance, I discuss why I believe the Clinton administration chose to ignore the multiple pleas for help. I also use criteria from other scholars of global interventions to show that the Clinton administration chose not to intervene because there was no economic or political reward. Then I consider the morality of the decisions made by the Clinton administration. This is important because morality plays a huge and vital role in American exceptionalism. Morality is what many

argue to be the pillars of this country's government. The thesis ends with a summary of the thesis discussion.

Chapter II

Research Question and Methodology

The primary focus of this thesis is to recount the massacres of the Rwanda genocide and analyze the response of the Clinton administration. I provide answers to why United States officials chose not to provide military and humanitarian aid during the Rwandan genocide.

This thesis draws from other studies conducted by foreign affairs scholars on the United States and their decision-making strategy during global crisis. The objective is to determine what factors are taken into consideration when considering United States intervention in the conflict. My research is limited to the United States and its lack of intervention during the Rwanda genocide, hoping to facilitate a discussion of why the United States limits its involvement in global conflict.

The problem I address is whether the United States intervenes when likely results show a return on investment for the country, and whether there are possible financial or political gains when the United States decides to take action. The case of Rwanda sheds light on whether intervention is for unilateral purposes—financial or political—and if that was the cause for the United States' delay in providing aid to Rwanda.

What is significant to note is the power the U.S. president holds in decision-making regarding foreign policy. The president assumes substantial power when deciding when and how the United States provides military and financial relief to other nations. This power is important to consider more deeply because the United States is a

superpower of global governance and holds the top position when it comes to military and economic power. When a country like the United States holds military and economic power, it also has the luxury of deciding who to help and which methods of assistance it is willing to provide. The deeper purpose of this thesis is look at why the United States uses, or in some cases abuses, its military and economic power by withholding aid in a global crisis. After reading studies by other scholars on this topic, I developed my contention that the United States considers intervention when such intervention will provide political and economic return.

Rwanda and the United States have a rocky and unusual relationship. Rwanda experienced one of the largest and most studied genocides in the world. While many scholars have examined it, few have focused on the reasoning behind the lack of action from the United States when it came to providing military aid. Previous studies focused on why the genocide took place, and the political and ethical difficulties that occurred within Rwanda. Few consider the motives that kept the United States from working with the United Nations in its peacekeeping efforts.

This study provides another contribution to extant studies, as my research examines President Clinton's policies that took effect in 1994, the year of the genocide, and compares them to the risks and gains that would have taken place had the United States intervened. This case study provides a lens into the influences and factors that the United States considers when intervening in humanitarian disasters, and gives a deeper understanding of what prevented the United States from responding to the Rwandan genocide.

My thesis broadly considers President Clinton's administration and its decision-making strategy regarding global crisis, especially those involving humanitarian disasters and crimes against humanity. *The research question is: Does the United States intervene only when the intervention is consistent with its national interests?*

I will answer why the Clinton administration did not provide humanitarian and military aid, despite constant reports on the violence taking place. My view, based on my research, is that the Clinton administration chose to ignore and withdraw its military support because there was no political or economic gain. This appears to be the case, as evidenced by the lack of intervention in the Rwandan genocide. *My hypothesis is that the United States chose not to intervene or provide military aid because there was too much risk, with nothing to gain in return.*

I looked for answers to these questions by examining correspondence between ambassadors, diplomats, cabinet members, advisors, and United Nation members, as well as reviewing President Clinton's speeches and writings. I sought stories recounted by natives of Rwanda to identify areas that I believe demonstrated a lack of political concern on the part of the U.S. while also lacking humanitarian concern.

Lastly, I incorporate the concept of American exceptionalism into the thesis. I define the term, then focus on why the neglectful behavior is considered out of the norm for the United States. and highlight how it shows that the United States acts in its national interest and unilaterally, not by the morality that many presidents, including Clinton, pride themselves on having. I cite scholars who have defined American exceptionalism in their own words, to create an overall definition of American exceptionalism and connect it to the Clinton administration's tactics, to prove that the United States did not live up to

the role it assumed at the founding of the United Nations in 1945, and as the key player of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The thesis conclusion discusses the Clinton administration on a moral dimension. My reason for including a moral point of view is to show that American exceptionalism is situational and is used only when it brings political and economic advantage.

Definition of Terms

American Exceptionalism: the idea that the United States is inherently different from other nations.

Crimes Against Humanity: a deliberate act, typically as part of a systematic campaign, that causes human suffering or death on a large scale

Genocide: the deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group. (United Nations)

Hutu: a Bantu-speaking people who are the majority population in Rwanda and Burundi. They are traditionally a farming people, and were historically dominated by the Tutsi minority.

Tutsi: a people who are the minority population in Rwanda and Burundi, who formerly dominated the Hutu majority.

Chapter III

American Exceptionalism: A Literature Review

Numerous Americans talk about America's exceptionalism and enthusiastically describe United States democracy as the "beacon on the hill" for all to admire. It is often said that other countries look to America during crisis, and that America leads by example. Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State, noted that international order depends not only upon the balance of hard power, but also on perceptions of legitimacy—and legitimacy depends on value (Kissinger, 2014, p. 45).

Two centuries after the United States drafted its Constitution, countries like Venezuela mimicked the United States when drafting its own constitution. Alexis de Tocqueville studied American government and its Constitution, then advocated for the American system and structure to be emulated in other countries. De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* was published in French newspapers in 1835 and again in 1840. His article praised America's concept and its ideologies, well before the term "American exceptionalism" became a global concept.

Similar to de Tocqueville, thinkers like Georges Danton and Maximilien Robespierre taught courses during the French Revolution about America's Constitution because of its fundamental concepts of citizenry and democracy. Both scholars studied in the United States and marveled over the new concepts that had not been thought of or practiced in their respective countries. As a result of scholars studying in the United States, the Constitution of the United States became universally known among

constitutional lawyers and international policy analysts. In Germany, there are points of reference to the United States Constitution in the 1848 German Constitutional Assembly (“Influence of the American Constitution Abroad,” 2). More specifically, the German Constitutional Assembly mirrors the United States’ Constitution in the Basic Rights section of the German constitution. There are direct references to individual rights like human dignity, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, protection of private property, and numerous others. Other countries also emulated the U.S. Bill of Rights and incorporate some of its basic human rights.

