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for Global Justice

*International Decision-Making
in the
Age of Genocide:
Rwanda 1990-1994*

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International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide Transcript

June 2: Failure to Prevent

Session 1 – “Peacemakers & Peacekeepers: The promise and perils of Arusha, 1990-1993”

MIKE ABRAMOWITZ: Welcome. I am going to turn this over very shortly to Tom Blanton. I just wanted to make two points. I wanted to salute my colleagues from the National Security Archive: Emily Willard and Kristin Scalzo, who helped with these briefing books that are in front of you. I also wanted to say a word about my friend Michael Dobbs. This conference would not have been possible without your work on the documents and on personally recruiting many in the room to come here. It is an amazing group of people.

Tom Blanton [director of the National Security Archive] is going to explain how the conference is going to work – or the conversation, I should say, because this is a conversation, not a conference. But I did want to make one general point about the agenda. We have a lot to cover in two days. Probably it is too ambitious for what we wish to accomplish. I would like everyone to keep in mind that our focus is the international response to the genocide. What were the missed opportunities? What were the turning points? Were there opportunities to have put things on a different path? We all recognize that there are other issues that may come up. That’s okay, but we want to keep the focus on the international response leading up to our session tomorrow on lessons learned. I am now going to turn it over to Tom who is going to chair both days.

TOM BLANTON: Thank you, Michael. Our sessions these two days are what reporters call “on background.” We are recording the sessions. We intend, with the Museum, to publish an

edited version of the transcript, but will not publish anything until you have a chance to review, revise and extend your remarks.¹

Attempt to bring us back to 1990 to 1994. We will have a session tomorrow afternoon to draw some lessons with the benefit of hindsight. Try to hold your remarks to a few minutes for each intervention on the specific point of the agenda. What did you see at the time? What was your impression of what was going on? What were the options you considered? Why did you take one and not the other? Bring us back.

We have tried to organize the conversation through the physical layout of the table. For our first session, many of the veterans of the “promise and peril of Arusha” are on the right hand side of the table. People who were on the ground, in Rwanda, working for various countries very much involved, the hosts of the Arusha negotiations. When we get to the second session about the failure of the Arusha Accords, the implementation, UNAMIR’s presence, we have folks in the center of the table. When we come to the United Nations debates, we have a core group of former UN Security Council members on the left side of the table. Scattered around we have eyewitnesses and experts, who will “get the party started,” in the words of the rock song, in the sense of getting people to talk. For this first session I would like to call on Filip Reyntjens to pose some questions, including questions to specific people at the table. Filip.

FILIP REYNTJENS: Thanks very much. To avoid wasting time, I am not going to say how thankful I am to you for having organized this great meeting. It is a unique lineup. This is never going to happen again. We will never be again in the same room, so I think we need to seize this opportunity. As Tom said, we want recollections, not speeches, and we also want

¹ This transcript was edited and annotated for clarity by conference staff and participants, in accordance with conference ground rules.

to try to avoid the benefit of hindsight. The idea is, “What did we know?” or “What did we think we knew at the time?” without the benefit of hindsight and how we interpreted these facts—or non-facts, for that matter. The interpretation of all this, and what it teaches us, is for tomorrow afternoon when we look at lessons learned. This morning, we are looking at the Arusha peace process. Did the parties, Rwandan parties and other players, believe in the Arusha agreement?² Did their positions change over time? Why did they change? When? Which events caused that shift, if any? We also need to look at the role of the Rwandan players, although again, as Tom said, in relation to how this was interpreted and relayed internationally.

Were warning signs picked up and interpreted? Just to remind you of a few during the period of October 1990 through the end of 1993: the killing of Tutsi, already in October 1990 just after the RPF [Rwandan Patriotic Front] attacked; the rounding up of so called *ibiyitso*, so-called RPF accomplices; hate media, Kangura, RTLM; the massacres in Bugesera in March 1992, Kibuye in August 1992, northwest Rwanda at the end of 1992, early 1993, but also, and much less documented at the time, killings by the RPF and its strategy of tension well before the Arusha Accords were signed in August 1993. We also need to look at how we interpreted the lethal mix of three phenomena:

1. The political transition, democratization, which has had destabilizing effects everywhere in Africa and elsewhere in emerging democracies.
2. The bipolar ethnic setup. This is quite unique. There are not many countries in Africa where you only have two relevant ethnic groups.

² The Arusha Peace Agreements were signed between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front in Arusha, Tanzania, on August 4, 1993. The agreements included a set of five accords, or protocols between July 1992 and July 1993 that included a military ceasefire, arrangements on power-sharing, and integration of the armed forces. For the [full text of the agreements](#), see UN Security Council document S/26915, December 23, 1993.

3. And of course the civil war. The previous factors were coupled with a civil war initiated by a movement [the RPF] that was seen as predominantly Tutsi.

And perhaps the last thing, what forces weakened the Arusha agreement and its implementation mechanisms? This leads us to UNAMIR, and allows us to start the discussion. We would like to ask the peacekeepers, first General Dallaire. How did you feel when you were presented with the Arusha Peace Accords that you were going to have to implement as a peacekeeper? Did they sound reasonable? Were they realistic?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: [Lists problematic timelines associated with the Arusha accords, including]: Wanting to have a Broad-Based Transitional Government in place, within thirty-seven days of signing the accords.³ Wanting a neutral international force on the ground in that time frame to be able to create an atmosphere of security. And wanting to have a democratic election within two years of establishing the BBTG after the country had been first under colonial rule, then under a dictatorship for about twenty years, and then three years of civil war. To expect a country that did not previously have a multiparty system to have a democratic election in two years.⁴ All those created significant pressures.

During my reconnaissance mission to Rwanda in August 1993, I had to spend a number of days with both sides walking through the whole peace accord because their interpretation was different...We all had different perspectives. I read the agreement one way. The leader of the government team, Colonel [Théoneste] Bagosora, read it another way. The RPF read it a third way. So, we spent a lot of time walking through it line by line.⁵

³ See [Annex I, Article 7](#) of the Arusha Peace Agreements, signed August 4, 1993.

⁴ See [Annex VII, Article 22](#) of the Arusha Peace Agreements, signed August 4, 1993.

⁵ For a report on Dallaire's reconnaissance mission to Rwanda in August 1993, see Joyce Leader, "[UN Reconnaissance Mission Head Discusses Thoughts on UN Involvement in Rwanda.](#)" US Embassy Kigali cable 03188, August 27, 1993.

FILIP REYNTJENS: So that is what the peacekeepers found when they arrived there. Let us take a quick look at what the “peacemakers” thought. Some of them were negotiating the Accords. Others were facilitating these negotiations. Anyone involved in making peace through the Arusha process, any idea how realistic this was seen at the time?

TOM BLANTON: Let us call on the former Belgian Ambassador to Rwanda, a key player in the period leading up to Arusha, Johan Swinnen. And then I would like to ask Jean-Christophe Belliard to talk about the French view leading into Arusha.

JOHAN SWINNEN: I am speaking in my own name, not the name of the Belgian government. Belgian policy toward Rwanda can be summarized as follows: supportive, critical, constructive, and balanced. I arrived in Rwanda just a few weeks before the first attack of the RPF on October 1, 1990. I witnessed the entire period between August 1990 and April 1994. We wished to assist Rwanda in confronting the two main challenges: peace and democracy. To achieve peace and reconciliation following the October 1 attack and at the same time implement internal institutional reforms in order to bring about multipartism and democracy. These were the two main objectives of the main Rwandan actors, but also inspired our actions. My government was involved in the peace process from the first meeting in Mwanza [Tanzania, on October 17, 1990], to the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreements in August 1993. For my part, I was very active in the internal peace process, which consisted of what President Habyarimana called the *aggiornamento politique* [political modernization], meaning internal reforms. There were also missteps, serious human rights violations, massacres, which we constantly criticized. We demanded investigations into the death squads and other destabilizing actions.

So, what was our method? We wanted to encourage the moderate forces in Rwanda, and empower them, not to substitute ourselves for them. We found these people everywhere: on the side of the government, on the side of civil society, and also on the side of the Army. It was a very stimulating exercise. We became believers. We truly believed in the success of the peace process and the success of the democratization process. There seemed to be a critical mass of moderate forces that wanted peace, reconciliation and internal reforms. It turned into a huge disappointment. Already, at the time the Arusha Peace Accords were being negotiated, there were destabilizing elements. It was really tragic to observe the implosion of the democratic center that we had supported so strongly. For us, and the international community, there was no alternative to moderation.

There was also no alternative to the Arusha Accords. I frequently complained to President Habyarimana that the Arusha Accords were badly explained. Radio Rwanda described the Arusha Accords in monotonous and insipid tones. I pleaded with the government to use more attractive, persuasive language to convince the political forces that were becoming radicalized to support the Arusha Accords. Unfortunately, the international community failed in this effort. But we should not focus only on the international community. And if we are going to focus on the international community, let us look at the entire international community, not only France and Belgium, but also the United States, the Security Council, the DPKO, the United Nations and so on. We also need to look at the role played by African forces, Rwandan actors...If we fall into the trap of always blaming the international community for everything, we will be playing the game of those negative forces who still do not want peace, even today.

TOM BLANTON: Monique.

MONIQUE MUJAWAMARIYA: Ambassador Swinnen spoke about different interpretations of the Arusha Accords. We all know how long it took to negotiate these accords. Why was more not done to ensure that the accords were properly understood? He also spoke about all these positive forces that were in place. How come all these positive forces were not given the support necessary to prevail? What was lacking? And what about the destabilizing forces, which were present on all sides? Why were they allowed to supplant the positive forces?

JOHAN SWINNEN: It is not me who should answer these questions. I think we need to get beyond the conventional wisdom, and avoid the traps of *pensée unique*, political correctness, and other selective indignations...We need to be very honest in digging deeper and grappling with the difficult questions that Monique just asked. The Belgian government had limited means at its disposal, but we examined the possibility of reviewing, or freezing, our cooperation aid programs as a means of pressure. We used diplomatic tools above all. I will give you one example: Radio RTLM. We made one demarche after another about this radio station, up to the level of President Habyarimana. When I was in Mulindi [headquarters of the RPF in northern Rwanda] with then Major Paul Kagame, I told him, "In order to be credible in Kigali, we must be able to tell President Habyarimana that we have made the same demarche with you, the RPF." It was a question of credibility and balance. I told him, "You also have a radio station that does not act in accord with the Arusha Accords, Radio Muhabura."⁶ This illustrates the approach we took. Perhaps we should have used other means as well, not just diplomatic, but we believed in the peace process. We wanted to

⁶ Radio Muhabura was an English language radio station created by the RPF in 1991 that broadcast from Uganda, as an alternative to the pro-government radio stations broadcasting from inside Rwanda.

exhaust all the diplomatic means at our disposal without resorting to coercion or repression that might antagonize the international community and Rwandan actors.

FILIP REYNTJENS: How were the Arusha agreements seen by the peacemakers? We need to listen to Ambassador Belliard and to Ambassador Mpungwe. To what extent did you at the time, based on the information you had, consider this a realistic accord that could be implemented?

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE BELLIARD: I would also like to discuss how we negotiated these agreements. Given the central role played by Tanzania, I think it is logical if the Tanzanian facilitator, Ami Mpungwe, first gives us his perspective on the negotiations and I speak afterwards.

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Mpungwe.

AMI MPUNGWE: Thank you, Tom. I am aware that this conference is about the international response to genocide...But I think it is important to have some background on what happened prior to the genocide. Focusing on the response alone will not help us to prevent genocides from happening in the future. In this regard, I am disappointed that there is nothing about the Arusha negotiations in the briefing books.

TOM BLANTON: We have a database that includes about 20,000 documents, including much detail on the Arusha Accords.

AMI MPUNGWE: We were in Arusha for thirteen months [from July 12, 1992 to August 4, 1993]. There was no day, no night. We worked around the clock for thirteen months, nonstop...A lot has been said and written about the Arusha negotiations. Unfortunately we Africans do not have a habit of writing. Many of the comments on the Arusha negotiations have been made by outsiders. I have not seen much by those who were actually involved. I plead guilty. Those of us who were involved in Arusha should establish a clear record of what exactly happened. This is what I will attempt to do in the few minutes that I have.

But I also want to pick up from something that General Dallaire said last night [at the opening dinner] concerning the unfortunate double standard that some are more human than others. For us in Africa, this has been a problem. Rwanda was a conflict that Africa took responsibility for, from the very beginning. The Rwandese themselves, and their regional neighbors and the continental organization, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), were very much involved in handling this. When the conflict broke out in October 1990, the initial response was the typical African response in dealing with conflicts, the “summitry approach.” The heads of state of the regional neighbors have a summit and a quick discussion, and then disappear. This was standard procedure but, in the case of Rwanda, there was a lack of understanding that this was a deep-rooted conflict. It was not an ordinary conflict that the summitry approach was geared up to deal with.

We held a number of summits on Rwanda from October 1990 onwards. There were summits all around the region, in Tanzania, in Mwanza, in N’Sele, in Goma.⁷ At a certain point, we realized this approach was not working. Direct peace talks between the Rwandan government and the RPF were held in Paris on June 6, 1992. The two parties decided on their own that they wanted to sit down and negotiate a settlement. They approached us,

⁷ For a useful summary of significant peace negotiations involving Rwanda, including summits, prior to the Arusha negotiations, see [State Department Chronology of Significant Events, 1990-1992.](#)

Tanzania, to assist in these negotiations. We finally met in Dakar, Senegal, during an OAU session, in June 1992. That is when we agreed that we would meet in Arusha in July 1992.

For us, as Tanzania, we had a lot of time to prepare. We did a lot of studying about Rwanda, the conflict, the historical and contemporary dynamics of what was happening. We also had the opportunity to study other conflicts around Africa. We had been involved in the front line in Nigeria and other conflicts in the region, such as Mozambique, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. When the two parties approached us, we said, "Fine, we will be involved." But we told the two parties, "We need a firm indication from you that you are indeed committed to a negotiated settlement." We decided to focus on a ceasefire during the first round of negotiations. Having a ceasefire would be proof to us, and to the Rwandan people, that the parties were committed to a negotiated settlement.

When we met in Arusha in July 1992, we negotiated a ceasefire agreement, and got one.⁸ We also set up mechanisms for monitoring the ceasefire. Learning from previous efforts, we eliminated all regional neighbors who we felt were linked to the conflict one way or another. The monitors came from outside the region. We had ten monitors from Senegal and ten monitors from Mali (both Francophone countries) and ten monitors from Nigeria and ten monitors from Zimbabwe (Anglophone countries). The two parties contributed five troops each. So we had a contingent of fifty monitors who monitored that ceasefire for the entire period of negotiations.⁹ We also had a mechanism for dealing with violations...We started with the ceasefire to get them to demonstrate a commitment to ending the fighting, but also to get the space to address other issues.

⁸ A ceasefire agreement fixing a timetable to end the fighting was signed in Arusha on July 12, 1992. The text of the agreement is available [here](#). See also, Edmund de Jarnette, "[Text of Joint Communiqué and N'Sele Amendments](#)," US Embassy Dar es Salaam cable 04011, July 14, 1992.

⁹ For breakdown of the "Neutral Military Observer Group," see Annex II, Article 3, of the Arusha Peace Agreement, available [here](#).

The second round of the negotiations addressed the root causes of the conflict. [On August 18, 1992] we signed the Protocol on the Rule of Law.¹⁰ We asked ourselves, “What is the new Rwanda we want to build?” This was part of the Rule of Law Protocol. We then asked, “How do we reach this new Rwanda that we envisioned in Arusha?” Between September 1992 and January 1993, we negotiated the transitional structures, Broad-Based Transitional Government and Transitional National Assembly, which included most of the political parties involved in the conflict. After that, we dealt with the issues of integration of the military forces and demobilization. We spent a lot of time on the ethnic issues that informed the conflict. We came up with a very innovative formula, based on both horizontal and vertical integration of the army and gendarmerie. In command and control, the principle was 50/50, with variations. If the head of the Army comes from one party, the number two comes from the other, and vice-versa in the Gendarmerie. We spent a lot of time on all this. On demobilization and integration of forces, we learned a lot from Zimbabwe, with which we were also involved.

[Addresses the criticism about unrealistic timelines]. Very early in 1992, we sent a message, through OAU Secretary-General, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, to the UN Secretary-General, reporting that we were making good progress in Arusha. We said we were going to hand over the peace agreement to the UN for implementation after the negotiations. We understood that the UN bureaucratic processes were quite lengthy. We were worried that the UN bureaucratic processes might not be in sync with the timelines we had established. We had previous experience with the UN involving Mozambique. In that case, the UN was one year behind. We said to the UN, “We can’t afford such a delay in Rwanda, we cannot afford one day delay in Rwanda. Please, start your processes.” Before you get engaged, you

¹⁰ The [Protocol on the Rule of Law](#), signed August 18, 1992, was included as Annex III of the final Arusha Peace Agreements.

have to send a reconnaissance mission.¹¹ The reconnaissance mission has to write a report to the Secretary-General, the Secretary-General should seek a resolution from the Security Council, troops and resources have to be allocated. We said, “These processes will not be in sync with what is being agreed in Arusha.” And the Secretary-General said, “No.” He is on the record. Unfortunately other players of Arusha have not been invited to this conference. Salim should have been here. There was a lot of correspondence with the UN urging them to start the process because the timelines were very strict.

FILIP REYNTJENS: We should bear in mind that this is complex. On the one hand, you have people negotiating the Arusha Accords. At the same time, a number of things are happening on the ground in Rwanda. Sometimes those events on the ground have an influence much later on the peace process. Let me give you just one example. Just before the final Arusha Accords were signed on August 4, 1993, the tri-polar Rwandan political landscape turned bipolar.¹² This was a major fault line. This is clear from the split within the MDR [*Mouvement Démocratique Républicain*] Party in July 1993.¹³ The Arusha Accords were signed on August 4, 1993, less than two weeks after the split in the MDR, as if nothing had happened inside the country. This had an important impact on how Arusha was managed. We need to be careful about our sequencing.

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Mpungwe.

¹¹ The reconnaissance mission was not sent until August 1993.

¹² The “tri-polar political landscape” refers President Habyarimana’s MRND party, the “moderate” Hutu opposition parties, and the RPF.

¹³ Founded in 1991 after the Rwandan constitution was amended to allow multiple political parties, the MDR (Democratic Republican Movement) party split into opposing wings in July 1993, a pro-RPF faction and a “Hutu Power” faction allied to President Habyarimana’s MRND party.

AMI MPUNGWE: To respond to that, we at Arusha were aware of what was happening inside Rwanda. The whole process, and the timelines for implementation, were meant to take care of these misinterpretations. We were aware that there were status quo forces, inside Rwanda, who were not interested in seeing Arusha succeed. We were not naïve. But we believed that, if the timelines for implementation were respected, we could have taken care of those status quo forces.

This is in response to General Dallaire. The timelines were not set arbitrarily. They were negotiated, even the twenty-four month transitional period prior to elections. That is why we wanted the UN to come in early. In the end, they ended up having the letter, but not the spirit, of Arusha.

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Mazimhaka.

PATRICK MAZIMHAKA: First of all, let me thank those who spoke before me for bringing out these points. On our side of the negotiations, from the beginning, we presented demands to the government of Rwanda. The status quo could not just stay as it was. The situation in Rwanda was no longer sustainable. Those who were there know that. The pressure was not just from the war. The pressure was not from the June 1990 speech of President Mitterrand at La Baule.¹⁴ The pressure was from Rwandans themselves who were demanding changes, demanding the cessation of oppression by the regime. The RPF program dates back to its inception in 1987, among Rwandan exiles in Uganda. We had a clear path that we were looking at when we went to negotiations. As Ambassador Mpungwe has outlined, the Arusha Peace Agreement negotiations reflected the aspirations of the people of Rwanda.

¹⁴ In a speech to the Francophone summit in La Baule, France, on June 20, 1990, President Mitterrand linked French assistance to African countries to progress on democratization and human rights. [\(English translation\)](#) The original version of the speech, in French, can be found [here](#).

The proof is that, even though people talk about Arusha collapsing, the principles that were agreed to at Arusha formed the basis for the current constitution of Rwanda. Those who survived the genocide believed in the transformations that we were trying to accomplish in Arusha.

The N'Sele Ceasefire Agreement of July 1992 reflected our fears and challenges in negotiating a settlement with the MRND [*Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement*] and President Habyarimana.¹⁵ We interpreted a breach of ceasefire to mean, among other things, the harassment of civilians through radio waves and insults, as well as a demeaning of the process. This is within the ceasefire agreement.¹⁶ We knew that was going to go on. At the same time, we were aware of what Filip Reyntjens described as the positive and negative forces. There were people within the institutions of government, including the military, who opposed the negotiations right from the beginning. They believed in a military victory and blamed President Habyarimana for conceding that negotiations were possible. There were people in the military, like Colonel Bagosora and others, who did not want negotiations to work, who wanted to continue a war that they claimed they had won. Maybe I am not speaking for former Rwandan Defense Minister James Gasana, but James knows because he was inside the Rwandan government.

We had a framework to contain the massacres of people in Rwanda, massacres that started in October 1990. By the way, let me just remind you even before we started a war in October 1990, there was a lot of repression and killings. The start of the war in October had nothing to do with starting the atrocities in Rwanda, it was just a partial response. We wanted to implement what we felt was the will of a majority of people in Rwanda who had

¹⁵ The [N'Sele Ceasefire Agreement](#), was signed July 12, 1992 in Arusha, Tanzania and can be found in Annex II of the Arusha Peace Agreements. The MRND (National Revolutionary Movement for Development) was the sole legal political party in Rwanda between 1975 and 1991.

¹⁶ Mazimhaka later said that he was referring to [Article II](#) and [Article VII of the N'Sele Ceasefire Agreement](#), July 12, 1992, which links the ceasefire to the end of "unfounded propaganda."

no room to speak. If we got an agreement that was good, they would support it. In the end, even though the agreement should have been publicized better, and even though it was denigrated by government leaders including President Habyarimana, the people of Rwanda supported the Arusha negotiations. What they wanted from the negotiations, first of all, was peace. The negotiations, by the way, were not the result of Mitterrand's speech at La Baule at the Francophone summit on June 20, 1990, which was rejected by Habyarimana. It was the other way around. The French put pressure on Habyarimana after we insisted that he should open up the political space. We discussed this in Paris with President Mitterrand's Africa advisor, Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, in December 1990. Jean-Christophe Mitterrand [President Mitterrand's son] was the heir to the throne. His thesis was that the RPF cannot be for a democracy when they are a minority. He equated the RPF with the Tutsi. We said, "In France, when a party loses elections, is it massacred? If there is a democratic process, we will go back to Rwanda. If we lose the elections, we will stay home and try again. That is what democracy is about. So do not be afraid for us. We shall join the process of democratization." We offered that.

So the pressure mounted again. This was how multiple political parties were allowed in June 1991, not because of the Mitterrand speech, which had been rejected by Habyarimana.¹⁷ We focused on these objectives because of what was happening parallel to negotiations. There were massacres, repeated massacres, as reported by human rights organizations. We tried to contain that situation by completing the negotiations and having a short timetable for implementation in which all the parties would be playing a role.

To reply to my friend, General Dallaire, the interpretations of Arusha were different because the Rwandan government was divided into three different factions going into

¹⁷ Habyarimana announced a package of political reforms, including the recognition of multiple political parties, in a speech on July 5, 1990. The reforms were enshrined in a constitutional amendment adopted on June 10, 1991 by the Rwandan parliament.

Arusha. There were those who were neutral, but went along with negotiations. There were those who were totally opposed to negotiations. And there were those who supported the negotiations, particularly members of the coalition government, what you call the “positive forces.” Did that answer your question?

TOM BLANTON: Very close. Let me ask James Gasana to give us the point of view from Kigali going into Arusha. What were your goals, objectives, concerns?

JAMES GASANA: Thank you very much. I think it is important to look at what was happening even before the war started in October 1990. I was working as an agricultural development agent in Rwanda. At one point, I was asked to preside over the National Commission of Agriculture, which was set up because of a general malaise in the rural sector of the country. I remember I gave the first warning in 1990.¹⁸ I was not in the government yet, and the war had not started. There was widespread famine, poverty, unemployment, particularly within the farming sector and the youth. When we organized workshops to share our findings, many sectors of the population told us that something is going to be done by them if the administration cannot address their problems. We discussed this with all the donors. I never had in my mind at that time that there would be a war later that same year.

[Turning to Arusha] I think it was a process in which the government believed at that time. Particularly the chief negotiator, Foreign Minister Boniface Ngulinzira, who was determined to conduct it very well, and was supported by all who wanted democratic changes. The strategy that has been summarized by Ambassador Mpungwe was very good:

¹⁸ The National Agriculture Commission (1990-1991) report warned that Rwanda could not feed its growing population, and drew attention to the “Malthusian effects that could derive from the gap between food supply and the demand of the population, and social disorders which could result.” See [September/October World Watch Magazine](#).

starting first with the least contentious issues but issues that proved the seriousness of both parties to negotiate. The ceasefire and the Protocol on the Rule of Law helped create trust and confidence inside the country in the Arusha process.

The problem with Arusha is that, while it brought the warring parties together, it could not manage internal problems. That was not its task. The internal dialogue that should have taken place in Rwanda even before the diplomatic process, or at the same time as the process, did not take place. It was shifted to Arusha. In Arusha, there were two negotiations taking place at the same time. There was the official negotiation between the government and RPF and a competing, non-official, negotiation that should have taken place in Rwanda, within the parties represented in the government. Perhaps that is what destabilized the process.

The problems started from there. One cannot know which was more important: the dialogue that should have taken place inside Rwanda that was moved to Arusha or the negotiation between the warring parties. When you talk about the Arusha process, there is a hidden part that became destabilizing for the process. It was not easy for the facilitator, Tanzania, to take into account. The Arusha negotiators (I am talking about the chief negotiators) had no problems among themselves, politically speaking. But here was an important political problem *within* the [MDR] opposition party that was represented in Arusha [Ngulinzira was a member of the MDR].

