When Silence is Betrayal: Genocide and United States Foreign Policy

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When Silence is Betrayal: Genocide and United States Foreign Policy

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Abstract
United States foreign policy must balance national interests with international obligations, including a commitment to human rights. Genocide represents an enormous violation of human rights but also a significant challenge to the formulation of United States foreign policies. The word genocide was created to encompass the multi-layered characteristics of the systematic and intentional nature of mass human destruction. Though the US has vowed to prevent and stop genocide from occurring, its actions do not indicate so. In Turkey the US failed to defend Armenians, using political principles to justify the decision. Association between the Holocaust and genocide has limited US recognition and action in other situations. Various methods were employed in response to genocide in Rwanda in order to avoid an obligation to action. Emphasizing the people and the society which they compose, the United States must not focus on a strict definition of genocide but must broaden its comprehension beyond technicalities in order to responsibly recognize and respond to genocide, and in doing so capture the intended comprehension of the word.
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To all those who have touched my life at Boston College—you have influenced who I am and who I am becoming. You have shaped how I see, understand, and interact with the world. I will carry all of you in my heart wherever life’s adventures may take me.

I owe deep thanks to my thesis advisor and mentor, Professor Eve Spangler. I value your patience and challenging questions in working with me on this project. Your passion for justice and knowledge of the world continue to inspire me.

Lastly, to all those who are victims of genocide—though the human capacity for evil is astounding, I am even more amazed by the hope, strength, and love which emerges from the midst of even the most horrific situations. This thesis is an attempt to explore one aspect of the extraordinary crime of genocide.
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Overview

Genocide – it is a word which carries memories, images, fears, anger, associations, and implications. It is a relatively new word, created in response to a particular event with the goal of triggering a strong reaction. There has since developed a moral imperative to act in response to genocide, but actions by the United States following the perception of genocide being committed have widely varied. How does the usage of the term genocide affect United States foreign policy? The United States does not claim to or want to be thought to support genocide, but its actions are not as clear as its intentions.

In formulating a foreign policy agenda and actions, the United States must carefully weigh national interests with the responsibilities to other countries outlined in agreements, treaties, and conventions. Humanitarian intervention falls right at the intersection of these considerations. The United States (US) cannot, and indeed should not, be expected to play the role of world policeman, intervening in countries as it sees fit in order to impose its will and values. On the other hand, the US can not maintain an isolationist attitude given the responsibility the country holds and due to its formal obligations on the international sphere. It has become generally accepted that the US, among other countries, pursue humanitarian interventions in cases of dire need as signified, for example, by extreme violations of human rights. Humanitarian intervention signifies one country acting in interference in another country on the basis of addressing the needs or abuses of the people of the recipient country. Genocide is one example of an
extreme violation of human rights which takes place on a massive scale and, as a result, might warrant international humanitarian intervention from countries such as the US.

Given that, as part of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide which will be discussed later in the paper, the US has acknowledged genocide as an international crime and obligated itself to acting to prevent it, thus clearly indicating its opposition to the act (or series of acts). Through its actions and statements, US intentions are to conduct itself international stage in order to demonstrate this commitment against genocide. To base foreign policy decisions solely on opposition to the idea of genocide would be much too simple for the realities of a complex world. Even when contemplating action against a horrific crime such as that of genocide, foreign policy decisions are complicated by issues of national interest, intelligence and assessment of facts, state sovereignty, and other international commitments.

In addition to these practical matters, the United States has put forth and claims to promote and uphold certain values. Eleanor Roosevelt was a major contributor to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is just one indication of the level of US dedication to protecting human rights. Human rights, in this sense, are meant to mean rights held by all human beings inherent in the very fact of being human, in contrast, though not necessarily in opposition to, the rights awarded by the state to an individual. Evidenced in the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution are the values of democracy and freedom, which are integral to the US government, society, and policies. By becoming a member of the United Nations upon its foundation after
World War II, the United States pledged to protect international order, cooperation, and stability in pursuit of peace. Acknowledgement of these values is not to say that there is agreement on how these values manifest themselves in domestic or international issues, but only to point out what principles the US claims to uphold, promote, and defend.

It is in deliberating over the balance between practical issues and accepted principles that the US bases foreign policy decisions. The US has undertaken humanitarian intervention when various circumstances call for the US to use its power to defend individuals against incredible violence. The purpose of this paper is not to debate the merits of humanitarian intervention; rather it will be assumed that, when considered and carried out correctly, humanitarian intervention is a viable and good option for the US to consider. In looking at a humanitarian response to genocide, this paper will not discuss how such an intervention should be characterized. Though this is a very valid consideration in drafting a response to genocide, the goal of this paper is to address the stage directly before intervention—the recognition of genocide and consideration of actions taken in reaction. In addition, humanitarian intervention can be undertaken unilaterally, multilaterally, and as part of an organized international institution. This paper will not attempt to assess the reactions to genocide of other countries or of international bodies, but will focus on US actions and, when applicable, how these US actions impacted other entities.

The emphasis of this paper will be on the usage of the term genocide in United States foreign policy—how such usage has changed over time, how the US has responded to genocide due to such terminology, and how US conception of the word genocide in
formulating policy must further evolve. The focus on language is due to the importance
language plays in characterizing violence and formulating policies for action, though
ultimately millions or even hundreds of deaths warrant a response no matter what the
language used to describe the situation. In order to discuss the usage of the word
genocide, the origins of how the word came into use are important to understanding the
fullness of its intended meaning. The word genocide was created as an emotional
response to certain events and was an attempt to encapsulate the horror of what it
describes.

With this background in mind, the definition of genocide will be presented. This
definition will show in words, rather than in events, to what genocide refers. In order to
be able to apply the term correctly, there must be a clear comprehension based on an
accepted definition of genocide. Examples of genocide are helpful in seeing how this
definition has manifested itself in events and conflicts around the world and will be
discussed later, but it is important that the definition first be established.

After the word genocide was introduced on the international stage, states came
together to recognize the crime it represented. Trials of other international crimes paved
the way for genocide to be codified in international law. The most important legislation
occurred in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the
Crime of Genocide. In this convention an internationally accepted definition was
established and the participating countries vowed to join together in the recognition and
obstruction of genocide. Though this paper’s focus is on the foreign policy of the US, the
UN definition of genocide has played a crucial part in the US understanding of the word
genocide. In addition, as a signatory of the UN Genocide Convention, the US is obligated to act against genocide. Discussion of UN legislation surrounding genocide is not meant, therefore, to lead to debate over how the US has responded to genocide as part of this international body, but rather to show the Genocide Convention as a basis for the formulation of US foreign policy. Interactions between the US and the UN will be discussed only to the extent that the US impacted the actions of the latter institution.

After explaining the origins of the word genocide and its subsequent foundations in international law, several case studies will be examined. The first question is whether or not genocide occurred in each of these situations. An analysis of the nature of the conflicts will lay the foundation to show that genocide did in fact take place in each of these three examples according to the internationally accepted definition. Though hindsight can be revealing, it is not everything. It will then be shown that the US either had the information at its disposal or had the intelligence-gathering capabilities by which to gather the necessary evidence through which to determine the nature of the crises. An examination will then show how the US responded in each of these conflicts, including whether or not the US in fact recognized the events as genocide.

These case studies are presented in a chronological format in order to show how US responses to intelligence of genocide have developed over time. The first case study is that of genocide of the Armenians in the Ottoman Turk Empire, which depicts the event which catalyzed the creation of the word genocide. Though the word genocide was not yet in circulation, US foreign policy will still be analyzed as to whether or not it used the vocabulary available at the time to accurately describe the nature of the events. After
US understanding of the events has been established, there will be an examination of how the US responded and if the US has categorized the events as genocide since the creation of the word. The second case study is that of the Holocaust which was carried out under the Nazi Regime, as led by Adolf Hitler, in Germany. Genocide as an internationally recognized term was coming into being during the same time period, and therefore the Holocaust is most closely associated with genocide. Due to various characteristics which will be expanded upon later in the paper, the Holocaust, for many, serves as the “textbook example” of genocide. An analysis of US responses to genocide under the Nazis will be given in order to show how this response has influenced later recognition and reactions to genocide. The third case study is that of Rwanda in which the use of the word and comprehension of genocide were well understood. Given that the US had accepted the definition of the term genocide in the UN Genocide Convention by this time, US policies can be studied through the lens of US willingness to apply the term to a set of events and the validity of US fulfillment of its obligation to prevent or punish genocide. Through these case studies the US will be scrutinized in order to determine whether or not the responses developed alongside the understanding and usage of the word genocide. It will be concluded that US comprehension of genocide must further evolve to meet the realities facing the contemporary world.

In addition to the analysis of the word genocide and its effects on US foreign policy, this paper will take a brief look at an even newer word—sociocide. This term has come about in reaction to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine. There will be an examination of the contrast between the conceptions of sociocide and genocide in
order to attempt to categorize the conflict as either. Implications for US response and actions will be suggested from this analysis and categorization.

With violent conflicts events occurring around the world, understanding the history of the term genocide and United States reactions to genocide is crucial to formulating responses to current genocides and in attempting to prevent them in the future.

**Argument**

The term genocide should be understood to refer to a broader series of actions than purely the mass killings of people from a certain group, and because the word carries with it certain memories and implications, it must be applied appropriately so as to accurately identify events as genocide in order to warrant action accordingly. Though the destruction of a group of people can be achieved through systematic killing, violence on other levels must be acknowledged. Those in power can employ methods to create conditions which lead to the gradual destruction and death due to negligence. This understanding of genocide is not meant to lead to the indiscriminate or inappropriate application of the term; to do so would cheapen the word and the strong reaction it is intended to evoke. To insist on an overly strict or literal interpretation of the definition, however, would also be an overreaction which could lead to the failure to categorize genocide in times when recognition and response are desperately necessary. By understanding the history and meaning of the term, there can be a clearer consciousness surrounding US recognition and response to genocide.
Historical Context

Borne out of one man’s response to events in Armenia, the word “genocide” was both the result of an emotional reply and the filling of a void in language to fully express these events. Noting the two inspirations provides greater understanding of the nature of the word and its implications. A word means nothing if it is not applied and accepted by the general public and on the internationals sphere. Examining the origins and context of for creation of the word “genocide,” therefore, offers insight to a full comprehension of its meaning and application.

Before the word genocide international leaders had to rely on other terms which did not fully portray the complexity of events. None of the descriptions used were able to convey the magnitude of violence on a systematic and intentional level. For example, events in Armenia prompted the United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, to use the term “race murder” in 1915. Though more than one million Armenians were killed under Morgenthau’s term as Ambassador, the Turkish government had taken steps to disguise its intentions to kill off the entire Armenian race by portraying the events as deportations or natural casualties of war.¹ Ambassadors such as Morgenthau must abide by a policy of non-interference in internal affairs of their host countries, and because no American lives or interests had been directly affected, Morgenthau was unable to garner the support of the United States government on behalf

of humanity. Though the United States would offer humanitarian assistance to victims and survivors of “race murder,” it would do nothing to pursue those at fault.

Another man decided to take matters into his own hands. On March 14, 1921 an Armenian man, Soghomon Tehlirian, shot and murdered former Turkish interior minister, Mehmed Talaat, who had been behind the massacres of Armenians. When news of this incident reached international media it caught the attention of Raphael Lemkin, a Polish Jew studying at the University of Lvov. He was angered over the fact that Tehlirian, who killed the one man, could be prosecuted while the man responsible for the killing of many men, women, and children could not be arrested. The issue at hand was that of international jurisdiction.

In both international and national discourse, sovereignty is often valued above all else. As evidenced in the US reaction to events unfolding in Armenia, Ambassador Morgenthau was prohibited from targeting the Turkish government because United States would have had to interfere in the sovereignty of another government. It is not that national sovereignty is not of value. Sovereignty holds value when it allows governments to make decisions which are in the best interests of its own citizens, without the influences or pressures from outside sources. The problem occurs when the principle of sovereignty prevents outside interference even when a government violates the rights of its own citizens. Governments, by construction and tradition, hold the responsibility to protect and care for its citizens.

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2 Power, Samantha. p. 8, 10.
3 Ibid., p. 1 and 17.
4 Ibid., p. 19.
In 1933 the phrase “universal jurisdiction” was coined and referred to the fact that perpetrators of international crimes can be prosecuted in any country regardless of the perpetrator’s nationality or location where the acts were committed.\textsuperscript{5} In this way state sovereignty is not viewed as absolute.

Through universal jurisdiction, states gained the possibility or ability to intervene, but the question was whether or not countries would be moved to do so. States rarely pursue justice for the sake of justice alone. Instead they typically require political pressure, service to national interests, or harm to their own citizens before moving to action.\textsuperscript{6} Citizens activism cannot be relied on as a stimulus to governmental action on the international stage because people live in a stage of “twilight between knowing and not knowing.”\textsuperscript{7} This state is brought about by people’s indifference to the victims of the crime, the belief that all is being done about the atrocities that can be done, and the fact that knowledge to the contrary is inconvenient.\textsuperscript{8} Thus, as one attempt to provide a catalyst for action, there existed the need for a word which would attract the attention of the world population and move governments into proceeding.

**Creation of the Word**

It is out of this context that Raphael Lemkin emerged, outraged at the inconsistencies he saw with the man’s murder of the Turkish official, and sought a way to enlist an international response. His first focus was the creation of a word which would accurately describe what he had witnessed in Armenia, a word which would more

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\textsuperscript{5} Power, Samantha. p. 20.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 34.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p. 35.
broadly communicate the methodology behind the term “race murder.” Lemkin sought a word which could not be used in other contexts, but which would garner moral judgment.\(^9\) The formation of the word needed to address all aspects of the assault on nationhood, including policies targeting physical, biological, political, social, cultural, economic, and religious components. It should incorporate not only mass extermination, but also mass deportation, lowering of birth rate through separation of women and men, economic exploitation, progressive starvation, and suppression of intelligence.\(^10\) Since no such word existed to address all of these characteristics, Lemkin found he would have to create a word which would.