Today, scholars such as Stephen Brooks, Robert Keohane, and Joseph S. Nye are well known for writing about American foreign policy and the American image globally. However, I believe there is more to know about the global view of the United States on a micro level. In order to look at America’s foreign policy and its exceptionalism on a deeper level, we must incorporate the views of other countries. Stephen Brooks, who wrote *American Exceptionalism in the Age of Obama* (2013), argues that American exceptionalism is still influential and expands beyond its borders.

Joseph S. Nye, a Harvard professor, discusses his views on American exceptionalism (2020, 2018). He believes that Americans often see their country as exceptional. Nye argues that the core reason the United States is widely viewed as exceptional is due to its liberal character and ideological vision of a way of life centered on political, economic, and social freedom. While Nye agrees that the United States views itself as exceptional, he also argues that it is controversial due to the country’s deeply rooted racism. This contradiction stems from the country’s beginnings when slavery was written into its constitution. Arguments like these show that America was

flawed from the beginning. I would agree that America's exceptionalism is questionable because democracy was extended to some but not to all.

Considering America's exceptionalism on a domestic level, there also appears to be division on how to promote liberal values in foreign policy. The United States promotes liberal values, but they come with a price tag, which ties back to the country's habit of working for its own national interest which I will discuss in more detail later in this thesis.

Nye further details his belief that the United States largely focused on westward expansion in the 19th century, and tried to avoid entanglement in the struggle for power then taking place in Europe. Nye notes: "By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, America had replaced Britain as the world's largest economy, and its intervention in World War I tipped the balance of power" (2018, p. 30).

It is evident that after the foundation was laid for a new world, the United States shifted to an isolationist mindset and focused on its own national interest. After World War II, Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman each changed direction and decided that an isolationist policy was the best option for the United States. Both had learned the costly consequences of taking on the burden of world order and global peace, especially during World War II, which remains the costliest conflict in American history.

Earlier wars in American history resulted in the United States gaining more land and territories. For example, the Mexican-American War in the 1840s yielded much of the territory that makes up the Southwest region of the country today. Likewise, the Spanish-American War gave the United States control of the Pacific islands of Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. The outcomes of the Mexican-American and Spanish-

American wars led to the United States establishing one of the largest military bases around the world. History shows that prior to WWII, the country's defense budget was spent on direct conflict.

It should also be noted that WW II did not yield similar benefits. During that war, the United States gave significantly more military supplies and assistance to its allies than any other country. The United States gave assistance even before its official involvement, which began in September, 1940. President Roosevelt declared earlier that while the United States would remain neutral in law, nevertheless it felt morally obligated to help England in particular, because it did not have the money to pay for military goods, raw materials and food. Other countries benefited from the Lend-Lease and the Neutrality Act.

Many Americans were opposed to involving the United States in another war. After listening to opposition from the American people, President Roosevelt had to switch to a method that kept the United States more neutral and isolated, and if the country had to get involved, there needed to be some form of benefit from it. On September 2, 1940, President Roosevelt signed the Destroyers for Bases agreement. Under the terms of the agreement, the United States gave the British more than 50 obsolete destroyers in exchange for 99-year leases on land in Newfoundland and the Caribbean, which would be used as U.S. air and naval bases. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill requested that Roosevelt provide the destroyers as a gift, but Roosevelt knew that the American public and Congress would oppose such a deal because there was no return on such an investment. He decided instead that a deal that gave the United States long-term access to British bases could be justified as essential to

the security of the Western Hemisphere. The Lend-Lease program was designed to serve America's desire to defeat Nazi Germany without entering the war until the American military and public was prepared to fight.

Instead of intervening with global conflict, the United States created a system of security alliances, multilateral institutions, and relatively open economic policies that comprised *Pax Americana* or the "liberal international order" (Nye, 2018, p. 24). This concept arose after dealing with the cost of carrying the burden of global conflict. Liberal international order changed the way the world and the United States handled conflict. It became a way for the entire world to share the burden. It created international organizations that would help negotiate any disputes in a civil manner rather than one that included violence.

Overall, I agree with Nye's argument on American exceptionalism. The United States has strayed from becoming involved in global conflict and has become more selective when it comes to intervention. That was apparent when it came to WW II. The United States was focused on obtaining some political, financial, or military return for its assistance. The Mexican-American and Spanish-American war brought substantial gains to the United States. The United States was and is very strategic in its foreign policy—perhaps even somewhat selfish—which has given rise to the nation's global success.

Another notable Harvard political scientist is Samuel P. Huntington (1993), who thought U.S. primacy was central "to the future of freedom, democracy, open economies, and international order in the world." Journalist Michael Hirsh went even further, writing in his book *At War With Ourselves* (2003) that America's global role is "the greatest gift the world has received in many, many centuries, possibly all of recorded history" (p.

254). Scholarly works such as *America's Mission* by Tony Smith and Richard Leone (1995), and G. John Ikenberry's *Liberal Leviathan* (2011) emphasize America's contribution to the spread of democracy and its promotion of a supposedly liberal world order. Both Ikenberry and Smith believe that the United States has made undeniable contributions to peace and stability in the world over the past century, including the Marshall Plan and the creation and management of the Bretton Woods financial system.

This thinking is somewhat different from Nye, who posits that the United States is motivated to help because of perceived national gains and not because of the moral duties that were placed in their hands to maintain world peace. Ikenberry and Smith credit the United States for global stability. I do not disagree that the United States has contributed to peace, but the motives behind those contributions are debatable.

There are other scholars who are more skeptical of the belief in America's exceptionalism. Harvard scholar Stephen M. Walt investigates the imperfections within America's foreign policy. In his article "The Myth of American Exceptionalism" (2011), Walt talks about the false beliefs of American exceptionalism. He describes the United States in terms by which it is commonly known, such as "an empire of liberty" and "shining city on a hill." The United States has also been referred to as the "last best hope of Earth," the "leader of the free world," and the "indispensable nation." Many other articles on American exceptionalism presume that America's values, political system, and history are unique and differ from other nations. They also imply that the United States is entitled to play a positive role on the global politics. Walt states that this belief is a myth. Although the United States possesses certain unique qualities, such as high levels of religiosity and a strong political culture that privileges individual freedom, the country's

foreign policy has been determined based on its competitive nature in international politics. Since the United States focuses on its exceptionalism, the country blinds itself to the ways in which it is not so exceptional. Walt's writing on America's exceptionalism explains why it is harder for Americans to understand why others are less enthusiastic about U.S. dominance and why so many are alarmed by U.S. policies. Walt also explains the hypocrisy on the United States' stance on nuclear weapons, international laws, and its tendency to condemn other countries' shortcomings while ignoring its own.