Many factions composing the government were represented in the Arusha negotiations, but those not participating in that divided government were left out. One of these factions, the CDR, would grow strong and would destabilize the process, particularly after the signing of the second stage of the Protocol on Power-Sharing, in January 1993.

The views of Rwandan civil society were not represented at Arusha. We still did not have a civil society that could have played a positive role in the whole process. The views of civil society were not even included on the government side.

An even more important problem was the issues that were left out of the negotiations, which had no way of being channeled into the agenda, in order to find a solution to them. [Gives as an example the consequences of the 1973 coup d'état that brought Habyarimana to power]. Many members of the first post-independence regime [led by Grégoire Kayibanda] were killed during or after the 1973 coup. One of the factors that caused dissent in the opposition was the demand for an accounting of the disappearance of the entire elite of a region in the country.¹⁹ This was a major motivation for even large parties like MDR and something that haunted Habyarimana, from even before 1990 to the last week of his life. The issue was very important to him. It influenced the equation of how many people from the MRND, from the MDR, from the RPF would be in the government and parliament. The importance of this issue was never realized by third parties, or even by the parties concerned.

I mentioned the problem of the impoverished peasantry, more than 60 percent of the population, which was nowhere represented in the Arusha process. The youth was not represented as an actor, alongside the other actors. The people who came to Arusha belonged to the elite, disconnected from the everyday problems of ordinary Rwandans. The farming community and the youth represented more than 60 percent of the population, but they were not present at Arusha.

Since I will not be here this afternoon, I would like to pinpoint some factors in the failure of the Arusha process, involving the Protocol on Power-Sharing, which was signed in

¹⁹ The 1973 coup in Rwanda led to a shift in political power from southern Rwanda (the birthplace of Kayibanda) to northwestern Rwanda (the stronghold of Habyarimana). The regional rivalry played an important role in the factional in-fighting between 1990 and 1994.

two stages, October 1992 and January 1993.²⁰ Article 14 of the Protocol became a major problem later.²¹ There were parties not represented in the multi-party government that had become stronger than some parties who were in the government.²² They felt left out. Even those who were in the government, for example, those in the MRND [the former sole political party in Rwanda, led by Habyarimana], felt that their relative power was not taken into account by that formula.

[Refers to Reyntjens point about the transformation of Rwandan politics from three poles to two poles in mid-1993]. An important factor here was Article 51 of the power-sharing agreement, signed in 1993, which stated that the name of the prime minister of the BBTG would be announced prior to the signing of the full peace agreement.²³ Since it was known that the prime minister would come from the MDR, there was a struggle within MDR over who should be nominated prior to the signing of the full Arusha agreement on August 4, 1993. We had a strong opposition party, the MDR that was divided in two. Some were for [the outgoing prime minister] Dismas Nsengiyaremye. Others were for Faustin Twagiramungu [eventually nominated as prime minister].

It became a problem of personalities, in addition to a problem of political parties. [Mentions articles describing] the distribution of positions in the transitional government [Article 56] and parliament [Article 62].²⁴ In addition to the frustrations of those who were left out, there was also, for the first time, the frustration of the moderates. Let me give the

²⁰ The [Protocol of Agreement on Power-Sharing](#), first signed on October 30, 1992, can be found in Annex IV of the Arusha Peace Agreements.

²¹ [Article 14 of the Protocol of Agreement on Power-Sharing](#) stated that the Broad-Based Transitional Government would be made up of the political parties participating in the multi-party government established in April 1992, plus the RPF. This formula excluded the extremist CDR party.

²² Gasana is referring, in particular, to the *Coalition pour la Défense de la République* (CDR), an extremist Hutu Power party founded in early 1992 that was not represented at Arusha.

²³ This article is widely viewed as a trigger for the split in the MDR party, which immediately preceded the signing of the final Arusha Accords in August 1993. Article 51 gave the MDR the right to nominate the prime minister, but Party leaders were unable to agree on who should receive the nomination. See [Annex IV, Article 51](#) of the Arusha Peace Agreements.

²⁴ See Annex IV, [Article 56](#) and [Article 62](#), signed January 9, 1993 of the Arusha Peace Agreements.

MRND [Gasana belonged to the MRND] as an example. The moderates felt that that the assigned positions would give more weight to extremists.

Beginning in January 1993, we saw the rise of the extremist Hutu Power party, the CDR [*Coalition pour la Défense de la République*]. That is when it became strong. Its enrollment increased from January onwards, on the basis of Article 14 of the power-sharing protocol, which excluded the CDR from the transitional government. If people are left out of the peace process, and cannot be integrated into it, they will become a major destabilizing factor.

To summarize, there were many who felt that they were excluded from the peace process. There were two victors. Clearly the RPF. Also the CDR. The CDR felt they were winning. Even though they knew they had problems, they felt like they had won because they had become important. The peace process boosted their enrollment. It widened their base and they became a political party to be considered.

TOM BLANTON: Thank you very much. Joyce Leader.

JOYCE LEADER: Thank you very much. I would like to underscore some of the things that have been said...The Arusha Accords were viewed as a way of containing the extremists and the violence. If we could just get them implemented, we would have a framework for containing the violence. The US certainly subscribed to this position at that time. We supported democratization and peace from when the RPF invaded Rwanda from Uganda in October 1990. Ambassador Swinnen has mentioned the various demarches we made. We very much supported Arusha. In fact, our Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs [Herman Cohen] visited Kigali and Uganda in May 1992, just after the coalition government

was formed, to talk to both sides and see if the time was right for direct negotiations.²⁵ We provided one legal and one military advisor to the group that was working on the ceasefire at Arusha.

What struck me at the time in Kigali was the intense conflict over power sharing, primarily between Hutu political parties, with the President and the MRND party on one side and the opposition party on the other. What I did not realize at the time as much as I should have was the impact of the North-South divide. In Arusha, there was the government with its North-South divisions on one side of table opposite the RPF, who were viewed as representing the Tutsi. The RPF was present in the dialogue in Arusha but in Kigali the Tutsi voice was basically absent. There, the debate over the country's political future took place among Hutus. There was a different dynamic in these two places. They started taking their own tracks, especially when the reactions in Kigali became so virulent.

I do not think I was aware of the fine print of the Power-Sharing Protocol signed in October 1992 and the extent to which it reduced the powers of the President. The political parties had come to us in August 1992 saying this is what they wanted to bring to the table in Arusha. Later we heard the reaction of the President in his November 15, 1992 speech [in the northern Rwandan town of Ruhengeri] in which he described the Arusha Accords as a *chiffon de papier*, [a piece of paper].²⁶ Then there was the speech by the MRND official Léon Mugesera [on November 22, 1992 in the northern Rwandan town of Kabaya], in which he

²⁵ Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen met with leaders of the Rwandan government and RPF during his visits to Kigali and Kampala. See Johnnie Carson, "[A/S Cohen's Meeting with Representatives of the RPF and the RPA.](#)" US Embassy Kampala cable 02581, May 12, 1992, and Robert Flaten, "[Habyarimana Tells Cohen Transition Government Can Govern.](#)" US Embassy Kigali cable 01978, May 13, 1992. The new coalition government was announced on April 2, 1992 See Robert Flaten, "[The New Government and Peace Negotiations.](#)" US Embassy Kigali cable 01400, April 3, 1992.

²⁶ [Speech by President Habyarimana](#) (English translation), MRND meeting in Ruhengeri, November 15, 1992. The French version refers to "*chiffons de papier*," or pieces of paper.

states that the best way to deal with the problem was to send the Tutsis back to where they came from.²⁷

So there was already a sense of lack of leadership in terms of supporting the peace process, going into the very intense talks in Kigali over power sharing arrangements in December 1992 which came to nothing.²⁸ There was a stalemate. Days later, Arusha announced the agreement on the division of Cabinet portfolios.²⁹ This was a shock to the Kigali politicians on both sides of the divide. The reaction was very strong. We had these two tracks going at once. The democratization dialogue moved to Arusha. As Filip Reyntjens was saying, we cannot ignore what was going on in Rwanda when we try to assess and evaluate what was happening in Arusha, which was so well described by Ami Mpungwe.

There were even divisions between the diplomatic corps in Kigali and the “shadow” diplomatic corps in Arusha because our roles were somewhat different. In Arusha, the diplomats were supporting the process, trying to encourage a diplomatic solution, a compromise that would bring an agreement. In Kigali, they were still working within the framework of the political parties that were there. There was a different perspective. When I was in Arusha talking to my Ambassador [Robert Flaten] on the telephone, I began to see that our thinking was quite different. It was difficult to know how to handle the internal Rwandan reaction to the power sharing agreement. The parties in Kigali, particularly the CDR and the MRND, did not want to accept it. In fact they publicly rejected the power-

²⁷ [Speech by Léon Mugesera](#) (English translation), MRND meeting in Kabaya, November 22, 1992. As translated by Canadian courts, in connection with deportation proceedings against Mugesera, it included the sentence in paragraph 25 where he said, “I am telling you that your home is in Ethiopia that we will send you by the Nyabarongo [river] so you can get there quickly.”

²⁸ See, for example, Robert Flaten, [“The Politics of Peace: Internal Dialogue”](#), US Embassy Kigali cable 05197, December 16, 1992 and, Robert Flaten, [“Impasse Again.”](#) US Embassy Kigali cable 05381, December 31, 1992.

²⁹ Peter Jon de Vos, [“Arusha V – Negotiators Settle on Cabinet, Move on to Transitional Assembly.”](#) US Embassy Dar es Salaam cable 07326, December 24, 1992.

sharing accord. The diplomats were worried that revisiting the agreement might cause the collapse of the entire process...

TOM BLANTON: Let me ask Jean-Christophe Belliard to come in here.

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE BELLIARD: First, I would like to praise the work carried out by Tanzania on the peace process, and of course Ambassador Mpungwe. The Tanzanian defense minister and foreign affairs minister often came to Arusha to push the negotiations ahead when they became difficult, as did the President. I want to emphasize that this was an African negotiation. We were there simply as observers in the corridors. As far as France was concerned, my instructions were to push for an agreement, and to work with the moderate forces that Ambassador Swinnen mentioned. Our work, both in Kigali and in Arusha, was to encourage President Habyarimana to make concessions. He had power and he had to share the power. The reality on the ground was that he had to share this power.

The goal of the negotiation was to create a transitional structure, a government of national unity, and ensure that the President ceded as much power as possible to the Prime Minister and the government. That was the goal of the negotiations. We pushed in this direction in Kigali all the time. President Mitterrand was constantly telling Habyarimana that he needed to reform. We also urged him to disconnect the Presidency of the Republic from the Presidency of the ruling MRND party, to open up and democratize. We tried to do the same thing in Arusha. My job was to put pressure on the Rwandan government delegation to make concessions. There were really two delegations. There was a delegation from the RPF, which was a single delegation with a unity of purpose. They knew what they wanted. There was a symbolic head of the delegation, Pasteur Bizimungu. The key people were the people next to him, from the RPF, who we observed every evening, around 18:00

hours, telephoning Mulindi [RPF headquarters].³⁰ The key person was Theogene Rudasingwa, who was at that time very close to Kagame. So, on the side of the RPF there was unity.

In the government delegation, sent from Kigali, there was no unity. There was no unity of purpose. Patrick Mazimhaka mentioned this too. In fact, there were really three delegations. There were the people close to Foreign Minister Boniface Ngulinzira, there was Habyarimana's man, Claver Kanyarushoki, and then there was somebody at the end of the table who did not speak a word but we could see was influential, [the Chef de Cabinet of the Defense Ministry] Théoneste Bagosora.³¹ I worked a lot with Ngulinzira who listened to me. But I also knew that Ngulinzira was powerless. It was not him who took decisions. The real decisions were taken elsewhere. We could see that Kanyarushoki was continually slowing things down and playing for time, while the third person, Bagosora, did not speak but seemed to think a lot. I had the sense that a lot of things got decided at his level. So we had the negotiations going on every day, a kind of shadow theatre, and then the real negotiations going on in parallel with people who did not want to make any progress.

We were there to ensure they made concessions. The status quo was not tenable. We supported the forces of moderation in Kigali and elsewhere. I think that at some point we should discuss an important question, about the CDR, and whether it should have been included in the peace process or kept out.³²

³⁰ A Hutu politician, and former member of the MRND party, Bizimungu left Rwanda in 1990 after his brother was murdered and joined the RPF. He became president of Rwanda after the genocide, but split with Kagame in 2000, and founded his own opposition party.

³¹ Ngulinzira represented the opposition MDR party, which joined the new coalition government in April 1992. He was murdered in April 1994 by Hutu extremists. Kanyarushoki fled Rwanda and now lives in France. Bagosora became a leading genocidaire, and was convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha.

³² The CDR was an extremist Hutu political party that rejected the Arusha Peace Agreements, and sponsored death squads active during the genocide.

FILIP REYNTJENS: Can we push Ambassador Belliard a bit further. In contrast to the other facilitators in the corridors of the Arusha negotiations, France did have a very important lever. Without the support of the French army, and Operation Noroit, the regime would probably have been defeated militarily well before the signature of the Arusha Accords.³³ How did France use this leverage, which was unique? Belgium did not have anything similar.

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE BELLIARD: I was in Arusha, I was not in Kigali, so I was not in charge of that. I imagine that at a certain point France wanted to achieve a balance. In order to have political balance, you also need a military balance. I was not a direct actor. Mr. Védérine, who will be here this afternoon, may have more to say on the subject. I just want to give you the perspective from Arusha.

A question was raised at a certain point: Is it better to have the CDR and the extremists in the process or outside the process? I think we should discuss this important question. Yesterday, during informal talks with my friend Ami Mpungwe, I recalled that there was a rumor that the African National Congress may have rigged the democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. The National Party [of former Prime Minister F.W. de Klerk] did not get 20 percent of the votes, it got 10 percent of the votes. Mandela had the political intelligence to give his political opponents votes that they actually won in order to have the National Party on board. We saw what happened in South Africa afterwards. Of course, these cases are different. South Africa had its own dramatic events, but I do wonder about what we should have done with the CDR. I do not know who shot down the plane. I have my thoughts on that, there was a logical chain of events. You make peace with your

³³ Operation Noroit involved the deployment of two companies of French troops (around 600 men) to Rwanda in October 1990 to evacuate French citizens and support the Habyarimana government following the RPF invasion.

enemies, not with your friends. I think it is worth posing the question of what might have happened if the CDR had been associated with the Accords. We should discuss what was possible and what was not possible in the framework of the negotiations.

On Great Lakes issues these days, there is a unity between the principal members of the international community. France, the UK, and the US agree on the Great Lakes, as do Russia and China. The Great Lakes are not a problem like Sudan or Syria, but in 1994, we were more divided. I had very good personal relationships with the RPF delegation on the human level. We became friends. I felt close to them, intellectually and ideologically, but I was not able to lean on them or pass messages to them. It was more the American delegation that was able to pass messages. There was a certain division of labor. I worked more on the Rwandan government delegation, when I was asked to push them in one direction or another. I think at a certain point we asked Joyce Leader to work on the RPF delegation. But we were more divided than we are nowadays. Within the P-3 [western permanent members of the UN Security Council], there was France, and there were the other two [US and UK]. That deals with the technical aspects of the negotiations. But since we are all here, I think we should ask ourselves, was it political error not to include the CDR? Was it something that would have been possible?

TOM BLANTON: Let me go to General Dallaire.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Listening to the previous speakers, I am trying to grasp the impact of the decisions taken at Arusha on implementation of the peace agreements, which ultimately is the aim of the exercise. It is one thing to negotiate, another to end up with something that you can actually implement. I gather that the diplomats felt they had to conclude a peace agreement in order to stabilize the situation in the country. One of the tools they created to

ensure this would happen was to create these incredible milestones, including having forces on the ground and the Broad-Based Transitional Government set up by September 10, and so on. When you look at it, these were impossible milestones. The discussions had been going in all directions. There were so many players, even just within the UN. There was no way that the UN could have an SRSG [Special Representative of the Secretary-General], a Force Commander and others on the ground within those time frames. You knew that. Surely people knew that a UN mission takes at least six months to get underway. On the one hand, you were trying to bring stability with this accord. On the other, you created enormous impossible tensions for those who were trying to implement the agreement. There was no way we could meet these deadlines. To me, this is a major dysfunctional situation that I expect diplomats to try to figure out, rather than simply write something down and hope for the best.

The other point that came out was President Habyarimana's concerns about the aftermath of the coup in 1973.³⁴ [Recalls meeting in January 1994 with Enoch Ruhigira, Chief of Staff to President Habyarimana, who complained that the distribution of key ministries was stacked against the President.]³⁵ If I was Habyarimana, I would be scared shitless that I would be thrown in jail the day after the transitional government was set up. There was absolutely no thought given to putting an amnesty option in there that would give the President and his associates the assurance that they would not be immediately thrown in jail...The division of power turned him into the equivalent of a Canadian Governor General who cannot even get the floors washed without somebody in the media complaining that he is spending too much. Going from a dictator to a figurehead is a massive

³⁴ See James Gasana's intervention, above.

³⁵ See Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, page 137. Ruhigira expressed concern that, once the BBTG was installed, the RPF and its "sympathizers" would be able to send Habyarimana and his associates to jail for crimes committed by his regime. Dallaire writes in his book that "an amnesty provision" should have been included in the Arusha Accords "for the sake of making a lasting peace."

change. I cannot comprehend why those things were not grasped during the negotiation process. During the implementation phase, it hit us every time we met.

TOM BLANTON: Let me ask General Anyidoho to address that. Then I will come back to the diplomats.

HENRY ANYIDOHO: I joined the mission in January 1994. Some of these issues took place before that date. But I wanted to ask a question about the CDR. Was not the opposition to the CDR being given a place in the transitional government the result of the radical nature of this party? If you offered them the opportunity of joining the transitional power structure, they could ruin the entire process. All the discussions we had at UNAMIR headquarters suggested that the CDR was considered too radical. When things were not working well, they continued to expand.

In implementing any peace agreement, you cannot do everything at the same time. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed between the Sudanese government and South Sudan in January 2005, envisaged a five-year interim period leading up to a referendum to decide whether the South was going to be independent. All things did not happen at the same time. The idea was that they would take care of all the unfinished business during the transitional period.

Going back to Rwanda, a radical party should not be allowed to undermine the democratization process. That is why, as I understood it, the CDR were not given a government portfolio from the beginning. After the agreement was signed, there was pressure to give a portfolio to the CDR at any cost. This was why we could never establish the Broad-Based Transitional Government. Try as hard as we did, it was this CDR issue that

blocked the establishment of the BBTG.³⁶ My question is: was it not because of its radical nature?

TOM BLANTON: Let me ask Ambassador Mazimhaka.

PATRICK MAZIMHAKA: Those who were in Kigali will recall that the CDR rejected negotiations of any form or shape with the RPF. We designed a form for all parties who were not part of the peace negotiations to sign a code of ethics committing themselves to the negotiated settlement. The CDR refused.³⁷ This was not just any radical politics, they rejected all negotiations with the RPF. Their ideology was, “the Tutsis are gone forever, and the RPF equals Tutsi,” which was, of course, erroneous. The CDR rejected the negotiated agreement to the end. The other Parties went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and signed the forms.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: I could never understand why at the end of March 1994 we agreed to let the CDR into the exercise at a time of enormous tension.³⁸ I just did not see why all of a sudden we threw them into the exercise when everything else was going up in smoke.

TOM BLANTON: Let me just ask Don Webster to come in on this question.

³⁶ For details on how the CDR issue blocked the formation of a new transitional government, see, for example, David Rawson, [“President Habyarimana Received DASD Irvin, Promised Installation Ceremonies Aborted.”](#) US Embassy Kigali cable 01323, March 25, 1994.

³⁷ For details on the dispute between the RPF and the CDR on signing the Code of Ethics, see David Rawson, [“Demarche Request on CDR Participation.”](#) US Embassy Kigali cable 01319, March 25, 1994. By March 25, the CDR had partially (but not fully) complied with the Code of Ethics requirements. US diplomats were in favor of allowing CDR representation in the transitional assembly in order to overcome the political impasse.

³⁸ Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, [“Daily Sitrep.”](#) UNAMIR Force HQ Outgoing Facsimile, March 31, 1994.

DON WEBSTER: Much of the discussion that we are having now was going on openly at the time. If you look at the communiqués that were issued, the telexes going back and forth between the US Embassy in Kigali and Washington, there is much discussion of the problems with the power sharing agreement with specific reference to the CDR. The question is, why did it come as a surprise in March that this was a problematic issue when the discussion had been ongoing for the previous six months?

[Looking at the events of January 1994], how do we explain Habyarimana's willingness to sign the power sharing agreement? The situation on the ground did not change that radically. He had signed away many of his powers in January 1993. How did you explain that, looking back? While all of this was going on, we see the militarization of the Interahamwe, which was not a secret. It was open. In view of all this public discourse, specifically with regard to the CDR, why was there not a response on the part of international actors in Rwanda?

TOM BLANTON: Let me ask Ambassador Swinnen. Then I'll come back to Ambassador Ndagijimana.

JOHAN SWINNEN: In Kigali, we often discussed the possibility of including the extremist ethnic party, CDR (*Coalition pour la Défense de la République*) in the affairs of the country. We discussed this at great length at the residence of the French Ambassador under the chairmanship of Special Representative Booh-Booh with members of the diplomatic corps, not only European Union members but also other observers like Burundi and Egypt. We finally concluded that it would be good to give the extremist CDR party some responsibility for events. We thought it would be better to involve this party fully in the dynamic of peace and reform rather than to exclude them. In calling for the inclusion of the CDR, we thought

this party could be better controlled, better contained, better disciplined, and more inclined to go along with the aspirations of the Rwandan people. I do not know if the decision was correct, but the negotiations were very calm and patient and they resulted in the Common Declaration of March 28, 1994.³⁹

There is something we have not discussed which relates to the credibility of the Arusha Accords. I talked earlier about the lack of commitment and conviction on the part of the Rwandan authorities when it came to defending and promoting the Arusha Accords. I remember being summoned by President Habyarimana on October 21, 1993, the day the president of Burundi [Melchoir Ndadaye] was assassinated. We had a very dramatic conversation. He was very excited. He told me, "You criticize me every day for not making concessions, for not being flexible enough in setting up transitional institutions and not helping with the implementation of the Arusha Accords. How do you think that I will be able to get my public opinion to accept these Accords while a person who was considered the 'incarnation' of a successful peace and democratization process has been assassinated in the neighboring country?"

Melchoir Ndadaye had won the presidential and parliamentary elections in Burundi in June 1993 with a large majority. Habyarimana was saying that his counterpart in Burundi had proceeded very cautiously in replacing Tutsis with Hutus, and had been killed "in spite of his rather moderate position." According to Habyarimana, the discontent should have come from the Hutu majority that elected Ndadaye. At this moment we already knew that the president had been killed by Tutsi military officers. Habyarimana told me, "How can Rwandan public opinion continue to have faith in a similar process [in Rwanda]?" So, there was a lack of confidence in the Arusha process. We talked earlier about radicalization and

³⁹ Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, "[Efforts to Install the Transitional Institutions.](#)" UNAMIR Kigali Outgoing Code Cable MIR-672, March 28, 1994.

polarization. This polarization was already underway but was reinforced after the events in Burundi. When we examine the process of the implementation of the Arusha Accords, we must also take into account what happened in Burundi and the impact that it had on the mentality of the different groups in Rwanda.

TOM BLANTON: Let me just focus on that date, October 1993. On the international scene, of course, you have the perceived failure of the Somalia mission, the Mogadishu Blackhawk Down incident of October 3. You have the United Nations vote to authorize the Rwanda peacekeeping mission on October 5 and then you have the assassination of Burundian president Melchior Ndadaye on October 21.⁴⁰ It is an extraordinarily fraught period. General Dallaire had visited Rwanda in August 1993 on his reconnaissance mission. We have the record of this extraordinary conversation between him and Joyce Leader in the briefing book, describing with real prescience of the problems of the deadlines, of resources, of commitments.⁴¹ Ambassador Ndagijimana.

JEAN-MARIE VIANNEY NDAGIJIMANA: I wanted to add to the comments of Ambassador Swinnen on the importance of the CDR in the process. You have already mentioned the Ndadaye assassination, which reinforced the position of the CDR. Historically, Rwanda and Burundi have always functioned like connecting vases. When something important happens in Burundi, it reproduces itself almost automatically a few months later in Rwanda. You would have to be blind not to realize this. The Ndadaye assassination was more or less the destruction of the Arusha Accords. But we must not forget the way in which the RPF seized

⁴⁰ The UN Security Council authorized the creation of UNAMIR on October 5, 1993, with [Resolution 872 \(1993\)](#).

⁴¹ Joyce Leader, ["UN Reconnaissance Mission Head Discusses Thoughts on UN Involvement in Rwanda,"](#) US Embassy Kigali cable 03188, August 27, 1993.

power and remains in power today. What was happening on the territory controlled by the RPF while the Arusha Accords were being negotiated and after they were adopted? The result was a huge flow of the population from the north, fleeing Byumba. These refugees were camped around the capital. I witnessed this myself. There were people dying of hunger, talking about what had occurred during the RPF occupation. We have to consider the importance of this phenomenon in the post-Arusha process. How did the RPF behave in northern Rwanda following the signature of the Arusha Accords?

Concerning the CDR. In January 1994, the CDR wanted to sign what was called the “additional Arusha protocol.” Even though I was in Paris at the time, I belonged to the MDR party and had a certain influence with my colleagues inside Rwanda. The brains behind the CDR, Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, called me and said, “We want to sign the protocol but they are stopping us. The head of the Constitutional Court and the Foreign Minister [Anastase Gasana] do not want us to sign, under pressure from the RPF.” I tried to find people from the MDR, like Faustin Twagiramungu, to lobby for the signing of the agreement by the CDR. Everybody agreed except the Foreign Minister and the President of the Constitutional Court.

