

## The Challenge

In April of 1994, reports came out of Rwanda about ethnic killings on a large scale. Then-Senator Paul Simon and Senator James Jeffords, with six co-sponsors, introduced a resolution calling on the United Nations and the United States to do what could be done to stop the slaughter. When the situation worsened, they phoned General Romeo Dallaire, the Canadian general in charge of a small contingent of 500 UN troops in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda. He told the Senators that if he could get 5,000 to 8,000 troops quickly, he could stop the killings. Tragically, no action was taken.

In August of 1994, Senator Simon wrote in an Op-Ed piece for the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*: “Our political leadership must make a case to the American people that deterring these situations is a cause worth our involvement – sometimes with our troops, sometimes without. We owe it to a future General Dallaire – and to the hundreds of thousands of Rwandans who might have been saved.”

Finally in October of 1994, after hundreds of thousands had been killed, the UN Security Council authorized action by member nations to stop the killing. However, an estimated 800,000 people had been killed in this ethnic strife.

International relations experts, including keynote speaker David Rawson, who was U.S. Ambassador to the African nation in 1994, gathered at the request of Simon and recommended dozens of reforms the United States, the United Nations and the media must enact to prevent a repetition of the genocide that took nearly a million lives in Rwanda.

## The Recommendations

When there are indications that unarmed civilians are being targeted and killed, and the subsequent movement of refugees fleeing for their safety, then the community of nations has a responsibility to act, and the United States has the responsibility to lead and not sit on the sidelines as an unresponsive observer. While the massive slaughter in Rwanda has ended, the violence continues in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in Burundi. It may soon resume within Rwanda.

### For the United States, we recommend:

1. Greater developmental assistance must be given to impoverished nations in support of democratic institutions and human rights. We have slipped from the days of the Marshall Plan when we led the world in the percentage of our income helping the needy



Paul Simon and C. Payne Lucas discuss the recommendations

beyond our borders, to our current position of being 21st among the 21 wealthy nations in the percentage of our income that helps those in distress outside our borders. We are a less credible voice in poorer nations when we issue pious statements but have a recent history of minimal concrete response to great needs. To both encourage stability, and to retain influence, we should be doing more, as the last four Republican and Democrat administrations have urged.

2. Whenever and wherever genocide occurs, in Europe or in Africa, in Asia or in Latin America, or any other spot on the globe, we must recognize that humanity is indivisible and act quickly and vigorously to prevent, and if necessary, stop genocide. We should encourage the implementation of conflict resolution strategies which take into account the regional implications of ethnic strife: this is particularly important in the case of the great lakes crisis, where ethnic violence has spilled across national boundaries, involving a multiplicity of state and non-state actors. As an element of the strategy, the United States should bring leaders from the various factions to this country for training in conflict resolution.
3. While the massive slaughter in Rwanda has ended, on a small scale it continues there and in Burundi and Congo. The United States owes more than a studied indifference to this situation. The United States should make every effort to support the implementation of the Arusha accords of July 1999, and to that end encourage the deployment of a UN peace-keeping force under chapter VII of the UN charter.
4. Wherever ethnic or religious or other divisions result in tensions in other nations, we should be encouraging bridge-building that results in understanding and the reduction in the probability of violence. And to the extent we face the divisions within our own nation and deal with them appropriately, we will be a more credible voice in other nations.
5. Where the cooperation of many nations is required within the threatened use of force for peaceful purposes, the United States should bear its share of the financial costs as well as share the risks to personnel. We are not effective when we say to other nations, “You take the risks.” We must also be willing to respond quickly,

6. It is important that the United States develop a better understanding of the political and economic impact of refugee flows, especially their capacity to act as vectors of further conflict in countries of asylum.
7. The United States should lead the way toward establishing a permanent international war crimes tribunal. Adoption by Congress of the resolution offered by Senator Arlen Specter would nudge future administrations in this positive direction.
8. Be ready to assist with Voice-of-America-type broadcasts where local radio has inflamed the populace.
9. The United States must make the enforcement of international humanitarian laws including the prevention and punishment of genocide, a priority in this region, and elsewhere.



Paul Simon and David Rawson lead the group in finalizing the recommendations

10. The United States must insist that all parties to the conflict permit full and free investigation of war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law in Rwanda, the DRC and Burundi.
11. The United States must insist that any peace agreement in the region provide justice for perpetrators of war crimes and genocide.
12. The United States should assist the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in executing its mandate completely. It should support an extension of this mandate to enable prosecution of violations of international humanitarian law in the DRC and in Burundi so long as this conflict continues.
13. High-level officials of the United States and the United Nations should continue visits to Burundi as part of the close monitoring necessary to enhance safety. The U.S. also should push for a multi-ethnic military in Burundi.
14. The United States should oppose the formation of civilian militia and the distribution of arms to civilians for the apparent intention of the carrying out of war crimes.
15. The United States should be prepared to interrupt the broadcast of any radio or television that actively incites genocide or gives other directives for killing civilians.