The word which encapsulated all the above components was “genocide.” It comes from the Greek root *geno-*., meaning race or tribe, and the Latin suffix *–cide*, meaning killing.\(^11\) The term was coined by Raphael Lemkin in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* published in November 1944 by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.\(^12\) A full meaning and explanation of the word will be discussed later in the paper, but first it is important to note the reception of the word genocide.

**Reception of the Word**

Genocide as a term became quickly assimilated into international vocabulary, but it met mixed responses. Shortly after its creation, genocide was admitted into *Webster’s New International Dictionary*.\(^13\) About one week later the War Refugee Board under President Roosevelt officially acknowledged mass executions by the Germans in the

\(^9\) Power, Samantha. p. 42.
\(^10\) Ibid., p. 40.
\(^11\) Ibid., p. 42.
\(^12\) Ibid., p. 38.
\(^13\) Ibid., p. 44.
Holocaust, and Lemkin’s term given some of the credit for this move.\textsuperscript{14} Due to its creation around the time of the Holocaust and the near immediate application of genocide to the Holocaust, there is a lasting association with the horrors committed by Hitler.\textsuperscript{15} Though the Holocaust will be examined later, it is important to note that the word genocide should not be limited to the understanding of Hitler’s crimes. People and countries need to learn from history rather than be paralyzed by it, with the belief that actions can be taken before violence escalates to the level of the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{16} Many supported the creation of a word to signify the horrific practices it entailed and hoped that even the pronunciation of the word would incite all those who heard the word.\textsuperscript{17} Some, however, criticized Lemkin for focusing too much on the creation of a word, saying that a mere label would do nothing to motivate state leaders into action.\textsuperscript{18} The fact that the word genocide was being used and debated on an international scale signified that it was being integrated into the general vocabulary.

The term genocide was created by Raphael Lemkin following mass killings of Armenians in Turkey. It literally means killing of a race or tribe, though Lemkin imagined the word to carry with it a sense of the more broad goals and impacts of the attempt to exterminate a group. With this more full description in mind, Lemkin hoped that just the word genocide would be enough to catch the public’s attention and move countries to action in light of the emerging conception of universal jurisdiction. Though genocide soon became a part of the international language and was praised for filling a

\textsuperscript{14} Power, Samantha. p. 44
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 42.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 43.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 43.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 44.
void in vocabulary, some wondered whether or not the usage of a word would be enough to mobilize international action. Before US response to genocide is examined, it is important to understand the full meaning genocide.
CHAPTER THREE – DEFINITION OF THE TERM “GENOCIDE”

Now that the context out of which the word genocide emerges has been established, it is important to examine to what genocide refers specifically. This definition becomes especially important as it is incorporated into international law and its meaning is debated. In order to use and, most importantly, to act based on a word, it must be understood. Action, first and foremost, implies comprehension.

Creator’s Definition

As discussed earlier, genocide comes from Greek and Latin roots and literally means killing of a race or tribe. The word as Lemkin intended it, however, goes well beyond the mass murder of a group of people. Lemkin explains in Axis Rule that “genocide” means “a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.”\(^1\) Genocide is not exclusively mass extermination, but is characterized by a stripping of all aspects of cultural identity.\(^2\) In accordance with this understanding, genocide implies that:

“The perpetrators of genocide would attempt to destroy the political and social institutions, the culture, language, national feelings, religion, and economic existence of national groups. They would hope to eradicate the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and lives of individual members of the targeted group.”\(^3\)

Taking into account the fullness of the purposes and characteristics of genocide, it is not a simple act.

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 43.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 43.
Lemkin saw genocide as having two phases: first, the national pattern of the oppressed group would be interrupted while the pattern of the oppressor was imposed, and second, the pattern of the oppressor will remain in that territory, whether it is composed of oppressed people allowed to remain in the area or of a colonized population from the group of oppressors.4 Through viewing the creator’s own explanation of genocide, one can see that it does not exclusively refer to the mass killing of a group of people, but takes into account the attempt to destroy the target group through either physical death or destruction of culture, society, and identity.

Comparative Presentations of Genocide

Looking at contemporary definitions of the word genocide, they are not as inclusive as Lemkin’s original definition and explanation. Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online are very similar in the definitions they provide. In the OED, genocide is defined as “the deliberate and systematic killing of an ethnic or national group.”5 The Merriam-Webster definition differs in the groups it names as targets saying, “the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group.”6 These definitions have managed to make Lemkin’s original explanation more precise, and an exploration of their similarities and differences may explain both some key elements to genocide as well as demonstrate some of the controversy surrounding its definition and related legislation.

4 Power, Samantha. p. 43.
The definitions provided by these two dictionaries initially sound almost identical but do contain nuanced similarities and differences. Both definitions focus on the fact that genocide is carried out intentionally by governments and is pursued in an organized way. It is the view of the author that Lemkin would have been more in accord with the second definition in that it acknowledges that different groups can be targeted other than ethnic or national groups. This contrast in definitions is a preview into some of the discussions surrounding the process of legislating genocide as an international crime.

**Introduction of a Supplementary Term**

There is another term even newer than the word genocide which enters the conversation here because of its remarkable similarities to the methods and goals. That word is “sociocide.” Sociocide is a term coined by Saleh Abdel Jawad and refers to drastic measures taken over time to expel the indigenous population. Jawad uses the term in reference to the treatment of Palestinians by Israelis in the ongoing conflict. He defines “sociocide” to mean “the gradual undermining of the communal and psychological structures of Palestinian society in order to compel the Palestinians to leave by other means.” He charges that in the war in June of 1967, the Israeli power structures and institutions deliberately committed sociocide with several goals: to destroy the Palestinian economy, to decimate the Palestinian national spirit and identity, to deprive the Palestinians of their civil and political rights, and to transform Palestinian daily life into an endless chain of hardships.

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
merits of the term itself, the importance is to see the connections between sociocide and genocide. In the sense that both measures attempt to disrupt the daily lives of an entire people and society with the intention of bringing about its complete destruction, whether physical or psychological, genocide and sociocide are akin to one another.

With this understanding of what is meant by genocide, it is now important to look at how actions relating to genocide have been legislated around the world and, more specifically, in the United States. Examination of official US and UN legislation regarding genocide reveals states policies and principles and how the US has, or has failed to, live out these claims.
CHAPTER FOUR – LEGISLATION SURROUNDING GENOCIDE

While Raphael Lemkin stated exactly what he meant by the term genocide, there continues to be controversy not only over the meaning of genocide, but over legislation dealing with genocide as an international crime. Regardless of whether or not genocide is defined correctly or given legal status internationally, the actions it describes are horrific. The intention in describing legislation on genocide is, therefore, not to place the emphasis on technicalities, but to show the importance of terminology in crafting a response to genocide.

Nuances of Nuremberg Trials

From 1945 to 1949 trials in the German city of Nuremberg tried European officials for crimes against their own citizens. Through this process, progress was made on the idea that state sovereignty could not and should not shelter individuals from being held accountable for international crimes.¹ These trials prosecuted individuals only after they had crossed international borders, meaning that the crimes these individuals had committed fell under international jurisdiction. While the challenge these trials presented to the previously untouchable idea of state sovereignty is remarkable, there is a nuance of the Nuremberg trials which takes away from the immensity of the trials. Since prosecution only occurred after they crossed an international border, there was the potential for the precedent to be set that if a crime is committed inside of an internationally recognized national border, the crime would be harder to prosecute.² The

² Ibid. p. 49.
Nuremberg trials established international jurisdiction, which opens the way for legislation punishing those who commit genocide, but the difficulty of prosecuting the individuals responsible for such a crime is a challenge without a foreseeable end.

**United Nations Resolution Defining the Term**

In 1946 the issue of genocide was taken up by the United Nations. On December 11, 1946 the UN passed a resolution condemning genocide as the “denial of the right of existence of entire human groups which shocks the conscience of mankind and is contrary to the moral law and to the spirit and aims of the United Nations.”³ Though this resolution denouncing genocide in the UN was an important moment in the recognition of genocide as an act or series of acts contrary to the widely supported ideals of the UN, a mere resolution holds no legal weight.

The passage from resolution to international law was submitted to the UN General Assembly and subsequently passed in 1948 at the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.⁴ At this convention the UN established the following definition of genocide:

“any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such:
A. Killing members of the group
B. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to the members of the group
C. Deliberately inflicting on the group the conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
D. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”⁵

In order for an individual to be guilty of the crime of genocide, the individual had to meet several conditions: “1. Carry out one of the aforementioned acts; 2. With the intent to

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³ Power, Samantha. p. 54.
⁴ Ibid. p. 57.
⁵ Ibid. p. 57
destroy all or part of; 3. One of groups protected,” noting that if one of these elements was not present, the crime would be considered mass homicide as opposed to genocide.6 The UN Convention on Genocide made the act a violation of international law whether committed during times of peace or times of war; it does not equate the two, but rather makes them both a crime.7 With this distinction, there must be acknowledged the difference between “domestic genocide” as resulting from internal divisions in a plural society, and genocide as a part of international war.8

In order for the convention’s definition to become international law, twenty states in the UN General Assembly had to ratify the resolution domestically. With the help of Lemkin’s personal crusades, ratification finally occurred on October 16, 1950, only seven years after Lemkin had initially proposed genocide as an international crime.9 Through the UN Genocide Convention, genocide was codified as a horrific international crime and the hope was that even the charge of genocide would be used to call attention to discrimination, injustice, and oppression.10 After the recognition and definition of the crime of genocide on an international scale, one can look more closely at acceptance and legislation in the United States of genocide as an international crime.

6 Power, Samantha. p. 57.
8 Ibid. p. 34.
United States Legislation

As one of the most powerful nations in the world and particularly a leader within the United Nations itself, one would expect the United States to be a leader in the movement against genocide. In presenting his resolution to the UN, Raphael Lemkin had teamed up with members of the US State Department. As a result, he had believed that the US would be one of the first countries to ratify. In addition Lemkin, remembering how lack of US participation in the League of Nations had doomed the institution to failure, felt that the US should take the lead in defining and enforcing the genocide ban. Sadly, however, this was not the case. Though President Harry Truman endorsed the Genocide Convention in June of 1949, it would take nearly four decades before the United States would ratify the treaty banning genocide and even longer before someone would be convicted for committing genocide.

US objections to the law were based on textual critiques such as wording, specifically an unclear or vague definition. Some wording aroused fear that the UN would use the law to prosecute the U.S. for past actions such treatment of Native Americans or African Americans. There was also the question of how many individuals would have to be affected in order for mass murder or ethnic cleansing to constitute genocide. What the U.S. failed to see or deliberately did not acknowledge were the facts that the crime of genocide could not be enforced retroactively nor could a

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12 Ibid., p. 61.
13 Ibid. p. 60 and 64.
14 Ibid. p. 65.
15 Ibid. p. 65.
specific number be put forth without jeopardizing the definition itself. It took longer than expected for the U.S. to ratify the Genocide convention, and even longer for legislation in the U.S. dealing with genocide to be put in place.

**Difficulties with Legislation Defining Genocide**

Recognition on the international and domestic level of genocide as a crime is an important first step, but difficulties over categorization and definition continue to affect how countries treat genocide to this day. One factor against the charge of genocide is the fact that the crime is usually committed by or with the complacency of a government. The UN, as a body of governments, cannot be expected to undermine the authority of its member countries, nor would the US want to be seen as violating the principle of national sovereignty. The UN, and the US as the major power within that organization, is committed to protecting the status quo—namely nonintervention, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Sovereignty, as related to the right to self-determination as developed under the Treaty of Versailles, was meant as a liberating principle, that “All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.” While governments or political leaders that commit genocide do not uphold the principle of “care of the governed” as the goal of self-determination and

16 Ibid. p. 65.
18 Ibid. p. 36.
19 Ibid. p. 39.
sovereignty, these issues become delicate when a country considers humanitarian intervention to stop a perceived genocide from occurring.

Some took to denouncing various violations of human rights as genocide, ignoring the greater qualification of the intent to destroy the victim group in whole or in part. For example, the Palestinian Liberation Organization charged that an Israeli force had carried out a genocidal attack on a Palestinian camp, but the UN decided that the single attack did not amount to a “racist genocidal crime.” Another example is the violations of human rights under the South African apartheid which aimed to destroy, in whole or in part, an entire race, but the decision was that these violations did not amount to genocide. The question caused the UN to issue a new document on apartheid saying that the crime of apartheid “border[ed] on genocide” but did not constitute it. In analyzing the severity of the crime, war has killed more people than genocide and also scars its victims, but genocide leaves a more lasting impression on its survivors and also affects bystanders. As previously mentioned, there is the difficulty of determining how many victims constitute a large enough number to make clear genocidal intentions.

Acknowledging these difficulties regarding genocide in international politics, it is also helpful to consider how other authors or scholars have sought to define genocide.

Alternative Definitions

Given these criticisms of the definition of genocide, some have suggested changes which would clarify or make what is meant by the term more explicit. A Dutch professor

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20 Kuper, Leo. p. 36.
21 Ibid. p. 37.
22 Ibid. p. 38.
named Pieter N. Drost saw that the definition by the UN omitted targeting a political group and believed this loophole would be exploited. He suggested the term genocide be redefined as “the deliberate destruction of physical life of individual human beings by reason of their membership of any human collectivity as such,” because it would include any person targeted because of their identity in any sort of group. Sociologist Irving Louis Horowitz suggested the definition be changed to emphasize that genocide was “a structural and systematic destruction of innocent people by a state bureaucratic apparatus.” This acknowledgement of state involvement and responsibility may address one of the difficulties of another government or an inter-governmental institution prosecuting perpetrators of genocide. Helen Fein suggested the definition be adjusted to “Genocide is a sustained purposeful action by a perpetrator to physically destroy a collectivity directly or indirectly, through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members, sustained regardless of the surrender or lack of threat offered by the victim.”

Her suggested definition suggests that genocide can take a variety of forms and methods while the nature of the crime is unrelated to the reaction of the victims. These alternative definitions further demonstrate the potential shortcomings of legislated definitions of genocide and suggest how the accepted definition of genocide may come into play when examining genocide, and reactions to genocide, as it unfolds in world events.

The UN Genocide Convention established the meaning of genocide on the international, legal level. Though it took longer than anticipated for the United States to ratify the convention, it has accepted this definition and the terms of the convention.