Three months later, in March 1994, we accepted the principle that the CDR should sign, but it was already too late. The fire was already lit. People were already excited. If we had let the CDR sign the Arusha Accords in January, perhaps we would not have had what happened later. Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza told me at the time, “If they do not give us a single deputy in the parliament, they will have to meet us on the street.”

Who were the real extremists, by the way? Were there extremists within the RPF? This is a work that needs to be carried out in an impartial and balanced matter. When we study the history of Rwanda, we have to look at all sides. We talk about the pressure on the Habyarimana government and that’s fine. People say that his regime would have collapsed without the support of France but you can say the same thing of the RPF. Without support

from abroad, the RPF would not have managed to come back after October 1990. They needed arms from someone. The lack of impartiality and balance on the part of the international community also led to frustration. People who were considered “moderates” became extremists the following day.

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Mpungwe.

AMI MPUNGWE: Thank you. All these issues were discussed in Arusha. It is not as if we are hearing them for the first time here. All these issues, about the CDR, about the fears of different parties, were brought to our attention. The diplomatic observers in Arusha will recall that there were times when we asked them to leave us alone with the parties. The observers had different interests. Our commitment was the resolution of the Rwandese conflict. Tanzania had a diplomatic infrastructure in Arusha and inside Rwanda. I had direct communication with the State Department of the United States.

The art of negotiation is compromise. The parties negotiating in Arusha had to compromise. We spent a lot of time in Arusha discussing the issue of the CDR. Tanzania was not a party to the negotiations. We encouraged the parties to negotiate in Kinyarwanda. They negotiated with each other directly, we were just facilitating. They were responsible for whatever came out of the negotiations.

Take the question, how solid was the government delegation vis a vis the RPF? As Patrick [Mazimhaka] will recall, we pushed heavily on the RPF. You were more organized. Your position was unanimous. The government delegation was composed of a coalition of different parties. They were divided. I know, Patrick that sometimes the RPF learned the government position much earlier than the government delegation in Arusha. We were aware of these dynamics. We would lean on the RPF. We told them, “We want a good

agreement, not just any agreement.” You may be stronger and smarter than the government on such and such a point, but we do not agree with you. We went to RPF headquarters in Mulindi and had direct discussions with Paul Kagame. I said, “Paul, your people in Arusha are being difficult, please assist.”

TOM BLANTON: Lean on Patrick...

AMI MPUNGWE: We even invited Paul Kagame to Dar es Salaam at one point to discuss the question of Habyarimana. The RPF did not want Habyarimana to remain as president after the agreement. But we said, “No, he is the incumbent, let us find a way.” What I am saying is that all these issues were discussed exhaustively in Arusha. They were not pushed aside.

Yes, we realized the timelines were tight. But they were agreed by the parties and that is why we started communicating with the UN very early, “Please, Mr. UN, move in.” This was February 1993 after we got the agreement on power sharing. We told the UN, “We can see the light at the end of the tunnel, start your processes. You delayed Mozambique for one year, we cannot afford something similar in Rwanda.” Mozambique was a low intensity conflict. We explained that Rwanda was a deep rooted conflict characterized by fear and mistrust. We had cases of parties disagreeing with their own proposals because they had been accepted by the other side. OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim should have been here in The Hague. In August 1993, he was wrangling with the UN to get the process moving on the Rwandan peacekeeping mission.⁴²

It is sad for us Africans. The two most senior people in the UN *were* African: Kofi Annan, the Head of Peacekeeping [from Ghana], and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General [from Egypt]. They were the ones who refused to start the implementation process

⁴² Marc Alan Baas, [“Salim on Rwanda.”](#) US Embassy Addis Ababa cable 05645, August 26, 1993.

until we got a full agreement. We said, "We will give you the agreement, start the process." We knew the timelines were tight, but should we have told the negotiating parties, "Forget about your timelines because the UN is not prepared?"

TOM BLANTON: Thank you. Michael Barnett.

MICHAEL BARNETT: Sitting here listening to the diplomats talk about the Arusha Accords, all I can conclude is that this was a house of cards. It was ready to collapse at a moment's notice. Ambassador Mpungwe seems to be describing a very small window of opportunity in which every day lost means that you are less likely to have a successful implementation process. To put it uncharitably, it sounds like the diplomats were handing a ticking time bomb off to the UN. This was not an agreement that was going to be workable in any realistic setting given the gross limitations of the UN. Looking at the documentary evidence, what is stunning now is the extent to which those who sold the operation to the Security Council completely sugar coated all of the problems. It was presented to the Security Council as an almost self-executing agreement...

I am wondering how this agreement was sold. Given that it was, as I see it, a house of cards, what could outsiders have done differently besides wishing that the UN forces could have been on the ground the very day the agreement was signed? What were the other options for the Security Council or others to try to contain the forces of violence and bolster the forces of moderation?

TOM BLANTON: Mr. Murigande?

CHARLES MURIGANDE: I want to intervene on two points. Mr. Webster asked why Habyarimana, who had treated the partial power-sharing agreement of November 1992 as a mere piece of paper, all of a sudden started accepting the agreement. I do not think Habyarimana had a change of heart, but he was a very skillful politician. He knew how to behave vis a vis the international community while achieving what he wanted to achieve. He knew that the CDR, which he had created, would torpedo the agreement. He decided to present himself to the Ambassadors as a moderate, ready to embrace the Accord, knowing very well that he had deployed others within his camp to oppose the same agreement. He even created a faction of the MDR party to do the job of wrecking the process.

I do not think the agreement failed because the UN delayed in deploying. Although the parties had agreed to various timelines, they did not resume the fighting when they were missed. They waited patiently. The agreement collapsed only later. The signatories to the Arusha agreements were willing to wait for the UN to deploy. The collapse did not come about because of the failure to adhere to the timeline of swearing in the Broad-Based Transitional Government after thirty-seven days. The process collapsed because of the forces that Habyarimana had deployed on the ground to make sure that this process would collapse anyway.

TOM BLANTON: Let me ask Joyce Leader, was the Arusha agreement “a house of cards” in the phrase of Michael Barnett? Johan Swinnen used the phrase “believers.” He said “we believed” in this process. If you are a believer, do you just blot out all the forces and divisions and splits that in retrospect loomed so large? Could you explain that dynamic?

JOYCE LEADER: I would agree that we continued to believe that the Arusha process could work. We pushed for faster implementation, for getting the compromises necessary to

achieve the Accord more quickly. I would like to restate what Jean-Christophe said, the diplomats were observers. The negotiations were between the parties. The compromises were made between them. Our job was to keep everybody talking, to keep the process moving forward, keep them looking for common ground. Was it a house of cards? We certainly did not think so. That is why we kept working so hard to avoid a collapse, to get to the implementation phase that would bring the parties together, to create a foundation for building a new Rwanda...

TOM BLANTON: André, did you have a question on that point?

ANDRÉ GUICHAOUA: A question for Jean-Christophe Belliard. There is something we did not mention. People in power were disappearing. James Gasana had to leave Rwanda.⁴³ Dismas Nsengiyaremye had to leave.⁴⁴ Boniface Ngulinzira had to leave.⁴⁵ In the case of a couple of these people, the French embassy insisted on their departure.

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE BELLIARD: These things happened in Kigali. We would have to ask the French Ambassador at the time. I see that Monsieur Védrine and Monsieur de La Sabliere are arriving.

TOM BLANTON: James Gasana.

JAMES GASANA: I wanted to correct a couple of things that Mr. Belliard noted about the factions in the Rwandan government delegation at Arusha. I think it is correct to speak

⁴³ Gasana was Defense Minister from April 1992 to July 1993 and member of the MRND party.

⁴⁴ Nsengiyaremye was Prime Minister from April 1992 to July 1993, and member of the MDR party.

⁴⁵ Ngulinzira was Foreign Minister from April 1992 to July 1993, and member of the MDR party.

about the moderate faction led by the principal negotiator, Ngulinzira, which also included members of the other opposition parties. Then of course there was the Habyarimana faction and an isolated Bagosora faction. But we should also add the Army. I must emphasize that the process would not have moved forward the way it did without the presence of a group of military officers. Minister Ngulinzira confirmed this to me. He told me the Army was the most constructive of all the groups in Arusha. I think we have to highlight this. It was the Army that represented moderates in Arusha. Army officers minus Bagosora.

To return to the question of the CDR, we must distinguish between different dates, before and after January 1993. Before January 1993, the CDR was an outlet for extremist groups. They had a negativist sensibility because they had no hope of participating in the debate, but it was in January that they became a true party. They were joined by all the frustrated people, including a part of the moderate MDR party, who were themselves frustrated by Article 51 of the Arusha agreements that I spoke about earlier. At this particular moment, the CDR was ready to assume responsibilities. It is important to distinguish between these two periods. This was when the MDR and many other people felt that their fears were not being taken into account.

There was not a real government at this time. It was not even a coalition government. It was like a mini-parliament.⁴⁶ There was no real way it could function. It is a mistake to attribute too much power to Habyarimana. He was not head of the government. He was the head of a political faction, perhaps the most important faction, but he no longer

⁴⁶The multi-party government established in April 1992 included nineteen ministers: nine from Habyarimana's MRND party, three from the MDR, three from the Liberal Party, three from the Social Democratic Party, and a Tutsi minister. The Prime Minister, Dismas Nsengiyaremye, was a "moderate Hutu" from southern Rwanda and a leader of the MDR party opposed to Habyarimana. James Gasana adds: "In a parliamentary system of government, a coalition government is one in which several political parties cooperate when none has a required majority to rule. In the case of Rwanda's multi-party government set up in April 1992, parties did not cooperate. The MRND, meanwhile, had a large majority of parliamentarians in the CND [national assembly]."

determined policy. That was the point of the multi-party transition: to make him share power with the opposition. I would even say that he had become an opposition leader himself, in opposition to the Prime Minister. He was the head of state, the chief of an important political faction, opposed to the people who were leading the government. I think too much importance has been given to Habyarimana who lacked power to be held truly responsible. Perhaps it would have been better if he had more real responsibility than he had. It was not clear who was truly at the wheel. Habyarimana's faction no longer determined policy. He feared that the power-sharing agreements were strengthening the power of those who were the most opposed to him. He saw what was going on as an internal power struggle. In the end, it was the Army that held things together, particularly in advancing the Arusha negotiations. As Defense Minister I went to New York in May 1993 to convince Boutros-Ghali that we needed to support the peace process.

TOM BLANTON: General Dallaire.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Although we did not have an intelligence structure, we had an information structure, and we were getting information. We forget that the CDR was a front for a lot of the subversive activities that were going on in the country. People were being killed, there were riots, moderates were being threatened, and politicians could not even get to meetings. After January 1993, the CDR became a force on the ground on the security side, not just the political side. I think the CDR was a political front for these subversive forces. They also participated in producing the Interahamwe militia. This was not just a political problem, it was a security problem nurtured behind the negotiations in Arusha. It undermined the ability of the Broad-Based Transitional Government to come into place because the CDR was identified as a belligerent.

[Cautions against viewing the Army as a stabilizing factor.] Déogratias Nsabimana [Rwandan Armed Forces Chief of Staff] was not what I call a moderate. I saw him as maybe a hardliner. I did negotiate on several occasions with moderates within the Army to make a deal with the RPF. I got nowhere with that. I think that the Army was putting pressure underneath the political process that was not conducive to the Broad-Based Transitional Government coming into place. I do not think that the President had a grip on the Army. I think they operated relatively independently, particularly when we see what Bagosora was able to do.

How and when the splits within the political parties came about was not really clear to us. When did the MDR split between hardliners and moderates? When did the other moderate parties split? [Recalls that the intra-party splits blocked a consensus on who would fill the twenty positions in the BBTG]. I got the impression that this was happening long before the signing of the Arusha agreement. Who created those splits? Who supported the hardliners in those parties, undermining their negotiating position?

TOM BLANTON: How much of this level of political complexity were you aware of when you arrived in Rwanda?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: During the recce party in August 1993, a few diplomats indicated to me that there were internal political problems that needed to be resolved. They felt the agreement was weak and therefore we should deploy quickly.⁴⁷ President Habyarimana initially refused to see me during the recce. He agreed only after I insisted, on my last day in Kigali, just before I flew out. Both parties came to lobby us in New York saying, "We want

⁴⁷ Joyce Leader, ["UN Reconnaissance Mission Head Discusses Thoughts on UN Involvement in Rwanda,"](#) US Embassy Kigali cable 03188, August 27, 1993.

you here soon.”⁴⁸ There were moderates on both sides, the RPF and the government, who were showing that hand of willingness. I hit the ground on October 22, 1993, the day after the coup d’état in Burundi. We ended up with 300,000 refugees in southern Rwanda. At that point, we did not have a firm grip on the political maneuvering that was taking place behind the scenes. Even our own UN representative, Macaire Pédanou, was nowhere to be seen. We were working fairly blind at that time.

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Gambari.

IBRAHIM GAMBARI: Thank you very much. I did not want to interrupt the train of thought but I would like to follow up on Ambassador Mpungwe’s earlier comments about the involvement of regional powers. In other parts of Africa, for example West Africa, you find that the commitment of other regional powers to the implementation of peace agreements is very strong. In the case of Rwanda, which regional powers or actors were committed to the implementation of Arusha, apart from Tanzania?

In contrast to West Africa, Arusha depended on the UN for implementation. But the UN does not seem to have been closely involved in the actual negotiations that led to the Arusha Peace Agreements. It was a huge mistake, in my view, to ask the UN to implement an agreement with which it was not closely associated. In the case of Liberia and Sierra Leone, the West Africans did not wait for the UN. They went ahead and implemented the agreements that they reached by themselves. Regional bodies should take full responsibility and start implementing the agreements that they reach. To wait for the UN implementation of such agreement is not advisable, in my view.

⁴⁸ Madeleine Albright, [“SC Pressure Building to Approve Rwanda PKO.”](#) USUN cable 04766, September 30, 1992.

There has been something missing in discussions so far this morning. We talk about the Americans and the French, but where were the Africans and the actors from the region? Where is the commitment to actually do something? At the level of the OAU, of course, you had Salim, the Secretary-General, trying vainly. You had observers from Senegal, from Nigeria and so on, but I do not see a strong regional force committed to implementation of the Arusha agreement. This is relevant in today's situation. When you look at Mali, at the Central African Republic, it is when Africans themselves put boots on the ground, and show some commitment, that the international community tends to follow.

AMI MPUNGWE: Was Arusha a house of cards? No. Were we believers, and therefore blinded? No. We were quite aware of all that was happening. We were not peace fundamentalists, who believed in peace at any cost. We were aware of the situation on the ground. We were following that constantly. Our Ambassador in Kigali became so unpopular to President Habyarimana that she was eventually asked to leave the country.

I can understand the confusion here. The Rwandese peace process was unique in Africa. This was an African conflict in which the parties, for the first time, negotiated directly between themselves, with the assistance of neighbors and the active involvement of the regional organization, the OAU. The two parties themselves asked us to come to Arusha after two years of serious war. As you recall, the war broke out in October 1990 and there were so many peace initiatives in between. What you call the N'Sele peace process. There were many summits around the region that were unable to resolve the problem. The Rwandan government was losing on the battlefield. They came to the negotiating table kicking and screaming, but finally came. The RPF was also ready to negotiate. What was happening at the [frontline] brought the parties to the negotiating table on their own. They brought us in. So it was not a house of cards in the sense that things were moving.

We achieved a ceasefire agreement maintained by a small force of fifty African monitors. Soon after we signed the ceasefire agreement in Arusha in July 1992, the monitors arrived, organized by the OAU, under the command of a Nigerian General, reporting to the Secretary-General of the OAU. We also had a mechanism for monitoring violations. Things were moving. This was not a house of cards. We were not just “believers,” sticking around to be seen to be busy. No.

TOM BLANTON: To follow up on Ambassador Gambari’s question, did you think of approaching African organizations, instead of calling in the UN, or sending the very persuasive James Gasana to New York? Could you have turned that fifty-person monitoring force into a more significant force? Was that possible?

AMI MPUNGWE: Yes, it was possible. It was at that point [in 1992] that Boutros-Ghali came up with his Agenda for Peace, which included a proposal for collaboration between regional organizations and the UN. Maybe we were naïve. We believed in the Agenda for Peace. The UN was saying that there must be collaboration between regional organizations and the UN in order to avert threats to security.

Let me go back to Africa. In 1990, African heads of state issued a very clear declaration on fundamental global changes and Africa’s response. The issues included democracy, rule of law, good governance and so on. We debated mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution at the OAU summit in Senegal in 1992. We could not get an agreement in Senegal in 1992, but we got one in Cairo in 1993.

The OAU was actively engaged in resolving African conflicts. We were not passive. I agree that the regional neighbors and the OAU should have remained focused on Rwanda after we handed the issue over to the UN. There was too much trust in the UN. I remember

talking to [the former Rwandan foreign minister], Casimir Bizimungu in Dar es Salaam, after Burundian president Ndadaye was killed in October 1993. He asked me at the time, “Will Arusha protect us?” I was dealing with other problems then, but I communicated [his concerns back to the Tanzanian government]. I agree that the regional neighbors should have remained focused on the issue rather than trusting everything to the UN.

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Kovanda.

KAREL KOVANDA: I am intrigued by this debate about the nature of Arusha, how solid it was or was not, but there is one thing that strikes me. House of cards or not, throughout the conflict, Arusha was always a point of reference. Even during the genocide, Arusha was invoked by the RPF and by us in the Security Council as the basis for getting out of the mess. It was not until late May 1994 that my delegation started questioning whether Arusha should still be considered a sacred cow, seeing that it was not leading anywhere. The weaknesses of Arusha have been described very eloquently around the table. I am puzzled as why Arusha continued, even through the worst period of the genocide, to hold such an attraction to all the important players.

FILIP REYNTJENS: Ambassador Kovanda says that everyone kept referring to Arusha. But we need to find out whether people really believed in Arusha. We should look at some defining events and ask ourselves the questions: who lost faith in the Arusha Peace Accords, when, and why? What event triggered the disillusionment with Arusha? I have here a document of the RPF entitled, “*L’environnement actuel et l’avenir de l’organisation.*”⁴⁹ It is

⁴⁹ Reyntjens is referencing an RPF [document](#) obtained by Andre Guichaoua in March 1994 from a foreign embassy in Kigali that had reportedly been supplied by Seth Sendashonga, a senior RPF official.

not dated, but the content suggests that it was written in February 1994. Of course the RPF continued to adhere verbally to the Arusha Peace Accords and did so even after taking power in July 1994. Yet this document outlines four scenarios, none of which involved the implementation of the Arusha Peace Accords.

The RPF offensive of February 1993 led major sections of Rwandan civil society and unarmed opposition parties to be very concerned about the RPF's ulterior motives. Prior to that offensive, they were objective allies. The elections in Burundi in June 1993 raised the specter of the FRODEBU syndrome for the RPF. FRODEBU [the Front for Democracy in Burundi] was the party that won the elections in Burundi in June 1993.⁵⁰ It was seen as a majority Hutu party, which it was. It beat the former single party, which was seen as Tutsi, by a large margin. So the idea was, UPRONA [Tutsi-led Union for National Progress], the old single party during the day, FRODEBU during the night. When you are alone filling out your ballot paper, you vote for your own ethnic group, basically. This has been a constant confirmation for the RPF that there would probably be ethnic voting in Rwanda as well.

The RPF lost the mayoral elections in the demilitarized zone in northern Rwanda in September 1993. They fielded candidates, they had a campaign there, no party controlled the area militarily, and the MRND/CDR captured all thirteen seats in that area. [Other defining elements in the Rwandan drama included the splits in the political parties, the bipolarization of Rwandan politics in the second half of 1993]. I think the issue of whether the CDR was in or out of the transitional power government is less relevant than these defining elements. The question then becomes: how does a total loss of faith in the Accords [despite the expression of semantic support for the Accords] manifest itself? What does one

⁵⁰ The June 1993 elections in Burundi led to the installation of the country's first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, on July 10, 1993. The first democratically elected president in Burundi's history, Ndadaye was assassinated on October 21, 1993, by Tutsi army officers, in a failed military coup which sparked a series of reprisal massacres between Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups.

do when one has decided not to implement the Arusha Accords? But we cannot discuss that, because we simply do not have the data. Who shot down Habyarimana's plane on April 6, 1994? Whoever downed the plane had clearly decided that they were not going to implement the Arusha Peace Accords.

TOM BLANTON: Senator Bizimana.

JEAN DAMASCÈNE BIZIMANA: Thank you, I was not an actor of the Arusha process, but I worked on the documents. I consulted some documents of the intelligence services of Rwanda, the armed forces chief of staff, and the Rwandan foreign ministry. What came out from this period was that Habyarimana wanted to please the international community, but within his camp he was also preparing a struggle against the Arusha Accords and even against negotiations. I will give one simple example. At the end of 1991, Habyarimana set up a commission of military officers and asked them to answer the question: what do we have to do to beat the enemy on the political, military and diplomatic level? The document was published almost a year later, in September 1992, signed by Déogratias Nsabimana, who was at that time chief of the Rwandan armed forces. In this document, there are clearly designated seven categories of "enemy."⁵¹

First of all, the Tutsis of course are designated as enemies of Rwanda. Tutsi refugees are designated as enemies. The Ugandan Army is designated as an enemy. All the negotiations are carried out on this basis. You have already identified beforehand a category of Rwandans who are designated as enemy and whom you do not have to reach an

⁵¹ Bizimana is referencing a document drafted by a commission formed by President Habyarimana in October 1991 identifying the "enemies of Rwanda." The document was translated into English by the ICTR and is [available here](#). In [a letter dated September 21, 1992](#), Colonel Nsabimana ordered that the document be widely distributed within the Rwandan army.

understanding. The extremist fringe of the government camp exploited this document of the armed forces chief of staff. This document determined the course of the negotiations. The peace process failed because Habyarimana played a double game, very simply. I don't think we have to go and look for extremists in the RPF, that's false. There was a group of people in the government who had power and all the tools they needed to ensure the implementation of the Arusha Accords. However, from the very beginning of the negotiations, this extremist wing was already playing a double game.

TOM BLANTON: Colette Braeckman.

COLETTE BRAECKMAN: I wanted to take one step back to the assassination of President Ndadaye in October 1993. I was a journalist at the Francophone summit that preceded his return to Burundi [in Port Louis Mauritius, October 16-18, 1993]. I interviewed him there. We had a private conversation. He feared for his life, but his enemies were varied. Of course, he feared a coup of Tutsi officers but he also feared his regional neighbors. He said very clearly that he had received too many compliments and praise at the Mauritius summit. He had become a dangerous example, both for President Mobutu and for his neighbor, Habyarimana. He told me, "It is also in the interest of my neighbors to eliminate me." He was very conscious of the fact that his disappearance could bring renewed tension in the area, which is what happened. Of course we now know who carried out the coup, but it was to the advantage of many people.

I remembered often hearing amongst diplomats in Kigali concerning the Arusha Accords, *ça passe ou ça casse*, meaning the accords will be passed or everything will break down. In hindsight, I wonder if it was a bit irresponsible to say *ça passe ou ça casse* because it broke down and we saw the price that resulted. So of course *ça passe ou ça casse* is a

pretty good trade, it put pressure on President Habyarimana. But it was not very realistic to imagine that an African head of state like Habyarimana would just surrender his power without any resistance. With hindsight, this seems unrealistic to me. General Dallaire could explain to us whether the instrument that was put in his hand was well prepared. There was a peace, but the peacekeeping force was inadequate, and expectations were both maximalist and unrealistic.

A comment about the CDR. At the time, the general feeling in Kigali among those who did not belong to extremist groups was that applying diplomatic pressure to include the CDR in the transitional government – and we know who wanted to include the CDR – was like putting a bomb in a ship to prevent it from sailing in to harbor.

I also wanted to comment on the comparison that has been made between the two radios, RTLM, Radio Television Mille Collines and the RPF Radio Station, Radio Muhabura. Do we have the transcripts of these two stations? Father Guy Theunis, who was working for the Belgian embassy, transcribed the most important RTLM transmissions. Are there comparable transcripts for Radio Muhabura that would permit us to make an analysis of the comparison between the two?

TOM BLANTON: General Anyidoho.

HENRY ANYIDOHO: Thank you very much. I have been listening to comments from various speakers. I was wondering what led the UN to put the force level so low, at 2,548? I have always wondered why it was only put at 2,548, a level which we never actually attained, even before the events of April 1994. It was just too low a level to implement the Arusha agreements.

TOM BLANTON: If I read correctly the conversation between General Dallaire and Joyce Leader from August 1993, you wanted 5,000 troops. That was your minimum requirement. So what happened?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Yes, minimum viable was 4,600 but I had been instructed that this mission had to be on the cheap. The Americans had not paid up, there was no money and nobody was particularly interested in the mission to start with. If you remember, it took a long time to get people to even provide forces for it. I was told that the mission would never be accepted if I came in with around 5,000. At 2,600 we were willing to accept a level of risk based on the political information that we had at the time both in New York and from the recce mission in August 1993.

TOM BLANTON: Did you hear that message from multiple people? Or was there one person in particular?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Throughout the structure. There was no money and people were concentrating on Yugoslavia. Cambodia was closing down, Haiti was starting up. There were more UN missions than Carter's Little Liver Pills at the time. The contributing nations were not able to sustain the requirement. There was no equipment. Those were real constraints. I was also ordered to start cutting the mission as soon as we established the Broad-Based Transitional Government. So, I am deploying to bring it to the 2,600 level, and then I am to start to cut it.⁵² There was no money and, quite honestly, no interest.

⁵² See force deployment plan contained Boutros Boutros-Ghali, ["Report of the Secretary-General on Rwanda,"](#) S/26488, September 24, 1993.

TOM BLANTON: Amazing. Venuste, you have been waiting very patiently.