Declarations of American exceptionalism rest on the belief that the United States is a uniquely virtuous nation, one that loves peace, nurtures liberty, respects human rights, and embraces the rule of law. While the United States rests on those beliefs, it rarely acknowledges or apologizes for its inhumane treatment of African Americans and slavery, and the unnecessary and costly wars. The United States' treatment of minorities, especially African Americans, weakens its argument that the country is exceptional and is a model for all to follow. Although this is a domestic issue and not an issue of foreign relations, it is still worth mentioning because it reflects the distrust felt by African leaders.

It also demonstrates what each U.S. presidential administration prioritizes in its agenda and morality. During the Reconstruction era, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery; the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was enacted, which gave African Americans citizenship; the Fourteenth Amendment was added, which prohibited states from denying citizens due process and equal protection law; and the Fifteenth Amendment was added, giving the right to vote to everyone, not based on race. Each was created to eliminate these "Black Codes" and to keep states from continuing their racism

towards Blacks. After the success of the Reconstruction Era, there was a rise in literacy rates, Blacks became elected officials, and many founded successful businesses. However, while all seemed well, and things were picking up for the Black race, the Fifteenth Amendment was vague, leaving it to the states to impose taxes and other strategies for keeping Blacks from voting and exercising their rights—rights that the United States prides itself on. In sum, equality was only written into documents, but not yet seen in reality.

African Americans obtained more political power and were starting to march forward to a greater social and economic equality. With such success, there also came a counter-movement from groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, which disapproved of Blacks becoming less inferior; with the Klan's increasing violence, it became very successful. The federal government no longer made effort to enforce federal civil rights legislation. Funding for the Freedmen's Bureau dropped tremendously which were organizations that helped the Black community.

By the 1960s, with so many outraged white supremacist protesting, many presidential candidates used the War on Drugs and strict police enforcement as their platform, which became beneficial for their campaigns. During this time, President Nixon was alerted to racial fears during the southern strategy. He stated, "You have to face the fact that the blacks are the whole problem" (Alexander, 2010, p. 44). In other words, in principle you have to recognize this fact without bringing attention to the Blacks by performing reverse psychology by targeting the anti-racists, meaning they would fight for racial issues while using anti-Black rhetoric. According to Alexander, this strategy seemed smart at the time. In actuality it did not work because it encountered racial

polarization (i.e., divisions within a race based on different ratios of ancestry, resulting in separate groups).

People throughout history make their way through the system by playing it exceptionally well. For example, two presidential candidates, George Wallace and Richard Nixon, both played the system by using law and order as part of their primary rhetoric. They actually gained 57% of the vote by claiming to support “law and order” tactics.

During this time a new type of slavery was formed by incarcerating Blacks. The aggressive enforcement of criminal offenses opened up an enormous market for convict leasing, in which prisoners were contracted out as laborers to the highest private bidder. Tens of thousands of African Americans were arrested during this period and sent to courts where they were charged heavy fines that then had to be worked off in order to secure their release. These laborers were sent to many different places throughout the U.S. South to work in strenuous conditions to pay off their debt. This led to shockingly high death rates, since their health did not concern the private contractors. The Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolished slavery, but it allowed one major exception: slavery remained appropriate as punishment for a crime. Segregation laws were also created during this time in an effort to drive a wedge between poor whites and African Americans.

So-called “Jim Crow” laws and policies also threatened America’s democratic values. Alexander (2010) mentions the appeal of communism to Blacks. Communists espoused racial and economic equality. Blacks, wanting equality as well, could be susceptible to embracing communism and engaging in communist activities to attain it

(Alexander, 2010, p. 36). The appeal of communism to Blacks, and the international embarrassment of Jim Crow laws, persuaded Americans to reconsider how the institution benefited the country.

These historical events show that the president of the United States controls what is prioritized based on national interest, even if it is morally wrong or if it costs others their freedoms. Without reviewing the inhumane treatment that has been deeply rooted in America's history, we cannot fully understand how flawed the concept of American exceptionalism is. Although this paper concentrates primarily on the neglect in Rwanda, scholars cannot ignore that America's exceptionalism does not begin and end with international intervention, but rather with its overall morality. The United States and its presidents have proven that the country will act in its own national interest, and not in a fashion of humanity.

Godfrey Hodgson mirrors the sentiments of Huntington. Hodgson (2005) discusses the spread of liberal ideals as a global phenomenon with roots in the Enlightenment, noting that European philosophers and political leaders did much to advance the democratic ideal. He believed that the abolition of slavery and the long effort to improve the status of women should be credited to Britain and other democracies more than to the United States. He also believed that the United States cannot claim a global leadership role on gay rights, criminal justice, or economic equality. He shows strong supporting evidence that European countries have done a better job in those areas. It is clear that Britain was more advanced in social issues, as we can see in Walt's arguments about slavery and the treatment of African Americans.

While these political scientists hold varying beliefs, former President Ronald Reagan told audiences that there was “some divine plan” (Hatchell, 1974, p. 2) that had placed America here; President George W. Bush offered a similar view in 2004, saying, “We have a calling from beyond the stars to stand for freedom” (Bush, 2004). It seems apparent that presidents are often blinded when it comes to the country’s flaws. America does have special qualities, but it is still competitive and continues to act in its national interest. Walt believes that these advantages give the United States a wider range of choice in its conduct of foreign affairs. He states:

The United States has behaved like all the rest, pursuing its own self-interest first and foremost, seeking to improve its relative position over time, and devoting relatively little blood or treasure to purely idealistic pursuits. Yet, just like past great powers, it has convinced itself that it is different, and better, than everyone else. (2011)

International politics, as Walt sees it, is a contact sport that must compromise political principles for the sake of security and prosperity. Nationalism inevitably highlights the country’s virtues, and the United States is no stranger to displaying strong nationalism.

As the world’s sole superpower, the United States carries a certain degree of knowledge and a level of influence that the United Nation struggles to achieve. Scholars have confirmed that other countries look to the United Nations as a source by which the United States may enforce their authority abroad. The United States has the most powerful army in the world and yet it wields its military influence, to the point where the entirety of the international community looks to it for guidance. This thesis shows that the United States willingly withholds its resources to protecting its interests, despite threats against humanity. It will act in its own interest rather than for the greater good.