25 Ibid. p. 48.
26 Ibid. p. 48 – 49.
27 Ibid. p. 49.
Controversy over the definition reveals some of the issues which continue to plague nations and leaders in categorizing events as genocide. It is the definition as established by the UN, and accepted by the US, which will be used throughout the remainder of the paper against which to gauge international occurrences of genocide.
CHAPTER FIVE - “MASS MURDER” OF ARMENIANS

“After all, who today remembers the genocide of the Armenians?”
-Adolf Hitler

As was previously discussed, the term genocide arose in reaction to events in Turkey in relation to the Armenian population. Though the word itself was not yet around, consciousness of the concept of genocide did exist. A case study of events in Turkey can be important in understanding the response of the United States to these events and the subsequent formation of the word genocide. Recent legislation in Congress reveals that these events are a part of history which is still much debated today, specifically involving the application of the term genocide in reference to the deaths of many Armenians. The United States deliberately avoided using available vocabulary to describe events in Turkey, instead preferring to adhere to national policies which allowed the US to avoid committing to action.

Description of Context and Events

Occurring between 1915 and 1923, atrocities in Turkey were the result of internal divisions which caused those in power to attempt to move from a plural society toward a single society, with the willingness to use extreme methods. The Committee of Progress, or the Young Turk Party, came to regard the Armenians as an obstruction to their political, social, and ideological goals of creating a single, unified Turkish society. As a result, the Young Turk Party exiled the Greek Population of Asia minor, suppressed

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2 Ibid. p. 111.
the non-Turkish Muslim elements of society, and destroyed the Armenian population.³

This government organized a special division to oversee the extermination of the Armenians, removing officials who were unwilling or unable to carry out these directives.⁴ Though relatively underdeveloped, the government used the technology available at the time, namely the telegraph, to assist in the fulfillment and coordination of these plans.⁵ In addition to actively targeting the Armenian population, there were also policies of neglect which led to the population’s further destruction. Rather than protect its entire population from invading armies during World War I, the Turkish government turned against the Armenian segment of the population.⁶ In the face of these invading armies, many Armenians had been driven into exile in other, nearby countries, becoming separated from their lands as well as cultural and religious foundations.⁷ Upon their return, Armenians found themselves as resident aliens in their own land since much or all of the social, political, economic, cultural, and religious infrastructures had been demolished.⁸ In light of all of these actions or deliberate inactions, the Turkish government was responsible for the near total destruction of the Armenian population and its society.

³ Hovannisian, Richard G. p. 111.
⁴ Ibid. p. 112.
⁵ Ibid. p. 113.
⁶ Ibid. p. 111.
⁷ Ibid. p. 113.
⁸ Ibid. p. 113.
Hindsight Application of Term Genocide

Though the term had not yet been established to describe these horrors, ultimately these actions and policies added up to genocide against the Armenian people. Without the term genocide, governments including the US relied on language such as “crimes against humanity” to describe the practices of the Turkish government. In hindsight, the events and results of policies pursued by the, oppression and systematic destruction of Armenian victims by the Turkish government meet to all of the five terms under the current UN definition of genocide. Though the term was not around at the time, it is clear that genocide of Armenians occurred at the hands of the Turkish government, and with this knowledge the reaction and language used by the United States must be examined.

United States Reaction: Policy over People

Despite knowledge of ongoing events by various United States political actors, U.S. reaction to the situation in Turkey was characterized by an adherence to policy above all else and a refusal to acknowledge the true nature of the crisis. In 1915, US ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, used the term “race murder” in reference to the Armenian genocide. After relaying firsthand information of events on the ground, Morgenthau urged the US government to act on behalf of humanity. His effort did not succeed in garnering US governmental support for action.

9 Hovannisian, Richard G. p. 111.
10 Ibid. p. 112.
11 Ibid. p. 112.
13 Ibid. p. 10.
The reasoning provided was that no American lives had been lost or endangered implying that the US saw no interest to protect in mobilizing for action in Turkey.\textsuperscript{14} Ambassadors must abide by the policy of non-interference in internal affairs of host country because “unless it directly affected American lives and American interests, it was outside the concern of the American government.”\textsuperscript{15} While the US was choosing to abide by its policies, the US government was aided by its professed lack of knowledge of the situation in Turkey regarding the Armenians. The Turkish government took steps to disguise its intentions to kill off the entire Armenian race by portraying the violence as deportations or natural casualties of war.\textsuperscript{16} Though it may be true that the Turkish government hid its intentions which would have helped in distinguishing acts of genocide from acts of war, it is clear from Morgenthau’s plea to the US government that the US presence in Turkey was aware of the true nature of the situation regarding the Armenians and was making this voice known. US adherence to the policy of non-interference and focus on direct US interests provided an excuse for lack of US reaction to events about which, if the US government had listened to its own operatives, the US was aware ran contrary to its ideals and the dignity of humanity.

**Contemporary Treatment of Armenian Genocide**

The United States, along with many other Western countries, continues to deny that genocide occurred against the Armenians. This decision is partly due to the US alliance with Turkey but also a result of not wanting to appear to have done nothing in

\textsuperscript{14} Power, Samantha. p. 10.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. p. 8.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. p. 10.
response to what is now referred to as genocide. In light of continued US failure to acknowledge genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Turk Empire, both Armenian-American US citizens and the President of Armenia continue to push for recognition.

Armenia’s new president will seek “historic justice” for the one and a half million ethnic Armenians who were killed by Ottoman Turks. Though the Armenian government claims the massacres should be called and recognized as genocide, Turkey, backed by Western historians, continues to deny these claims of genocide, saying instead that the massacres of Armenians in World War I do not amount to systematic genocide, noting that large numbers of Christian Armenians and Muslim Turks were also killed. It is a criminal offense in Turkey to refer to the killings as genocide. The President, who was just sworn into office this April, will make international recognition and condemnation of the genocide of Armenians a priority and an essential part of Armenia’s foreign policy agenda. Due to this conflict, Armenia, a tiny ex-Soviet republic located in between Turkey and Azerbaijan, has no diplomatic links with Turkey. In addition, Turkey has maintained a closed border with Armenia over various land disputes. These allegations and controversy surrounding the terminology of genocide have complicated Turkey’s relations with the US and European Union, which Turkey is attempting to join, and perhaps because of this reason, the Turkish president has recently called for the opening of dialogue to normalize relations. Discussion over acknowledging genocide against Armenians continues to be a source of tension between nations, demonstrating the

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strong emotions raised by the word genocide and the continued importance of a clear understanding of what constitutes genocide and which actions do not.

The US, though it had enough information and inside sources revealing the situation to constitute what is now known as genocide, decided to rely on the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference in order to circumvent an obligation to act on behalf of Armenian civilian victims. Elements of the US reaction to the genocide will resurface with relation to other situations of genocide around the world. In analyzing other events, this pattern in US foreign policy has been best described by Samantha Power:

“America’s non-response to the Turkish horrors established patterns that would be repeated. Time and again the U.S. government would be reluctant to cast aside its neutrality and formally denounce a fellow state for its atrocities. Time and again though U.S. officials would learn that huge numbers of civilians were being slaughtered, the impact of this knowledge would be blunted by their uncertainty about the facts and the rationalization that a firmer U.S. stand would make little difference. Time and again U.S. assumptions and policies would be contested by Americans in the field closest to slaughter, who would try to stir the imaginations of their political superiors. And time and again these advocates would fail to sway Washington. The United States would offer humanitarian aid to the survivors of “race murder” but would leave those committing it alone.”

"In Germany, they came first for the Communists,
And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Communist;
And then they came for the trade unionists,
And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a trade unionist;
And then they came for the Jews,
And I didn’t speak up because I wasn’t a Jew;
And then . . . they came for me . . .
And by that time there was no one left to speak up."
-Martin Niemöller

The Holocaust in Germany is probably the best known and most closely associated example of genocide. It is most often discussed in relation to the Jewish population in Germany in Europe, but the aims of the Nazis were far broader than the elimination of that one group. Because the Holocaust is so often thought of upon mention of the word genocide, it is necessary to understand characteristics of the Holocaust in order to comprehend the full nature of genocide and to assess how accurately or inaccurately the term has been applied in new situations.

Nazi Policies: In Pursuit of a “Pure State”

Hitler rose to power in 1933 and brought with him the rule and rules of the Nazis. In July 1940 it was deemed a crime to be a “contragenic,” referring to anyone who would impede the development of the perfect, biologisch, state. This label referred to someone who is “Gypsy, homosexual, Jehovah’s Witness, mentally ill, physically handicapped, or Jew.”¹ It is said that these groups were not targeted because of what they did, but because of who they were.²

² Ibid. p. 165.
Having identified the groups unworthy of and detrimental to German society, Hitler began processes which would lead to their extermination on a mass scale. On July 14, 1933 the Reichstag passed a law to sterilize all those seen unfit for reproduction so that their “bad genes” would not be passed on to further generations, estimating that this law could apply to roughly 10 percent of the German population. Before Hitler attacked Poland, over 300,000 Germans were sterilized and thousands died from the procedure.

Under a program referred to as T-4 beginning in October 1939, Hitler authorized physicians to terminate their patients, beginning with children seen to be suffering from incurable diseases, though it was later acknowledged that some patients who were killed were Jews who were not mentally ill. Soon this procedure was performed on adults, first using the method of injection and then of gas chamber. Though public outcry against the practice led to its official end in August 1941, Hitler continued to carry out the process in areas other than Germany. It is estimated that between 200,000 and 250,000 people died under the Nazi program of euthanasia. The groups targeted included not only Jews but also people of other groups deemed unfit for society.

Hitler and Nazi policies targeted Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals, Gypsies, and Jews, as well as anyone willing to support or protect any of these selected groups. Hitler targeted Jehovah’s Witnesses because of their unwillingness to serve in the German army.

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3 Friedman, Saul S. p. 154 and 164.
4 Ibid. p. 155.
5 Ibid. p. 156.
6 Ibid. p. 156.
7 Ibid. p. 157.
8 Ibid. p. 157.
due to the fact that they would serve no leader other than God. After outlawing homosexual acts eventually including “lewd glances,” Hitler decreed in 1942 that anyone convicted of homosexuality could be executed. Gypsies, deemed “untouchables” and persecuted throughout Europe, were expelled from the civil services and armed forces, not allowed to have sexual relations with those of Aryan descent so as to contain Gypsy blood, and were placed in concentration camps. Jews were subject to laws which restricted much of their daily lives and personal livelihood. All of the above groups were alienated from mainstream German society both by laws which restricted their activities and by identification which led to their visual identification.

An important step in the targeting of these groups was their visual labeling. Each group was given an emblem which had to be affixed to outer clothing, and later had to be placed on doorways to identify individuals’ homes. Jehovah’s Witnesses were identified by a purple triangle. Homosexuals were made to wear a pink or lilac triangle with either 175 (for violating code 175 which outlawed homosexuality) or an A (for Arschficker). Gypsies, deemed to be anyone with one or both grandparents who were Gypsies, were identified by a brown triangle. Initially Jews only had to wear a yellow Star of David on their clothing, but they were made later to identify their businesses and homes with the same mark. Identification, however, was only the first step.

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9 Friedman, Saul S. p. 158.
10 Ibid. p. 160.
11 Ibid. p. 161, 162, and 163.
12 Ibid. p. 158.
13 Ibid. p. 160.
14 Ibid. p. 162 and 164.
15 Ibid. p. 167.
After marking those who would be the targets of laws of persecution against these individuals and groups, the Nazis began passing legislation after legislation restricting social movements and occupations. Hitler outlawed organizations and went on a crusade burning books and organizational materials of these groups. Members of the targeted groups, and anyone seen to help or sympathize with these populations, placed into concentration camps were worked to death, tortured, suffered starvation, maltreatment, and disease, or were taken out in groups into deserted areas and executed.

Following a night of incredible violence targeting Jews, called Kristallnach, the Nazis passed legislation after legislation including: turning over items of value, not allowing the ownership of automobiles, banned from going to movies, entering parks, or serving on boards of trade, call of men to forced labor, forced to move to Jewish-owned housing, subject to a curfew, no radios, have to report for daily calisthenics, pay a war tax, denied rations for shoes or clothing, restrictions on purchases and ownership of food and other items, confiscation of private telephones, forbidden usage of public telephones, and later surrendering winder coats and blankets, forbidden from using public bathrooms, or traveling unless going beyond a certain distance for work. The visual identification of individuals in these groups led to a sense of alienation from both the German society at large and their own communities. As described by Henry Huttenbach, this “sense of isolation created a ‘psychological claustrophobia’.” In reaction to the above described actions of persecution, some committed suicide while others hid with friends.

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16 Friedman, Saul S. p. 158 and 159.
17 Ibid. p. 160, 164.
19 Ibid. p. 167.
20 Ibid. p. 167.
unsupportive of Hitler’s regime, or attempted to be smuggled into Sweden.\textsuperscript{21} Through the policies carried out by the Nazi regime, Hitler sought to alienate people he saw as unworthy from German society by visually marking them and passing laws which disrupted their daily lives and physical and emotional well-being.

Though the effects of the above persecution cannot be measured in numbers, the amount of deaths of the groups targeted speaks as to how well Hitler and the Nazis carried out their plan of ridding German society of those it deemed imperfect and unfit. Under the Nazis it is estimated that between 2,500 and 5,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses died; between 3,000 to 9,000 homosexuals died; some estimates put the deaths of Gypsies at 219,700 while others have the numbers at less; and perhaps 110,000 Jews lost their lives.\textsuperscript{22} It may be hard to get a grasp for what these numbers mean, so it must be noted that in some places these groups were virtually all eliminated and the group was faced with extinction.\textsuperscript{23}

**Close Association: Holocaust and Genocide**

Because the word genocide was just occurring during and around the time of the Holocaust, it is difficult to analyze the usage of the term in relation to events at that time. The term genocide, however, is most closely associated with the events and history of the Holocaust in many people’s minds. Nazi policies targeting specific groups of people for both persecution and death fit the definition of genocide as accepted by both the United States and the United Nations. In fact, multiple genocides occurred because the Nazis

\textsuperscript{21} Friedman, Saul S. p. 172.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. p. 158, 161, 165, and 174.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid. p. 163 and 176.
targeted multiple groups, not just the Jewish population in Germany. United States involvement in World War II helped to uncover and display to the world the horrors of the Nazis in committing genocide. Due to United States involvement in helping to stop the continuation and fulfillment of genocide, the history of the Holocaust has been made widely known to citizens and students within the United States. An association between genocide and the Holocaust can be helpful in conjuring up images and memories which may make the term and idea of genocide more real to someone who has not experienced it.