VENUSTE NSHIMIYIMANA: I wanted to come back on the words of Ambassador Mpungwe on the involvement of Africa in the peace process in Rwanda. Since 1992, I was involved in that peace process as part of the Neutral Military Observer Group that had been put in place by the Organization of African Unity to monitor the ceasefire signed on March 29, 1991.⁵³ I was a press attaché to the force commander, Nigerian-born General Ekundayo Opaleye. Later on, I also had the opportunity to work with General Dallaire as the information officer of the UNAMIR. It was Opaleye who was in charge of the African Union Military Observer Group (NMOG) made up of contingents from Senegal, Tunisia, Congo and Zimbabwe. What I noticed is that Africa responded very rapidly and effectively contributed to the implementation of this process. That was a job well done. People tend to notice that Africa played a big role in the peace process in Rwanda and our soldiers, including Captain Mbaye Diagne, never abandoned the people of Rwanda. The OAU funded mission set up a demilitarized zone. We also managed to do something that had never been seen before: bringing together soldiers and officers from both sides involved in the conflict for discussions to support the negotiations in Arusha. The demilitarized zone set up in 1992 by General Opaleye was the same zone monitored later by General Anyidoho, with his Ghanaian contingent.

I wanted to highlight something others have only hinted at. Why did the agreement, signed voluntarily by two parties who claimed to be in favor of peace, fail? The answer is simple: there was a lack of information. While the warring parties were busy negotiating in Arusha, very little information was given to the Rwandan population. Occasionally you could hear a report filed by a Radio Rwanda correspondent about the signing of a protocol.

⁵³ ["Rwandan Cease-fire Accord."](#) US Embassy Kinshasa cable 04337, March 22, 1991.

But this was not enough because, in the hinterland, authorities were telling the population that those coming from the north, from Mulindi [RPF headquarters] were monarchists. I remember one day, after I returned from Mulindi, some people in the capital asked me, “What do they look like?” They did not know that the RPF fighters and their families were Rwandans like us. We did not explain properly to Rwandans that these negotiations were being carried out between Rwandans seeking a lasting peace between Rwandans. It was this lack of information and education that made it possible for the CDR to emerge and recruit members in a very fertile field. The Arusha agreement collapsed at the moment of its signature. There was also a lack of good will.

When General Dallaire arrived in Rwanda late in 1993, he did not have the resources, and the Rwandan government could not help him. [Addressing Dallaire] How long did it take for you even to get an audience with the Head of State? More than three months. I remember the first press release that we published together with General Dallaire, drafted in his room at the Hotel Mille Collines. Of course, in principle, Rwandans wanted to implement the Arusha Peace Accords. There were a few politicians in Kigali who wanted it to happen. They believed in it. But the problem was that the content of the agreement was hidden from the Rwandan population. It was only after the agreement had been reached that it was explained to Rwandans.

TOM BLANTON: On this point, Monique.

MONIQUE MUJAWAMARIYA: There is something related to Venuste’s point about the lack of information. Who were these Rwandans who were preparing to come back to the country? What was being done to prepare them for coming back and to get to know those with whom they would be living? We launched a project at the time, in cooperation with Jacques

Bihozagara, financed by *Agir Ensemble*, Acting Together, a French association.⁵⁴ The idea was that our human rights association would set up a team of activists to visit refugee camps in Uganda to describe what was happening in Rwanda and what they would find on their return. This was not the country they had left in 1959. At the same time, Jacques told me that there were people in the refugee camps in Uganda and Burundi who would come to Rwanda, meet the Rwandans of the interior, tell them how they were living, and create the conditions for a peaceful cohabitation between the different groups.

Unfortunately, the Rwandan Patriotic Front used the money for other projects. The project collapsed. There was no follow up. This was unfortunate because the lack of communication between Rwandans inside and outside the country exacerbated mutual discrimination.

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Keating.

COLIN KEATING: I want to add some context to what Roméo Dallaire said about the situation that prevailed in New York at that time regarding resources. It is important to remember that, just a few months earlier, the Security Council had to take a decision on the force structure for the protection of the safe areas in the former Yugoslavia, in Bosnia. The Secretary-General had recommended a force of 12,400. He got 5,200 troops. We know that was one of the contributing factors to the fall of the Srebrenica safe area in July 1995, which also involved genocide. So, it is a situation which is pervasive across the whole set of issues which the Security Council is dealing with at the time. It is not unique to Rwanda.

⁵⁴ Jacques Bihozagara was a member of the RPF Executive Committee in charge of international relations in Europe.

The Arusha Agreements were presented to us as if they were a piece of gold. There were many other peace negotiations that were failing and unable to work. Arusha was presented to us as a success story. Not only James Gasana came to New York, but also delegations from the RPF to reinforce what had been achieved in the Arusha process. There is a responsibility not only on the part of the facilitators, the negotiators, the believers, to be responsible believers – but there is also a responsibility on those who received the presentations to do appropriate due diligence about the quality of the advice they are getting. As Ibrahim Gambari was saying, we did not do a good enough job of due diligence about the sustainability of the Arusha process.

If we had known what we now know, if we had the benefit of the report of the Special Rapporteur [Bacre Ndiaye] who had been to Rwanda in April 1993, If we had understood all that, I am sure we would have come to the conclusion that a Chapter VI mandate and 2,600 soldiers was simply not good enough for the job.⁵⁵ It is irresponsible of us to simply point the finger at those who did the negotiating in Arusha and those who facilitated those negotiations. There is always a need to accentuate the positive in these kinds of negotiations. You have to sell the product, you have to believe in it and you have to hope it will hold. Sadly, in a percentage of cases, that does not work. It is therefore incumbent on those on the other side of the fence responsible for implementation to be aware of their responsibilities.

IQBAL RIZA: Ambassador Keating has made many of the points I was about to make so I shall obviously not go over those again. Just a couple of other points. Ambassador Mpungwe,

⁵⁵ Bacre Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur for the UN Commission on Human Rights, visited Rwanda between April 8 and April 17, 1993, to investigate human rights violations and “arbitrary executions.” His [report](#) was published on August 11, 1993, but received little attention, even though it alluded to the possibility of genocide taking place in Rwanda.

you remarked that these were direct negotiations and you were simply trying to get the two sides together. From other sources we know that you made a tremendously substantive and valuable contribution. You were deeply involved. I think we should recognize that. There was a remark about the Arusha agreement: when the massacres started, was it viable? Why were we still flogging it? After General Maurice Baril and I went to Rwanda in May 1994, I sent a cable to the Secretary-General dated May 31, 1994 that said, "Arusha may not quite be dead. But, if it is to be resuscitated, a number of the painstaking details which have been negotiated may have to be revised."⁵⁶ So I must say that from our point of view that the question had arisen: was Arusha still viable?

Ambassador Keating has given us a picture of the situation that prevailed at that time in the Security Council, and in the UN. I would just like to make that a little bit wider. The UN system is extremely diffuse, and we did not even know in DPKO [the Department of Peacekeeping Operations] about Ambassador Ndiaye's report. Even General Dallaire did not know about it because there was no internet at that time. It was a report by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, a document that had been issued in Geneva which did not come to our notice. Similarly, while the UN did have an observer in Arusha [Macaire Pédanou], I do not remember receiving one report from him on what was going on. We had no idea. We do not know how active he was or how passive he was – or whether he was there all the time. Ambassador Mpungwe will confirm this.

On the question of deployment, when the Arusha Agreement reached DPKO, which had not been following the negotiations, we wondered, "How are we going to implement this?" The dream in DPKO and the UN has been for a rapid deployment force. It's been there

⁵⁶ Riza's report is included in Kofi Annan, ["Draft Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Rwanda,"](#) United Nations Outgoing Code Cable Number 1765, May 31, 1994. The exact language in paragraph 29 of the report reads, "In this context, while both sides declared that the Arusha Peace Agreement remained valid as a framework, each stated that the new circumstances would necessitate re-negotiation of certain parts of the Agreement."

for fifty years. We know we are never going to get it. If we did have a rapid deployment battalion, we could deploy it as a first step until we mustered forces from governments. But we did not have this option and we simply had to rush to find troops. General Dallaire had to rush, we in DPKO had to rush. In 1994 we had about sixteen or seventeen operations going on, with about 80,000 personnel deployed in these operations.⁵⁷ At headquarters we have fifty-five professionals to look after these, a number of them borrowed from governments on loan because DPKO had just been set up in 1992 and had been kept starved of personnel.

In 2013, I am told – I have not researched the figures – DPKO had 250 professionals, five times as many as 1994. DFS [the Department of Field Support], which has the administrative and logistics capacity that DPKO managed by itself in 1994, has another 200 or so. Fourteen, sixteen hour days were the rule in those days. It was very difficult to focus only on Rwanda while also attending to Cambodia, Somalia, Angola, Mozambique, and so on. Without a rapid deployment force, we will never be able to deploy quickly. Even in the most urgent crises, we have to depend on governments providing troops.

Rwanda was particularly difficult because it was landlocked. We could not even get functioning APCs to the mission until about July 1994 – and only half of them were functional.⁵⁸ As General Dallaire said, UNAMIR was a mission on the cheap, and it was destined to be reduced even further. First it had been reduced from what General Dallaire had recommended, around 5,000. The Security Council cut this to 2,560, or thereabouts, which was supposed to then be drawn down as the implementation process advanced. It

⁵⁷ In 1994, there were nineteen UN peacekeeping operations in progress. A complete list of UN peacekeeping operations from 1948 to 2013 can be found [here](#).

⁵⁸ For delay in sending APCs, see Johnnie Carson, "[Situation Report on APC's to UNAMIR](#)," US Embassy Kampala cable 05493, July 13, 1994.

was on the cheap and we paid the price. In reality, it was not “we” but hundreds of thousands of Rwandans who paid the price.

TOM BLANTON: Since James Gasana will not be with us this afternoon, a couple of final comments.

JAMES GASANA: I would like to comment on Ambassador Kovanda’s intervention about how much the people believed in the Arusha peace process. Did people really believe in the process? For people outside the government, from different parts of society, in particular people who had been in internal displaced peoples camps for almost four years, any kind of agreement was good. They were hoping to return to their homes. Generally speaking, the population welcomed the agreement. The problem was the dispute within the party hierarchies. At Arusha, we had a two-pronged negotiation strategy. There was a distributive, power-sharing component, which was designed to resolve the problems of the transition, and frame the longer term democratization. Then there was an integrative approach based on the second Arusha Protocol on the Rule of Law.⁵⁹ Foreign Minister Ngulinzira worked on the power-sharing questions. I worked on problems of military integration. I went to Nicaragua in May 1993 to see how they were implementing their peace agreement and how they managed the integration of the Contras. This is my report.⁶⁰ The report has got elements that I fed into the process...from the government side.⁶¹ When I

⁵⁹ The [Protocol on the Rule of Law](#), signed September 16, 1991 in Gbadolite and July 12, 1992 in Arusha, can be found in Annex III of the Arusha Peace Agreements.

⁶⁰ James Gasana, [“Rapport de mission effectuée au Nicaragua.”](#) November 13, 1992, sent to the President of Rwanda.

⁶¹ Gasana later told US officials that his delegation did not find the Nicaraguan model very relevant to the Rwandan case. See Lawrence Eagleburger, [“Rwandan Minister of Defense on Integration of Forces.”](#) US Department of State cable 372632, November 16, 1992. The Rwandan conflict involved rival ethnic groups, while the Nicaraguan conflict involved political and ideological groups.

returned from Nicaragua, I contacted the Rwanda representative of UNDP [Amadou Ly, of Senegal]. I told him that I wanted UNDP to assist us in doing what they had been doing in Nicaragua. They sent a mission that worked on a program for post-conflict reintegration.⁶² This is his report, which was even shared with all the active groups in Rwanda including the diplomatic community.⁶³ Ambassador Swinnen participated in the debriefing meeting. We were moving in a direction based on the hope that the peace agreement would be signed and implemented.

The situation worsened with the RPF's attack on of February 1993.⁶⁴ I personally believe that if the February 1993 attack had not taken place, we would not have had the genocide in 1994. We moved from 300,000 displaced people living in camps to one million, a seventh of the population. Many people were dying every day. This relates to the transformation of the tri-polar political landscape to a bi-polar one, as mentioned by Filip Reyntjens earlier. Many people in the MDR hierarchy based in the northern towns of Gitarama and Ruhengeri had family members in displaced camps. Some of the people from Ruhengeri who took part in the Arusha negotiations, including minister Ngulinzira, lost family members. So you can imagine their mental state. From that time, we started moving from three poles to two, with a shrinking of the moderate pole. To make everything worse, there was the shooting down of Habyarimana's plane. Even if Habyarimana's plane had not been shot down, there would have been no genocide without the events of February 1993.

⁶² The mission included a Uruguayan sociologist named Dr. Juan Pablo Corlazzori, who served as consultant.

⁶³ UNDP mission report, "[*Compte rendu de la reunion sur les principales conclusions de la mission d'etude pour l'appui a la demobilization des militaires.*](#)" published June 16, 1993.

⁶⁴ The RPF launched a massive attack in northern Rwanda on February 8, 1993, driving back government troops from the ceasefire line agreed in July 1992. According to Alison Des Forges, the RPF "claimed that they had to attack to halt the late January massacres of Tutsi and others. In fact, the slaughter of Tutsi had stopped more than a week before the RPF moved, suggesting that the real motive of the attack had been to force progress on the negotiations that Habyarimana had sought to stall by killing Tutsi." The RPF attack caused the civilian population to flee south "joining hundreds of thousands of persons displaced earlier in the conflict to make a total of some one million displaced, about one seventh of the population." [Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 109.]

This created the problem of one million internally displaced people plus 500,000 from Burundi after Ndadaye was killed. We had 1.5 million people wandering around the country and a huge camp in Kigali of about 80,000. That is where the militias were recruited, in the huge camp of 80,000 IDPs. We cannot ignore these one million IDPs if we want to understand why the peace process failed.⁶⁵

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Mazimhaka.

PATRICK MAZIMHAKA: James, thank you very much for not assigning responsibility. [Sarcasm] The February 1993 war followed the statements made by President Habyarimana on the negotiations in November 1992. MRND official Léon Mugesera made his famous speech of November 22, 1992 about “cutting the Tutsis and throwing them in the Nyabarongo.”⁶⁶ That was the end of 1992, in November. Right? Bagosora walked out of the negotiations in Arusha with the statement that he was going to prepare an apocalypse.

FILIP REYNTJENS: That is based on a single source, Foreign Minister Ngulinzira. Bagosora could well have said something else like, “This will lead to apocalypse,” not “I am returning to prepare an apocalypse.”

PATRICK MAZIMHAKA: Let me finish my statement. It is what we saw, what we know. We are not in a court of law.

⁶⁵ For more information on the refugee crisis before the genocide, see National Security Archive Briefing Book No. 464, [“The Rwandan Refugee Crisis: Before the Genocide.”](#) March 31, 2014 edited by Kristin Scalzo.

⁶⁶ See the [speech of Léon Mugesera](#) (English translation) at a meeting of the MRND held in Kabaya on November 22, 1992. As translated by Canadian courts, in connection with deportation proceedings against Mugesera, it included the sentence in paragraph 25 where he said, “I am telling you that your home is in Ethiopia that we will send you by the Nyabarongo [river] so you can get there quickly.”

FILIP REYNTJENS: But that's not what we know.

PATRICK MAZIMHAKA: That's what I know. I am saying what I know. I was in Arusha.

FILIP REYNTJENS: Did he tell that to you?

PATRICK MAZIMHAKA: Yes. He said that in an elevator where I was.⁶⁷

FILIP REYNTJENS: Did he tell that to you?

PATRICK MAZIMHAKA: Yes, there were two other people in the elevator. We were in the same hotel.

FILIP REYNTJENS: Okay, that's a good source.

PATRICK MAZIMHAKA: I am saying what I know. That is what this meeting is about.

TOM BLANTON: Exactly.

PATRICK MAZIMHAKA: You may have another interpretation, but those are statements he made to me. Fine. Those statements have been made by Habyarimana, Mugesera and

⁶⁷ Mazimhaka has consistently maintained that he heard Bagosora make the "apocalypse" comment in December 1992, while in Arusha. See, for example, Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, page 40. For ICTR examination of this incident, see the [court's ruling in the Bagosora case](#), paragraphs 217-222. The ICTR concluded that the Prosecutor [had not proven "beyond reasonable doubt"](#) that Bagosora made the so-called "apocalypse" statement during the Arusha negotiations.

Bagosora. What happened then in January 1993? We have it here [references chronology prepared by conference organizers]: massacre of Tutsis in Ruhengeri, Gisenyi, and Kibuye. In January. What did you think would happen? That was a gross violation of the July 1992 ceasefire agreement. We finished all these protocols, and we saw it as a total rejection of the Arusha Agreement. There was violence against the Tutsis, again. The RPF could not pretend to have an agreement when the government makes these statements to make it unpopular among the population and then goes and massacres people in the north. You were Minister of Defense, James, so you know that.

[Addresses Gasana]. You say, that brought about the swelling of the CDR. I put to you the possibility that all these things contributed. For us, there was a deliberate effort to empty the MRND of extremists and put them in the CDR, which would remain outside the agreement. It was the same when we negotiated military integration. Officers were moved from the Army to the Gendarmerie. But we were not fooled.

I am glad Colette Braeckman talked about Ndadaye's fears as a man in power, which he had attained through the unfamiliar method of democratization. He could have been afraid of other things. I also believe Habyarimana should have been afraid of people on his own side, because he was doing things that were not generally accepted. But you can't fool people all the time. They could see that he was going to sneak out of their camp and return to government as president again. They feared they were going to be abandoned.

Disinformation has been a tool in Rwandan politics used on the population since the fifties. You cannot imagine Rwandans listening to Radio Muhabura in Kinyarwanda, and asking "How do those people look like?" On the other hand, and this was a sign of commitment of the RPF, every agreement we signed was faxed to all the branches of our movement, from Canada to New Zealand. We sought views on the next stage of the peace

process. We were committed. We shared information about Arusha with all the members of the RPF, everywhere. In Kigali, they were giving disinformation to the people.

TOM BLANTON: Thank you for that final intervention which put some primary evidence on the table. We will re-gather here at 2:00 and look specifically at the October 1993 to April 1994 period.

Session 2 – “The Failed Peace: October 1993 – April 1994”

TOM BLANTON: Good afternoon. Welcome back. We are off to a terrific start. The end of the morning session got very lively. We have a special opportunity right now to continue some of that primary source evidence that we started to get in this morning’s session because we have former Élysée Secretary-General and close Mitterrand advisor Hubert Védrine with us. What we thought we would do with this session is to ask Minister Védrine to cover the French vision for Rwanda from 1990 through the hand off to the United Nations in October 1993. I would refer you to a wonderful document in our briefing book, notes of a Cabinet of Ministers meeting taken by Minister Védrine where President Mitterrand says, “We must get out [of Rwanda], but by going through the United Nations.”⁶⁸ There is a long term strategy taking place in France. I would like to ask him to briefly take us through the change in strategy and bring us up to the Arusha Accords in 1993. This will set us up for examining the challenges of implementation which will be the subject of this afternoon’s session. Minister Védrine.

HUBERT VÉDRINE: Thank you. I wanted to say first of all that I find this meeting remarkable because it is necessary to speak about this terrible drama in a historical, scientific, and rational manner. I should remind you that at the time I was with President Mitterrand first as his spokesman, and then, from May 1991, as Secretary-General of the Élysée. An important change took place during this period in internal French politics. Until March 1993, we had a Socialist government and a Socialist president. After that date, we had a so-called “cohabitation” arrangement since the right-wing opposition won the elections. We had a Balladur government with Alain Juppé as Foreign Minister.

⁶⁸ See Hubert Védrine, [“Restricted Council: Wednesday, March 3, 1993 \(Notes taken by Hubert Védrine\).”](#) March 3, 1993 (English version). The original version in French can be found [here](#).

What I can contribute is the point of view from the Élysée, the President of the Republic, which was a little different before and after “cohabitation.” So, I just want you to keep this in mind that what I say refers especially to President Mitterrand. I want to remind you of his speech at La Baule in June 1990, which marked an important stage in French policy towards Africa.⁶⁹ This was a speech in which he said, “We are not going to abandon anyone, but we are going to give more assistance to those who are moving toward democracy.”

I turn now to October 1990 and the first attack of the RPF, supported by the Ugandan army. In meetings, when he mentioned this incident, President Mitterrand would often talk about “the Ugandans.” His reaction was immediate. He said, “We have to stop this.” I heard him say this on several occasions, including the day of the attack itself, which was the period before the Gulf War involving Iraq and Kuwait.⁷⁰ I also heard him explain his rationale, which was never based on ethnic reasons. Later we read that there was a kind of struggle for influence between Anglophones and Francophones. It is probably true, but I never had the impression that this played a role in the position adopted by Mitterrand. On the other hand, I did hear him talk frequently about France’s commitment to stability and security in Africa, from Senegal to Djibouti. He had already shown this attitude in Chad, forcing the departure of the Libyans in 1985. He took the same position in regard to Iraq and Kuwait. That was a different case [from Rwanda], of course, but it seemed to me that was his principled position.

⁶⁹ [Speech of French President François Mitterrand](#) at the Francophone summit in La Baule, June 20, 1990 (English translation). The original version of the speech, in French, can be found [here](#).

⁷⁰ The RPF launched an attack on Rwanda from Uganda on October 1, 1990. The Gulf War began on February 24, 1991, in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

Remember that this was a man who had acquired his political experience under the Fourth Republic. He had been Minister of Overseas French territories.⁷¹ Among the French politicians, he was one of those who had a long and fairly detailed knowledge of African dramas. He knew about the massacres that had occurred when Rwanda received independence from Belgium. I heard François Mitterrand say very early, in 1990-1991, that the situation in Rwanda was very dangerous and could only lead to a civil war and massacres. I am not saying that he anticipated a genocide in the form that it eventually took, nobody imagined that. But from the very beginning, he had the idea that this was a very dangerous situation which could only lead to massacres. This was one of the motivations for the preventive intervention, known as Operation Noroit.⁷² I was not a direct actor in these events, but I witnessed what was happening as the President's spokesman. This was two sides of one policy, not two different policies. It was because of its military engagement that France hoped to have the means to intervene and put pressure on the Rwandan government. We realized that there were considerable risks involved, but we felt we were involved in a race with the forces leading to confrontation.

Concerning the Arusha Accords, there are more direct witnesses than me. We had a change of government in France in March 1993, with Balladur [becoming Prime Minister] and Alain Juppé [becoming Foreign Minister]. They agreed with President Mitterrand on the general goal in Rwanda: military engagement to deter attacks combined with very strong political pressure (with other governments) to reach a political compromise. Alain Juppé was very committed to this policy...Even before the Accords are announced on August 4,

⁷¹ Mitterrand was Minister of Overseas French territories (*Ministre de L'Outre-Mer*) from July 1950 to August 1951.

⁷² Operation Noroit was launched on October 4, 1990 with the ostensible aim of protecting and evacuating French citizens. In addition to sending two companies of French troops (around 300 soldiers) to Kigali, France also deployed thirty military advisors in northern Rwanda in March 1991 to support the Rwandan army.

President Mitterrand begins to get worried, as you can see from one of the documents in your dossier. In March 1993, he begins to think about how France is going to disengage itself.⁷³ It is this policy that leads, at the end of 1993, to the withdrawal of French troops.⁷⁴

To sum up, what I experienced was the understanding in 1990 that the attack by the RPF from Rwanda was going to create a terrible drama in Rwanda, that France had to do something to stop this, but we also needed a political solution. Perhaps we should have realized that Arusha was not going to work out. We should have realized that there were strong forces on the Hutu side, perhaps including the President himself, who did not want to share power. We should have had a better appreciation of Kagame's determination to obtain complete power at whatever cost. I cannot speak for people in the ministries or intelligence services, but there could have been an underestimation of these two extremes: the Kagame extreme and the extremist Hutus that you have talked about this morning. The Arusha agreements were a relief for France. We felt that we had fulfilled our mission, reached our goals. There was a political agreement. We would support the agreement with political and diplomatic means but there was no longer a need for an important military presence.

As for what happened later, France had the feeling that it was the country that best understood the enormous risks represented by the RPF attack of 1990, and the country that invested the most in the Arusha Accords. You can criticize this agreement, it was certainly fragile, but it was an agreement. [After the agreement collapsed and the genocide began], France was the only country that resigned itself to intervening in Rwanda...

⁷³ Notes by Hubert Védrine, "[Restricted Council, Wednesday, March 3rd, 1993.](#)" (English translation). Védrine quotes Mitterrand as saying, "We must get out, but by going through the United Nations. We cannot pull back like this." The original version in French can be found [here](#).

⁷⁴ French troops were withdrawn from Rwanda in December 1993 following the arrival of UNAMIR, but about thirty military advisors remained behind, according to the [1998 French parliamentary inquiry](#).

President Mitterrand came into my office on April 6, 1994, the day the plane was shot down. I was Secretary-General of the Élysée at this point. He said, "Have you heard?" I said, "Not yet." So, he brought me up to date. He told me, "It is terrible. They are going to massacre each other. Everything we have done since 1990 has been destroyed."

TOM BLANTON: Monsieur de La Sabliere.

JEAN-MARC ROCHEREAU DE LA SABLIERE: Between June 1992 and May 1996, I was Director of African Affairs at the French Foreign Ministry. I always thought that the Arusha Accords had great credibility. Mr. Riza has mentioned all the crises breaking out in Africa. There were many conflicts, many serious crisis...We were very pleased with the Arusha agreements, which was saw as the proper and only solution...I remember a letter written by the President of the RPF to President Mitterrand to thank him. Perhaps Habyarimana was not delighted, but he accepted the agreement. The perception at the time was that both parties were satisfied. The July 1993 election of Melchoir Ndadaye as President of Burundi showed that Habyarimana would probably win elections planned for Rwanda, so he was reassured.

The real question is why Arusha did not receive enough support? Did the RPF not believe in it, or at what point did they cease to believe in it? And then there is the question that was posed this morning: what was the reason for the splits within the Hutu opposition political parties? I have always thought that two elements were important. Habyarimana wanted to have a blocking majority in the Broad-Based Transitional Government.⁷⁵ On the

⁷⁵ [Article 21](#) of the Protocol of Agreement on Power-Sharing (Annex IV of the Arusha Peace Agreements) specified that decisions of the BBTG could be adopted with a two-thirds majority. Habyarimana controlled [five of the twenty-one positions in the transitional government](#), which were reserved for his MRND party. In order to veto government decisions, he therefore needed the support of at least three ministers nominated by other political parties.

other hand, many of these parties were afraid of the RPF, so that was another cause of the split.