Chapter IV

Genocide in Rwanda

In order to understand the severity of this genocide and to paint a clear picture of the disaster that occurred 27 years ago, it is necessary to recount the massacres and violence that took place. Members of the Hutu community, the ethnic majority in East-Central Africa, murdered an estimated 800,000 people—most of the deaths were people from the Tutsi tribe. About 85% of Rwanda's population were from the Hutu tribe, while the rest were Tutsi (History.com, 2009). The genocide occurred when Hutu nationalists became frustrated with government leadership.

During the colonial period, Belgians favored Tutsis. This resulted in ongoing tension between the Hutus and the Tutsis, and gave the Tutsi's a sense of superiority over the Hutu tribe. This tension ultimately transformed into violence. During the time Rwanda was working toward independence, a revolution occurred which continued the divide within the nation. The Hutu revolution in 1959 forced 330,000 Tutsis to be displaced, owing to Hutu hatred of the preferential treatment of Tutsis by Belgium. Many Tutsis fled to neighboring countries, mostly to Uganda.

By 1961, Hutus had forced Rwanda's Tutsi monarch into exile and Rwanda was declared a republic. The same year, the United Nations presented a referendum which allowed Belgium to officially grant independence to Rwanda. In 1973, a military group placed Hutu Major General Juvenal Habyarimana into power (History.com, 2009). Habyarimana founded a new political party, the National Revolutionary Movement for

Development (NRMD) which put many Hutus into military power. Thus, the country went from being controlled by Tutsis to being operated fully by Hutus. These changes were abrupt and drastic. The effects were still felt after the displacement of the Tutsis because power was obtained via violence and manipulation.

Fast forward to 30 years after the Tutsi monarch was exiled. Tutsi refugees from Uganda, now united in allegiance to the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), invaded Rwanda to reclaim land that once belonged to the Tutsis. In retaliation, President Habyarimana accused local Tutsi residents of being RPF accomplices and arrested hundreds of them—and accusation that was baseless and without merit. The false claims were a tactic to abuse power and continue to assert Hutu government authority over the Tutsis. Not only did the government start making arrests, it also began directing Hutu civilians to start murdering their Tutsi neighbors (History.com, 2009).

Many murders took place, but by 1992 there were signs that peace was around the corner. A ceasefire began, which ultimately led to negotiations between the government and the RPF. In August 1993, Habyarimana signed an agreement at Arusha, Tanzania, calling for the creation of a transitional government that would include the RPF, especially when it came to making political decisions. Even though there were talks of coming to agreement, the agreement was not equally beneficial, but rather completely one-sided. The Tutsis were disappointed by the uneven distribution of power and began to retaliate with violence.

On April 6, 1994, Tutsis shot down an airplane carrying Rwandan President Habyarimana and Burundi's president, Cyprien Ntaryamira. The killing of Habyarimana incited riots that included setting up roadblocks and barricades and the slaughtering of

Tutsis. Among the first victims of the genocide were the Hutu Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and 10 Belgian peacekeepers (History.com, 2009).

By 1992, the government started granting permission through radio ads to citizens to start slaughtering their neighbors. With the help of civilians and military men, 800,000 were killed and more than 2 million people, nearly all Hutus, fled Rwanda, crowding into refugee camps in Zaire (now known as Congo) and other neighboring countries.

(History.com, 2009). Since there were no longer any signs of reconciliation, France stepped in and played a huge role in providing military aid. Troops entered Rwanda from Zaire in late June, but they limited their intervention to a “humanitarian” zone rather than taking a combative route. France was able to save tens of thousands of Tutsi lives by helping them escape and find refuge in other countries. Even though France had saved many lives, their mission was ultimately unsuccessful.

One survivor of the Rwanda genocide was Consilee Nishimwe. She spoke with the Africa Renewal organization of her experiences in Rwanda. She told how the Tutsis had been discriminated against prior to 1994. She mentioned that certain services were denied to them because of their tribal affiliation. She said the situation grew worse as she heard the local radio stations calling Tutsis “cockroaches” and “snakes,” and suggesting ways to kill Tutsis. Nishimwe remembers she and her family were forced to leave their home and go into hiding:

I still remember how scared my parents were. As children, my siblings and I thought the mayhem would stop soon but that was not the case. We spent three months hiding in many different places and during this period many of my family members were murdered—including my father, my three brothers, my grandparents, my uncles, and many friends. (Nishimwe, n.d.)

Her father was the first in her family to be killed by the Hutus, and her brothers' murders followed immediately after. She said that the day her family was murdered was the worst day of her life. Even though she survived, she recalls that she was hurt emotionally and psychologically. While in hiding she was afraid of being raped and tortured. Many of the killers were known to rape and torture women. "During the time we were hiding, I was among the many girls who were raped and, unfortunately, I contracted HIV as a result. I still have nightmares" (Nishimwe). Because of her experiences, Nishimwe has vowed to be a voice for genocide survivors, especially for women.

Immaculée Uwizeyimana (2021), another survivor of the genocide, was with her husband and her two youngest children ages 6 and 1, in their home in a small village in southern Rwanda. After the airplane carrying the president was shot down, Immaculée and her family did not leave the house, but they were unable to contact their eldest son who was 9 at the time. She describes their situation: "On 12 April we saw some houses being burnt around us and that is when we also decided to leave our home and go somewhere." She said many of her neighbors were fleeing their homes to a school site called Murambi, a place that was supposed to be safe for those fleeing their homes. Along with her husband and the two children, Immaculée joined thousands of others at the school.

It was only a matter of time before danger followed. "We were told they were there to protect us, but we started seeing people from everywhere coming with clubs, with sticks, with machetes, and we started getting worried. That is when the policemen started shooting, and my husband and the children were killed." The killings went on all night long. Among the thousands that hid there, Immaculée was the only one to survive.