16. The United States should emphasize education and teaching our children from the earliest age and the most elementary levels of schooling, to respect the inherent, fundamental dignity and value of all the people of the world.
17. To encourage the widest possible discussion, the United States should keep a genocide web page with e-mail access all over the world. Everyone would have the ability to report and criticize and urge action.
18. Strengthen and actively support the work of the United Nations and its affiliated regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, and the organization of American States and to renew this nation's commitment to the universal Declaration of Human Rights as contained in the charter of the United Nations, and to promote compliance by all member nations.
19. Leaders of traditionally African-American religious institutions should convene a national meeting to consider some effective means of responding to Africa's needs.

### For the United Nations:

1. The United Nations should have a mechanism to respond quickly to a situation like Rwanda that will invariably arise again. The current process for peacekeeping requires Security Council action and then the Secretary-General must call and beg nations for assistance. Nations then ponder what to do. A small, mobile force available on 24-hour notice after Security Council action, coupled with approval by the chief executive of the nation with the available troops, could result in peace-making as well as peace-keeping, and save countless lives and tragedies.
2. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees should monitor refugee situations and where there is evidence of incipient genocide, the Secretary-General should report immediately to the Security Council and recommend appropriate action.



Alison Des Forges contributes to the discussion

3. The United Nations should encourage the development of regional peacekeeping and peace-making forces, such as ECOMOG in Africa. These regional forces frequently will need financial assistance from wealthier nations, and often training from such nations also.
4. The United Nations should make clear to assisting nations that establishing stability in some areas will require long-term commitments.
5. In tense situations where bloodshed is threatened or a reality, international organizations should make certain that local personnel assisting are ethnically mixed, and where possible, international personnel in these volatile situations should be mature and experienced people who understand the dangers of becoming advocates when that may not be appropriate.
6. The United Nations should consider the purchasing and destruction of weapons held by non-authorized personnel, both in Rwanda and in the refugee camps near Rwanda.
7. The United Nations should develop a code of conduct for multinational business organizations that reduces the likelihood of arms flow to sensitive areas.
8. Inflammatory radio broadcasts played a role in the disaster to Rwanda. The United Nations should prepare to offer temporary assistance for fair communications in these emergency situations.
9. Support the deployment of human rights monitors in the areas immediately surrounding Rwanda.
10. Encourage non-governmental agencies to foster programs that encourage reconciliation between opposing groups. Schools should also play a lead role in encouraging understanding.
11. Encourage the establishment of mandatory mediation in hot spots. If a country refuses, then it can be the subject of economic sanctions.
12. The United Nations should develop a clear, codified series of actions, in addition to sanctions and military intervention, that can be utilized in reacting to violations of international humanitarian law.

#### **For the Media:**

1. Non-governmental organizations should urge greater media coverage of Africa, providing that coverage not simply when major crises arise. The positive developments in Africa should be shown to the public, and when crises start to develop the public needs to know about them before they explode.

## **March 25, 1998 in Kigali, Capital City of Rwanda**

*“So let us challenge ourselves to build a world in which no branch of humanity, because of national, racial, ethnic or religious origin, is again threatened with destruction because of those characteristics, of which people should rightly be proud. Let us work together as a community of civilized nations to strengthen our ability to prevent and, if necessary, to stop genocide.”*

*—President Bill Clinton*

### **Special thanks to those who helped draft the recommendations about genocide.**

They include the following: Dr. Seymour Bryson, Southern Illinois University; Mike Cherry, attorney with the Chicago law firm of Cherry & Flynn; Alison Des Forges, 1999 MacArthur Fellow and author of the book Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda; Professor Rene Lemarchand, Thomas Watson Institute at Brown University; C. Payne Lucas, Africare; David Rawson, former ambassador to Rwanda; Professor D. K. Smith, Southeast Missouri State University; Roger Winter, U.S. Committee for Refugees.



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The Carnegie Corporation of New York provided financial support for this symposium but does not take responsibility for any statements or views expressed through the symposium or its resulting literature.

## **GENOCIDE IN RWANDA:**

## **HOW DO WE PREVENT REPEATING HISTORY?**

Recommendations created during an international symposium.

Held November 14 – 15, 1999 at Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Presented by:  
The SIU Public Policy Institute

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The Carnegie Corporation of New York