There has been much criticism of the United Nations. It is true that one can raise a lot of questions about UNAMIR, with hindsight. But we must remember that the United Nations did not want to be involved in Rwanda at the beginning. They went there reluctantly. I know this because I was sent to New York in March 1993, following the attack of the RPF, to try to convince the UN to get involved. After that, we had the Somali affair. The Organization of African Unity did not have the means to provide the Neutral International Force envisaged by the Arusha Accords. Finally, as a result of discussion between UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and OAU Secretary-General Salim Salim, it became clear that only the UN could play this role. The UN ended up going because both parties asked for it...

The United Nations must be involved in the discussion but the region should also be fully involved. Tanzania was involved in Arusha, of course, but greater regional involvement would be very useful.

TOM BLANTON: André Guichaoua.

ANDRÉ GUICHAOUA: I have the feeling that we have overlooked an important period, 1990-1992, which helps explain the despair of the Rwandan population and the willingness to listen to extremists, to rumors. As a researcher, I undertook many agrarian studies during more than twenty years on the hills with the local inhabitants. What I saw in Burundi and in eastern Congo after 1988 and 1989 was a period of extraordinary hope and social and political mobilization to put an end to corrupt regimes (as in the Congo) or authoritarian regimes (as in Burundi which had experienced twenty-five years of military rule). In both

Burundi and Rwanda, I witnessed quite exceptional mobilizations of civil society and political parties, particularly after 1990, along with promises for a new constitution and recognition of multiple political parties.

It is a pity we do not have someone from Germany here as the Germans worked very hard on the election process. The most important meeting preparing for elections took place in March 1992, at which point the MDR and the other so-called “democratic” parties were unable to agree on a type of election that would enable them to retain their representation in government. These parties were built around individual personalities, without a national presence. From that moment on, they decided not to have elections. Beginning in April 1992, they preferred to negotiate the establishment of a multi-party government.⁷⁶ For ordinary people, this was the first element of political despair. During the months that followed, everybody divided up the ministries, the state enterprises. There was no popular control. The population understood that they were not dealing with democrats, but with people from the former one-party system, who were establishing similar parties under different names. None of this reflected the desires or aspirations of ordinary people.

Various Machiavellian maneuvers took place. One involved the MDR party, which thought it could reinforce its political position if it had an armed wing...For the MDR, everything was very simple. They knew very well that, if they had an armed wing like the RPF, no one would be able to prevent them from gaining national representation during the elections. Then something very surprising happened. On June 4 or 5, 1992, the RPF began a military offensive. This moment marked the start of real popular despair. Not only did they not have democracy, they had a war. It is necessary to understand the roots of this popular despair, because it made people susceptible to propaganda and extremist policies.

⁷⁶ Robert Flaten, [“The New Government and Peace Negotiations.”](#) US Embassy Kigali cable 01400, April 3, 1992.

One more point: let us not get into lectures based on hindsight. None of us who were in Rwanda at the time could have predicted what was about to happen or the scale of the killing.

MICHAEL DOBBS: I think we should deal with France, and French policy, first because we have the opportunity of having Mr. Védrine here. Let us think about French policy before we move on to other questions.

TOM BLANTON: We have the Rwandan Ambassador to Paris at the time, who can speak on this subject.

JEAN-MARIE VIANNEY NDAGIJIMANA: I arrived in Paris as Rwandan Ambassador in October 1990. Soon after I arrived, I met with President Mitterrand in order to present my credentials. The RPF had been pushed back to Uganda at the beginning of November. President Mitterrand spent five minutes, a long time for a head of state, asking me to transmit the following message to his Rwandan counterpart, President Habyarimana: "It is true that the Rwandan Army has just won a victory on the ground, but it is not a definitive victory. Perhaps we have given you the means to push back your enemies [the RPF], but you must remember that they may return and we may not always be there to assist you." He asked me to inform Habyarimana that he had to negotiate with his political and military adversaries. It is true that France continued to help Rwanda militarily, but Belgium and Zaire also provided assistance initially. What was especially important with regard to France was the diplomatic support.

However, this support was always conditional. President Habyarimana used to come to Paris two or three times a year to request military assistance. Every time, President

Mitterrand would say to him, "Don't forget that the objective is peace and coexistence between Rwandans." I attended several of these meetings, and heard President Mitterrand saying, "No, we can't give you that," [in response to Habyarimana's requests]. This also happened in October 1993, during the last working visit by President Habyarimana to Paris. He met Mitterrand, Foreign Minister Alain Juppé, Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, and others. At a certain point he asked for military weapons. French officials, including President Mitterrand, told him: "Mr. President, the arms you want could be used offensively. Why do you need offensive weapons in October 1993 when two months ago you signed a peace agreement with the RPF?" The answer was a definitive "no." If you know the history of this period, you know that Rwanda had to go and buy these weapons elsewhere, from east European countries like Poland. It is possible that Rwanda also bought weapons in France after the signing of the Arusha Accords in August 1993, but the French government did not give them any weapons to make war with the RPF.

The main assistance that the French gave Rwanda was diplomatic assistance during the peace negotiations. The decision to begin talks in Tanzania, as opposed to Zaire, was taken in Paris. I was there with RPF negotiator Patrick Mazimhaka, during the three sessions of secret negotiations in Paris, both in 1991, and on two other occasions in 1992. Mazimhaka was sitting opposite us. I was with the government delegation. It took us hours, even days, to decide the agenda. The RPF negotiators said that they were a rebel movement and did not have the financial resources to keep on going to Paris. So we had a discussion and said, "Why do we not meet in Africa?" The closest country for both us and the RPF, and probably the most neutral country, was Tanzania. This was a decision taken thanks to French mediation. We spent days in Paris beginning these negotiations. We must remember that diplomatic negotiations were held in Paris. It was not just weapons and war. I just wanted to say that we benefited from French support, but it was relative and very

conditional. One of my Rwandan colleagues said that if France had not supported us, perhaps we would have won the war.

TOM BLANTON: Let me ask Patrick to come in and then maybe Pru Bushnell. Did you have your hand up? And then go back for a response from Minister Védrine, maybe Filip too. But Ambassador Mazimhaka, your view of French policy in this period?

PATRICK MAZIMHAKA: From the RPF side, what we could see is support for the government of Rwanda. Military support, in particular, which was most important when the war started in October 1990. There was definitely an increased French military presence at that time. There was also a bit of increase in the Belgian presence in the military sector which I think ended sometime in November 1990. But France continued to increase its personnel. We engaged in combat, with them supporting the Rwandan Army (although they never came to the front line themselves). I do not dispute that Mitterrand was telling Habyarimana to negotiate. That is something that we also noted, as Ambassador Ndagijimana said. We went to Paris many times and were received by French government officials, both in the Foreign Affairs and in the Élysée. But what we came away with all the time was, "You have to negotiate, you have to stop the war."

But then there were incidents. I did not want to comment on that but since you asked me, we had an incident that my President [Paul Kagame] has referred to several times. At the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the senior official in charge of African Affairs, Paul Dijou, told Kagame, "You have to stop the war." This was in 1992. Dijou said, "If you don't stop the war, by the time you win the war, all your people will be dead."⁷⁷ Now,

⁷⁷ See ["Rwanda Governments' Reaction to Judge Brugeire's Indictment Saga,"](#) 39, for remark attributed to Paul Dijou by Paul Kagame.

that was maybe a way of encouraging us to negotiate. Maybe. But it was certainly not nicely put.

The attitude that I was getting from French services was the constant definition of the RPF as representing a minority, the Tutsi minority, with no quality of being Rwandan. That is something really hurtful. It reflected the policy of the Gregoire Kayibanda regime which taught our children, including my brother here [reference to Charles Murigande], who is younger than me, that the Tutsi were foreigners who occupied Rwanda and dominated and enslaved the native population of Hutu.⁷⁸ Lessons in school, plus the practice of discrimination, made the people of Rwanda think that the Tutsis were some foreign and strange people who had left Rwanda after the social revolution of 1959 and wanted to come back. These attitudes were planted in our population. Unfortunately, the foreign partners of Rwanda also absorbed some of that. It was the current language in politics in Rwanda, the current practice of politics in Rwanda. Nobody found that strange at all.

So that increased French military support for the Habyarimana regime was there. There was also diplomacy. We spent so many meetings in Paris at the invitation of the French government. They were saying, "Negotiate at the end, don't insist on a military victory." And I said, "We're not insisting on a military victory." Then they would ask the question, "Why are you talking about democracy when you can't even win elections in Rwanda? You are a minority." So yes, in diplomacy, they did help, even in the Arusha negotiations but there was always the bias towards the government of Rwanda and President Habyarimana in particular.

TOM BLANTON: Thank you. Prudence Bushnell.

⁷⁸ Gregoire Kayibanda was the first elected President of Rwanda from 1962 to 1973, when he was overthrown by his defense minister, Maj. Gen. Habyarimana.

PRUDENCE BUSHNELL: Thank you, I was in the Bureau of African Affairs of the US Department of State. It was very difficult for us in personal conversations to separate the topic of French policy from the topic of the interests of the Mitterrand family in Africa and interpersonal relationships between the President and the Habyarimanas. I would ask that our French friends address that. What impact did interpersonal relationships, both enmities and amities, have on your policy? Thank you.

TOM BLANTON: I don't see them leaping to address that. But Filip, would you like to raise a question and then I will come back to Mr. Védrine.

FILIP REYNTJENS: A very concrete question. We have the opportunity with Védrine and de La Sabliere here to ask questions that we have no answers for, so this covers the whole period. My question is a very precise one about the end of our reference period (October 1993 – April 1994), three or four days into the genocide.

My question is this: France after April 9, and Belgium after April 10, had their troops on the ground for what was called "a humanitarian operation," the evacuation of foreigners. These were very good troops, paratroopers.⁷⁹ Neither contingent was restricted by a UN mandate. They were operating under their national flags. My specific question to both of you is: was there ever any consideration given to these two countries working together at any point, let us say between April 10-12, to use these troops to stop the genocide? In

⁷⁹ According to the [French parliamentary report](#), Operation Amaryllis included three Parachute Infantry tank companies and a "specialized detachment for security transfers between collection points and the airport." According to "[Situation Report No. 21](#)," US Department of State Operations Center, April 10, 1994, the "French have 400 troops at the Kigali airport and are landing 120 more. The Belgians are sending 7-8 C-130s from Nairobi to Kigali." "[Situation Report No. 24](#)," US Department of State Operations Center, April 10, 1994, noted that "240 Belgian troops have secured Kigali airport with French assistance."

addition to the Belgian and French troops, there was also an Italian company and 600 or so US Marines on standby in Bujumbura.⁸⁰ Did you at any point imagine an intervention outside of the UN mandate but authorized by the Convention for the Prevention of Genocide? In fact, authorization is not necessary. It is necessary to act. Did you at any point think of pulling together all these troops in order to put an end to the genocide by neutralizing the transitional institutions in Kigali, and taking advantage of the offers of cooperation, for example the declaration by moderate Hutu army officers of April 12?⁸¹ So that's my question. Did you at any point think of doing this and if you didn't think about it, why not?

TOM BLANTON: General Dallaire and Ambassador Swinnen. General Dallaire and then we'll come back to Minister Védrine.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: The first question, I never understood who was leading the French intervention in Rwanda. We had the office of the President [Mitterrand] which issued various statements. Then we had visits by the former French health minister and unofficial government envoy, Bernard Kouchner. Then there was an ambassador [Jean-Michel Marlaud], who had his own position on what was happening. For instance, when I did my reconnaissance mission in August 1993, he appreciated the need for a significant UN force of 4,000-5,000 peacekeepers to be deployed, even though he had only recently arrived in

⁸⁰ According to ["Situation Report No.12,"](#) US Department of State Operations Center, April 9, 1994, "90 Marines have landed in Bujumbura, and 190 more will land at 1500Z, along with three helicopters." See also Aurelea Brazeal, ["Rwanda Evacuation: 11 April, 1800,"](#) US Embassy Nairobi cable 06462, April 11, 1994, reporting Italian flights evacuating foreign citizens out of Rwanda.

⁸¹ ["Communiqué issued by the Command of the Forces Armées Rwandaises,"](#) April 12, 1994, signed by ten field officers of the *Forces Armées Rwandaises* (Rwandan armed forces).

Kigali.⁸² And then there were the French soldiers, defense ministry officials, who were saying, “No, we just need about 500 military observers and everything will be fine.” And of course we know that France had officers who were completely integrated into the headquarters of the Rwandan army and Gendarmerie. So I would like to ask, what was the real position of France in all of this?

I never understood why [switches from French to English] Kouchner appeared in my headquarters on June 17 to say that he was not offering me Operation Turquoise, he wanted me to go under the command of Turquoise. We actually ended up with a UN authorized Chapter VII mission with a representation of Franco-African countries that undermined, for the second time, my own mission. I had to get rid of all the Franco-Africans because they were suspected of cooperating with the enemy by the RPF. I found myself between a belligerent [the RPF] and a Chapter VII mission [Operation Turquoise], while I am a Chapter VI mission. I am supposed to be the “blue beret” between these two characters on the ground.

[Switches back to French] My last question is this: I directly asked the commanders of the Belgian and French evacuation operations if they would modify their orders to let me establish a force that would stop the massacres of threatened people, particularly in Kigali. The answer was a categorical “No.” Quite the contrary, far from cooperating, they even stole my vehicles, which put me in a difficult position because we were accused of focusing our attention on evacuating Westerners. So my main question is: who was running the show in France?

TOM BLANTON: Mr. Védrine?

⁸² Marlaud took over as French ambassador to Kigali in May 1993, following the retirement of George Martres.

HUBERT VÉDRINE: I can answer some of these points. First, the intervention of the former Rwandan Ambassador in Paris is very pertinent. He reminded us that French support for Rwanda after 1990 was conditional. This is an important point, which relates to both military and diplomatic support. This was not blind support, it was always conditional support. We intervened to stop a downward spiral that could only lead to civil war, and put pressure on the Rwandan government for a political solution. If you look at all the contacts between 1990 and 1993, at the level of the President, Ministers, special envoys, Africa directors, there was always this same balance. We supported you [the Rwandans], with the goal of achieving a compromise. On the government side, they kept on telling us that they represented the immense majority, so why should there be a political compromise with a small minority? You can discuss the position of France, but our support for the Habyarimana government was always conditional.

Second, there have been allusions to the relations between the families. It is true that President Mitterrand's son, Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, worked in the "African cell" of the Presidency.⁸³ From an African point of view, this may have seemed important, but from the point of view of the Élysée, it always played a minor, limited role. The relationship between the Mitterrand and Habyarimana families was no closer than with any other African leader. There was a warm, friendly relationship between French leaders and African leaders since the end of the colonial era. France was one of the few countries that did not simply leave its former colonies, but maintained links, often at the request of the Africans themselves. If there had been a special relationship [with Habyarimana], the result was rather cruel, because the goal of French policy was to twist the arm of Habyarimana, and

⁸³ Jean-Christophe Mitterrand was advisor for African affairs to President Mitterrand from 1986 to 1992. He was indicted by French magistrates in 1993 for complicity in an illegal arms deal.

oblige him to share power, which was something he did not want to do. Why share power with a miniscule minority that has attacked you, with the support of the army of a neighboring country? I do not think you can explain French policy to Rwanda through the angle of family relations.

I understand why people wonder about the decision of Mitterrand in 1990 [to help Habyarimana resist the RPF invasion]. If you were cynical, you could say that if President Mitterrand had believed that it was unimportant who governed Rwanda, we would not be meeting here today. But he adopted a different attitude, which had nothing to do with linguistic conflicts [Francophone Africa versus Anglophone Africa], but political stability.

On the question of French troops remaining in Rwanda, I remind you that French forces had been withdrawn at the end of 1993.⁸⁴ There were some units who were still there (twenty-four military advisors in December 1993), but nobody thought of pooling all these available forces, even outside of a UN mandate, to do something in a unilateral fashion. With hindsight, perhaps we can say that this was a huge pity. Since there were troops in place, they certainly could have acted. But it seems to me that nobody requested this, and nobody envisaged it at the time. The event happened on April 6. We introduced an arms embargo on April 8. Operation Amaryllis, which was a classical evacuation operation, ran from April 8 to 14.⁸⁵ It is a very good question. I do not know why it was not requested, why it was not done, whether or not it was possible. This is something we could talk about.

To reply to General Dallaire, who decided what in relation to Rwanda? One could ask that question today about many things, who decided what in Afghanistan, for example?

⁸⁴ French troops were withdrawn from Rwanda in December 1993 following the arrival of UNAMIR, but about thirty military advisors remained behind, according to the [1998 French parliamentary inquiry](#).

⁸⁵ A total of 600 French citizens and 800 foreigners were evacuated from Rwanda under Operation Amaryllis, which was made up of several French military units, totaling 610 troops in all. The foreigners included 400 Rwandans, including several members of the Habyarimana family and government.

This is not unique to this situation. You also mentioned Bernard Kouchner, but since the Right was in power at the time, he did not have any official position.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Kouchner came as a representative of your President.

HUBERT VÉDRINE: Yes, but the government was headed by Balladur and Juppé [two right-wing politicians]. Perhaps Kouchner invented a mission for himself, I don't know.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: In that case, I would have kicked him out of my office.

HUBERT VÉDRINE: He certainly came with good intentions.

AHMEDOU OULD ABDALLAH: If I recall, he was a member of the European Parliament. He also came to see me at that time.⁸⁶

HUBERT VÉDRINE: In any case, you have to distinguish between the periods before and after March 1993. Before you had President Mitterrand with his advisors in the Élysée, his African cell, and you had the [Socialist] government of Pierre Bérégovoy. Afterwards you had the [right-wing] government of Edouard Balladur, with Alain Juppé in foreign relations and Michel Roussin at the Ministry of Cooperation and François Léotard as Minister of Defense. And then of course the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces played an important role, less under the control of the Élysée, but a French division of power. You have a similar situation in other countries.

⁸⁶ Bernard Kouchner was a member of the European Parliament's Sub-Committee on Human Rights between July 1994 and January 1997.

TOM BLANTON: Mr. Ndiaye. Then Mr. Kagamé.

BACRE NDIAYE: Thank you very much. I have a question about France's role for Minister Védrine. If French aid to Rwanda was conditional, should this not have led to the refusal to sell certain offensive weapons the moment a peace agreement was signed? This was not only a question of a confrontation between two armies. We know that the Rwandan army, or in any case part of the Rwandan army, was busy recruiting and training and arming militias, in particular the Interahamwe militias. The question I ask myself is this: were the French informed? And what could have been done to prevent the militia groups from disrupting the peace accords and later using their training and the weapons they acquired to perpetrate genocide?

TOM BLANTON: Mr. Kagamé?

FAUSTIN KAGAMÉ: Thank you for giving me the floor. It seems to me that the French parliamentary commission analyzed the role of France in Rwanda differently to Minister Védrine. In the concluding part of its report, the French parliamentary commission chaired by Paul Quilès wrote: "France could have questioned its policy, which consisted of encouraging the Habyarimana regime to respect human rights, which it did not do, and the violations continued." Given the slow progress on the path of democratization, France could have wondered about the consistency of its policy to encourage President Habyarimana to democratize a regime that practiced repeated violations of human rights, "while assuring our unwavering military and diplomatic support."

Someone mentioned the fear that the RPF inspired in the Rwandan population. It must be said that the visit by French cooperation minister Marcel Debarge made in Kigali on February 28, 1993, was a big contribution to that “fear” which turned to hatred, ethnic polarization and crime. He had a meeting with all of the political parties that were part of the civilian opposition, and told them that they would have to abandon the Arusha option, that they should bet on their Hutu ethnic identity instead of betting on the political parties. In essence what he told them was: “Stop your political divisions, and unite as ethnic Hutu. Otherwise the RPF will take power.”⁸⁷

TOM BLANTON: All the documents and exhibits from the French parliamentary investigation are part of our database...but let me ask Linda who has waited patiently.

LINDA MELVERN: Good afternoon. The Quilès report, the French parliamentary inquiry, confirmed that the Rwandan Army had been a military protégé of France.⁸⁸ Even after the bulk of the French troops left in 1993 to make way for UNAMIR, senior French officers remained embedded in the elite Army units: the Paracommandos, the Presidential Guard, the Reconnaissance Battalion [an elite army unit], and the Gendarmerie. It is somewhat curious that three of these French officers have given testimony in defense of genocidaires at the ICTR. I am rather curious about that. I am sure, Monsieur Védrine that you are aware of the enormous amount of information that has been produced by French journalists. I want to particularly put to you the findings of Patrick de Saint-Exupéry who said that

⁸⁷ In a later clarification of his remarks, Kagamé said that the Debarge visit of February 1993 marked the beginning of the division of the Rwandan political opposition into “Hutu Power” and “moderate” factions. He said that the Hutu Power faction became the leading force perpetrating the genocide, which also targeted Hutu moderates.

⁸⁸ The [“Quilès Report”](#) refers to a French parliamentary inquiry published on December 15, 1998, under the leadership of Paul Quilès.

France provided weapons before, during and after the genocide. “We poured petrol on an immense fire,” he said. He described how a secret army had been created for Rwanda by French officers who worked directly with what Saint-Exupéry called a *Legion Présidentielle*. These elite operatives were answerable only to Mitterrand. They created a secret command for the Rwandan Army and built within it a psychological warfare capability, with operatives trained in the manipulation of public opinion. Monsieur Védrine, was this what President Sarkozy was talking about when he went to Rwanda in 2010 and admitted that mistakes had been made?⁸⁹ I wonder if you could perhaps enlarge on what Sarkozy meant at that time. Thank you.

TOM BLANTON: Monsieur de La Sabliere.

JEAN-MARC ROCHEREAU DE LA SABLIERE: Let me quickly respond to two or three points. Concerning the question about what should have been done the day after the assassination of Habyarimana, I have no memory of discussion of other missions other than the mission of evacuating French citizens and the citizens of allied countries. We can regret this but this was the general feeling. The Americans took their citizens out via Burundi. Everybody left at that point. Of course, today you can criticize this action but during that period there was a sense that the expatriates living in Rwanda were at risk. I remind you that the UN debated three options. [1] The option of reinforcing UNAMIR, which would have been difficult as neither the Belgians nor the Bangladeshis, who had 1,000 troops, would have accepted. [2] Leaving completely, which was not the French option but the option of other Western countries. [3] Finally, keeping 270 troops in place.

⁸⁹ During a February 2010 visit to Rwanda, French President Nicolas Sarkozy [gave a speech](#) called on “the international community, including France, to reflect on the mistakes that stopped it from preventing and halting this abominable crime.” He stopped short of apologizing for French actions.

Everyone knew that massacres could take place. I went to New York in March 1993, after the RPF attack, to explain that there were risks of massacres, as there always were in this region. It was a fear we lived with. But I honestly do not think that anyone thought, at that moment, that there could have been a plan for a genocide of this scale. Nobody imagined that.

A second question, about French support for Habyarimana. I accompanied a representative of Mitterrand to visit President Habyarimana and Ugandan President Museveni when the RPF attacked in February 1993. People say that French officials did this or that, but I can tell you that President Habyarimana was clearly informed that the support of France would remain an indirect support. There was a lot of support, but it remained indirect. This was said very clearly.

A third point, about arms supplies. Look at the French parliamentary report. There were no French arms exports to Rwanda after Arusha. No new authorization was issued. All the details of export authorizations are provided in the report.⁹⁰ The arms exports diminished very rapidly, then they became non-lethal. All this is strictly controlled in France. Besides, there was a French arms embargo from April 8, which was adopted before the United Nations embargo.⁹¹

I will let Hubert Védrine discuss the errors. I wrote a book and mentioned various errors, but I cannot accept the accusation that there was a moral failing.⁹² Yes, mistakes were made. For example I think we (and me, as director of African affairs at the Quai d'Orsay) under-estimated the determination of the RPF to secure a total victory. I also think

⁹⁰ See pages 82-84 of the [French parliamentary inquiry](#), which details the supply of arms to Rwanda by France.

⁹¹ According to de La Sabliere, the French *Secrétariat General de la Défense Nationale* cancelled authorization for earlier arms sales to Rwanda from April 8, 1994, more than a month before the arms embargo introduced by UN Security Council Resolution 918 on May 17, 1994.

⁹² Jean-Marc Rochereau de La Sabliere, *Dans les Couloirs du Monde*, Paris, 2013.

that our intelligence services did not provide sufficient intelligence about Hutu extremists, and the links between these people and the Habyarimana entourage. I think a serious collective error was made during the week after the assassination. In fact, different types of errors were committed, and they were not exclusively French errors. They were collective errors.⁹³

TOM BLANTON: Before we get to Minister Védrine, Ambassador Swinnen has been waiting.

JOHAN SWINNEN: We should also talk about the actions of the European Union. Did the European Union fail in this case? Did we, Belgians and French, fall into the trap of the caricature that extremists made of Belgian and French diplomacy: to put it very crudely, the Belgians were considered as pro-Tutsis and the French pro-Hutus. President Mitterrand was the hero of some Hutus because he “did not abandon Rwanda.” As for the Belgians, we were reproached for not supporting the threatened president in his efforts at democratization and reconciliation, instead of listening to all the criticisms about him. My question is: would a more united – and strongly and explicitly defended – position of Paris and Brussels have had a positive impact on moderation and a deterrent effect on radicalization? Let us, however, not only focus on the Europeans. Were there ways for the international community to contribute more effectively to peace and stability? Perhaps I am being provocative but I think we should think about these questions.

⁹³ Ambassador de La Sabliere noted after the conference that the “collective departure of the international community [from Rwanda] was a great mistake. It was at the moment when the international community left in a hurry, fleeing the chaos, without much attempt to understand what was happening, that the genocide was organized.”