“I don’t know, maybe God just wanted me to be telling this story now. I don’t know how I survived” (Immaculée, 2021). She was bruised and battered, but was alive the next morning. She recounted seeing all of the bodies lying beside her, bloodied and mangled. She found safety by hiding in the bushes until a man found her and took her into his home. When the new government came to power, the man then took her to safety. She was reunited with some of her neighbors but none of her family members survived. “It was very hard. I was left with no relatives at all and to tell the truth I nearly committed suicide. I started asking myself why I had to survive the genocide”

However, it was not knowing what happened to her nine-year-old son that tormented Immaculée most of all. Now 54, Immaculée still finds it difficult to talk about. Her son and his grandparents had sought sanctuary at neighbor’s house, a family that had been friends with them for years. The son of the family grew up with Immaculée. She was devastated to find out that the family played a part in killing her son and relatives. “I would say I nearly went mad because looking at the relationship we had always had with Vianney, this was something that was really hard for me to understand.” Vianney, the son of the family responsible for killing her family, was put in prison but was released in 2008. Immaculée couldn’t understand why he would be released, and had to deal with deep grief and trauma, but now she finds hope and peace in life.

One last story portrays a grave picture of the genocide. Edith said in her interview: “My four brothers and sister were killed during the genocide. This commemoration is important and we must remember them,” She told the Thomson Reuters Foundation (which set up the interview) that her village in Rwanda’s southern Kamonyi district had seen some of the worst killings during the genocide. She said that

she still can't hear songs or poems on the radio that talk about the massacre because she gets flashbacks, even after 26 years. Some of the flashbacks include a time when she was hiding in the forest, and men from the militia came with their machetes. She was raped and left for dead. Edith, like many others, is still haunted (Bhalla, 2019).

Thousands of survivors still live in torment, haunted by memories of extremist Hutus who killed more 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Many of the survivors now experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Yvonne Kayiteshonga, who works as a Mental Health Division Manager at the Ministry of Health explained how this type of PTSD is very different from traditional PTSD. She described symptoms of lack of sleep, nightmares, flashbacks, depression, and anti-social behavior where sufferers are withdrawn and do not want to be with others. Kayiteshonga said preliminary results from a 2018 national survey found 35% of survivors between ages 25 and 65 reported symptoms linked to mental health problems. Seventy percent of the Tutsi population was wiped out, and over 10% of the total Rwandan population. The study also reported that sexual violence was used as a weapon of war with up to 250,000 women and girls raped, resulting in thousands of births. Hutus extremists also released AIDS patients from hospitals to form "rape squads" to infect Tutsi women, thus spreading the HIV/AIDS virus (Bhalla, 2019). After the killings ended, the focus was on providing food and shelter to the survivors, but no one paid attention to the trauma. Many women gave birth after being raped but could not accept their children, sometimes mistreating them or leaving them altogether.

The next chapter discusses how France and the United Nations requested help from the United States during the Clinton administration.

Chapter V

The Clinton Administration and Rwanda

President Bill Clinton claimed that he was unaware of what was happening in Rwanda. Various reports from foreign leaders and White House advisors showed differently, especially since there were emails and briefings on what was taking place in Rwanda. It is not that the U.S. government did not know what was happening in Rwanda. The truth is that the Clinton administration did not care. U.S. officials in Rwanda had been warned more than a year before the 1994 slaughter began; they were given reports on the unrest in the country. Joyce Leader, the U.S. Embassy's deputy chief of mission in Kigali, cited warnings that Hutu extremists with links to Rwanda's ruling party were believed to be advocating the mass killings of Tutsis. . She said: "We had a very good sense of what was taking place. It was clear that a systematic killing of Tutsi was taking place in neighborhoods" (Leader, 2004). This is what she told former Rwandan officials and international policymakers in 2004, and U.S. officials were directly involved.

Samantha Power, a Harvard professor, has written about the calamities that took place in Rwanda and how disappointing it was that the United States waited so long to intervene. In her article entitled "Bystanders to Genocide," Power (2001) wrote about the tragedy of roughly 800,000 deaths in Rwanda. She speaks of former President Bill Clinton and how he ignored his close advisors who told him the true dimensions of the massacres as well as updates from other political leaders. President Clinton also received

reports from Rwandan diplomats who gave similar reports about the violence against the Tutsi.

What scholars also know from Power's research is that the Clinton administration ruled out sending U.S. troops during the early part of the crisis. On a much deeper level, we also know that the U.S.'s relationship with African countries were already strained, and that there was considerable hesitation about intervening right from the beginning of the crisis. President Clinton did not see an urgent need to send troops, and he believed there was no recognizable national interest to the U.S. by taking a role in Rwanda. While the constituents and members of TransAfrica and the Congressional Black Caucus were expressing their desire for the U.S. to intervene, their leaders were not hearing them. The United States was one of the few countries that could supply the rapid airlift and logistical support needed to move reinforcements into the region. After learning about U.S. intervention and Rwanda, there seem to be questions left unanswered. Despite concrete evidence of violence in Rwanda, the United States passively stood by.

The factors that led to this foreign policy decision to deny humanitarian and military efforts are important to consider in order as they relate to the underlying incentives. The main argument presented by Clinton and other policymakers was that intervention in Rwanda did not align with the United States political or economic interests. There was no evidence that there were domestic or foreign policy advantages for the United States to intervene in Rwanda, thus the United States saw no justification to intervene.

The United States' failure to take action in Rwanda also demonstrated a failure to comply with international obligations to intervene under the 1948 Convention on the

Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (United Nations, 1948b). This Crime of Genocide law declares that the international community has a responsibility to intervene to preserve peace and security. The term *genocide* was defined by Raphael Lemkin and later codified by the United Nations 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as:

Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (United Nations, 1948b, p. 1)

The lack of action by the United States made it clear that under the Clinton Administration, when intervention was needed and justifiable, it would not intervene because action did not fit into U.S. foreign policy objectives.

In the years after Clinton left office, he finally admitted that his lack of direct action led to the loss of thousands of lives (Ohaegbulam, 2004). Prudence Bushnell, an American diplomat, wrote in a memorandum to Secretary of State Warren Christopher: “If, as it appears, both Presidents have been killed, there is a strong likelihood that widespread violence could break out in either or both countries” (Ohaegbulam, 2004). This report, stating that both presidents had been killed, should have prompted leaders to intervene, especially since it meant there was no legitimate leader. Reports kept coming in, but the reports did not lead to intervention—except for the administration to make an immediate decision to withdraw all American personnel from Rwanda.