To constrain one’s understanding of genocide to purely the Holocaust, however, can be dangerous. Hitler made his intentions of eliminating certain populations explicitly known. Through his insistence on adherence to the legal system, the Nazis instated policies which were inherently and outwardly bigoted. Though Hitler and the Nazis did not advertise what they were doing or the brutality of their methods, the intentions and the actions were clearly laid out for anyone looking for such answers. Not all, and generally most, governments, parties, or leaders seeking to and/or carrying out genocide are not as open in their intentions and methods. More likely is the attempt to disguise incriminating words and evidence. Identification of genocide is made much more difficult by having to interpret the “big picture” of intentions behind events and policies.

It is also important to note and understand the full nature of the Holocaust in seeking to examine the genocidal intent in other contexts. Yes, the intent to destroy a group of individuals is the foremost part of genocide. But this destruction can come about in a number of ways. When thinking of the Holocaust, people may think mainly,
or entirely, of the killing of mass numbers of Jews and other targeted groups. This reality is true, and cannot be ignored. Leading up to and alongside the mass murders were policies which sought to destroy the mental and physical well being of the individuals and the way of life. Restriction of access to food and other items, limiting of activities, and undermining of businesses induced physical and financial suffering. These realities, along with identification to the public as a member of one of these “unworthy groups,” lead to psychological alienation and mental suffering. In turn both types of suffering can cause individuals to commit suicide, thereby self-eliminating, or to despair which can bring about early death. The suffering of persecuted groups which occurs in conjunction with or leading up to mass murder is important to recognize in identifying and working against genocide. Considering that Nazi policies aimed to disrupt the daily lives and well-being of the groups for which the government was also seeking physical destruction provides a clearer picture as to how to recognize and understand genocide as it occurs in the contemporary world.
CHAPTER SEVEN – “ACTS OF GENOCIDE” IN RWANDA

"All that is needed for evil to win in this world is for enough good men to do nothing.”
- Edmund Burke

Events in Rwanda occurred relatively recently, recently enough for it to have been in most people’s lifetimes and for major players in the United States government to be around or still in power. Hollywood movies such as Hotel Rwanda have again brought the issue to the attention of the United States public. The situation in Darfur over the last few years has resurfaced discussion and reflection over the United States reaction to the crisis in Rwanda. As a recent example, yet one that has the benefit of hindsight and critical analysis, the situation in Rwanda provides insight into understanding how the United States has formulated a response to intelligence of genocide and how the US government can better react in the future. It is first important to know what happened—the realities on the ground in Rwanda at the time–before considering the intelligence the US received, how the issue was addressed by the media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and US governmental officials, and then to look at the US response to genocide in Rwanda.

Emerging Tension

The context out of which the genocide emerged is crucial both to show out of what political and social situation the genocide occurred, and to see how events were explained in relation to, or because of, the context. The genocide in Rwanda was preceded by four years of civil war after which the United Nations, with the help of the
United States, had launched the Arusha Peace Process.\(^1\) During this process that human rights violations along with the armament and training of civilians made those involved in the peace negotiations uneasy and unsure of both sides’ commitment to peace.\(^2\) As a result, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) began to mistrust the peace process and attempted to achieve peace on the party’s own terms.\(^3\) Therefore though the United States and the United Nations had been involved in dealing with resolving the country’s civil war, blind focus on the Arusha Peace Accords led to lack of awareness of escalating tensions within the country.

Amidst these tensions, attention to statements made by officials would have revealed genocidal intent before the killings began. Though the statements made by extremist Hutu rarely declared openly the intention to eliminate all Tutsi, they focused on violence and discrimination against Tutsi.\(^4\) In a more bold declaration in November 1992, Leon Mugesera, a senior affiliate of Rwandan President Habyarimana, said:

“The fatal mistake we made in 1959 was to let [the Tutsi] get out … They belong in Ethiopia and we are going to find them a shortcut to get there by throwing them into the Nyabarongo River. I must insist on this point. We have to act. Wipe them all out!”\(^5\)

In an explicit comment by Colonel Bagosora, on April 4, 1994 he announced what he saw as the best way for Rwanda, “The only plausible solution for Rwanda would be elimination of Tutsi.”\(^6\) In light of these statements, few US diplomats, if any, sent word to the Clinton administration of worries of ethnically motivated massacres, but instead

\(^{2}\) Ibid. p. 4.
\(^{3}\) Ibid. p. 4.
\(^{4}\) Ibid. p. 25.
\(^{5}\) Ibid. p. 25.
\(^{6}\) Ibid. p. 25.
continued to focus on the progress of a democratic process and adherence to the Arusha Accords.\textsuperscript{7} Had the United States been paying attention to these bold declarations of party mindset and action intention, it may not have been surprised by the events that unfolded.

**Overview of the Crisis**

The timeline of events shows the severity of the crimes being committed and the strength of conviction with which the genocide was carried out. On April 6, 1994, the plane carrying the Rwandan and Burundi presidents was shot down, killing everyone involved.\textsuperscript{8} Representatives from the UN High Commission on Refugees witnessed this event, and recall hearing of systematic killing within hours of the death of the president.\textsuperscript{9} In the first week 20,000 corpses were scattered throughout the streets of the Rwandan capital, Kigali.\textsuperscript{10} By the second week on April 13\textsuperscript{th}, the RPF had declared that genocide was taking place in Rwanda.\textsuperscript{11} Specifically, RPF Chairman Colonel Alexis Kanyarengwe announced that extremist Hutus sought the total extermination of the Tutsi population.\textsuperscript{12} Radio was used by those committing the genocide to coordinate actions, but it was also used by the victims to broadcast the atrocities. On April 17\textsuperscript{th}, the RPF announced over Radio Muhabura “the world cannot and should not forget the genocide which is being perpetrated in Rwanda today.”\textsuperscript{13} By April 21\textsuperscript{st} more than 250,000 people, the majority of which were Tutsi, had been killed in Rwanda.\textsuperscript{14} As early as April 29\textsuperscript{th}, only twenty-five

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7} Cohen, Jared. p. 25 – 26.
\item \textsuperscript{8} Ibid. p. 37.
\item \textsuperscript{9} Ibid. p. 37.
\item \textsuperscript{10} Ibid. p. 129.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Ibid. p. 129.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid. p. 129.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid. p. 129.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid. p. 129.
\end{itemize}
days since the beginning of the genocide, the RPF announced that “the genocide is almost completed.”\textsuperscript{15} It is clear that in the space of a month those within the country were aware of the intent of the perpetrators and witnessed genocidal desires being manifested in action against the Tutsi population in Rwanda.

In looking at the situation in Rwanda, knowing some numbers can also be helpful to gain an overview of how the crisis can be characterized. Beginning April 6, 1994 more than 800,000 people died over the course of one hundred days.\textsuperscript{16} This number represents 11 percent of the total population, and 84 percent of the Rwandan Tutsi population.\textsuperscript{17} In addition to this large amount of deaths, militiamen called Interahamwe raped 250,000 women, leaving 70 percent of them HIV positive.\textsuperscript{18} Over the course of the one hundred days and the backdrop of an ongoing civil war, there emerged four million internally displaced persons and over two million refugees which temporarily reduced the entire Rwandan population by 50 percent.\textsuperscript{19} From these numbers and the impact on the Rwandan, and particularly Tutsi, population, it is clear that genocide occurred in Rwanda during this time period.

Outside of Rwanda others became aware of the events and their significance. Evidence suggests that the State Department and Bureau of Intelligence and Research had knowledge that the killings were spread throughout the countryside by April 15\textsuperscript{th}.\textsuperscript{20} On April 27\textsuperscript{th} the Pope issued a statement saying that the genocide was occurring in

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{15} Cohen, Jared. p. 130.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. p. 1.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid. p. 1.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid. p. 1.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. p. 1.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. p. 133.
\end{footnotesize}
Rwanda. Shortly after that, on April 28th a press release declared “Oxfam fears genocide is happening in Rwanda,” and joining Oxfam and Human Rights Watch, the US committee for Refugees called on the US to recognize the crisis in Rwanda as genocide. Though perhaps sad that it took some in the international community even a month, there had begun to be recognition of genocide in Rwanda before the end of April.

The length of delay in calling events in Rwanda may have been due to their unexpectedness, but surprise at what happened does not fully explain reactions to intelligence of genocide. It may be true that no one could have known that the president would be killed on April 6th and that so many people would be killed in response. When the genocide begun on that April day, the situation received attention only to the degree that they wanted to make sure all US diplomats and expatriates were safely evacuated into neighboring Burundi. While this initial protection of its own US citizens is natural and important, the US government’s response did not extend further than those direct national interests. Instead of using the evacuation plan to then intervene in the genocide, US officials rested content knowing all the Americans had been evacuated and returned to other matters of US foreign policy. Though events in Rwanda were unexpected, the US response looked not much further than protection of its own citizens.

Further occurrences in Rwanda purposefully discouraged a more extensive US or international role, beyond protection of countries’ own citizens, against the genocide. The day after the assassination of the presidents, ten Belgian UN Assistance Mission in

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22 Ibid. p. 134.
23 Ibid. p. 5.
24 Ibid. p. 5.
Rwanda (UNAMIR) peacekeepers were ambushed by Hutu forces in the hopes of sparking a withdrawal of foreigners from Rwanda.\textsuperscript{25} Given this tragedy, Secretary of State Warren Christopher decided that the environment on the ground signaled that UNAMIR no longer had the capability to perform effectively at low-risk and therefore instructed the US to “either remove or marginalize the existing UNAMIR force.”\textsuperscript{26} The US followed his suggestion, a decision which had larger implications than perhaps considered:

> “Not only did the United States not advocate a response to the genocide, but the U.S. mission to the United Nations also, under orders from the Secretary of State, discouraged any international response by lobbying the Security Council for a withdrawal of all UNAMIR troops.”\textsuperscript{27}

As a result of US lobby for removal support, the Security Council, after debating the issue, compromised that all but two-hundred-seventy UNAMIR troops would be evacuated, thus marking the departure of the international community.\textsuperscript{28} At this point the United States had successfully removed its citizens from danger and, for all intensive purposes, reduced the international presence in Rwanda to the point where it could not realistically hope to be effective in stopping or limiting the genocide. These actions are indicative of other factors and demonstrate the ongoing US agenda with regard to Rwanda.

**United States Pleads Ignorant**

Removal of United States and international presence from Rwanda is part of the larger failure to acknowledge that genocide was taking place, and part of the reason for

\textsuperscript{25} Cohen, Jared. p. 71.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid. p. 6.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid. p. 5.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. p. 5.
this breakdown was the belief that officials did not have the information required to make the determination that genocide was occurring. Though there may have been statements which foreshadowed the violence, diplomats claim they did not recognize plans for genocide because they were not trained to look for genocide.\textsuperscript{29} In addition, because of the focus on implementing the peace accords, distribution of arms from various outside sources to segments of the public was seen as being for defensive purposes.\textsuperscript{30} Overlooking signals and lack of training in distinguishing genocide caused US and other diplomats to fail to recognize genocide in Rwanda before it occurred and was suddenly engulfing the country.

Failure to predict genocide cannot be equated to lack of knowledge about possible violence in the country. While policymakers have insisted that they did not have the information available to predict and prevent genocide, they were aware of lists for targeted ethnic assassinations, extremism of hardliner Hutus, and had witnessed similar ethnically motivated killings and violence.\textsuperscript{31} This information suggests that decision makers may have foreseen some ethnically driven violence and killings even if they could not have known that it would be on the level of genocide.\textsuperscript{32} Again, though it may be true that US officials were not looking for nor expected genocide in Rwanda, they could have foreseen massive amounts of civilian deaths.\textsuperscript{33} In addition to the above indications of possible violence, the US also received warnings from various sources.\textsuperscript{34}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} Cohen, Jared. p. 32.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid. p. 33.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Ibid. p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ibid. p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Ibid. p. 25.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Ibid. p. 4.
\end{itemize}
Though claiming lack of realization that genocide was about to occur, the US had the information within its reach to suggest that the violence predicted above may be or could become ethnically driven. By December 1993, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was informed of “Some forty million tons of small arms [which] had been transferred from Poland to Rwanda, via Belgium, an extraordinary quantity for a government allegedly committed to a peace process.”\(^\text{35}\) One month later, in January of 1993, the “CIA warned of a likelihood of large-scale ethnic violence.”\(^\text{36}\) To corroborate this warning, there is some evidence to suggest that the lists of Tutsi or sympathetic Hutu had been compiled by this same period and that placement on one of these lists clearly presented danger.\(^\text{37}\)

Beyond physical proof, US officials were in close contact with native Rwandans who could provide insight into the social and political atmosphere. Participation of Foreign Service Nationals (Rwandans working for the US embassy or USAID) knew the culture and society.\(^\text{38}\) These Rwandans came from a variety of political and ethnic backgrounds which led to tension at the workplace and, at times, even confrontation.\(^\text{39}\) It appears that the US embassy even employed Foreign Service Nationals specifically to translate propaganda in the newspapers and on the radio and required them to hand in reports daily.\(^\text{40}\) Lists indicating potential targets of violence and contact with Rwandans who would have been well acquainted with and able to be a resource about potential

\(^{35}\) Cohen, Jared. p. 28.
\(^{36}\) Ibid. p. 28.
\(^{37}\) Ibid. p. 27.
\(^{38}\) Ibid. p. 27.
\(^{39}\) Ibid. p. 27.
\(^{40}\) Ibid. p. 35.
violence and even genocide, show that US officials had more knowledge or access to knowledge than has been acknowledged in recognizing and responding to genocide.