HUBERT VÉDRINE: I will try to answer. There was a question about arming the militias...I would say that during this period, 1990-1993, France was engaged in a race with the murderous and diabolic process set in motion by the RPF attack of 1990 which led to a hardening of positions, reactions, and so on. France attempted to win this race through a double policy of military containment and political pressure. We knew the risk was very great. This explains the commitment of France. No one imagined the genocide as it finally took place. It was too large, too terrible. But we knew we were in a race. Each element that increased the sense of aggravation of a part of the Hutu camp reinforced the need for French involvement since France, along with Belgium, was more or less the only country in the world that was concerned about all this.

I was glad to hear Mr. Kagamé speak about the French parliamentary inquiry led by Paul Quilès, but I have to say again there was never any question of “total support” [for the Habyarimana government]. It was a huge effort, eighty-eight people were interviewed, 520 questions were asked, and 7,000 pages of secret defense information was declassified. But Paul Quilès, the head of the mission, never spoke of “full support” [for the Habyarimana regime]. There never was full support, it was always conditional support at every stage. Human rights questions were raised at each stage, from Mitterrand’s La Baule speech onwards. We raised the question of refugees constantly and the need for political compromise. So I reject absolutely that the Quilès inquiry talked about “total support.”

The same thing with Marcel Debarge, Minister of Cooperation at the time, now deceased. He never made these comments [attributed to him by Faustin Kagamé] about betting on ethnic groups. That was not the way he thought. It is important not to cherry pick the statements of one or other witnesses from the huge Quilès inquiry. There were many different witnesses.

Someone said that it might have been better if France had done nothing. This may be shocking to say but, yes, it might have been better for France. The Ugandan Army would have won together with the RPF. There would have been massacres of course, since the Rwandan government would not have allowed itself to be defeated just like that. France might have been accused of hypocrisy and cowardice, but nobody would be speaking about the French position now. France would have been forgotten in an ocean of bad events. It is true that the French policy of military engagement, political conditionality, and support for Arusha was an obstacle for the RPF, which wanted to take power. France was engaged because France felt that a political compromise was a less bad outcome for Rwanda, and for the region, than a direct civil war. It was a completely different way of reasoning.

I did not expect anyone to quote the French journalist Patrick de Saint-Exupéry in a serious conference. I know him. I have given him interviews as a minister, and each time, what he wrote bore no relation to what I said. I can understand him because he was there and witnessed terrible things. He nearly weeps when he speaks about them. From a human point of view, I respect that, but what he writes has nothing to do with the truth. Nothing. All these stories about special commandos are absurd. We are talking about France in 1994, the France of Mitterrand and Balladur, and so on. Saint-Exupéry even draws cartoons to explain his theory. Even those newspapers who love to attack French policy ignore Patrick de Saint-Exupéry because what he says is so exaggerated and incredible...

You cannot speak about the Habyarimana government being a military protégé of France. If the regime had been France's military protégé, there would never have been an Arusha agreement. The regime would have been supported militarily by France, as happened at other times, and there would have been no kind of compromise. We would not have forced our protégés to share power with a small minority coming from Uganda. Rightly

or wrongly, we saw a political compromise as the only solution for Rwandans. So this was not a military protégé.

As for what President Sarkozy said when he was in Rwanda [in 2010], he did not say what Bernard Kouchner wanted him to say about responsibility and blame because he concluded that this was false. Instead he spoke about “errors.” There were many errors. The concern about Rwanda in 1990 may have been an error. Underestimating the determination of the RPF and Paul Kagame to take power at any cost may have been an error. Maybe we underestimated the engagement of Uganda, maybe we underestimated how far these Hutu extremist groups would go. But nothing that has been said contradicts my main point, which was that we were involved in a race to prevent massacres, genocide, which explains the efforts we made. I do not think that President Sarkozy had anything else in mind when he spoke about mistakes.

As far as the poor European Union is concerned, I do not think it can be attacked on this point. There are so many expectations from the EU, and they are so confused, that people always end up being unhappy. In an ideal world, of course, we can regret that there was not a strong common policy in the 1990s. We should have been together in Arusha, and implemented Arusha together, but this was not possible without the United States. Ideally, the United States would not have been trapped in the Somali trauma, and would have put pressure on Uganda and the RPF. South Africa, Ethiopia, other African countries would have been engaged as well. With hindsight, we can see that we needed an entire international system – I am not speaking about the international community which, as I see it, still does not exist – to impose the Arusha Accords on the participants. Perhaps nobody really wanted to apply them. But I would not put all the responsibility on the European Union. I have no criticism to make of Belgian policy.

In terms of the ethnic question, I want to remind you that it was exactly the opposite in Burundi. When we try to reconstruct what happened in Paris, Brussels, London, Washington, and New York, let us not forget that people were managing a series of simultaneous problems, and were unable to focus on a single subject, as this symposium is able to do. That is never the way it is. This famous “international community” is an invention. If it really existed, it would act in a preventive fashion more often. It was the Yugoslavs themselves who began the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which ended up out of anybody’s control. Had this imaginary international community existed, it would have acted in the Yugoslav case, after the death of Tito, ten years earlier. But that is not the way things happen.

LINDA MELVERN: I have a point of fact. The Quilès inquiry did actually call the Rwandan Army a military protégé of France. It is in the Quilès report. Thank you.

TOM BLANTON: Filip.

FILIP REYNTJENS: The last half hour was interesting, but I think that during this meeting we must avoid putting on the table things that are on the public record. The Quilès report is known. The opposite, August 2008 Mucyo Commission report is known.⁹⁴ What Sarkozy has said in Kigali is known...All those data are very well known. Since we do not have a week together, I think we should avoid discussing things that are in the public record that we all know.

⁹⁴ The Rwandan government-sponsored Mucyo report entitled [“The role of France in the 1994 Rwandan Genocide.”](#) was released in August 2008.

TOM BLANTON: Let me call on Colette who has been very patient.

COLETTE BRAECKMAN: If Colonel Marchal [the Belgian officer responsible for the Kigali Weapons Secure Area] was here, we could ask him to repeat his testimony. When the French planes landed in Kigali after the genocide, he saw boxes of arms and ammunition left on the airport tarmac brought by planes that were evacuating expatriates. But since he is not here, I will not go into this further.

I wanted to ask whether Mr. Védrine and de La Sabliere were aware of a meeting in Paris on May 9, 1994, in which the Lieutenant Colonel Rwabalinda, an envoy of the Rwandan military, met with General [Jean-Pierre] Huchon, the head of the French military cooperation department. According to the report of Colonel Rwabalinda, there was talk about using French soldiers present in Rwanda, or at least of instructors, for cooperative action. Rwabalinda spoke about various urgent needs, particularly for ammunition. He also cited General Huchon as recognizing the need to prove legitimacy of the war that Rwanda was waging in order to influence international opinion and resume bilateral cooperation. Concrete measures were also envisaged, such as supplying communications equipment, some of which had already been sent and some of which was waiting to be shipped. There were also recommendations to not underestimate the enemy, who had powerful allies, and a warning that Rwandan military leaders would be held responsible for massacres committed in Rwanda if nothing was done to improve the image of the country. I would like to know if the Élysée was aware of this meeting which took place on May 9, 1994.

HUBERT VÉDRINE: I believe General Huchon was no longer at the Élysée at the time.

COLETTE BRAECKMAN: [References a report by Rwabalinda] “On the visit I made to the headquarters of the French Military Cooperation Department in Paris, May 9-13, 1994.”⁹⁵ This is a report from a Rwandan source, from Colonel Rwabalinda. So this is a Rwandan source, but it refers to his meeting with General Huchon at that time.

HUBERT VÉDRINE: I do not remember this. You cannot remember everything. I was not managing this question directly. What I can say is that Huchon was no longer at the Élysée at the time. He was at the Ministry of Cooperation, Chief of the Military cooperation mission. From the historical point of view, it would also be interesting to know what happened as a result, not simply what the Rwandans requested, but what happened next. In general, for a certain time after the shoot down of the Habyarimana plane, we felt we had to do everything to save Arusha since the shoot down, whoever was responsible for it, was an attempt to sabotage Arusha. This may seem naïve and unrealistic today, but that is the way we saw it at the time. We thought we had to save Arusha, which was why we kept in contact with all the players. But I have no idea what happened as a result of this meeting with Huchon.

JEAN-MARC ROCHEREAU DE LA SABLIERE: I just wanted to say a word about the arms embargo. After the attack, there were requests from the interim Rwandan government for arms and ammunition, which France absolutely refused because of the embargo. The policy, at that time, was to support a ceasefire, so there was no question of giving arms to anybody. We needed a ceasefire, and we needed to get back to Arusha. That was the policy.

⁹⁵ Colonel Ephrem Rwabalinda, [*“Rapport de visite fait auprès de la maison militaire de coopération à Paris.”*](#) May 16, 1994.

TOM BLANTON: Senator Bizimana.

JEAN DAMASCÈNE BIZIMANA: Just three small points. Twenty years after the genocide, we should not be speaking about the attack of the Ugandan Army. The RPF was made up of Rwandans. It was a political and military organization, certainly, but it was made up of Rwandan refugees. We cannot accept this kind of language, twenty years after the genocide against the Tutsi.

Second, Mr. Védérine said that France was unaware of the criminal and genocidal nature of the Habyarimana regime. I will cite two dispatches, the dispatch of Colonel René Galinié, the French military attaché in Kigali, and the dispatch of the ambassador, George Martres. Colonel Galinié sent three cables on October 15, 1990. In one of the cables, he mentioned the possibility of attacks on the Tutsi population, either spontaneous or encouraged by regime hardliners.⁹⁶ This means that, even in 1990, France was aware of the criminal nature of the Habyarimana regime and its genocidal nature.

When Ambassador Martres was questioned by the parliamentary inquiry, he said this: "Genocide was predictable from this period, certain Hutus were even talking about it. Genocide was a daily occurrence for the Tutsis." Ambassador Martres admitted that. From October 1990 onwards, France knew that the Rwandan regime was a regime that was going to practice genocide.

Finally, on the question of arms supplies, I refer to the Quilès inquiry and Rwandan military documents that I have consulted. From 1989 onward, there was a growth of French military aid to Rwanda. France supplied military equipment worth 116 million francs [about 21.8 million US dollars] in 1989. In 1990, the arms supplies were worth 190 million

⁹⁶ George Martres, "[*Analyse de la situation par la population d'origine Tutsi*](#)," October 15, 1990. See the document translated into English [here](#).

francs [about 35.7 million US dollars]. In 1991, there was a slight decrease, but in 1992 we have an increase again, 122 million francs [about 22.9 million US dollars] worth of arms.⁹⁷ During the period of peace negotiations, a period when massacres were going on, France increased its military and technical aid to Rwanda. It is completely false to claim that conditions were attached to this aid. The figures prove it.

Finally, there is information that in 1992 France invited the president of the RPF to come to Paris. Kagame went to Paris as the military chief. After the negotiations, he was put in prison. What was the reason for that? In 1992?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: From an operational and strategic point of view, the analysis by the French government that they had not realized that the RPF wanted to take over the whole country is Monday morning quarterbacking...The forces that they supported and trained, the Rwandan Government Forces, were so inept, so undisciplined and so incapable that they gave the country to the RPF. They did not put up a sophisticated or capable fight. The RGF could have held, but at one point in late May, early June [1994], after the visit from Bernard Kouchner and a representative of President Mitterrand's office, there was a decision to withdraw significantly and move 2.3 million people across the border into Goma, into Bukavu, and move the bulk of the RGF forces with them. Operation Turquoise came in with no humanitarian logistics capabilities, but with Jaguar aircrafts, heavy mortars and armored vehicles. As the officers of Turquoise said, "We're coming in because the UN is telling our friends, classmates from the RGF what the operational plans are and we're here to support them." So that is what was happening on the ground. Thank you.

⁹⁷ For a detailed summary of the supply of arms to Rwanda by France from 1990 to 1994, see page 82 of the [French parliamentary inquiry](#), published December 15, 1998.

TOM BLANTON: We want to resume this conversation when we come back, and come back to the United Nations and the deployment of UNAMIR.

[BREAK]

TOM BLANTON: Thank you, everyone. We're going to move on in this final hour of the day to some direct questions of advance warning and response or lack thereof. I want to call on Ambassador Keating to start us off with some specific points and questions. Let's focus in on what it was like, where we were in January 1994. Ambassador Keating.

COLIN KEATING: Thank you very much, Tom. I think one of the things that captured my attention in the last session was what we knew, when we knew it, and what we did about what we knew. One thing that I think we do need to drill down into a little more detail is what became known to General Dallaire and which he reported to UN Headquarters, on January 10, 1994, related to the allegations of Interahamwe arms caches, by an informer, Jean-Pierre Turatsinze. We know Dallaire reported it to UN Headquarters and we know he was instructed to make representations to the government in Kigali, but I have been told that there was wider dissemination of that information to other countries as well.⁹⁸ It would be good if we could get General Dallaire, and perhaps Iqbal Riza and perhaps Jean-Marc [de La Sabliere] to also comment on their reaction to that information. What kind of lessons might one draw on how we could do better in the future?

⁹⁸ Roméo Dallaire, "[Request for Protection for Informant](#)," UNAMIR Kigali Outgoing Code Cable MIR 67, January 11, 1994. Markings on the documents show that General Dallaire sent his fax at 2324 Zulu Time (GMT) on January 10, 1994, which was 1:25 am on January 11, 1994, Kigali time, and 6:25 pm on January 10, 1994 New York time.

TOM BLANTON: Thank you. Do you want to call directly on General Dallaire, the author of the January 11, 1994 fax?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Thank you very much. The instructions were that I was to brief the President, which we did that afternoon, as well as the three principal ambassadors who were very much involved with Mr. Booh-Booh and myself in the negotiations of trying to bring in the Broad-Based Transitional Government.⁹⁹ These were the Ambassadors of the United States, France and Belgium. The information was passed on over that twenty-four hour period. I don't remember giving any copies of my original fax. My staff had a copy, of course. Colonel Luc Marchal [commander of the Belgian contingent] had a copy. However, we all knew that the code cables going into New York at times ended up on the front page of the New York Times in twenty-four hours so there was a little worry about classified material going that way. So that's the extent of what we did.

Remember, we had just entered this new era and were still fiddling a lot with missions authorized under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. We were starting to use Chapter VII of the UN Charter [which authorizes the use of force].¹⁰⁰ The mandate for me was VI but I made it a "VI plus," as we called it. I felt that I was allowed to do offensive operations in order to curtail the belligerents from violating the Kigali Weapons Secure Area where the belligerents were not supposed to move any weapons or have any weapons.¹⁰¹ That's when I went in. I finally got authority on February 3-4 to start conducting those arms seizure

⁹⁹ Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, ["Initiatives Undertaken Relating to Latest Security Information,"](#) UNAMIR Kigali Outgoing Code Cable MIR 95, January 13, 1994.

¹⁰⁰ [Chapter VI](#) of the UN Charter deals with the "Pacific Settlements of Disputes," or "traditional" peacekeeping operations and does not authorize the use of force. [Chapter VII](#) of the UN Charter provides a framework within which the UN Security Council may take enforcement action, in order to "maintain or restore international peace and security."

¹⁰¹ Joyce Leader, ["Critical Analysis of UNAMIR's Phase I Operations,"](#) US Embassy Kigali cable 04551, December 23, 1993.

operations, but at arm's length.¹⁰² But the Gendarmerie was so riddled by informants that we were only able to do a couple and they proved to be ineffective.

TOM BLANTON: When you say "arm's length," that meant working with the Gendarmerie?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: We would brief them on targets, we would discuss with them the operational plan. We could only provide the outer cordon. They [the Gendarmerie] would have to be the ones to do the actual searching and the actual going into buildings. The concession I got from them [UN Headquarters] is the CIVPOLs [civilian police officers] who were with me would go in with the Gendarmerie. We wanted to protect the Gendarmerie from being accused of beating down doors and smashing places and so on. But even when we briefed them only three hours before, the information still got out. We knew the weapons were there, but the next day when we did the operation the weapons were gone. UN headquarters was concerned that we were just a couple of months after Blackhawk Down in Mogadishu [October 1993]. I am going in with a fairly weak force in the middle of the capital. The Americans with all the forces they had went into Mogadishu to go after bad guys and ended up with eighteen Rangers killed. There was a concern that we were being sucked into a trap.¹⁰³

That was not my assessment, but it was a concern. I knew there was a risk, but we felt that we could go after it. Our goal was to destabilize the bad guys, that is to say the

¹⁰² UN code cables reflect an intense discussion on the recovery of illegal weapons by UNAMIR in February 1994. See Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, "[Update on Security Situation and Request for Commencement of Deterrent Operations Aimed at the Recovery of Illegal Weapons.](#)" UNAMIR Kigali Outgoing Code Cable MIR-256, February 2, 1994 (sic). See also Kofi Annan, "[Recovery of Illegal Weapons.](#)" United Nations Outgoing Code Cable UNAMIR 479, February 16, 1994.

¹⁰³ Kofi Annan, "[Contacts with Informant.](#)" United Nations Outgoing Code Cable UNAMIR 100, January 11, 1994. Annan writes, "We wish to stress, however, that the overriding consideration is the need to avoid entering into a course of action that might lead to the use of force and unanticipated repercussions."

extremists who were moving the weapons. We felt that if we could hit them, we would be able to throw them off their game. They would make more mistakes, we would find more weapons and vehicles that they were moving in, grenades, and so on. The goal was to pressure them, to show that they were not playing by the rules, and try to get them back to the table...Then there was the information from the informant [Turatsinze] about why they were doing this, to implement a plan of genocide, of mass destruction of human beings.

TOM BLANTON: But you got an immediate response back, these are on pages 275 – 278 [of the conference briefing book]. The actual fax from you is on 275/276 and the following two pages, 277/278 are the response from New York.¹⁰⁴ And New York says your mandate does not even allow you to give protection to your informant, much less go after arms.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: We were still negotiating with UN headquarters to grant me authority to protect anybody in April 1994. I was already two weeks into the genocide and had about 20,000 people under protection. In a Chapter VI mandate, we are not authorized to protect people.

TOM BLANTON: You mean that even in April you did not have that authority until two weeks into the genocide.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Yea, but then I did not have a mandate any more. There was no more peace. We were just on the ground. We had continuous discussions and negotiations on

¹⁰⁴ Roméo Dallaire, "[Request for Protection for Informant.](#)" UNAMIR Kigali Outgoing Code Cable MIR 67, January 11, 1994. Kofi Annan, "[Contacts with Informant.](#)" United Nations Outgoing Code Cable UNAMIR 100, January 11, 1994.

what my mandate should be, which finally came on April 21, or something like that.¹⁰⁵ At that time, according to the doctrine of the UN, we were not authorized to protect people specifically. We had authority to protect UN assets and our own people, but not necessarily the people of Rwanda, unless they were in imminent danger or ended up in our sites, which we opened up.

TOM BLANTON: And yet, in the draft rules of engagement that you and Major Beardsley, I think, drafted in November 1993, you have a very explicit paragraph 17. It is in the briefing book. Part of your rules of engagement was that you got to prevent crimes against humanity.¹⁰⁶ Did you ever get a response on that?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Yes, we wrote those [rules of engagement] in September 1993 and used them with all the contingents coming in. And Article 17 essentially said that we felt that there had been massacres before so we needed to be able to respond. The Article said that we would use force in order to protect people, but that was never fully authorized by the UN.

TOM BLANTON: Did they ever respond to those draft rules?

¹⁰⁵ [UN Security Council Resolution 912 \(1994\)](#), adopted on April 21, 1994, adjusted the mandate of UNAMIR to act as an intermediary between the parties to attempt to secure a cease-fire agreement, to assist in humanitarian relief operations, and to monitor and report on developments in Rwanda, "including the safety and security of the civilians who sought refuge with UNAMIR."

¹⁰⁶ Paragraph 17 of "[Operational Directive No 2: Rules of Engagement \(Interim\)](#)," drafted by General Dallaire on November 19, 1993, noted that "[UNAMIR will take the necessary action to prevent any crime against humanity.](#)"

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Yes, I ultimately got a response that I was not authorized [to use force].¹⁰⁷

TOM BLANTON: On January 11, 1994, New York says you can't even protect the informant. Did you ever interpret that as, in effect, a repudiation of your attempt in the rules of engagement to include crimes against humanity?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Well, the fact was that I could not conduct weapons seizure operations...My plan was not to protect the informant. I just wanted to get him on the earliest Hercules [aircraft] out of the country, give him some cash, and get him out of there. That was the aim with the informant.

TOM BLANTON: Maybe Iqbal Riza would comment. What was it like to receive this warning in New York? What did you make of it?

DON WEBSTER: Could I expand the question just a little bit? It may be helpful to have a bit more context about what is happening on January 10 when General Dallaire receives this information. On January 5 [1994], President Habyarimana took the oath of office to start the transition to the Broad-Based Transitional Government. Once he does that, it suspends the previous government. What is interesting about the Arusha Accords is that it becomes the fundamental law of Rwanda and it actually abrogates part of the 1991 constitution. [Arusha] becomes the fundamental law of the country once the transition starts. But the transition only started. There was no swearing in of the rest of the government and the

¹⁰⁷ Kofi Annan, "[Contacts with Informant](#)," United Nations Outgoing Code Cable UNAMIR 100, January 11, 1994.

Transitional National Assembly. Then we get to January 8. There is a huge demonstration in front of the CND [parliament building in Kigali], with Interahamwe, very visible, disturbing even Booh-Booh. I think Booh-Booh gets caught up in this demonstration.

Aside from the information that General [Dallaire] is receiving, the Interahamwe are implicated in preventing the installation of the Broad-Based Transitional Government and are involved in massive and very public violence. The Interahamwe themselves write a letter to Booh-Booh on January 19 where they recount all these accusations against [Dallaire]. Of course January 19 is after General Dallaire's exchange with New York. But to appreciate your perspective, General, and the response you are getting from New York, it would be helpful to see just how unstable the situation was, and how highly visible the Interahamwe were, by the time you are getting this information from Turatsinze.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: If I may amplify just a moment, one of the attempts to install the rest of the transitional government was totally disrupted by the Interahamwe and Presidential Guard, both in civvies and in uniform. We got information [that the Presidential Guard set up an ambush for the Belgians]. We dismantled that ambush.

TOM BLANTON: Let's go to the perspective from New York.

RIZA: It is very difficult to just deal with this specific question without giving the context. All cables received or sent were circulated in the Secretariat, to the Secretary-General's office and DPA [Department of Political Affairs] and so on. They were all informed. I had recently joined DPKO from my assignment in El Salvador, where we operated on the basis that the [January 1992 peace] agreement had been signed by two parties. We assumed that both parties were genuinely committed to the implementation of the agreement, not that one

party had hidden intentions behind it. We treated the Arusha agreement the same way. But by the end of December [1993], we were getting worried. We had seen in many other situations clashes continuing, truces breaking down, and we were used to that. But in Rwanda we did start to get worried. Then suddenly we got this fax dated January 11, 1994.

Every morning we used to get a sheaf of code cables from all the missions. This fax (not code cable) arrived in New York in the evening of January 10. General Baril, the Military Advisor to DPKO, actually brought it to me because it had been addressed to him. It had not been circulated. Obviously, when one reads it, how else could one react but with alarm, with very high alarm? Kofi Annan, the head of DPKO, was in New York but I was supervising this particular mission. General Baril, Hédi Annabi, who was director for Africa, and I think Isel Rivero (the desk officer for Rwanda), were there with myself and one other person, probably the DPKO legal officer, Lamin Sise. We spent some hours discussing the recommendation from the Force Commander for an operation to confiscate the arms caches reported in the cable. This was beyond the provisions of the UNAMIR mandate, which was under Chapter VI. It was very clear to us that the mandate did not authorize even deterrent operations which risked armed action, which was supposed to be limited to self-defense. In fact, General Dallaire's rules of engagement state that force is to be used for self-defense, after which follows the crimes against humanity paragraph.

We discussed this very, very intensively. There is no question that the traumatic experience of the mission in Somalia was very much in our minds. We had been through a very similar crisis just three months earlier, in October 1993, with heavy casualties in US troops who were trying to seize weapons from Somali militants. Before that, on June 5, twenty-four Pakistani troops had been killed, trying to recover equipment from a radio station. But our caution was psychological more than anything else – we were not comparing rules of engagement or mandates. That is why we sent this very cautionary cable

to the SRSG, copied to the Force Commander.¹⁰⁸ One other reason was that General Dallaire's fax had indicated that this might be a trap. We had not ruled out the possibility that this might be a trap, or a set up for a "very important person." [Addressing Dallaire] I think you had in mind the interim Prime Minister, Faustin Twagiramungu.

We could not risk a situation in which UNAMIR forces could be overwhelmed. By that time, UNAMIR's troop strength had reached over 2,000, but they were deployed all over Rwanda. The Rwandan government forces [*Forces Armées Rwandaises*], was estimated at 40-50,000. Of course they were also dispersed, but in Kigali they had overwhelming force. It was meant to be against the RPF, but they could always divert it against UNAMIR. We were very, very worried about a scenario where some armed action would be taken by UNAMIR and they would be overwhelmed, so we sent this cable. What was the content of the cable? We asked SRSG Booh-Booh and Force Commander Dallaire to take it immediately to President Habyarimana, and to the Ambassadors of the United States, France and Belgium. One little explanation here. We did not include Tanzania which had played a leading role in the Arusha agreements, since this was a matter that concerned the Security Council. That is why we limited it to the United States and France on the Security Council, as well as Belgium for pretty obvious reasons.¹⁰⁹

Obviously, we could have taken it to the Security Council. We did not because we had doubts about this. We wanted to get more information, a reaction from the President in Kigali, and we knew that certainly France and the US would in any case send this information to their missions in the UN. So it was never formally taken to the Security Council by the Secretariat.

¹⁰⁸ Kofi Annan, "[Contacts with Informant.](#)" United Nations Outgoing Code Cable UNAMIR 100, January 11, 1994.