After the period of decolonization, U.S. foreign policy heavily influenced African countries. This was primarily to subdue communist ideals from spreading. The policy of

containment was especially important in order to prevent parties infiltrating African nations. During the Cold War, the United States supported many movements in African countries that were opposed to communist influences (Cohen, 2006, pp. 17, 18). In Rwanda, the United States developed diplomatic relations rather than direct economic or political policies. It can be argued that this was a strategy to keep from becoming too entangled with African affairs, primarily because there were no political or economic gain. As a landlocked country, Rwanda was not of great interest to the United States, especially in terms of economic relations. There were no major ports, no oil fields or other rich minerals that the United States could use for economic gain. The lack of a communist threat in Rwanda was the main reason why policy relations between the United States and Rwanda never developed beyond financial support to promote development and friendly diplomatic relations. Since there were no strong foreign policy relationships with Rwanda or clear incentives to become involved with domestic politics, the United States did not feel the urge to intervene.

When the violence in Rwanda began, the main priority of the United States was to use its non-intervention and isolationist tactics, which were implemented after WW II. In a speech delivered at the U.S. Naval Academy Commencement (1994a), President Clinton outlined the policy objective of non-intervention stating:

We cannot solve every such outburst of civil strife...simply by sending in our forces. We cannot turn away from them, but our interests are not sufficiently at stake in so many of them to justify a commitment of our folks. Nonetheless, as the world's greatest power, we have an obligation to lead, and at times, when our interests and our values are sufficiently at stake, to act. (p. 987)

While Clinton recognized U.S. responsibility as the leading world power, he failed to follow his own words. Clinton determined that the United States' interests and

values were not at stake despite a moral obligation. As a result, Clinton pushed the political opinion that U.S. foreign policy was driven by the protection and preservation of American interests and values abroad and not humanitarian efforts.

Many argue that Clinton's choice to not intervene came from several unsuccessful missions in the past. The Clinton administration encountered problems in Somalia a year earlier that gave the Administration a bad reputation. Despite Secretary Holbrooke's warning, Clinton's involvement in Somalia ended up becoming another international crisis. Three events involving international relations, which occupied a substantial part of Clinton's first term, were ones in which the United States had more to lose than to gain.

Following the events in Somalia, Clinton launched a major peacekeeping policy review that would lead to less intervention. The Presidential Decision Directive Twenty-Five (PDD 25) (Clinton 1994b) emerged in a document that outlined intervention. The policy contained several requirements on peacekeeping operations that would reflect the United States desire to make disciplined and coherent choices about which peace operations to support. Even though the policy did not officially take effect in the administration until its signing by Clinton on May 3, 1994, it was implemented during the chaos in Haiti and Somalia.

The argument I make here is that the United States did not take sizable measures to provide aid as the Rwandan genocide progressed. The decision that was taken was to protect the United States' interest and its people who were overseas. Even though evacuation was considered the best option for the United States, it was not in the best interest of Rwandans or the French military who helped tremendously in the peace efforts. The evacuation of Americans drastically decreased the number of personnel on

the ground who could have given updates on the killings and diminishing government power. The evacuation left only a commander and the 2,600 UN peacekeeping forces. While the evacuation did not give the United States any more sense of its foreign policy goals, it did show its allegiance to its United States' people.

Prior to the events in Rwanda, the United States had threatened to pull out of the United Nations Peacekeepers Mission, which was active in past conflicts. In addition to withdrawing Americans, the United States also pushed for a reduced presence in the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR).¹ By the time the United States requested the reduction, the UNAMIR forces had already endured substantial shortages in funding and supplies from the United Nations. Robert Weiner said at the time, "It felt like the Department of Peacekeeping Operations needed fixing and demanded that the United Nations 'learn to say no' to chancy or costly missions" (1998, p. 1).

With these kinds of sentiments circling around, it was even easier for the Clinton administration to remove itself from the crisis altogether. During his first term as president, Clinton spent much of his time attempting to shift the attention of the public away from his foreign policy failures in Bosnia and Haiti, as well as from the Whitewater scandal and the healthcare debate that divided the country for the first years of his administration. In doing this, Clinton shifted more focus to the economy, his goal to reduce America's large deficit, lower the debt, and once again "make the United States' economy thrive again" (Clinton, 1993). Since there were domestic issues that were characterized as more important, it was easier to ignore the issues in Rwanda and focus

¹ UNAMIR was established by United Nations Security Council Resolution 872 on 5 October 1993. It was intended to assist in the implementation of the Arusha Accords, signed on 4 August 1993, which was meant to end the Rwandan Civil War.

on national issues. The failed attempts in Haiti and Bosnia also helped to justify ignoring the mass murders that were taking place in Rwanda.

Chapter VI

The Why

In this chapter, I discuss the criteria and justifications for why the United States frequently chooses not to intervene in global conflicts and foreign disputes. I read numerous articles on American foreign policy from professors who have written on United States' interventions, seeking to sum up why the United States chooses to not provide military and humanitarian support.

Upon his appointment as Deputy Secretary for African Affairs at the U.S. Department of Defense, James Woods was asked to provide information on pressing issues that the Clinton administration planned to tackle. This list would include all topics, both domestic and foreign, that were top priorities for President Clinton and his office. Rwanda was on the Deputy Secretary's initial list, according to Woods, but it was taken off and replaced by other domestic and foreign affairs. Woods responded to the removal of Rwanda from the list this way:

Look, if something happens in Rwanda . . . we don't care. . . . U.S. national interest is not involved and we can't put all these silly humanitarian issues on lists, important problems like the Middle East, North Korea and so on. Just make it go away. (Woods, 2006, p. 190)

This quote stated, simply and blatantly, that the Clinton administration did not care about the events that were taking place in Rwanda. Woods said the happenings in Rwanda were "silly humanitarian issues" that were not sufficiently important to be added to the list.

Madeline Albright, the U.S. representative to the United Nations at the time, voiced her thoughts on the matter. While her comments do not exactly mirror Wood's words, there is an undertone of not taking the genocide as seriously as it should have been taken. Albright recounts: "I realized, along with most of the world, that what was occurring [in Rwanda] was not just terrible violence but genocide" (Albright, 2003, 190). It was not until close to the end of the conflict that U.S. officials called what was happening in Rwanda a genocide.

As details of the attacks emerged, the Clinton administration still neglected to address the crisis in many ways. Some assumed, with good reason, that this could be attributed to the administration's desire to take a firm stance on PDD 25. Anthony Lake, National Security Advisor during the Clinton administration, said: "I was obsessed with Haiti and Bosnia during that period. Rwanda was a 'sideshow.' Not even a sideshow, a no-show. Our sin was an error of omission—of never considering that issue" (Lake, 2005, 127). Lake's words illustrate the embarrassment felt by the United States when dealing with Bosnia and Haiti. It also gave rise to the possibility that the administration may have over-extended its support and concerns for those two nations, which might explain why Rwanda was left off the agenda.