US officials themselves in Rwanda may have had the knowledge and proximity to be able to understand and obtain more information. United States Ambassador to Rwanda, David Rawson, spoke a related language which was mutually-intelligible with the language spoken in Rwanda, at least to the point of understanding the general idea of a statement, so he may not have even needed translations of the propaganda broadcasts used to announce and coordinate genocidal activities.\(^4\) There is no question that Rawson could have just not heard the radio broadcasts. After the main radio station responsible for propaganda was destroyed, it began to broadcast from the back of trucks traveling throughout the city, including down the street of the US embassy, so the message would have been difficult to miss.\(^2\) As the highest US official in Rwanda at the time, US ambassador Rawson had the knowledge to gain at least a basic level of understanding from the broadcasts which he could not have avoided hearing.

In addition to the direct contact the US ambassador had with the propaganda surrounding the genocide, other US officials had firsthand encounters which revealed the nature of the violence. Armed men came to Deputy Chief of Mission Joyce Leader’s compound looking for the Prime Minister (who was later shot, killed, and put on display), accused an African American woman of being Tutsi, and then proceeded to beat the gardener who was Tutsi.\(^3\) Though the Prime Minister at the time was Hutu, she may

\(^{41}\) Cohen, Jared. p. 36.
\(^{42}\) Ibid. p. 36.
\(^{43}\) Ibid. p. 38.
have been targeted as a Tutsi sympathizer. There was also news that civilians, probably the Interahamwe militia, had come to schools looking for and killing Tutsis.\textsuperscript{44} Through witnessing and hearing news of even schoolchildren being identified and killed specifically because they were Tutsi, it became clear to those looking to understand that the violence was ethnically driven against the Tutsis.

This information about the nature of the violence was confirmed by an insider who had offered valuable knowledge prior to the start of the killings. In January 1994 an informant from the Interahamwe militia revealed his own role in training men from the Rwandan military and his instructions to register Tutsi for what “he suspect[ed was] for their extermination.”\textsuperscript{45} In addition to the Rwandan military’s preparation, he suggested their capability. The informant indicated the capacity of the Interahamwe to carry out a plan of extermination by killing one thousand Tutsis every twenty minutes.\textsuperscript{46} Given that this information was presented to the US in January 1994 before the killings began in April, the US might have foreseen the genocide or have been able to better interpret the violence as genocide once it had begun. With the insider information about the Rwandan military, US officials would have been able to corroborate news reports and firsthand accounts described above to recognize the killings as ethnically motivated.

Though some claim to be unsure of the nature of the killings in Rwanda, the evidence and intelligence was available to be able to characterize the violence relatively accurately. From the beginning reports show that the killings were “carefully planned

\textsuperscript{44} Cohen, Jared. p. 38.  
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid. p. 33.  
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid. p. 33.
Joyce Leader observed that there were three types of killings: “Hutus killing Tutsis and moderate Hutu civilians, radical Hutus assassinating moderate politicians, and there were the killings on both sides that were taking place within the context of the civil war.” The fact that reports and knowledge by US officials reveal that the killings were planned, systematic, and ethnically-motivated aiming at the total extermination of the Tutsi people reveal that the violence occurring in Rwanda fit the definition of genocide.

**Lack Media Attention**

With the appalling nature of the violence in Rwanda, classified by some as genocide though not acknowledged as such by all, the next question to ask is: where was the media? In past international conflicts the media has played an important role in displaying the violence to capture both the public and the government’s attention. For example, in the United States war in Vietnam, the role of the media cannot be underestimated in galvanizing the public by broadcasting the violence and the ugly truths about the war and US involvement. Beginning with the double assassination of heads of state, it would seem likely that the atrocities in Rwanda would have captured the attention of the media and perhaps precipitated action by the US government, which will be described below. Sadly, this was not the case.

Violence, specifically violence which was revealed to be genocide, did not receive much coverage from the media, and such coverage came very slowly. The media had prioritized other conflicts, internationally and domestically, and did not exert the

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47 Cohen, Jared. p. 38.
48 Ibid. p. 38.
pressure on the government which may have moved the U.S. to action.\textsuperscript{49} The Rwandan genocide was not given coverage in the media because priority was given to crises in North Korea, Bosnia, Haiti, and South Africa, along with domestic concerns such as the death of Richard Nixon, the death of Jackie Onassis, and the arrest of O.J. Simpson.\textsuperscript{50} Though atrocities in Rwanda were not given much attention by the media due to prioritization of other news, there is also another explanation.

Coverage of Rwanda was allowed to be demoted on the priority list because the media and the public are consistently not as interested in reports about Africa. This phenomenon can be summed up in the statement “African coverage has been historically less appealing to media organizations unless the particular crisis involves western expatriates, diplomats, or floods of refugees.”\textsuperscript{51} In general, African news is only appealing when it contains a lot of bodies or involves an area vital to US interests.\textsuperscript{52} Even given this trend, it is somewhat surprising that even the double assassination of the heads of state did not receive as much international attention as would have been guessed.\textsuperscript{53} In the first week after the double assassination, nothing was mentioned about Rwanda in the major news magazines.\textsuperscript{54} The media and, inextricably related, the public have not show an interest in African affairs, to the point that even important political assassinations and huge amounts of violence were overlooked and not given coverage.

\textsuperscript{49} Cohen, Jared. p. 4.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. p. 64.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid. p. 65.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid. p. 65.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid. p. 65.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. p. 67.
The media did begin to cover events in Rwanda after a noticeable delay, and even then did not give the attention to the coverage that the crisis warranted. The first mention of violence and killing in Rwanda came in April 18th issues of *Newsweek* and *Time* and focused on the killing as “tribal violence,” and giving importance to US expatriates and the UN.\(^5^5\) Even when the conflict was mentioned, Rwanda did not receive front page reporting.\(^5^6\) At this point, even as Rwanda was beginning to be covered by the media, attempts by experts on Rwanda to publish opinion-editorials were turned away.\(^5^7\) With the media focused on other events during the most severe part of the genocide, the country mainly received attention when floods of refugees started pouring into neighboring Zaire and Tanzania.\(^5^8\) Some time after the genocide had taken over the country the media began covering the crisis, but did so in a limited capacity thereby shortchanging the importance and reality of the violence in Rwanda.

Seeing as the media did not give the genocide in Rwanda the priority or the attention it deserved, it is understandable, and not unpredictable, that the coverage did not devote the time necessary to understand the conflict so as to characterize and depict the events accurately. Once the crisis was given coverage, reporters did not look much further than a surface level explanation of the violence and killings. As a result, “The media continuously [misrepresented] the violence in Rwanda as a civil war, tribal conflict, ethnic strife, and other stereotypical classifications of African conflicts.”\(^5^9\)

When covering Rwanda, the media focused on the killing and the appalling nature of the

\(^5^5\) Cohen, Jared. p. 67.
\(^5^6\) Ibid. p. 67.
\(^5^7\) Ibid. p. 66.
\(^5^8\) Ibid. p. 65.
\(^5^9\) Ibid. p. 66.
crimes rather than the details of who was behind it all.\textsuperscript{60} As such, the media was quick to classify the violence as tribal violence given that they were not experts on the country and were probably working under the pressure of deadlines.\textsuperscript{61} Though the media did capture the horror of the killings and the inhumane treatment of civilians, it failed to capture the systematic nature of the massacres, a detail which would have contributed to the view and understanding of the massacres as adding up to genocide.\textsuperscript{62} After initially failing to cover the crisis in Rwanda due to prioritization of other events and lack of interest in Africa in general, media coverage of genocide in Rwanda was both limited and failed to portray accurately the genocidal characteristics of the mass killings in Rwanda.

**Weak Non-Governmental Organization Voice**

With the media failing to provide much, if any, coverage to Rwanda, the responsibility may have fallen to other players on the international stage such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Even this largely knowledgeable and important sector fell short in exercising its potential influence on the US government. With the exception of Human Rights Watch and Oxfam, NGOs did not initially call for U.S. intervention in the crisis.\textsuperscript{63} Left unexplained, this fact may be seen as a huge failure, but

\begin{quote}
“It is important to note that while most NGOs did not initially call for American troops to stop the genocide, many called for a strengthening of UNAMIR, greater pressure on the genocidal government, and jamming of the hate radio.”\textsuperscript{64}
\end{quote}

Though NGOs suggested other responses to the genocide, their lack of desire to call for military action by the US can be attributed to two main factors. Some attribute the NGOs

\textsuperscript{60} Cohen, Jared. p. 66.  
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid. p. 66.  
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid. p. 66.  
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid. p. 4.  
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid. p. 99.
lack of call for US intervention to their reluctance to call for military intervention as a whole while others believe that NGOs were unused to witnessing this kind of atrocity so it took awhile to recognize the genocide for what it was. Though these factors must be taken into account and though the Rwandan genocide was different from those that had been witnessed in the past, some representatives say that they did recognize the genocide but knew that a call for US action would be limited to smaller undertakings. NGOs, either because of lack of identification of the crisis or lack of belief in moving the US government to action, for the most part did not call for military intervention but instead focused on other, smaller actions to try to stop or impede the genocide.

**Rwanda: Low or No Political Priority**

Given the lack of attention by the media and a mixed assessment by NGOs, one must now examine the response by the US government both in receiving and processing intelligence about the crisis in Rwanda. Much like in the media, Rwanda was given low priority status as conflict compared to other international conflicts which involved greater US interests. Specifically, Rwanda got prioritized behind a political crisis in Haiti, nuclear disarmament in North Korea, violations of safe havens in Bosnia, and uncertainty surrounding the results of elections in South Africa. Given these other international events and their perceived greater importance to US interests, Rwanda was not given priority in the US political sphere, a decision which was echoed in the amount of attention Rwanda received from high-ranked US officials.

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66 Ibid. p. 99.  
67 Ibid. p. 59.  
68 Ibid. p. 4.
Lack of prioritization of the genocide in Rwanda had significant and irrevocable implications for the US response. During the one hundred days of the genocide, the US government never sat down to discuss the matter, instead leaving the decision making to lower ranks of the government while avoiding diplomatic statements, refusing to use the term genocide, and never considering that intervention could imply something other than military deployment.\(^{69}\) The lack of discussion about Rwanda was a result of the fact that the Rwanda issue not given the attention it needed or warranted from senior administrative officials.\(^{70}\) Those senior officials were familiar with the events in Rwanda took the safe route instead of fighting a hard fight for US intervention in the genocide.\(^{71}\) Without consideration of the crisis in Rwanda by high-level US officials, the situation and a US response to the situation were never discussed by those with the power to affect government decisions.

Lack of attention by the necessary US officials was not due to lack of opportunity to do so. US ambassador to Rwanda Rawson and Assistant Secretary of State George E. Moose failed to pressure the Secretary of State to put Rwanda on the priority list.\(^{72}\) Of equal or greater importance, US President Bill Clinton and National Security Advisor (NSA) Anthony Lake had the ability to make Rwanda a prominent issue which would demand a response, but the pair never discussed the conflict or a US response.\(^{73}\) Had Lake wanted to make the severity of the situation in Rwanda clear to the president, he could have called a meeting or issued a report, but these actions were not taken due to the

\(^{69}\) Cohen, Jared. p. 3.  
\(^{70}\) Ibid. p. 95.  
\(^{71}\) Ibid. p. 95.  
\(^{72}\) Ibid. p. 103.  
\(^{73}\) Ibid. p. 5.
prioritization of other issues.\textsuperscript{74} Even if the NSA had focused on the issue, it would have difficult to mobilize the necessary support to launch an intervention since the neither NGOs, Congress, nor the media were calling for intervention, and the force capable of responding, UNAMIR, was being withdrawn.\textsuperscript{75} Response to Rwanda faced an insurmountable obstacle of lack of discussion, though even discussion would have been difficult given other factors.

With the NSA and the president failing to address the issue, the responsibility of dealing with Rwanda was passed onto the National Security Council (NSC). The decision fell to Dick Clarke, head of peacekeeping in the NSC, who pursued a policy of strategic interest as the determining factor for US intervention.\textsuperscript{76} Within the NSC, those in the Africa sector, such as Donald Steinburg, found themselves marginalized by the Peacekeeping sector, talking not about what could be done but what would be allowed.\textsuperscript{77} With the policy of strategic interest in mind, the NSC and Republicans of Congress saw Rwanda as a “test case” in which the US could exercise its responsibility in saying no to situations that were not vital to US interests.\textsuperscript{78} Debate over reaction to Rwanda was stifled in the NSC by a policy which put events in Rwanda outside sphere of US vital interests.

With the higher ranked officials not providing outright support for a response to Rwanda, it was unlikely that those ranking lower would advocate a response facing Republican aversion to peacekeeping which would not even be supported by the White

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\textsuperscript{74} Cohen, Jared. p. 98. \\
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid. p. 99. \\
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid. p. 6. \\
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid. p. 101. \\
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid. p. 101.
\end{flushright}
US response to Rwanda was inhibited by lack of discussion by high level officials, including the president, which further hindered discussion among lower level US officials.

In contrast to the above described lack of discussion, there were some officials who attempted to generate support for US action against the genocide in Rwanda. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Prudence Bushnell tried to garner support for US action in Rwanda, but this support was not sizeable or influential enough to pressure the National Security Council. The Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor John Shattuck voiced concern over the issue, but was unpopular and not influential because of his pressure for greater attention to human rights in China and his representation of a human rights bureau. Responsibility also fell to the Director for African Affairs and head of the Rwanda task force, Vince Kern, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peacekeeping, Sarah Sewall, who were pressured by Congress and by lack of support from their superiors not to act or apply pressure. Even those with sufficient responsibility and knowledge of the situation who did seek or may have sought US intervention in the genocide encountered enough opposition to limit the impact and reception of such a call.