¹⁰⁹ Belgian soldiers were responsible for monitoring the Kigali Weapons Secure Area (KWSA).

I must clarify that DPKO was working in somewhat hobbled conditions because we were restricted in our contacts with the Security Council. We had to ask for permission from the Secretary-General's office. The SG's approach was that his personal representative [Chinmaya Gharekhan] would handle all contacts with the Security Council on his behalf. Of course, these cables had gone to the SG's staff. If they wanted the cables to go to the Security Council, they had the option of doing that. In retrospect, it may have been a mistake for DPKO not to have taken the initiative of going to the Security Council, I admit that. But I will come back to that. We waited, there was nothing from [the Secretary-General's offices on] the 38th floor, so we thought – it's fine.

If the Secretary-General or DPKO had taken this fax to the Security Council, what would have happened? UNAMIR was a Chapter VI operation, would it suddenly have been converted to Chapter VII? We know it would not have been. In practical terms, what would have been achieved by going to the Security Council? I think we have to consider that. It would have started debates, it would have started discussions, and it would have started a search for more troops, which would have taken several months to deploy.

We started being criticized in the press after this fax became public knowledge, and after Bacre Ndiaye's August 1993 report became public knowledge.¹¹⁰ It was said that DPKO had been warned of genocide and did not react. If you read Mr. Ndiaye's report, he investigated recent waves of violence in Rwanda and stated: "This can be characterized as genocide." Are we to interpret that straight away as saying, "Ah, we are now heading towards genocide," that is what is going to occur? We could not make that interpretation. Also, there was no reaction whatsoever from the 38th floor. On many cables we would get

¹¹⁰ Bacre Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur for the UN Commission on Human Rights, visited Rwanda between April 8 and April 17, 1993 to investigate human rights violations and "arbitrary executions." His [report](#) was published on August 11, 1993, but attracted little attention, even though it alluded to the possibility of genocide taking place in Rwanda.

instructions: “do this,” “do that,” “we have read this cable.” But there was nothing on this one. So, this was the situation. We simply proceeded. It is interesting that in the cables that came from UNAMIR in Kigali during the rest of January and February [1994], it was always “violence,” “interethnic violence,” “breakdown of ceasefire,” “movement of troops,” “distribution of arms” but nothing suggesting that “genocide is being prepared.”

TOM BLANTON: Let me ask Ambassador Kovanda to interject.

KAREL KOVANDA: I have two remarks and two questions. The first remark has to do with the atmosphere in the UN Security Council in very early January when I took over as President. As is customary at the beginning of the month, the President canvasses his colleagues on what they think is important, how they think this and that will develop, what should be on the program and so forth. From my cable home on January 4, I quote, “According to most of the delegations, the peace process [in Rwanda] is progressing rather well.” I quoted my brother Gambari as seeing “positive signals that offer a chance to resolve the conflict without major delays and take it off of the Council agenda altogether.”¹¹¹ Would that he had been right. The point here is how inadequate attention was paid to Rwanda at the time when the Council was dealing with Angola, and Mozambique, and Liberia, and Somalia, and of course the former Yugoslavia.

My second comment has to do with what happened to the genocide fax. In the second half of 1995, the UN published a fat blue book on Rwanda, which is a customary thing to do on conflict areas that included a collection of all the UN and related documents. Boutros-Ghali wrote a preface to the book claiming that the telegram was brought to the

¹¹¹ See Karel Kovanda, [Cable 1025](#), January 4, 1994.

attention of the UN Security Council.¹¹² Now, I had been visited by Claude Dusaidi [New York representative of the RPF] on January 7, 1994, so I was fully sensitized as to what was happening in Rwanda, what the difficulties in fact might be.¹¹³ After I saw the preface, I wrote to Boutros-Ghali saying I have no recollection of the Security Council being briefed. He invited me to see him. He and I and Chinmaya Gharekhan, who he used very frequently as his representative to us in the Council, talked about this. Gharekhan told us, “Well, fortunately or unfortunately, there are no records taken on informal meetings of the Security Council.” I thought that this was an interesting little aside, that the 38th floor [the Secretary-General’s office] had a change of mind in the aftermath of the genocide and decided to insert this false little reference into the preface to the blue book.

My two questions, or mysteries rather, have been itching me for the last twenty years. I would very much like to know more about the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative to Rwanda, Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh who, starting in January, we certainly never saw in the Security Council. It had been customary for Special Representatives to come and show their face, talk to us about how they were doing. Booh-Booh is mentioned very seldom in any of the documentation. My second puzzle concerns Marrack Goulding, who was the head of the Department of Public Affairs. In 2002, he published a book called *Peace Monger*, in which he talks about any number of peacekeeping operations but is deafeningly silent about Rwanda. Not a word about that one.

¹¹² See preface to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, [The United Nations and Rwanda, 1993-1996](#), page 32. Boutros-Ghali claimed that his Special Advisor “briefed the Security Council [on January 12, 1994] on the reports which had been received from UNAMIR and on the actions the United Nations had taken in response.” There is no evidence of the “genocide fax” being brought to the attention of the Security Council on this date. However, in a report to the Security Council dated May 31, 1994, [S/1994/640](#), the Secretary-General wrote the following [paragraph 11]: “UNAMIR also received evidence that arms were being brought into the country and protested to the provisional Government and also conveyed this information to the diplomatic community. On one occasion the Force Commander requested Headquarters to use force to recover a cache of arms and was instructed to insist that the Gendarmerie conduct that operation under UNAMIR supervision.”

¹¹³ Karel Kovanda, [“The Czech Republic on the UN Security Council: The Rwandan Genocide.”](#) *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 5, 2 (August 2010): 192-218.

TOM BLANTON: Can I just ask you Iqbal Riza's question? If the document had been shown in the Security Council, what would have happened? Would it have raised the awareness of the possibilities of "anti-Tutsi extermination," as the January 11 fax says? That's a big change from your January 4 cable, "The peace process is going swimmingly." What would have happened if you would have seen the "genocide fax"?

KAREL KOVANDA: This is an exercise in alternative history, which usually is not very fruitful. My take on this, and I have thought about it a lot over the past twenty years, is that the Security Council would at least have had a chance to do something if we had been informed about the "genocide fax." As it is, we were kept in the dark. Whether our action would have been fruitful and useful, whether it would have led to interminable debates in the Council is another matter. Iqbal is absolutely right, probably all of that, and then some. But I would defer to my more experienced colleague to my right [David Hannay] to give you a more nuanced answer to that one.

TOM BLANTON: Let me bring in your colleague to the right [David Hannay], and then Ambassador Gambari.

DAVID HANNAY: Just one or two comments about what we are now discussing. We have moved from the sins of commission to the sins of omission, which are far more numerous in the case of Rwanda than the sins of commission. The sins of commission were mainly the work of Rwandans on themselves. The sins of omission were the work of the international community, if Mr. Védrine would forgive me for using that loose expression, because the net goes pretty widely. Iqbal is quite right to have said that, but he was too polite to put the

finger on Boutros-Ghali. One of the most disastrous small procedural decisions that Boutros-Ghali made (which had effects on Rwanda and many other peacekeeping operations) was to forbid DPKO to brief the Security Council on a regular basis about the conduct of peacekeeping operations. It was a completely disastrous decision. I remonstrated with him at the time. The result was that he agreed that Ambassador Gharekhan should come and brief us, but that was not frankly a substitute. That was at one remove, Gharekhan was not the person who was responsible for directing the peacekeeping operation.

One element that has not been mentioned about this question of why the Security Council was not briefed on General Dallaire's telegram is the near impossibility of doing it with Rwanda on the Council.¹¹⁴ Nobody has mentioned this fact. Of course, Rwanda should not have been on the Council. On that, I am afraid, one has to turn to our African colleagues, because it was the African system that brought Rwanda onto the Council, by rotation "willy nilly." The unwritten rule, which should have been applied, is that a member state involved in an international dispute (as Rwanda was at the time) should not be on the Council. But it was, and it made it very difficult for the Secretariat, although they could have found other ways of telling everyone except Rwanda about what had happened. I think it is a pity they didn't. But, one should not forget that the straightforward way of simply coming down and telling the Council was very difficult because of course the Rwandan [Ambassador Jean Damascene Bizimana] would have flatly denied everything, would have reported back what was being said, and so on.

¹¹⁴ David L. Bosco, "Rwanda's ex-U.N. ambassador, who vanished after genocide, resurfaces in Alabama." *The Washington Post*, April 4, 2010. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/02/AR2010040201517.html>. Rwandan permanent representative, Jean-Damascene Bizimana, 36, became a member of the UN Security Council on January 1, 1994.

The question is what would have happened if there had been a briefing of the Council. Just a brief answer to that. There is only one certain thing. It would have leaked. It would have gotten into the public domain. That you can say with certainty. You cannot say anything else with certainty because you do not know what the Council would have done. I agree with Karel when he says that they probably would have thrashed about a bit and not done very much. But, it would have leaked and that in itself, I suspect, would have been a good thing. It would have come into the public domain. I think the failure to bring it into the public domain was a mistake in retrospect.

Finally, just a word on the context of all this, which several people have referred to. The depth of the shadow cast by Somalia cannot be exaggerated. It did not only apply to the United States, which had had a terrible experience in Somalia and had drawn, in my view, the wrong conclusions from it. It also applied to all the African countries who had troops in Somalia who were involved in a peacekeeping operation that was dying. Everybody knew it was dying. They had troops there and they did not know what the hell was going to happen to them. The United States had left the battlefield. Everyone knew that the Somali Chapter VII operation was going to collapse, which it did. This had an appalling effect on everyone's reaction to Rwanda. Why did practically no African countries volunteer to send troops to Rwanda? Because some of them, the ones who were prepared to send troops anywhere, had got them in Somalia and were worrying a great deal about what happened when an operation started to collapse.

Addressing the wider context for Europeans, including France and Britain. January 1994 was a month in which NATO gave an ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs at the request of the Secretary-General of the UN. This resulted in the stationing of observers and a ceasefire around Sarajevo, which very nearly took the UN, with a large number of troops deployed on the ground in pretty indefensible positions, into a serious military situation. Even without

mentioning other operations like Angola, the amount of distraction at that period was great. None of this excuses these sins of omission. But in those first months of 1994, without the warning from the UN that we did not get, the only interest of the Council was how to get Arusha implemented, to provide for the admittedly inadequate peacekeeping force to carry out its task. There was no other thought on people's minds at the stage. Wrongly.

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Gambari.

IBRAHIM GAMBARI: Thank you very much. I wish I had seen this document earlier, because I just discovered it: "Nigeria at the United Nations Security Council 1994-1995."¹¹⁵ Nigeria came onto the Security Council in January 1994. The instructions we got from Abuja was that we should try to de-congest African issues from the Security Council agenda. We felt that the more time the Security Council spends on African issues, the more it portrays the continent as a continent of nothing but conflict, when in fact some progress was being made on the economic front. We came to the Council determined to work with Security Council members to decongest the agenda of African issues. With the cooperation of the Council, and of course the parties of the conflicts, we were to an extent successful...Mozambique was off the agenda, South Africa was off the agenda for different reasons. When we came onto the Council in January 1994, our determination was to see that the Arusha agreements actually succeeded. As Colin Keating said earlier, Arusha was presented as a gold nugget. We kept supporting Arusha, all of us, even when it was collapsing before our eyes. We kept talking about Arusha, kept talking about a ceasefire, long after it was clear that genocide was going on in Rwanda. If we look at that fateful Resolution 912 on April 21, 1994, we

¹¹⁵ Ibrahim Gambari. [*Nigeria at the United Nations Security Council, 1994-1995*](#). Princeton, N.J.: SUNGAI. 1998, 4-64.

were still talking about an option of reducing the forces and getting them back up after the ceasefire was restored.¹¹⁶ That is in April. You can imagine that in January the commitment was to Arusha and how to make it work.

On the question of Rwanda's presence on the Council. Normally, I do not disagree with my colleague and friend, Lord David Hannay. I do not think that Rwanda's presence on the Council was such a big problem. It was inconvenient, it was immoral, but it did not stop the Council from doing whatever it needed to do. In my view, the impact of Rwanda's presence on the Council has been exaggerated. In the end, they left.

Now, on the issue of what would the Council have done had the genocide fax been made public? My feeling is it would not have changed the reluctance of the big powers to do anything major on Rwanda, partly because of the experience of Somalia...Nobody mentions that Nigeria lost seventeen soldiers in Somalia.¹¹⁷ We mention Pakistani casualties, we mention the Americans, but Nigeria also lost about seventeen soldiers. In general, there was no great appetite for peacekeeping at that moment. I would suggest that because of this general climate of wanting Arusha to succeed, believing that a ceasefire was possible, I do not think the sharing of this information would have made a great difference. There were a lot more powerful forces at play. Nobody wanted at that point to seize the moment even when some Council members such as Nigeria began to say that, "something terrible is happening on the ground." Even later on, when it became very clear that something terrible was indeed happening, the Council did not take the necessary decisions to stop the genocide...That is the way I see it. Karel is correct in saying we do not know what may have happened. But I would be very surprised if we had suddenly changed gears dramatically as a result of the Security Council being informed about the genocide fax. Thank you.

¹¹⁶ See [UN Security Council Resolution 912 \(1994\)](#), April 21, 1994.

¹¹⁷ "7 Nigerian Troops Die in Somalia." *The New York Times*, September 6, 1993.
<http://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/06/world/7-nigerian-troops-die-in-somalia.html>.

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Ould Abdallah.

AHMEDOU OULD ABDALLAH: Thank you very much for this opportunity to share with you my recollections of the tragic events of April 6, 1994 and the subsequent days. First of all, it seems to me that we need to see those events in the context of their time, not from today's perspective or from what might have happened if...It should not be speculative like those who ask: what if Napoleon had not lost the Battle of Waterloo? Indeed, in 1994, we had a very different view of things from today. The word genocide was used only to refer to the events that happened during World War II. Nowadays, of course, genocide is a much more common word. That was not the case in 1994. A second comment: ethnic and tribal violence was a frequent occurrence in the Great Lakes region, more so than elsewhere in Africa. We know of those outbursts in 1959 in Rwanda, and in a cyclical manner in Burundi. They were not qualified as genocides. Most people thought that these targeted killings occurred only in Africa. Then came the Yugoslavia crisis. For us, Africans, that tragedy opened our eyes. We said, "Look in Europe they also have these ethnic wars."

Third point, external military interventions were frequent in Africa. In 1962 and 1964, the Belgians and Americans intervened in eastern Congo to free western hostages in the hands of rebel groups. South Africans and Americans intervened in Angola where Cuban soldiers were backing the Luanda based government. The French intervened in my own country, Mauritania, after it was attacked by the Algeria-backed Polisario [1977-1978] which claimed independence for Western Sahara. They also intervened in Chad in 1983-1984 to stop Libya-backed rebels from taking over the country. External interventions were thus considered sort of a normal thing during that era. Today, analysts and experts say "this

or that military intervention is dangerous.” That was not always the case when military interventions were parts of normal foreign policy throughout the Cold War.

Another observation: during the early 1990’s, a Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General had a huge amount of power. I am not saying whether that was good or not. My point is that they had a lot of influence, and the possibility to use it. Of course, Boutros-Ghali had a bureaucratic mentality and wanted to control everything. However, in an emergency situation, my feeling is that either you take responsibility or you resign. I am not criticizing my friends or former colleagues here in this room, but it was clear to us in January 1994 that there would be a fire, and then in April 1994 that fire started. Something had to be done to limit or stop it. Special Representatives of the Secretary-General [Ould Abdallah was SRSG in Burundi during this period] had a free space for action and were able to use it. The embassies, particularly from the democratic countries, were very cooperative. I never faced, during my tenures as UN SRSG, any rejection of proposed policy or action from Americans, British or French officials – the countries with which I worked most in my African missions. I am very happy to see with us in this room Prudence Bushnell. I remember, when she came to Burundi, I would ask her to help me deliver this or that message to both the civilian and military leaders. It helped strengthen my hand. It was as if I was her boss. There were many possibilities for us [Special Representatives] to act decisively.

I will give the example of the events of April 6. When I heard, at about 8:20 or 8:30 pm, that the two presidents were dead, following the downing of their plane over Kigali, I was at Bujumbura airport.¹¹⁸ At that time, when an African president traveled anywhere, every diplomat had to be at the airport to greet him back, as part of the official duties and,

¹¹⁸ The President of Burundi at that time, Cyprien Ntaryamira was killed in the crash, together with Rwandan President Habyarimana.

as a matter of courtesy for international officials. So I was at the airport with a few colleagues ready to welcome the President back. Then I learned from the official in charge of the Civil Aviation Administration (himself, a Colonel present with us at the airport) that the Presidents' plane was downed over Kigali and that both heads of state had died. He said that in the usual coded Burundese manner. My first reaction was to ask the Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Colonel Bikomagu, and the Speaker of the Assembly Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, (the constitutional successor of the President) to meet as a matter of urgency. The objective was to help manage the situation throughout the country by sending a reassuring message to the population before they learned the terrible news from uncontrolled sources. I felt that my duty included reassuring the population as a preventive measure.

In the United States or Europe, when a President dies, everybody knows the line of succession. In Africa, when the President passes away, power is in the street. Whoever grabs it first has it. On issues of peace, the Special Representative has a crucial role to play. I went straight to the meeting with both men and a few other officials. We first called to ensure that the national television station remained opened to carry our live message. At that time, television programs were new in Africa and very costly. They closed around 10:00 pm. We wanted to issue our own declaration on the Kigali events before they were aired by international news networks (French, British or American radio broadcasting networks). This was done smoothly. Afterwards, the Speaker and I went with the Army Chief of Staff to his headquarters to continue our efforts to contain the crisis. He got in touch with all the military barrack chiefs to put them on alert and instruct them to cooperate with the civilian governors. The Speaker did the same with the civilian officials. Nobody was thinking about genocide at the time, but were simply afraid of a new round of ethnic violence. That does not mean that there were no plans for genocide. The thinking at the time was that there could be more tribal wars, more violence.

I remember that the President of the National Assembly, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff, a remarkable soldier, and I went on TV to announce that the plane carrying President Cyprien Ntaryamira had crashed over Kigali airport but that the situation in Bujumbura was under control. Although we knew the President was dead, we did not announce it on TV. That was to avoid panic within the population. I was with the two men until 3:00 am on April 7, as the Army chief of staff called on his soldiers and the Speaker called on the governors, requesting them to cooperate with each other. Both the Burundians and the Rwandans like to speak in coded words. Those days when you say “military” in Burundi that means “Tutsi.” When you say “governors,” that means “Hutus,” the people of the FRODEBU party. They talked to all the local military units’ commanders as well as to their civilian counterparts ordering them to use joint efforts to control the local situation.¹¹⁹

After doing all that emergency work, I called the United Nations headquarters. Boutros-Ghali was on an official visit to Minsk, Belorussia. I spoke to his Chief of Staff, Jean Claude Aimé, to brief him on the latest developments and what I had done with the Burundese to address the crisis. I was fortunate in that I had come to Burundi from the Headquarters in New York. In Rwanda, General Dallaire and Mr. Booh-Booh had not been at the UN in New York, and may not have known the way things were done there. What I am saying is that a SRSG had a lot of possibilities at the time to do what he/she thinks should be done. Even if they did not have that power in writing, when there is an emergency, they can act decisively and the bureaucratic system will generally follow.

The final point I want to make is that on April 8, less than twenty-four hours after the Kigali events, I sent a cable to Marrack Goulding [Chief of the UN Department of Political

¹¹⁹ The record shows that Ould Abdallah made energetic use of his powers as SRSG in Burundi to ensure calm in the country following the joint assassination of the Burundi and Rwandan presidents on April 6, 1994. See, for example, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, [“Sitrep No 015/94,”](#) Bujumbura Outgoing Fax, April 7, 1994.

Affairs], copied to Kofi Annan, Chief of DPKO, and to the attention of Jean-Claude Aimé [Chief of Staff to Boutros-Ghali].¹²⁰ I have here with me the text of that telegram. I called for an urgent external intervention like the French had carried out in Kolwezi in 1978 [in south-east Zaire]. Otherwise, I warned, we could expect large massacres. I was still not thinking of “genocide.” That was a term we used afterwards, after we witnessed it. During the first twenty-four hours, I and people around me were thinking of a war similar to the one in Yugoslavia, Rwanda in 1959, or Burundi in 1964/1972. On April 8, I reported to New York as follows: “Atrocities and killings undertaken have already engulfed Rwanda in a terrible tragedy. For the first time, foreigners were deliberately killed in Rwanda ethnic strife.” (Usually the expectation was that the people would kill each other, but not foreigners). [Switches to English] “If this killing is not deterred or stopped by an external military intervention [as in the Kolwezi, 1977 and 1978] not only Rwanda but whole sub-region could be engulfed in horrible massacres.”

[Switches back to French.] A few weeks later, in cables to the UN headquarters on security issues and also to me in Bujumbura, the UN Mission in Kigali offered to assist me with troops to help avert a major crisis in Burundi. At the same time, however, they let it be known that they did not have enough troops themselves to carry out their own mandate. I responded that I did not want military help or association with the UN in Kigali. The main reason behind my response was to avoid any association with Kigali as extremist Hutu and Tutsi in Bujumbura could find a reason to create problems. I remember that I added, “I do not want foreign troops if it is just for oversight.” The UN Secretariat sent a mission of inquiry led by General Henry Anyidoho, the deputy Force Commander. I have here with me the report of that Commission of Inquiry. Overall, if we want to discuss historical events in a comprehensive manner that should be done for the entire sub-region and for that same

¹²⁰ Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, [“Sitrep No 017/94.”](#) Bujumbura Outgoing Fax, April 8, 1994.

fateful week or ten days. [Switches to English] On this point, I would like to recommend a very interesting book by the American historian John Lukas, *Five Days in May*, 1940.

[Switches to French] He analyses all the cables of the British and the Germans but also those of other countries during that same five-day period of May 1940. You cannot just look at the cables concerning Rwanda coming from one or two origins. You have to look at the cable traffic concerning the entire region for that period of time if you want to have an authentic and a larger picture of the situation.

TOM BLANTON: Thank you very much. Don.

DON WEBSTER: I just wanted to make a point of clarification that I would direct to General Dallaire. Going back to the [January 11] fax itself, I understand from Iqbal Riza that the embassies in Kigali were contacted in relation to the fax. Did you contact them or was that something that Special Representative Booh-Booh did? Who on the UNAMIR side gave this information to the American Embassy, the Belgian Embassy and the French Embassy? What was their response to the information that you were sending to New York?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Mr. Booh-Booh and I went to the President and subsequently briefed the ambassadors.¹²¹ I do not remember the sequence of briefings, to be quite honest...but I think we went together...to the three Ambassadors of the United States, Belgium and France.

¹²¹ Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, [“Initiatives Undertaken Relating to Latest Security Information,”](#) UNAMIR Kigali Outgoing Code Cable MIR 95, January 13, 1994.

DON WEBSTER: Maybe the Ambassadors could share with us what their impression of that information was?

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Swinnen?

JOHAN SWINNEN: We were summoned by Ambassador Booh-Booh and General Dallaire who briefed the ambassadors of Belgium, France, United States and Germany, as well as the Papal Nuncio and perhaps some others. We expressed our grave concerns about the latest developments to President Habyarimana, in general terms, not very specific terms. But in any case our message was very clear. We made the President of the Republic aware of the security problems on the Rwandan side, on the side of the regular military forces, but also the political parties and other players who needed to contribute positively to the peace process. We talked about joining the Special Representative [Booh-Booh] and General Dallaire in urging the United Nations to make the Security Council aware of the problem if appropriate measures were not taken rapidly by the Rwandan authorities. One of the important elements in our demarche was that, if no appropriate measures were taken, the international community should be informed through the Security Council.

TOM BLANTON: You got an even stronger warning, it's in the briefing book on page 2-90 and 2-91, not from an anonymous informant but from the visit of your own Minister, Willy Claes. On February 25, a message relayed by the Foreign Ministry to the Belgian mission to the United Nations states that "it will be unacceptable for Belgians to be passive witnesses to genocide in Rwanda."¹²² This is February 25. Your Minister is in Rwanda, the security

¹²² Lode Willems, "[Telex Nr 64, from Minafet to Delbelonu](#)," February 25, 1994. The telex was sent in the name of Lode Willems, chef de cabinet of the Belgian foreign ministry, while Foreign Minister Claes was still in Rwanda.

system has totally deteriorated, and here is a warning asking your own Ambassador to the United Nations, “How do we strengthen UNAMIR, even within the existing mandate?” Because, and it says, “There’s the possibility of genocide in Rwanda.” This is even stronger than a message about arms caches. This is a warning from your Foreign Minister, right?

JOHAN SWINNEN: Even earlier, there was the formal letter sent by Willy Claes transmitted on February 14 by Ambassador Noterdaeme, calling for a stronger mandate, even though Chapter VII was not explicitly mentioned.¹²³

TOM BLANTON: Why did the Belgian warning fall flat?

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: If I may, Mr. Ambassador. When Minister Claes was in Kigali in February 1994, Ambassador Swinnen held a large conference with all the players in the Hotel Milles Collines. We were able to tell Claes to his face quite directly what was going on at the time. There was no doubt in my military mind that Claes understood, and Ambassador Swinnen was reinforcing that at the table. So, the Minister had a firm grasp of the situation. The impression we were left with is that he was going back to Brussels, and that he might even be going by New York, to beat up on people to move on that.

But, I think there is an important sub-factor. I do not want to be nasty, but I will say the following. I had no experience in Africa. I have in the Canadian Army for thirty years, but no experience in Africa. The SRSG was an African. He knew the Secretary-General very well. My January 11 fax to Maurice Baril, the DPKO military advisor, was not illegal, but inappropriate. The only faxes that leave a mission are supposed to be signed by the SRSG.

¹²³ Kofi Annan, [“Letter from Foreign Minister of Belgium,”](#) United Nations Outgoing Code Cable 462, February 14, 1994.