Comparing Lake's and Woods' words, it is clear that the combination of failed attempts and over-extension clouded the judgment of those making such critical decisions. While the Clinton administration preferred to "omit" Rwanda from its agenda, possibly due to their embarrassments from previous international conflict, the media was pushing it toward the public eye.

The New York Times quoted Red Cross claim that “tens of thousands were dead, eight thousand in Rwanda’s capital city of Kigali alone” (Power, 2001, p. 13). Descriptions of the scenes of the murders appeared all over the newspapers and media. Articles described piles of corpses reaching six feet high, and accounts emerged detailing scenes such as the *Washington Post* in a 1994 article: “The heads and limbs of victims were sorted and piled neatly, a bone chilling order in the midst of the chaos that harked back to the Holocaust” (Power, 2001, p. 13).

With all these descriptive articles and magazines circulating, the term *genocide* became more and more difficult to suppress. On April 19, 1994, Human Rights Watch estimated at least 100,000 dead, and called for official use of the term *genocide*. As time went on and reports continued to come out, the administration focused on trying to deny that the situation in Rwanda was in fact genocide. When word spread that the United States was avoiding the term *genocide*, Canadian Commander Romeo Dallaire (leader of the UNAMIR forces) sent an ongoing stream of cables to the United Nations in New York, aiming to provide proof that this was indeed mass ethnic cleansing. Leaders like Dallaire were continually met with indifference. On May 3, 1994, just days after Dallaire gave another update, a journalist asked Clinton if the United States and the United Nations would intervene and save lives in Rwanda. Clinton replied, “Well, perhaps. . . ,” while also implying that the world was grieving other tragedies. He also added that the experiences he faced when intervening in Somalia made him leery of getting involved again (Clinton, 1994a). President Clinton’s response and his new directive showed that for the sake of American interests, it did not make sense for the United States to intervene in a conflict where no visible U.S. national interests were present.

Digging a bit deeper beyond the costly repercussions that the United States faced in Haiti, Bosnia, and Somalia, Rwanda's status as one of Africa's poorest nations played a huge role in the decision not to intervene. Supplying Dallaire's UNAMIR troops was an expensive mission. The United States had grown weary of the financial contribution it assumed for such costly missions. On the domestic level, the United States could make a point that the country did not need to become entangled with what it viewed as a non-essential mission into international conflicts in which the United States had no real interest. Instead, the country would continue focusing on the economy. (Clinton, 1994a).

Presidential Decision Directive 25 gave Clinton a way out, as he now had a legal reason for not intervening in a conflict that did not result in any obvious American benefit. To the Clinton administration, it did not make sense to engage in a conflict where no visible national interests were present. By agreeing that the violent killing in Rwanda was genocide, the United States would require the U.S. to act under the 1948 Genocide Convention (Clinton, 1994a).

At the same time, Secretary of State Warren Christopher was under intense pressure from the UN Human Rights Commission to outline the terms of the United States' stance on the events that were occurring in Rwanda. In lieu of crafting a policy that would help victims of the genocide, the United States continued to avoid overuse of what it termed "genocide rhetoric" to avoid being pulled into an intervention situation. Instead the Clinton administration created a document that outlined when to intervene. PDD-25 established requirements on U.S. support for and participation in UN peace operations abroad. This may have been the reason why the Clinton administration remained quiet during the genocide.

The United States' inaction during the Rwandan genocide was a direct consequence of the earlier U.S. experience in Somalia, and it became the turning point in United Nations' multilateral interventions. Even though the Clinton administration justified its reasons based on the disaster in Somalia, the Clinton Presidential Library had published a draft of PDD-5 weeks before Black Hawk was shot down in Somalia. That draft concludes that the events that took place in Somalia did not directly influence the outline of the document. Its strict guidelines were already on paper and part of American peacekeeping policy prior to the dilemma in Rwanda. This proves that the criteria contained in PDD-25 become an integral part of the decision-making process for American policy in Rwanda long before the Somalia.

In an article titled "When Should the US Intervene? Criteria for Military Intervention in Weak Countries," Robert Keohane (2011) talks about what it takes for the United States to intervene in weak countries during global conflict. Keohane defines a weak country and how it correlates to American foreign policy and intervention. He said that interest and power are interconnected, and "interest is endogenous to power." The United States' interest depends on its power. Simply put, as power expands, so does interest. The United States is arguably the most powerful country in the world, thus making its power and interest great. Even though there may be a decline in United States' power, the United States is not weak. A decline in power means that the United States must switch the direction of its interest. The United States is less powerful than it was decades ago, and world governance is pivoting from a unipolar dynamic to a multipolar dynamic. Due to the changes in its power structure, the United States must be strategic in its decisions to intervene. Keohane argues that the United States needs to be sensible in

its foreign policy. He also makes a point that the United States cannot help with preventing every act of terrorism and every humanitarian effort. Since such interventions are costly, the United States must make decisions based on the most important criteria.

Keohane defines a weak country. His definition states that a weak country is a country that is not capable of preventing an invasion from the United States. A weak country is considered weak if the United States has the capability to take over a major city in their country. Rwanda meets the criteria of a weak country because the country lacks valuable natural resources. Rwanda, even at the time of the genocide, had no product that could be sold for substantial amounts of capital. Rwanda is a landlocked country, which means there are no possibilities for geopolitical advantages, such as military bases or ports for exporting and importing goods. This means there are very limited trade opportunities for Rwanda, thus making it a very poor country.

In addition to its trade and economic disadvantages, Rwanda has a weak military. Rwanda could easily lose a major city to invasion from much stronger countries. While a weak country like Rwanda is not capable of preventing an invasion from strong countries, it does not mean that weak countries are unable to use violence to inflict high costs on the invading country. Rwanda's violence caused a tainted image for the United States because of how the U.S. handled the genocide.

Another argument made by Keohane is that intervention should depend on national interest, the maintenance of democracy, and the securing of global markets. One reason why the United States should intervene in a conflict is when there is a threat to democracy abroad. For example, Keohane says that includes Japan, South Korea, and Australia where democracy is constantly under threat. The United States should also

consider the relationships that it has with major rising powers. These rising countries include the so-called BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). The BRIC countries have proved their global power, and now have the attention of the United States and strong European countries. Unfortunately, many African countries, including Rwanda, do not fall into that category.