Failing to discuss Rwanda and relegating the issue to lower ranking officials can be seen as part of a larger strategy employed by those in power. US policy toward Rwanda, rather than being described as a failure due to lack of decision making, is

79 Cohen, Jared. p. 6.
80 Ibid. p. 7.
81 Ibid. p. 7.
82 Ibid. p. 7.
characterized a stance of calculated non-interventionism as adopted by senior officials adopted.\textsuperscript{83} The atmosphere within the administration showed that the government was not willing to do anything, but lower level officials were allowed to continue working on the situation knowing that nothing would be done.\textsuperscript{84} This policy resulted in a separation of thought among officials in the US government, because “The prospect for an intervention in Rwanda was left in the hands of a small group of dedicated low-level officials who, despite their creativity and ambition in trying to devise some kind of an intervention, were unable to move any of their proposals without senior level support.”\textsuperscript{85} Though there were hard-working, knowledgeable US officials working to generate support for US action in Rwanda, these efforts were futile given the policy and lack of prioritization of Rwanda by high ranking officials.

A suggested reason for the lack of movement on the issue by powerful US officials is that information on the ground was not calling for such a response. One such major source of information was the US Ambassador to Rwanda, David Rawson. Rawson had a difficult time distinguishing types of violence ongoing in Rwanda, from political violence to civil war to genocide, and therefore did not push for US action.\textsuperscript{86} Ambassador Rawson viewed the conflict as a result of antagonism between the two sides when reality showed that it was a one-sided campaign by Hutu extremists to exterminate the Tutsi population and any Hutu that would prevent this from happening.\textsuperscript{87} Instead, Rawson continued to advocate a return to the peace process, downplaying the nature of

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{83} Cohen, Jared. p. 95.
\bibitem{84} Ibid. p. 95.
\bibitem{85} Ibid. p. 95.
\bibitem{86} Ibid. p. 6.
\bibitem{87} Ibid. p. 7.
\end{thebibliography}
the conflict, and sided with the administration. Given the current political climate, it is unlikely that even if Rawson had pressured the Secretary of State that the matter would have been presented to Congress or the White House. Perhaps the most influential US official in Rwanda, US Ambassador Rawson failed to recognize the violence for what it was and as a result did not issue a call for a US response.

In addition, the US was able to dismiss evidence as given by the informant from the *Interahamwe* as mentioned above. This informant was willing to disclose all information he knew in return for protection of he and his family outside of Rwanda, a request which Force Commander for UNAMIR Romeo Dallaire passed on to the US. In the report Dallaire passed on to New York, he ended with the hesitation over the informant’s sudden change of heart, a small statement which allowed the US to dismiss the request for escalation of UNAMIR needed to seize the arms. Further reports by Dallaire concerning the amassing and distribution of arms were received by the UN and the US, but he was forbidden from action due to the earlier qualifying statement about the informant. An offhand comment made by the UN Force Commander for UNAMIR allowed the US to discredit information which would have given insight into the nature of the violence.

**Single-mindedness in Consideration of Intervention**

Despite lack of support from leading US officials and rejection of key evidence, the US at some point was forced to consider action. US governmental institutions had

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88 Cohen, Jared. p. 7.
89 Ibid. p. 7.
90 Ibid. p. 33.
91 Ibid. p. 33 – 34.
92 Ibid. p. 34.
received word of hundreds of thousands of deaths by mid-May.\footnote{Cohen, Jared. p. 7.} Massive numbers of deaths had been reported before this time, but these deaths were primarily associated with the civil war and the movements of troops.\footnote{Ibid. p. 8.} As a result, within the month of May officials contemplated a US response with the guidelines of not deploying any troops, not spending any US money, and placing no one in harm’s way.\footnote{Ibid. p. 8.} Though this may appear as a huge difficulty, suggestions for US intervention included: stopping the extremist radio, airlifts announcing the killers’ names on the radio, and a coalition of the willing.\footnote{Ibid. p. 8.} Unfortunately, all of these suggestions were thrown around on the lower levels of the government while the upper levels of the government continued to refuse to call the crisis genocide.\footnote{Ibid. p. 8.} About a month and a half after the start of the genocide, massive amounts of deaths dictated that the US consider a response, even if its options were limited to something other than military intervention.

Experts suggest that a full-scale military intervention would have been difficult if not impossible.\footnote{Ibid. p. 8.} For one thing, there were large numbers of civilians (people not employed by the government) carrying out the killings throughout the countryside.\footnote{Ibid. p. 8.} As the killing became decentralized, weapons became more available in the sense that people could use farming tools such as machetes, hoes, and axes.\footnote{Ibid. p. 8.} The fact that people lived in close proximity to each other due to high population density also made carrying
out the killings easier.\textsuperscript{101} Even if the above characteristics would have made military intervention difficult, that does not mean that all intervention is impossible or would have been unneeded or unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{102} Had military intervention been an option, conditions in Rwanda would have made carrying out its goals in stopping the genocide very difficult, though not impossible.

Beyond these characteristics of the country, specific events in Rwanda made it even more difficult for the US to even consider military intervention. On April 7\textsuperscript{th}, ten Belgian UNAMIR officials were attacked, leading US policymakers to associate Rwanda with events in Somalia.\textsuperscript{103} Failure of US forces in Somalia six months previously meant that the decision not to intervene was made well before the details of the situation were known; because Somalia had failed, the U.S. would not intervene in places like Rwanda.\textsuperscript{104} This “failure in Somalia” refers to the loss of eighteen US Army rangers, one of which was dragged through the streets of the capitol of Mogadishu, while peacekeeping was blamed for the catastrophe.\textsuperscript{105} The attack on UN peacekeepers by Hutus aiming at the removal of international forces in Rwanda was successful on two levels: almost all of the UNAMIR forces were removed from the country, and the event caused the US to associate the situation with Somalia.

Relation between Rwanda and Somalia had huge implications for US policy toward the genocide. The events in Somalia described above made US policy strategists

\begin{footnotes}
\item[101] Cohen, Jared. p. 8.
\item[102] Ibid. p. 8.
\item[103] Ibid. p. 5.
\item[104] Ibid. p.3.
\item[105] Ibid. p. 3.
\end{footnotes}
shift to consider intervention on the basis of more selective and critical criteria.\textsuperscript{106} It is unlikely that the US public or the Clinton administration would have allowed more troops to be sent to central Africa so shortly after the Somalia debacle.\textsuperscript{107} In addition, the dismissal of the Secretary of Defense Les Aspin after events in Somalia meant that the Clinton administration was even more wary of committing to US action and resources for peacekeeping efforts.\textsuperscript{108} Public memory of the events and the governmental response to Somalia made the case for military intervention infinitely times more difficult.

Though intelligence shows that the cases in Rwanda and Somalia were unique, it was hard for both the military and the public to separate the two from one another. The government could not disassociate Rwanda from Somalia except when it came to intervention in which the association was made that Clinton did not want a repeat of the earlier crisis.\textsuperscript{109} Though the phrase is typically associated with the desire to prevent genocide from occurring, “Ironically, the concept of ‘never again’ seemed to have more resonance with regard to humanitarian intervention than it did with genocide.”\textsuperscript{110} Association with failure of US forces in Somalia caused the US government to rule out military intervention in the case of Rwanda.

Though military intervention may have been helpful and called for in Rwanda, there were other possible methods for US intervention. Clinton only thought of intervention as being a military commitment, but, having decided against this course of

\textsuperscript{106} Cohen, Jared. p. 4.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid. p. 9.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid. p. 9.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid. p. 9.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid. p. 97.
action, he failed to call meetings to develop other strategies or a contingency plan.111 The US underestimated the power of diplomatic statements or small-scale interventions and as a result never even considered them.112 Though it is unclear what impact these actions would have had, Clinton could have called the Rwandan leadership himself to voice that they were in violation of international law and pressure them to stop the genocide.113 The US government could have pressured France, China, Belgium, and Germany who either provided or allowed funding and arms to be given to the Rwandan government.114 Despite these options for US actions, Clinton did none of the above, meaning that the US played a superpower unwilling, rather than unable, to act to stop genocide from occurring.115 Courses of action other than military intervention were never even considered which led to no response at all from the US.

Both the emphasis solely on military intervention and the failure to contemplate other options were all part of a tactic employed by the US government. In trying to avoid commitment to the conflict in Rwanda, associating intervention specifically with military intervention was a strategy.116 Other options could have been explored which would not have required US military intervention.117 Beyond the fact that these options were not considered is the reality that US officials did not even examine the need for these options.118 This lack of acknowledgement by the US manifested itself in a weak US

111 Cohen, Jared. p. 97.
112 Ibid. p. 9.
113 Ibid. p. 97.
114 Ibid. p. 2.
115 Ibid. p. 97 and 9.
116 Ibid. p. 8.
117 Ibid. p. 8.
118 Ibid. p. 9.
position which encouraged those carrying out the genocide to believe that they could get away with the acts. Not wanting to act against genocide in Rwanda, US officials purposefully focused on military intervention knowing that it would not be undertaken.

**Just Words: The Debate over Terminology**

Another strategy used by the US government to avoid commitment to action in Rwanda was that of linguistics. By focusing on the words used to describe and characterize events in Rwanda, US officials sought to avoid being obligated to act by international standards or an incited US public. Due to the accepted definition of genocide as explained above and the memories the word prompts, the US government sought to differentiate between “genocide” and “acts of genocide.” It was the belief that the difference between these two titles would determine the US response.

Intelligence and information from Rwanda led some officials to call the crisis in Rwanda genocide while others insisted that not everything added up. Body counts and eye witness accounts of events on the ground led Assistant Secretary Shattuck to the belief in late April that the crisis in Rwanda was genocide. On April 26th a large, interagency meeting was called by Assistant Secretary of State Bushnell to discuss the crisis in Rwanda, and a report was issued calling events in Rwanda genocide. On May 9th the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) referred to events in Rwanda as a genocide running parallel to the civil war, but this reference was largely ignored. One week later the Assistant Legal Advisor for African Affairs Joan Donohue explained why events

120 Ibid. p. 135.
121 Ibid. p. 135.
122 Ibid. p. 138.
in Rwanda fit the definition as understood in the Genocide Convention.\textsuperscript{123} Then, on May 18\textsuperscript{th}, an official from the Bureau of Intelligence and Research voiced that the atrocities in Rwanda met the three criteria for genocide as outlined in the Geneva Convention.\textsuperscript{124} By May 21\textsuperscript{st} the State Department was facing pressure to term the conflict in Rwanda as genocide.\textsuperscript{125} In response State Department lawyers maintained that it was not genocide that was occurring but rather “acts of genocide.”\textsuperscript{126} Secretary of State Christopher announced on May 24\textsuperscript{th} that “acts of genocide” or “genocide” had and was occurring in Rwanda but restricted use of the terminology away from characterizing any specific event as such.\textsuperscript{127} When facts on the ground in Rwanda determined that a statement be made by the US government, it was determined as policy that what was occurring should be termed “acts of genocide” though individuals continued to voice what they saw as “genocide.”

Though the differentiation between these two terms may seem minor, it was paramount to US policy. The distinction between these two labels was insisted upon by those who wanted to maintain the stance of wanting to do nothing.\textsuperscript{128} Though Bushnell did not want to get involved in a terminology debate, because regardless of what it was being called people were being killed, in the end terminology had to be discussed before thinking about intervention.\textsuperscript{129} US officials insisted on referring to the situation as “acts of genocide”, “killings of mass scale,” and “genocidal acts” because they feared that

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\item \textsuperscript{123} Cohen, Jared. p. 138.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Ibid. p. 138.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Ibid. p. 138.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Ibid. p. 135.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Ibid. p. 139.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Ibid. p. 135.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Ibid. p. 135.
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\end{footnotesize}
using the term genocide would warrant a commitment by the US.\textsuperscript{130} In a memo to the State Department it was suggested that an acknowledgement that “acts of genocide” were occurring in Rwanda with the thought that “acts of genocide” implied some of the conditions for genocide were being carried out rather than a coordinated campaign of genocide.\textsuperscript{131} There existed the belief that the US had to acknowledge at least “acts of genocide” to maintain credibility in the area of human rights, but shy away from the exact term “genocide” in order to save the government from having to act.\textsuperscript{132} It was inevitable that terminology be discussed before determining the US response to Rwanda, and dedication to the term “acts of genocide” was utilized to lessen the severity of what was taking place in Rwanda and to preclude the US from having to intervene.

US movement away from the term genocide to the insistence affected other actors in the crisis in Rwanda. With regard to action by the UN towards Rwanda, “The US government influenced the UN Security Council to muffle its language about the nature of the conflict in Rwanda,” and changed the wording of an association between the word/definition of genocide to events in Rwanda, instead calling such events a “breach of international humanitarian law.”\textsuperscript{133} Pressure to conform to terminology also existed within the US government. Assistant Secretary of State, in talking about what he had personally witnessed in Rwanda, was pressured by State Department lawyers to conform to language calling the atrocities “crimes against humanity and acts of genocide.”\textsuperscript{134} To strengthen its case that the US was accurate in characterizing the crisis in Rwanda as a

\textsuperscript{130} Cohen, Jared. p. 8.  
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid. p. 139.  
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid. p. 139.  
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid. p. 137.  
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid. p. 137.
series of “acts of genocide,” the US insisted that the UN and officials within the US government adhere to the same language.

As touched on above, the reasoning for US vocabulary was the implications use of the term “genocide” would have on US policy and necessity of action. Ties between the word “genocide” and its classification as an international crime under the Genocide Convention were somewhat misled. In reality, though “Officials discussed the term genocide in the context of the Genocide Convention, and the symbolic nature of this treaty ensured that those who did not want to get involved in Rwanda could use terminology as a way of avoiding commitment.” ¹³⁵ Though the Genocide convention defined what was meant by genocide and names the act as an international crime, there are no instructions as to how to identify genocide nor does the convention “[compel] signatory nations to intervene.” ¹³⁶ In addition, because the language for responding to the genocide was so vague, the US could have justified calling the conflict genocide and issuing a forceful diplomatic statement as upholding the terms of the genocide. ¹³⁷ Though the word genocide would have been associated with the Genocide Convention which identified genocide as an international crime, this fact would not have obliged the US to act in specific ways.

US fear of using the term genocide stemmed not from legal obligations but from the belief that pressure to intervention would come from other sources. US refusal to call the conflict genocide stemmed out of fear that NGOs, the UN, the media, or other third

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 131.
¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 131.
parties would use US acknowledgement of genocide to call for US intervention.\textsuperscript{138} Christine Shelley, a spokesperson for the State Department, voiced to the media that the government was still trying to assess whether or not the conflict in Rwanda was in fact genocide, when in fact her orders were a result of a deliberate decision to ignore the fact that genocide was occurring.\textsuperscript{139} Pentagon officials feared that using the term genocide might commit the US to actually doing something.\textsuperscript{140} Refusal to use the term genocide with regard to events in Rwanda was part of a deliberate strategy by the US to try to prevent the US from being compelled to action against the genocide the US government knew was occurring in Rwanda.