But the information that I was providing the SRSG was being watered down. He was sending a perspective on the political side that was going, to my knowledge, to the Secretary-General, that was less alarmist than my stuff. That is why I started to send messages directly to my fellow Canadian general, Maurice Baril. Maurice was passing it on to Mr. Riza. You end up with a situation where, in the field, you are being interpreted from two different angles. I would argue that probably more often than not (and certainly what I found out subsequently) is that my stuff was downplayed because I did not have the background. I do not know how many times Booh-Booh was talking with Boutros-Ghali. There were different angles coming out of the UN mission in Kigali that created some difficulties of course at the higher headquarters in New York. It pissed me off because I felt that I was not being heard at UN headquarters, but it was the play that was there. So I went against the rules and wrote directly to DPKO.

TOM BLANTON: Michael, do you want to get in on this part of the discussion?

MICHAEL BARNETT: I wanted to weigh in on what would have happened if they had shown the cable to the Security Council. I wanted to propose an alternative scenario: If the cable had been shared with the Security Council, the United States would have led a charge to shut down UNAMIR. Let me explain why because it leads up to the climate in April 1994. By January, the United States was head hunting peacekeeping operations. This was going to be open season on peacekeeping operations. You are working with Presidential Review Directive [PRD] 13.¹²⁴ You are making clear that, if there is no peace to keep, there will not be any more peacekeeping. By March 1994, the United States is beginning to use the threat

¹²⁴ United States Presidential Review Directive/NSC-13, "[Multilateral Peacekeeping Operations](#)", February 15, 1993.

of withdrawal as a way of trying to put pressure on the Rwandan government. At least that was what they said in diplomatic presentations.

My sense of it though is that there were two other reasons why the United States was ready to shut down UNAMIR. It was not a bluff. You look at the cables and it was quite serious. One was cost savings, which was ridiculous, this was nickel and dime. The other was to show the Republicans that Clinton could be tough on the UN. If that meant sacrificing Rwanda, that was okay. Part of the broader climate, as I see it, of that period, is that the US is impoverishing the UN. I wanted to ask Mr. Riza if that also helps explain why DPKO would be reluctant to run over miserable information because the likelihood is the US would treat this as evidence that Rwanda had never signed the agreements with good faith, so you shut down the operation.

TOM BLANTON: Let me ask John Shattuck who has been waiting in line, to comment on that larger sequence before Mr. Riza comments.

JOHN SHATTUCK: Thanks Tom. I was going to make somewhat the same point, but in a little different way than Michael has made. The climate at the time in the United States Government was one of the post-Somalia hangover, to be sure. It was also a time of preoccupation with many other issues. Probably the most important one close to home, which in some respects was a similar kind of human rights crisis, although much, much smaller, was Haiti. The situation in Haiti, where there were many boat people who were fleeing the country because of the violent repression under the Raoul Cédras regime was explosive and close to home. Thousands of refugees were landing on the shores of the United States and southern Governors were pressing Washington to do something. This was a preoccupation. There was also a preoccupation with China, very different set of issues, but

major human rights issues. President Clinton had conditioned the renewal of China's "most favored nation" status on improvements in human rights. China was going to have to show progress on human rights in order to get its MFN status reaffirmed by the US. This was a very different period from today, I might add.

The hangover with Somalia produced a new peacekeeping directive, Presidential Decision Directive 25, which came out in early May 1994.¹²⁵ During the period January through March 1994, the Presidential Decision Directive was highly contested within the US Government. It was going through the process of approval. Here I would differ with Michael Barnett. I do not think there was a unified position within the US Government that we had to pick off peacekeeping operations and shut them down. I think there were parts of the US Government that had a different position, the State Department in particular. President Clinton had done a lot to contract out certain US activities and obligations to the UN. There was an ambivalence in the US Government about peacekeeping.

I will relate this very specifically to the genocide fax that we are talking about. In the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor I never knew about the genocide fax. I am not sure whether my colleagues in the African Affairs Bureau knew about it. I am sure that US Ambassador to Rwanda, David Rawson, knew about it – but what he did about it, I am not sure.¹²⁶ Had this fax become more widely known in the US government, it would have provided ammunition for those who were trying to resist some of the more restrictive elements of this Presidential Decision Directive that ended up putting a straightjacket not only on General Dallaire, but on a whole variety of other peacekeeping operations. Only

¹²⁵ See United States Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-25, "[US Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations.](#)" May 3, 1994.

¹²⁶ David Rawson, "[UN Special Representative Asks for Support on Security Demarche.](#)" US Embassy Kigali cable 00157, January 12, 1994.

when the US finally realized that it had got to get out of this straightjacket does it do so in the case of Haiti, because Haiti was such a hot domestic issue.

One final comment on the domestic aspects of US policy. President Clinton, of course, was very much preoccupied by domestic issues, particularly his healthcare bill and the upcoming midterm elections. He was determined to try to keep the US out of any major engagements overseas which is why there was an ambivalence about the peacekeeping operations. He would have been quite happy for the peacekeeping operations that had taken place prior to Somalia to succeed, but there were a complicated set of issues going on inside the US government. There was a debate about what peacekeeping should look like. I do think the genocide fax could have made a difference to those like myself who were trying to impact on the debate. Certainly [Deputy Assistant Secretary of State] Pru Bushnell was leading it from the point of view of the efforts to try to do something about Rwanda.

TOM BLANTON: Let me call on Iqbal Riza to respond.

IQBAL RIZA: Several of the points that I was going to make have already been made. Where shall I start? On Professor Barnett's comment, whether there was a consideration that the US might close down the mission, this was not a major consideration. Of course, with Rwanda coming so soon after Somalia, we did wonder what the US might do, but it was not a major consideration in not sending the fax to the Council. One more reason why we did not take the fax to the Security Council may have been that we used to get any number of such cables, not of this magnitude and degree, but we had to be sure whether there was strong enough evidence that the threat was genuine. There was already a reference to a possible trap or set-up.

If we had received from Mr. Booh-Booh or General Dallaire a message saying, "Look, this is serious, the questions you are raising are irrelevant," or if we had received a reprimand from the 38th floor saying, "You stupid fellows, can't you see that there's genocide on the horizon, what are you doing with this fax?" we might have acted differently. But there were no such messages. DPKO could not have taken the fax to the Security Council in its original pristine form without permission from the Secretary-General's office, which itself had the option of taking it there. They had the exchange of messages with UNAMIR. Not only that, but the Ambassadors in Kigali of two members of the Council, France and the US, had been given that fax in Kigali.

PRUDENCE BUSHNELL: As someone who was looking at Rwanda, I never got a cable referring to the General's warning. Never. I would have seen it, I would have done something. Joyce Leader [US Deputy Chief of Mission in Kigali] and I have been kibitzing here about whether she was aware of it.

TOM BLANTON: Joyce?

JOYCE LEADER: I have been racking my brain and trying to remember when this actually happened and how it actually happened. Ambassador Rawson was fairly new and I was still being kept fairly informed about what he was doing. Frankly I don't remember anything about this either.

MICHAEL DOBBS: Here is the cable. Actually it is copied to AF [Africa Bureau]. On January 12, 1994, US Embassy Kigali sends a cable to the State Department and it's also copied to

the Africa Bureau.¹²⁷ “Booh-Booh convoked Belgian, French and US Chiefs of mission.” It is not the Dallaire cable, but it talks about Booh-Booh’s briefing to the US, Belgian and French Ambassadors.

JOYCE LEADER: I accept that. I would just like to say that the idea of arms caches was not necessarily brand new to the Kigali diplomatic community...As a group, the Ambassadors had talked with the President on January 3, I think, to press for the urgent implementation of the peace accord.¹²⁸ The Apostolic Nuncio, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, had raised the issue of the distribution of arms. It was rather sloughed off by the President who said, “Well, we had these arms distributed, but we aren’t doing this anymore.” To hear that they are asking them to go and talk to the President again was spinning wheels in ways that were rather unproductive. What I am hearing reinforces the feeling that what goes on in the country is of less importance to those who are outside. It is not taken very seriously even if a serious matter that is being raised.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: I must rebut, if I can. First, in mitigation of my superiors in New York. They were getting two stories from the Rwanda mission. We knew about over thirty sites of arms caches, including right inside the President’s own tea plantation.¹²⁹ Significant weapons. When Booh-Booh looked at the map that I used to brief him, he saw that every one of the arms caches was on the RGF side. There was none on the RPF side. I am not saying that there were not any on the RPF side, but we did not find any. Booh-Booh countermanded my orders to search out and ultimately destroy those weapons...Although I

¹²⁷ David Rawson, [“UN Special Representative Asks for Support on Security Demarche.”](#) US Embassy Kigali cable 00157, January 12, 1994.

¹²⁸ Joyce Leader, [“Transition Institutions: Impasse Persists.”](#) US Embassy Kigali cable 00032, January 4, 1994.

¹²⁹ Roméo Dallaire, [“Security Situation 31 January 1994.”](#) UNAMIR 1000.01 (FC), January 31, 1994.

was passing this information to DPKO, I was not allowed to act on it. Inside the mission there was a decision already taken by my superior [Booh-Booh]. That did not preclude me from informing DPKO, but I could not order troops to carry out arms confiscations. That was impossible.

[Responding to Mr. Ould Abdallah] On the evening of April 6, when the plane was shot down, the Chief of Staff of the Rwandan Defense Forces [General Déogratias Nsabimana] was killed, I went to immediately find the people who were running the country. I tried to get Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana on the radio station and the military and, of course, use the media. But what was surprising and a bit different than maybe what Minister Abdallah was experiencing in Burundi is that significant numbers of Rwandan government troops were already deployed. The plane went down around 8:30 pm. By the time I was on the road, no later than 9:30 pm, there were troops all over the place. They were all Presidential Guards. They were all elite units. The headquarters was fully mobilized. There was no reason to be fully mobilized like that. They knew what the hell was going on.

TOM BLANTON: Let me just call on General Anyidoho.

HENRY ANYIDOHU: Retired or serving, you always have to be loyal to your boss. I am sitting to the right of my boss [General Dallaire]. I am glad that he has mentioned this difficulty that we experienced in UNAMIR between the Head of the Mission [Booh-Booh] and the Force Commander [General Dallaire]. Any mission that has that difficulty has a major setback. We entered into a crisis situation where the Force Commander and the Head of Mission, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, were not communicating properly. That was a major headache for UNAMIR. My Force Commander [General Dallaire] asked me to

accompany the SRSG for ceasefire talks in Arusha.¹³⁰ On our way back, the SRSG took a decision to remain in Nairobi in order to be able to make contacts with the heads of state from the Great Lakes region. He asked me to remain with him, but I refused, saying, "My immediate allegiance goes to the Force Commander." Secondly, my troops were in the field. There was no way I was going to stay outside Rwanda. I pleaded with him and returned to Kigali. That was the last time our Head of Mission ever came back to Rwanda. He was subsequently replaced as Special Representative by Shaharyar Khan. These were some of the difficulties that plagued the mission. Lack of coherence at the very peak of it was a major problem. I was not going to talk about this if General Dallaire himself had not raised it earlier. But, now that General Dallaire has opened it up, I am also emphasizing that, should this happen on future missions, it is something that must be looked at and immediate action taken. Thank you.

TOM BLANTON: Thank you. Iqbal Riza, thank you for your patience.

IQBAL RIZA: I will go straight to what General Dallaire and General Anyidoho were reporting. And before that, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah. In any mission, the SRSG is the crucial person. He is the SG's representative, he is the UN's eyes and ears, he is the advisor and decider. In some missions, the Force Commander has a more important role than the Head of Mission, but he has to accept the Head of Mission as his superior. In Rwanda we had an exceptional Force Commander. We all know of his courage, principles, morals, everything, I do not want to say more. In the case of the SRSG, it was the opposite. I have to say it bluntly.

¹³⁰ Booh-Booh left Kigali for Arusha on April 22, 1994. [See Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, "[Arusha Peace Talks](#)," UNAMIR Kigali Code Cable MIR 830, April 24, 1994] After waiting in vain for the arrival of a Rwandan government delegation, he proceeded to Nairobi on April 25, where he remained. A UN spokesman announced Booh-Booh's resignation as SRSG on June 14, 1994.

The man had no principles, no morals. The imperative requirement for a Special Representative is to be impartial. He had no impartiality, he was friendly with President Habyarimana, friendly with the President's cohorts. We could do nothing about it because we never could get an official report. His staff was not going to send us an official report, but we used to hear unofficially about this. And the communications from Kigali, from the SRSG, usually were to the SG, not to DPKO...

TOM BLANTON: Bypassing you?

IQBAL RIZA: ...Yes straight there, telephone, cables, whatever. I dealt with Rwanda all the time. I never once met the SRSG. He came very seldom to New York, he would see the SG, I think he would not even see Kofi Annan, let alone me. When General Baril and I went to Rwanda, in May 1994, he was not there. As we know, in April he was not there either.

Let me come back to the question of how the fax could have been sent to the Security Council., DPKO might have wanted to take it, but obviously after verification, after checking the fax and so on, but we could not have taken it without permission from the SG's office. The 38th floor could have taken it in its pristine condition or asked for clarifications. They did not do so. Then it could have been taken by the US Mission...I addressed the reply fax of January 10/11 to SRSG Booh-Booh and General Dallaire.¹³¹ I was not obliged to copy it to General Dallaire at all. These code cables usually went only to the Head of Mission. I deliberately addressed it to both of them. At the end of that cable I said, "Please let us know if you have any doubts about the guidance that is being given." As I said, the SRSG is the critical person in any operation. We have to be advised by him. His reply, if I remember,

¹³¹ Kofi Annan, "[Contacts with Informant](#)," United Nations Code Cable, UNAMIR 100, January 11, 1994.

was, "No, your guidance has been very helpful."¹³² So, we thought, it's on track...It was our impression that both the French and the US Ambassadors in Kigali were given copies of the "genocide fax." And the Belgian Ambassador.

JOHAN SWINNEN: I did get briefed. I did not get a copy. I am sure.

IQBAL RIZA: But you were briefed on the content.

JOHAN SWINNEN: We were briefed, of course.

IQBAL RIZA: ...The US did not take the "genocide fax" to the Council, France did not take it to the Council. We may have made a mistake. I think we probably did make a mistake. But, again we could not have acted by ourselves, as DPKO. There were many ways of conveying it to the Council. You take it to consultations. That was the normal way. Otherwise you convene a group, the P5, the P5 plus Nigeria. We could have done all that. But, we could not do it without clearance, without the 38th floor who already had that very alarming cable. We were stymied.

MICHAEL DOBBS: This is the cable back from Booh-Booh on January 13 saying, "We met with the Ambassadors of Belgium, US and the Chargé d'affaires of France and shared with them the information we had received."¹³³

¹³² Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, ["Initiatives Undertaken Relating to Latest Security Information,"](#) UNAMIR Kigali Code Cable MIR 95, January 13, 1994.

¹³³ Ibid.

IQBAL RIZA: He does not say he gave copies, but “shared the information with them.” Sorry, my mistake there.

TOM BLANTON: We have Minister Murigande and Monsieur de La Sabliere. Minister Murigande.

MICHAEL DOBBS: Let Monsieur Védrine speak first, he has to leave.

HUBERT VÉDRINE: This conference is remarkable, but I think we need to dig deeper on certain topics. For much of this afternoon, we have focused on French policy, which I understand very well. There are French participants here and things that need to be said, but we should focus as well on the policy, or lack of policy, of Great Britain, the United States, and neighboring African countries. We have talked a lot about the Rwandan government, but we should also talk about the strategy of Paul Kagame. Whatever you think about it, Kagame had a real strategy during all these years. I feel like we have only gone half way. I wanted to say that I would be available for follow-up sessions, as would others like Admiral Lanxade and Paul Quilès, who would have liked to have come. I know there is a debate about the archives. France has already made a lot public through the Quilès inquiry, but there are obviously many other documents [still to be released]. I would like to improve access to the archives of all the protagonists.

[Referring to Senator Bizimana’s intervention] I never said that there was no consideration given to a genocidal evolution of events. On the contrary, I said that every time we saw terrible signs in this direction, during the years 1990 -1994, that was a confirmation of the need for an intensification and acceleration of French policy. I spoke of a race against time. All these negative signals were incorporated into our approach, which

obviously failed. We are talking about a failure. But I would be happy if the policies, or non-policies, of other countries were analyzed with a similar depth. Simply steering clear of the problem was also a policy. But I think it is remarkable that we have succeeded in hearing so many different points of view and memories. An impressive exchange has taken place around this table about the historical truth that is necessary to construct.

TOM BLANTON: Thank you, Mr. Védrine. Mr. Murigande.

CHARLES MURIGANDE: I wanted to ask two questions. The first question is related to this fax. We talked about this fax being received at DPKO. For reasons that Iqbal Riza explained, it was not submitted to the attention of the UN Security Council. What I want to understand is why, when the content of the fax started to materialize on the ground, when these Interahamwe started killing 1,000 Tutsis every twenty minutes, or maybe every hour, when they killed the ten Belgian peacekeepers and provoked the withdrawal of the Belgian peacekeepers, as was said in the fax, why didn't the 38th floor, or even DPKO, remember the fax? In their almost daily briefings to the UN Security Council, why did they not say, by the way, we were warned in January, we are sorry we did not bring it to your attention, but what is happening was explicitly mentioned in the fax. Maybe if that was raised, the UN Security Council would have reacted differently. I don't understand why it wasn't mentioned in April 1994. I can understand why it wasn't brought to the attention of the UN Security Council in January, because at the end of the fax, Dallaire said, we are not one hundred percent sure, it may be a trap. But, when it became evident that it wasn't a trap, what was described in the fax was happening, I think there was a duty to bring this to the attention of the UN Security Council. That is my first question.

The second question I wanted to ask. In the briefing in Kigali, I do not understand why this information you were sharing was not shared with the Ambassador of Russia and the Ambassador of China. Russia and China also had embassies in Rwanda, they are members of the Security Council. They are supposed to have a voice on the Security Council as permanent members. Why are they deliberately left outside of the people who should be informed? I don't know. Just out of curiosity.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: May I respond to the second question? Of course, the SRSG had meetings with some of the Ambassadors who had demonstrated an interest in the situation. Remember not everybody was that interested in it...The players were mostly Ambassador Swinnen...the Americans, the French, and sometimes the Germans. The other guys were simply not on the block. At no time did the SRSG even entertain speaking to them. In fact, I never met those Ambassadors throughout my stay there. I will be honest, I failed to raise information about arms caches, etc. with other Ambassadors that maybe I should have, like the Ambassador from Burundi, who was a pretty good guy. I did speak with the UK Ambassador because I went to Kampala [where the residence was]. I had a force of monitors in southern Uganda. The UK had a military attaché and an Ambassador in Uganda who were both pretty aware of what was going on.

TOM BLANTON: Thank you.

JOHAN SWINNEN: I do not remember having meetings with the Russian and Chinese ambassadors. Apparently they were not interested. They were absent. They were there, but they were not participating in the diplomatic process.

TOM BLANTON: Monsieur de La Sabliere.

JEAN-MARC ROCHEREAU DE LA SABLIERE: Much of what I wanted to say has already been said. It is true that this was a strange period. There were both worrying elements and reassuring elements. The worrying elements included the assassinations we have spoken about and the fact that Arusha was not moving forward. On the other hand, the ceasefire was holding and displaced people were returning. There was probably a tendency to gloss over the disturbing elements and attribute too much importance to the reassuring elements.

Concerning the January 11, 1994 Dallaire cable, the ambassadors delivered a collective demarche to President Habyarimana. There were certainly worrying elements, but there was also concern that this could be a trap, as was mentioned in the telegram. That was one of the possibilities.

I wanted to return to the Resolution 918 [reinforcing UNAMIR] that was adopted by the Security Council on May 17.¹³⁴ By this date, we were already six weeks into the drama, but we French did not succeed in getting a resolution adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, authorizing enforcement actions. There was only part of the resolution, the part covering the arms embargo, that was covered by Chapter VII. The real scandal from my view was that the mandate was not changed once the genocide was known. You have to put yourself in the context of the time. The Security Council has fortunately adopted resolutions with a robust mandate protecting civilians in Kivu [in Eastern Congo] but this was not the case in 1994.

I do not remember mentioning the Dallaire cable in April 1994 following the Habyarimana assassination. I do not recall anyone saying, "a few months ago, we received this information."

¹³⁴ [UN Security Council Resolution 918 \(1994\)](#), May 17, 1994.

I completely agree with Ahmedou Ould Abdallah. We have to examine all the problems of the region. It is very difficult to understand what happened in Rwanda if we do not look at what was happening in Burundi. Of course the situations were different but there were interconnections. There still are such regional interconnections. Look at what has been happening in Kivu where there have been serious violations of human rights and massacres.

On the P-5, it seems to me that much depends on the initiative of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on whether the P-5 is convened. In the case of Mozambique, Aldo Ajello was a great Special Representative.¹³⁵ He worked non-stop with the P-5 ambassadors. This helped a lot because they sent almost identical reports to their capitals, which ensured that good Security Council resolutions were adopted, from Ajello's point of view. I think Ahmedou Ould Abdallah did something very similar.

TOM BLANTON: John Shattuck.

JOHN SHATTUCK: Well I want to return just very briefly, and hopefully provocatively, to the January warning, and the value it would have had to me and others in the US government had we had a more active handle on it. It may well be that there was this cable from Rawson, describing the genocide fax. It's not clear how it was reviewed. In any event, by April 1994, what was seen in the US government was a very chaotic situation in Rwanda that was not categorized as anything other than mass atrocities...Had some of us known that a genocide had been predicted, and there had been a warning, and rather specific circumstances specified, as happened in January, I think it could have made a difference. It

¹³⁵ Aldo Ajello, of Italy, was head of the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) between 1992 and 1994.

certainly would have sparked a much greater debate. It might have come into the press. It would have had a much bigger impact than was ultimately the case. In fact, there was almost no debate and the matter just kept moving along...I think it could have made a real difference.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: I must rebut rapidly...President Clinton did not want to know. He had taken the decision with Presidential Directive 25 that unless it was in the national interest of the United States, I am not going to help anybody. I hold Clinton accountable. He can excuse himself as much as he wants to the Rwandans but he established a policy that he did not want to know it...so it never got to him. He can "Pontius Pilate" himself on that. That's where I sit. I do not know, Prudence Bushnell, how you saw it, but that is the information I got from various people in the Clinton administration. What is even worse is that the Congressional Black Caucus did not get involved either.¹³⁶ I could not believe that. Not a word from them...

PRUDENCE BUSHNELL: May I just say, I was a senior midlevel person or a junior senior person. I was way down the totem pole and I had responsibility for the Rwanda portfolio.¹³⁷ That shows you how important it was in the US government. It sank [makes crashing, sinking sound, *Pooooohw*] until it came to my desk. Thank you.

TOM BLANTON: Don Webster, you want to follow Ambassador Keating or do you want to proceed?

¹³⁶ General Dallaire subsequently clarified that he heard from various informal meetings and discussions around Washington that the Congressional Black Caucus had failed to lobby the Clinton administration to intervene in Rwanda.

¹³⁷ Bushnell was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of African Affairs in the US State Department.

DON WEBSTER: I would like to go back to General Dallaire. When you reflect on the content of the fax, was that the only source of that information? The impression I get looking through all the documentation is that there were multiple sources of the same information. What I got from reading your book, sir, is that you found the informant [Jean-Pierre Turatsinze] revealing because it brought to light for you this “third force” and fleshed things out that you had thought about but could not concretize. For anybody on the ground, nothing in the fax is that revealing so what were the Embassies on the ground doing in terms of their communications with the US State Department or the French Foreign Office, or in Belgium?

TOM BLANTON: But the summary cable back from Ambassador Rawson on January 12, 1994 to the State Department only asks permission to do a demarche to the President of Rwanda.¹³⁸ It does not anticipate any further action other than that. The third paragraph of the Kigali embassy cable refers to the possibility of “a diplomatic or military trap.” Dallaire is seeking guidance.

ROMÉO DALLAIRE: Monique Mujawamariya gave me information. I got information from various sources. But this was not intelligence, collated, verifiable information. We were like an NGO getting anecdotal information, except for the hard data we got on the weapons because we actually paid out of our pocket to get into those places. One of my information officers was going out with the President’s daughter. I do not know how much stuff he was

¹³⁸ David Rawson, [“UN Special Representative Asks for Support on Security Demarche.”](#) US Embassy Kigali cable 00157, January 12, 1994.

passing on to her. In between him passing on to her and the Rwandan Ambassador sitting in the Security Council, they knew a hell of a lot more than I did about what was going on.

The information from Turatsinze firmed up everything that I had been getting since I hit the ground in late November 1993. I want to come back to the fact that I said that there might be a trap. With that level of intelligence, it would be absolutely irresponsible not to indicate there was a risk. There had been a lot of manipulation and misinformation that was being passed on. As a Commander, I had to indicate that it was a risk. But if you read the fax, I was not asking for permission, if you remember. I was saying this is what I am doing, and by the way I am just changing my modus operandi from being defensive to offensive.¹³⁹ I should have used proactive or some other damn term. They were correct in saying it was not in my mandate, but I never wrote it because I wanted them to tell me that I could do it. The biggest surprise was that it got shot down. I must say, it was one of the fastest faxes I ever got back...

TOM BLANTON: Ambassador Keating.

COLIN KEATING: I am going to propose that...we spend a little bit of time reviewing what actually happened in August 1993 when the mandate for the mission was agreed. We have passed over that completely. There were some very important discussions which took place at that time, which I think is worth getting out on the table. Certainly to my mind, the situation was never as clear as has been put around this table that this was a classic Chapter VI mission. I would like to talk about it some more but it will take more than two minutes.

¹³⁹ Roméo Dallaire, ["Request for Protection for Informant."](#) UNAMIR Kigali Code Cable MIR 67, January 11, 1994.

TOM BLANTON: Absolutely. That is also congruent with the warnings that we see in Mr. Ndiaye's report at the exact same time in August 1993, posing the question of genocide...I thank you very much for your patience and your contributions.

END OF DAY ONE