What is most interesting about Keohane's contentions is that military action must be just. What makes military action just—for instance in the case of Rwanda—is that military action should have clear and appropriate motives, means, and consequences. Intervention in Rwanda had no motivating power. The United States had no military bases, no trade agreements, no allies in danger. The consequences of intervention could have been costly military expenses, a decline in approval ratings for the Clinton administration, and neglect of domestic issues such as healthcare and the economy, which were issues at the time of the Rwandan genocide.

If the United States decided to intervene in a specific situation, there should be a clear and sensible exit strategy that retains the key achievements of the intervention. If the exit strategy throws away the achievements, then there was no crucial interest in the first place. If the United States had intervened in Rwanda, it was quite possible that there were no clear and sensible exit strategy, which Keohane stresses is critically important. In Rwanda, political chaos was already the *status quo*. There was no stable government to return to or support if the United States intervened. There was no structure, and even after military aid was provided, that would not have stopped Rwanda from returning to violence and mayhem. Since there was no order to return to, there was no clear objective or *status quo* to bring back.

Rwanda, like many other African countries has had weak governments run by weak and corrupt leaders. A possible reason to intervene may have been the need to assist with creating a stronger government, not to prevent further killings. Keohane makes a strong point (with which I agree), that once an intervention is completed, there should be someone strong to hand power to. In Rwanda, the president was killed when his plane was shot down, leaving no one to assume governance and power.

Keohane made a very interesting point about non-crucial interest. He believes that a country should respond with intervention when it is being attacked. When a country is being threatened, the other criteria he discussed (e.g., justice and protecting its values and interests) are less important because the country has the right to defend itself.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the United Nations put a lot of the burden on the United States for intervention. R2P is a document introduced by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. It is a global political commitment stating that all member states of the United Nations must take responsibility for protecting members from four key concerns, including genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Since many of the interventions did not concern United States' interest, it has been difficult for the United States to be motivated to get involved. R2P is a collective burden-sharing document that makes all members of the United Nations responsible for maintaining peace and order. The goals should be clearly stated and specified. In addition, there should be an explicit procedure for periodic reevaluation and substantial transparency. While this commitment sounds good in theory, it is not legally binding. The problem I see is that there is no worldwide policing force and no real power behind international organizations like the United Nations. There were no legal ramifications to

the Clinton administration for not intervening in Rwanda, and it never faced consequences for looking the other way when multiple updates were being sent to the White House. Although some may argue that the United Nations serves as a type of world police, others say the United Nations lacks legitimacy in the eyes of its members, and therefore has little or no effect on its members' policies and behaviors. With all the rights and powers that the United Nations has, many also find it to be ineffective.

In his book *Do Morals Matter* by Joseph S. Nye, President Clinton was ranked on his morality in international conflicts, and Rwanda was factored into his score. President Clinton came into office as an assertive multilateralist who wanted to help the United Nations with its peacekeeping efforts (Nye, 2020, p. 135)—clearly a contradiction if one considers the situation with Rwanda. Those who worked closely with President Clinton described him as someone who followed the neo-Wilsonian ideologies, but that vision did not become reality with his failures in Somalia and Mogadishu.

Following those failures, the Clinton administration conducted an internal study on how to scale back the country's support for United Nations peacekeeping (Nye, 2020, p. 135). Clinton's foreign policy rating, in terms of moral vision and intention, was good, but critics argued that he should have done more in Rwanda, and that there were a number of options he could have explored. His caution during the Rwandan conflict hurt his image, not only because the United States did not intervene, but because it also chose to withdraw from the United Nations peacekeeping force in 1994. Yet, despite his unsuccessful efforts, Nye gave Clinton's administration a good rating.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

The evidence presented here points out that the Clinton administration failed to intervene in Rwanda because such an intervention did not align with U.S. national interests. The criteria outlined in the PDD-25, which were developed prior to the conflict, made it easy to ignore the genocide and ignore the United States' commitment to R2P. Since the United Nations did then and still does today struggle with legitimacy, it has little hard power, and it cannot make legally binding documents. The Clinton administration took those advantages and turned away and focus on domestic matters.

The criteria highlighted in Keohane's paper show that without a direct threat to the United States and/or interference in the nation's interest, there is reason to suspect that the Clinton administration did not see any need to interfere. To be clear, Keohane argues that the Clinton administration *should have* intervened under the Responsibility to Protect, and Keohane affirms that there was clear exit strategy. The genocide in Rwanda met most of the criteria that Keohane outlines as causes for intervention. For example, it hit the mark with several criteria: the goals were clear, it was a just cause, it fell under the scope of R2P, and there was a clear exit strategy. The clear goal was to prevent the killing of 800,000 people and return power to the Tutsis. The exit strategy was to return power to the Tutsis who were wrongfully overthrown. There was consensus in the UN General Assembly, so the burden to enforce R2P would not have fallen completely on the United States. In fact, most of the burden fell on France.

In my opinion, PDD-25 was a deliberate attempt to make non-intervention justifiable. I admit that the United States bears most of the burden for protecting the rights of foreign countries, but that is no reason for the United State to turn its back on what makes America a defender of democracy.

While I believe the United States is remarkable in protecting democracy and having one of the strongest militaries in the world, I also believe that American exceptionalism is a myth. From the beginning of this thesis, I have reiterated that what makes America exceptional is the morality that lives at the center of the country's actions. The United States played a major role in drafting the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and it influenced the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Since the United States counts its influences on morality as a soft power and as a victory, it is hard to believe the decision was made that there would be no intervention in Rwanda.

As I looked deeper, I found that Rwanda has no economic power or presence, it lacks geopolitical power, it is weak and poverty stricken, which highlights even more the fact that there is no national advantage. When comparing United States interventions in other cases, there were apparent reasons, or advantages, such leveraging more power or protecting the country's interests abroad.

Finally, the Clinton administration accrued a number of failures in intervention, including in Bosnia and Somalia. This is possibly another reason why the Clinton administration may have decided to focus instead on national issues. The Clinton administration suffered blows to its international image and credibility. I will say that overall, the downfalls of Bosnia and Somalia, a fear of being expected to bear the major

costs of the burden of protection, and the lack of any national gain were reasons why there was no intervention in Rwanda. In the memoirs written by President Clinton and former Secretary of Foreign Affairs Madeleine Albright, their lack of willingness to intervene will always be something they regret.

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