**Recognition of Mistakes**

In the end, the US did eventually act as well as admit guilt by inaction. When the US did commit to supporting a reinforced UN mission, resources were delayed until one month after the genocide.\textsuperscript{141} The US first acknowledged its failure to intervene three and a half years later when Secretary of State Madeline Albright said to the Organization of African Unity, “We, the international community, should have been more active in the early stages of atrocities in Rwanda in 1994, and called them what they were – genocide.”\textsuperscript{142} On March 25, 1998 Clinton visited Rwanda and admitted that the crisis in the country was genocide and not a civil war as had been thought by the US government.\textsuperscript{143} In addition to the acknowledgments and apologies for US inaction,
National Security Advisor Anthony Lake sees the failure to action with this understanding: “An error of omission not commission, in the sense that we never really made decisions. We did not make the wrong decisions, we just didn’t make any, and this is where we failed.”\textsuperscript{144} Though the United States did eventually act to stop the continuation of genocide in Rwanda, its actions until this point were marked by deliberate, intentional ignorance and inaction.

The crisis in Rwanda beginning in April 1994, though not initially recognized as such by all, was genocide and therefore warranted US attention and a response. With the number of ethnically motivated deaths mounting each day, US inaction and lack of consideration of any action, was a failure to respond to international and humanitarian need. By understanding how and why the US fell short in its reaction to events in Rwanda, there is the hope of not repeating the mistakes of the past.

The first issue to consider is US knowledge of the situation and/or access to the intelligence needed to gain an accurate understanding of the crisis and what needed to be done. Though the US claims to not have had information about events in Rwanda, this assertion is untrue. Had the US wanted to gather such information, it would have been readily available and fallen within a reasonable reach of contacts the US either had relations with or could find a connection. The US must rely on those within its grasp, including Foreign Service Nationals, officials with firsthand knowledge or experience, and lower level officials willing and able to devote the time to gain comprehension of the situation. All of these groups had information in the early stages of the genocide which

\textsuperscript{144} Cohen, Jared. p. 100.
would have been helpful in classifying the violence appropriately. Even if intelligence does not allow the US to predict violence on the scale and intensity as occurred in Rwanda, examination of already received information would have provided clues, foreshadowing, and insight into the nature and intentions of the violence once the genocide had begun. The US cannot claim a lack of knowledge necessary to characterize the violence in Rwanda because not only did it have this information in the government’s hands, but it had access to such information had it sought more.

With the information at hand or within reach, there is the question of the US government giving the matter attention. Greater understanding and acknowledgement of the nature of violence may have helped raise the situation to a higher priority, but domestic or international affairs cannot be prioritized so as to completely ignore a growing situation. This argument is not to say that there may have been other issues of greater importance to US interests and relations, but there is a problem of giving so much priority to these matters that the issue of Rwanda was completely left out of the discussion. Briefing the president or allowing the National Security Advisor to consider the crisis may have led to a request to gather more information and hopefully would have resulted in contemplation of a response. With lower level officials working to understand the crisis and formulate a response, higher officials should have taken the time to make an informed decision as to whether or not Rwanda should be a priority.

Though part of the above problem of actively avoiding dealing with the issue of Rwanda, officials need to stay away from a debate over terminology. The strength and length of the deliberation between calling violence in Rwanda “acts of genocide” versus
“genocide” is a testament to the power of language. Language has the ability to capture the public’s and the government’s attention and to some degree must be addressed before an appropriate response is formulated. To be sure, intelligence and examination of evidence must be devoted to characterizing the situation correctly so that the crisis is recognized and an appropriate response drafted. At some point, however, a huge number of deaths and violence warrants action whether or not the actions are thought to constitute genocide or acts of genocide. It must be noted that in focusing on vocabulary with respect to the crisis in Rwanda due to fear that certain language would compel the US to action, the US had indirectly acknowledged that a response may be and is warranted, whether or not the US wanted to comply with such a need.

In looking at the demands of an issue, each situation must be considered separately, taking into account the lessons of past actions so as to overcome the fear of repeating past failures. US engagement in Somalia was characterized by a failure to interpret the situation appropriately which led to the lack of protection for and death of US military personnel. Though located in the same region, Rwanda and Somalia are not the same nor were the conflicts that arose in each country similar. Recognition of the difference between the two conflicts would have reduced some of the stigma against intervening in Rwanda. This argument is not to say that US actions in Somalia should not be considered. Failures of the US in Somalia should be considered to the extent and in the context that the lessons learned would be applied so as to formulate a better response in intervening in Somalia. The US needs to avoid grouping situations
unnecessarily, whether deliberately to avoid action or inadvertently so that each crisis and response is understood in its own context.

Partly due to the close association with events in Somalia, the US failed to consider other options besides military intervention. Military intervention may have been helpful, necessary, and successful. Given the recent experience with Somalia and nature of the violence, military intervention in Rwanda may not have been the best option and may not have been supported by officials or the US public. Refusing to see other options other than military intervention was a failure of the US government, especially as a strategic policy. Lack of US response to the genocide and US influence in the withdrawal of UNAMIR led those responsible in Rwanda to believe that the genocide could be carried out without retaliation from the international community and namely, the United States. Smaller actions by the US would have been powerful in countering this belief and the visible lack of presence of the international community within Rwanda. Without resorting to probably unpopular military deployment, the US could have denounced the violence, pressured other international actors for their role in supporting those carrying out the genocide, stopped the radio which was crucial in the coordination of genocidal activities, or other such responses. While it is not surprising that the US first considered a military response to genocide in Rwanda, failing to move beyond this option was to the detriment of a US response to the dire situation.

The US response to genocide in Rwanda was one marked by failure after failure. Ignoring information it had, the US did not seek further intelligence needed to characterize the violence and formulate an appropriate response. US officials decided to
focus on the debate over terminology after having not given the situation any consideration or the consideration the crisis deserved. Haunted by the memory of the US debacle in Somalia, the US, actively or inactively, could not disassociate Rwanda from Somalia. Beyond the fear of repeating the horrors in Somalia, the US was blind to other methods of intervention other than a military operation. These failures resulted in the lack of and subsequent inappropriate response by the US to genocide in Rwanda, leaving millions dead and the US to deal with the guilt of inaction in the face of genocide.
In contrast or in supplement to the generally accepted conception of genocide, the term sociocide has arisen out of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. As described earlier, sociocide refers to the gradual undermining of the foundations of a society with the intention of destroying the physical and social well-being of a group of people in order that they either die or remove themselves from the area.\(^1\) It is not the purpose or intent of this paper to explain the complicated history between the Israelis and the Palestinians. To do so would be another paper in itself. Moreover, it is not the purpose of the paper to pick sides in order to determine who is right and who is wrong. Such distinctions are far too simple for a complicated conflict. Instead, having already explained what is meant by sociocide earlier in the paper, this paper seeks to draw comparisons between sociocide and genocide, especially given recent claims of genocide of Palestinians in Israel.

**Concentration Camp Comparison**

First, let there be established claims of genocide occurring of Palestinians at the hands of Israelis. Just recently, in April of 2008, the US, French, and British representatives to the UN walked out of a UN Security Council debate on the Middle East because a representative from Libya had compared the situation in the Gaza strip to that of Nazi “concentration camps.” The Syrian Ambassador confirmed this statement when talking to reporters, saying “Unfortunately, those who complain of being victims of genocide [during World War II] are repeating the same kind of genocide against the


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Palestinians.” He added that the goal or responsibility of the Security Council is to find solutions to the Israel-Palestine crisis, and specifically the Israeli persecution of the Palestinians. The statement and subsequent walkout occurred as the fifteen member council was trying to do just that by first agreeing on a statement which would both highlight the dire situation in the Gaza Strip while still pushing talks forward to reach an Israeli-Palestinian agreement.  

**Indications of Genocidal Intent**

In addition to the suggestion of genocide which occurred at the UN, there have been reports that statements by leading rabbis have articulated the genocidal intent of Israel. According to an article published by Al-Ahram Weekly Online, Rabbi Yisrael Rosen, director of the Tsomet Institute, issued the statement declaring “All of the Palestinians must be killed; men, women, infants, and even their beasts.” He cited evidence in the Torah to support this claim, saying that the Lord commanded the ancient Israelites to kill the Amalekites, representing any population who persecutes the Jews for religious or other reasons—today the Amalekite population is the Palestinians. Rosen is just one example of prominent rabbis who are allowed to issue religious opinions which for many carry authority even over state or government laws. These leaders have created a climate in which persecution of Palestinians by Israelis is supported and even encouraged, including the glorification of terrorist acts such as the killing of twenty-nine Palestinian civilians who were gunned down during dawn prayer. Statements made by religious Israeli leaders reveal the intent and order to persecute Palestinians, even

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justifying the killing of this population solely because of an individual’s identification with the group.³

Conditions of Sociocide

Now let us examine some of the conditions on the ground which may or may not support the claims of sociocide or of genocide. Palestinian land has been seized by different methods—85 per cent of Palestinian villages that fell under Israel’s control were entirely destroyed while other land was seized for government purposes—with the result that Israel owns most of the land in predominantly Palestinian areas. Israel controls the water sources, which as led to the cutting off the distribution of water resulting in the withering of Palestinian crops. Israel has also taken control of the economy, making it difficult for Palestinians to earn a living. Israeli products have flooded the Palestinian markets, the majority of imports into West Bank are from Israel with many Israeli exports destined for the Gaza strip, and there are no custom controls or protection for Palestinian products. Palestinians are also forced into the Israeli labor force which is biased against them, leaving them to the least paying jobs with little to no room for advancement. The result is that the Palestinian economy is stagnant. All of these actions are part of the Israeli process of de-development for Palestine which not only aims to wreak havoc on the Palestinian economy but also seeks to prevent it from having the ability to transform itself.⁴

In addition to these actions taken toward Palestinian land and economy, Israeli policies have also targeted Palestinian institutions which create and uphold the basis for Palestinian society. Palestinian workers are not permitted to establish labor unions to fight against the discrimination and conditions described above. Palestinian civic institutions are targeted for political reasons, such as the municipal council of East Jerusalem which was dissolved. Universities are routinely closed down for extended periods of time, from a few weeks to several months, which not only interrupt studies but also discontinue maintenance, research, education, and library usage. Even smaller schools such as nurseries along with cultural and community centers have been closed down. Freedom of movement in travel for educational or cultural exchange purposes has been forbidden. Every detail of daily life is subject to bureaucratic controls including: obtaining a work permit, travel abroad, marriage to a person from abroad, being reunited with one’s relatives, forming cultural societies, establishing hospitals, obtaining an identity card, obtaining a building permit, taking driving lessons, obtaining a driving license and obtaining a birth certificate. All of these above described policies are aimed at disrupting the daily life and functioning of Palestinian society.  

These policies have been aimed at specific physical components of a society, but the psychological security and understanding has also been victimized. All individuals without an Israeli passport find themselves without the natural right to citizenship and are instead “permanent residents.” Even that status is questionable as Palestinian residents from Jerusalem are not allowed to seek dual nationality or reside for longer than six

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months outside of the country without risking losing their permanent resident status. Not only is the Palestinians claim to citizenship in question, but they are not safe even remaining on the land. Since 1967 more than a quarter of a million Palestinians have been imprisoned, some multiples times and some for up to twelve years. Prisoners are subjected to torture through psychological practices or physical torture which does not leave visible marks. These methods have attacked the mental and emotional well-being of the Palestinian population, coupled with the economic exploitation described above, and physical violence.⁶

Violence against the Palestinians has been supported and promoted by Israeli authorities. In order to continue the climate in which Israelis can attack Palestinians, a Rabbi and Israeli authority issued the statement that any Jew involved in an attack must appear in a Torah court ruled by Jewish law instead of a civil court. As was mentioned above, though not all of the Israeli population is Jewish, most consider the authority of the Rabbis to be above civil law and will thus obey the religious orders over orders issued by the government. Israeli Rabbis have called for violence against the Palestinian population, have provided evidence to support such violence, and have perpetuated a society in which such violence is tolerated and celebrated.⁷

**Societal Components of Genocide**

The result of all of the above policies is a state of fear, frustration, and depression. As a culmination of the above policies, sociocide has been created to describe the

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systematic nature of the destruction of a society, through expelling the population or destroying its foundations. The purpose of this comparison in this paper is to show the societal components of genocide. In addition, this author would like to argue that sociocide is not really that different from genocide and in fact, the two “-cides” may be two sides of the same coin.

The purpose of sociocide is that it attacks the foundations of the society to create conditions which are unlivable with the goal of driving the population out of the physical space or to its death. Genocide, too, seeks the extermination of a population while employing laws and methods to alienate and destroy the population before it is physically eliminated. Both are systematic. Both aim at the elimination of a population and an entire society. Genocide may more openly carry out massacres of a group of people while sociocide aims to remove the population, thereby eliminating them directly. With the necessity of the precision of language, the author is not suggesting that the word sociocide be eliminated. Instead, the policies enacted in order to carry out genocide attack the population by undermining the physical and psychological aspects of society, and this characteristic of genocide is often ignored. The term sociocide makes clear the societal component which is not as explicit with the term genocide. In order to identify genocide and act in a manner which responds to the full nature and implications of genocide, the US, among other nations and international institutions, must recognize the societal components of genocide in addition to, but not limited to, the killings of members of a group or groups of people.

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CHAPTER NINE – CONCLUSION: LESSONS LEARNED

“If history repeats itself, and the unexpected always happens, how incapable must Man be of learning from experience.”  
- George Bernard Shaw

Given the seriousness of the crime, genocide warrants the attention of the public, of those on the international diplomatic sphere, and of governmental officials. The images arising out of such events are horrific and are hard to ignore, but the response of the US to knowledge of genocide has not always reflected this sentiment. Not every situation is the same, and it is natural, therefore, that US and other nations’ responses to genocide will differ according to the realities of each crisis. Though the uniqueness of each set of circumstances must be acknowledged, there are general guidelines that must be followed, or at least considered, whenever the issue of genocide arises. The US, both when considering a response and when formulating an action plan, must consider the whole impact on society, not just the large number of deaths, and respect the sovereignty of the people, not that of a disillusioned government, and accordingly act against genocide.

Knowledge Empowers Action

As the most powerful country in the world and one which has some of the strongest and widespread intelligence capabilities, the United States cannot claim a lack of knowledge. Moreover, ignorance is not bliss when it comes to foreign policy. The first step in recognizing, characterizing, and responding to genocide is gathering information. If the US had not received enough information about a country and/or ongoing events, then it is the responsibility of the United States to actively seek the
attainment of such information. Gathering such intelligence entails utilizing all possible resources at the disposal of the US. It is well known that the United States has institutions and departments whose very task are to seek and provide reliable evidence as to the occurrences of other countries and within the US. The workers within the US government are valuable assets whose potential contributions cannot be overlooked. Some of these workers are Foreign Service Nationals who, by their very identity, have a familiarity with the culture, society, customs, and language of the country which cannot be matched by that of an outsider. Though it is most clear in Rwanda that the “insider” knowledge of Foreign Service Nationals employed by the US government was ignored and overlooked, the same can be true in the other cases of genocide and even outside the realm of genocide. With the resources and capabilities the US has at its disposal, the US cannot claim lack of information or lack of access to such information so as to be uninformed about the nature of events in other countries. It is likely that the United States may shrink from its responsibility to act, but there is absolutely no excuse to shy away from the responsibility to gather evidence and intelligence as it utilizes operatives already in place, should no interfere with the sovereignty of the other nation, and does not put US lives or interests at stake.

The difficulty in predicting such violence, even in light of such intelligence-gathering abilities, is also not an excuse for lack of characterization of events as they unfold. Though monitoring a country’s activities, US diplomats or intelligence agents may not be looking for or foresee the terrible violence of genocide or similarly horrific activities. Given these limitations to even efficient and responsible intelligence-
gathering, there are telling, attention grabbing events which can and should spark further inquiry into possible implications and intentions behind these actions. For example, Hitler’s conquest neighboring countries prompted an investigation into some of the goals and mindset of his rule in Germany. In a similar way, the double assassination of the Rwandan and Burundi heads of state should have prompted an inquiry into events surrounding their deaths and especially the violence that immediately followed this remarkable event. Though not all genocidal masterminds are as explicit in their intentions as Hitler was in the targeting and killing of people deemed “contragenics,” genocidal intentions and methods are hard to completely hide or conceal. The laws established under Hitler and the Nazi’s were clearly bigoted. Turkish laws put in place by the Young Turks Party reveal intentional alienation of the Armenian population through policies and purposeful neglect of protection of an entire segment of the population. Statements predating the massive amounts of killing demonstrate the desire to eliminate the Tutsis population in Rwanda, and lists identifying targets shows the plan of carrying through with such intentions. Even had these declarations or laws gone unnoticed in the prediction stage, examination of this information at the start of the violence would have revealed the nature of these violent activities as fitting into a larger strategy and intent. It should be noted also that international recognition is not a one-shot deal–there are continuous opportunities to use intelligence and/or to gather more information to be able to understand a conflict. Lacking the evidence to predict and prevent massive violence on the level of genocide does not exclude the US
from continuing to gather information at the start of said violence so as to determine the real nature of the events.

The Dual Role of the Media

In addition to the necessity of the US government compiling evidence based on its own intelligence gathering, one cannot underestimate the power of the media in mobilizing both public opinion and governmental support. As was seen in the US war in Vietnam, the extensive coverage of the war by the media contributed to widespread opposition, protests, and the eventual withdrawal of troops from the area. The media must balance the relationship it has with the public. It is true that the media has to cater to some degree to the demands of its audience. News coverage, however, cannot be limited to public demand. The news media is both a provider of information and a former of public consciousness. As was seen in the uncovering of the Watergate scandal under President Richard Nixon, the news media can serve an important role in truth and accountability through shaping what the public wants to see. An important function of the media is to inform the public, and through its portrayal and discussion of various events, the media does play a role in shaping public opinion. When events such as the double assassination of heads of states or violence which may be characterized as genocide occurs, it is the responsibility of the media to cover these stories, even if such coverage may be uncomfortable or unpopular to witness. This importance of the media is not to ignore the public’s own responsibility to seek and demand greater information in pursuit of awareness and understanding, but that process occurs on a more individual level and is therefore harder to measure. Armed with knowledge of and information
about genocidal violence, the public can begin to look deeper into the conflicts, demand that their government do the same, and mobilize into action against such atrocities.

Along with the accountability the media can provide for the government and the public, the media itself must uphold the standard of accountability and cannot rely on stereotypes through which to view and portray international occurrences. For example, to depict the genocide in Armenia as the result of the natural casualties of war, and to believe that because Turkey is part of Europe its government is incapable of genocide, is to fail to recognize the situation for what it is beyond preconceived notions of war and of Europe. More egregious was the failure to fully investigate and comprehend the nature of the genocidal violence in Rwanda. Characterizing violence in Rwanda as tribal violence relies on a historical understanding of tensions in Africa that are not accurate. By reporting the genocide as such, the media allowed the government and the public to dismiss the events and the possible role each could have played in stopping the violence. It was said that Rwanda did not receive much media coverage because events in Africa are only shown if they contain lots of bodies. Furthermore, to only represent events and conflicts in Africa if they contain a lot of “bodies,” is to put forth and perpetuate a stereotype of a traditionally violent Africa which is both untrue and racist. The insistence on “seeing bodies” reveals the underlying perception of Africa as uncivilized and composed of savages. Whether or not this mentality was intentional, its validity is made explicit through the reporting itself. The media should not be seen as the sole actor in garnering support for international action against genocide, but, for better or for worse, the media plays a role in shaping public opinion and must, therefore, search beyond a
surface level characterization of events to as to discover and put forth information which is both true and informs the public to advocate for necessary and appropriate action.

The Value of Language

Just as the media plays an important part in shaping public opinion and mobilizing governmental support for action, so too does the terminology surrounding events. As was discussed earlier, it is necessary for the government to compile and examine evidence to be able to characterize events correctly, and this process can help in applying the appropriate terminology. It is true that at some point the debate over terminology is somewhat inconsequential; when millions are being murdered it should matter little whether or not the murders are part of genocide or merely mass murder as both require action. As was witnessed with the genocide in Rwanda, applying the appropriate terminology can be a key factor in determining both who is responsible and what actions should be taken and by whom. Contrary to historical precedent, questions over terminology should not be used to delay necessary action or acknowledgement on behalf of the US government, but should be used to provide a clearer understanding to the public and to government officials as to the characteristics of the conflict and what actions are being taken against the violence. In addition, the terms applied to international conflicts should be derived from intelligence and information about those situations, not out of fear or thought of what the vocabulary used will imply in terms of US action. Language is a tool for understanding, not for deception. In describing international conflicts and violence, language should be used not as a hindrance to
discussion of a response, but out of knowledge of a given event or events to inform the public and officials charged with the responsibility of making decisions of US policy.

Since the term genocide carries with it the memory of past events and the weight of an international convention, it must be applied correctly so that the term does not lose its implications or fullness of its meaning. Raphael Lemkin created the word out of a void in the language so that it could give an accurate name to such atrocities with the hope that use of the word would galvanize public opinion and governmental action. Misuse of the term genocide for the purpose of creating a strong reaction lessens the impact of the word genocide when applied appropriately. Failure to characterize events in Rwanda as genocide hindered a US and a UN response, ultimately costing many more lives unnecessarily. Knowledge of the Holocaust during World War II captured the attention of the US public, led to further support for US involvement in the war, and gave the US soldiers a cause for which to fight. There is a fine balance between overuse of the term genocide which lessens the impact of the word, misuse which clouds understanding of genocide, and under-use which miscomprehends the true characteristics of genocidal events. The word genocide, in order to fulfill the meaning and hopes by the author of the word, must be used, with discretion, to acknowledge the genocidal intents and actions which warrant an international response.

**Genocide Targets the Whole Society**

Though genocide refers to the massacres of the members of a group, these killings do not occur in a vacuum. Too often the societal components carried out in conjunction with or leading up to genocide are ignored, inhibiting the recognition of and response to
genocide. As was seen in Armenia, the Holocaust, Rwanda, and now in Palestine, laws which persecute and oppress a targeted group of people often reveal what those behind those policies will not state explicitly. These laws undermine the capacity to maintain personal and social physical well-being and lead to psychological alienation and depression. As the US and the international community looks to recognize and identify genocide more quickly and appropriately in the future, it must examine the societal characteristics which reveal and execute genocide and facilitate a response with this in mind.

Though it is true that the US cannot abandon its ideals or operate outside of rules set for itself or by the international community, it cannot be solely bound by policy regardless of other concerns. In Turkey, the US adhered to a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of other sovereign nations amidst pleas from the US ambassador to act on behalf of humanity to stop the genocide of Armenians. While the US cannot wholly abandon the belief in state sovereignty, it cannot and should not use sovereignty as an excuse for inaction. Sovereignty is based on the idea that a nation should have the freedom and authority to make decisions for the benefit of the country and its citizens without interference from outside actors. When a government fails to protect its own citizens to the extent that it is carrying out a systematic policy of destruction against a segment of its population, it has committed genocide and has failed to live up to the expectations which earn the respect of sovereignty. The United States was founded on the very idea that a government which fails to take into account the concerns of its
citizens ceases to maintain authority over those citizens – the concept of consent of the
governed. In light of the fact that genocide is recognized as an international crime, it
warrants international action which may, though perhaps only on the surface level, appear
to violate US policies such as that of non-interference.

Though the United States cannot use adherence to policy as a justification for
inaction, it must also examine both the policies it claims to support and how it
demonstrates its support in its actions internationally. In principle state sovereignty and
non-interference are policies which the US claims to uphold. In the case of genocide
however, adhering the policies of state sovereignty and non-interference could be
interpreted as tacit approval of the actions taken by the government. Sovereignty rests on
the right of states to pursue actions which support and protect its citizens without outside
interference. When a government actively and systematically pursues genocide against
its people, it no longer maintains the consent of the governed because it has failed, and in
fact violated, its citizens’ rights and well-being. The government guilty of committing
genocide, therefore, forfeits its right to state sovereignty. Even in the above description
of state sovereignty, the emphasis was on the citizen—the people who compose the state.
This collectivity of people is that which does, and should by international standards, hold
the true power. The state retains power so long as it protects and upholds the dignity of
the people; it loses the power when it acts to the contrary. By intervening, the US would
in fact be protecting and upholding the sovereignty of the people because the government
in question can no longer do so. Subsequently it is the group of people that comprise the
state which should be considered at all points in the process of solving the conflict. A
response to genocide should be undertaken only to protect the people from the violence, not for or alongside any selfish motives. Intervention, if undertaken, should follow the doctrine of *jus in bello* so that the least number of people are harmed as possible. When constructing a peace, it is again the people which should be considered so that the dignity of the people from both sides should be upheld and a peace established that protects the rights of the people. If the United States claims to support sovereignty, it must follow through on protecting the sovereignty of the people as understood by their collective rights, rather than the right to rule of the government.

In considering intervention to protect the human rights and lives of the victims of genocide, the United States must consider options other than military engagement. Use of the military can be helpful and powerful, but the same or greater impact can come through other actions. With the financial and public opinion cost of military deployment, the US has held back from intervening against genocide because it only considered the military option. The ability to contemplate other actions would also lessen the fear that using the word genocide would commit the US to specific actions. Having recognized a situation as genocide, the US should feel compelled to act. Usage of the term genocide, however, should not automatically necessitate military intervention. Again, this is not to say that military intervention should not be considered because in some cases it may be a viable or the best option, but alternatives outside of a military force should also be taken into account. These alternatives include, but are not limited to, strong diplomatic statements, pressuring allies who may have a role in the continuation of the violence, sanctions, or smaller scale interventions. The importance of gathering intelligence as
described above cannot be overlooked, for it is through knowledge of each unique situation that a response, military or otherwise, can be crafted to create the greatest impact. Though military intervention is an option in acting against genocide, other courses for action must be considered.

To contemplate an appropriate course of action against genocide, one must understand both the situation and the conflict itself. The word genocide was created to encapsulate the full meaning of the atrocity – systematic mass destruction of people and their personal well being because of their association to a group – and to spark a reaction and action upon mention of the word. Though the United States claims to be against genocide and would not want to be understood to support genocidal activities or regimes, this claim has not always been credible when looking at the reality of US actions in the world. Many in the US think of the Holocaust, mainly or exclusively, when talk of genocide arises. Even then, the US mobilized to stop genocide under Hitler after US lives and interests had been put at stake in World War II. In Turkey the US chose to follow the policy of non-interference despite knowledge from the US ambassador that genocide of Armenians was taking place. Rwanda represented the deliberate denial of intelligence and refusal to even discuss the genocide which resulted in calculated US inaction and actions which were to the detriment of the response by the international community. Though these conflicts are all different and each situation must be considered for its own unique characteristics, lessons can and must be learned from past US responses to genocide. The US has and must utilize the capabilities to gather information and intelligence about potential conflicts so that it can either prevent
outbreaks of violence or recognize genocide for what it is shortly after it has begun. The media must accept its responsibility in not only providing the public with information, but in shaping public consciousness and awareness of international events, whether or not such coverage will be popular. While examining the ideals and policies which the US claims to uphold, the US must not use these policies as an excuse for inaction nor can it blindly adhere to said policies without questioning the nuanced implications of such policies. Though genocide is an egregious crime and gross violation of human rights which may warrant military action, the US must take the time and effort to consider all options in response to genocide, including those outside the realm of military intervention. The United States, in its recognition of and response to genocide must uphold the ideals and policies it claims value, and in doing so, live up to the challenging words as stated by former President Ronald Reagan in 1981: “Like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians which followed it ... the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten.” Let us never forget … and respond to genocide accordingly.
Bibliography


