

The Security Council: behind the scenes

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The United Nations Security Council meeting in January 1992 had marked a turning point in history. As the first meeting of the Council held at head of state level it had captured the spirit of the age. The Council had met the challenge of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and it seemed that at last the United Nations might realize the goals set by its founders in 1945. This crucial summit was a British initiative. Britain held the Presidency of the Council and the chair of the meeting was the Prime Minister, John Major.

This was nine years ago and today the speeches written for that historic occasion seem simplistic and naïvely optimistic, the promises almost cynical. In his speech Major had said that it was time to reaffirm the belief in the principles of the UN Charter, time to review preventive action and to avert crises by monitoring and addressing the causes of conflict, time to reduce tensions and underpin efforts to restore peace. It was time to ensure that the UN had the necessary resources to enable it to do so. The Council was united in its commitment, Major said, and this was the best chance for peace since the UN was created. The US President George Bush had declared that never before in its history had the UN been so ready and so compelled to step up to the task of peacemaking.¹ The five permanent members planned another Security Council summit to be held in January 1995 to mark the UN's fiftieth anniversary year. This too would be a grand restatement of everything that the UN stood for, and the proper role of the great powers within it. But this next summit never took place and the Council meeting of January 1992 appears now to have been a brief and shining moment.

In the years to come the Council showed itself to be an ineffective instrument for collective security. My book on the circumstances of the genocide in Rwanda reveals this to be the case for it draws on an account of the informal and secret meetings held by the Council while the genocide took place.² This primary source gives a unique view of the Council's secret world and describes

¹ UN Doc. Provisional Verbatim Record. S/PV.3046. 31 January 1992.

² Linda Melvern, *A people betrayed: the role of the West in Rwanda's genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2000).

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how an unaccountable Council controls UN peacekeeping operations. Without this invaluable document the record of the international failure over Rwanda would be incomplete for it reveals the oversight and management of UN peacekeeping operations by the Council and the division of labour between the Security Council and the Secretariat.

It was in the Secretariat, in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, that the greatest challenges were felt in 1992 for shortly after the world leaders returned to their capitals, the Council had voted to create the UN's biggest ever mission for Cambodia. That same month saw the expansion of the UN Angola Verification Mission II where more than 500 UN observers went to implement peace accords. UN personnel were in El Salvador to verify a peace agreement. On the Iraq–Kuwait border a UN commission was drawing a boundary line, and the Council, together with the International Atomic Energy Authority, was to eliminate Iraq's mass destruction capability. UN personnel were supervising a compensation fund for Kuwait and all these missions broke new ground. In addition to military personnel, a substantial number of experts in human rights, health, finance, engineering and administration were required. The Secretariat was overburdened and soon the strains began to show for in spite of the 1992 rhetoric in the Security Council, more practical proposals of help were avoided.

The UN mission created for Somalia set a precedent in the post–Cold War era. This was the first time that the Security Council had authorized a Chapter VII intervention for humanitarian purposes without the consent of a sovereign government.³ The story of exactly how events went so disastrously wrong in Somalia is fairly well documented. Less attention has been given to the Security Council's own internal report on what happened.⁴ Indeed, so contentious was this report that after it was produced the Council held a meeting to decide whether or not it should be published. It highlighted a catalogue of errors and concluded that the Council had lost control of the mission. One of its most important findings was how a lack of information had doomed the operation to failure: there had been a false assessment of the capability of the Somali fighters, and a lack of intelligence gathering capability.

One of the non-permanent Council members on the Council at the time was somewhat more critical. 'We were a bunch of diplomatic amateurs', the New Zealand Ambassador Colin Keating recalled.⁵ 'The UN has had forty-five years of stunted growth and it is not yet ready to deal with all this.' The UN effort for Somalia ended in March 1995 when the UN pulled out completely. The Security Council had tried to apply traditional peacekeeping to a civil war

³ See Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving strangers: humanitarian intervention in international society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 172.

⁴ Report of the Commission of Inquiry Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 885 (1993) to investigate armed attacks on UNOSOM II personnel which led to casualties among them. New York, 24 February 1994.

⁵ Linda Melvern, *The ultimate crime: who betrayed the UN and why* (London: Allison and Busby, 1995), pp. 330–31.

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and had tried coercive disarmament. The result had been loss of UN prestige, credibility and US leadership.

Some of the lessons in this crucial and now forgotten Security Council report on Somalia were ignored. Produced in February 1994, it was presented to the Council only a few weeks before the Rwandan genocide began.

In spite of the considerable press attention given to the 11 January fax from the Force Commander of the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), the Canadian Lt-Gen. Romeo Dallaire, containing information from an informer that a genocide was planned, there were in existence many more dire warnings. What is more surprising is that none of these warnings was presented to the members of the Security Council. While the permanent members with their considerable intelligence gathering ability had some knowledge of what was prepared, and particularly the governments of France and the US, no specific information was ever shared with the non-permanent members on the Council. Neither was the information shared with the force commander of the peace-keeping mission in Rwanda, UNAMIR. 'We were blind and deaf in the field', Dallaire told me in an interview in September 1994. Dallaire was not to know how well informed US intelligence circles were; in January 1994 the CIA had given the State Department an analysis which warned that if hostilities resumed, up to half a million people would die. This report analysed Rwanda's peace agreement, the agreement that the peacekeepers had come to Rwanda to monitor, and it had concluded that this agreement was doomed. The subsequent death of ten peacekeepers, Dallaire believes, was a direct result of the failure to provide his mission with intelligence data.

There was more public information. Human rights groups had reported extensively on massacres of Tutsi in Rwanda: in January 1991 and February 1992 there had been exact descriptions of the involvement of military and local government officials. In January 1993, the violence in Rwanda was so terrible that a group of human rights experts from ten countries travelled there to collect testimony. In March a report was produced that showed how in the previous two years the racist and extremist Hutu government had killed 2,000 of its own people, all Tutsi. There were death squads operating and some 10,000 Tutsi and members of the political opposition had been arrested or detained without charge.⁶ One French journalist had reported: 'The death squads are operating a genocide against the Tutsi as though it were a public service.'⁷

In August 1993 a UN Commission on Human Rights Report revealed that the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was applicable to Rwanda. The report revealed in Rwanda a powerful elite was desperate to cling to power and was fuelling ethnic hatred. The

⁶ International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), Africa Watch, InterAfrican Union of Human Rights, and International Centre for Rights of the Person and of Democratic Development. Report of the International Commission of Investigation of Human Rights Violations in Rwanda since 1 October 1990 (7-21 January 1993).

⁷ Stephen Smith, 'Massacres au Rwanda', *Libération*, 9 February 1993.

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massacres that took place in Rwanda were planned and prepared with the names of victims broadcast on the radio.⁸ The author of this report, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, was Bacre Waly Ndiaye. He said later that if the Security Council had consulted him he would have said that their mission for Rwanda was too weak to make any difference. He would have recommended effective measures to protect civilians against organized massacres. For all the attention his report received, he said, he might as well have put it in a bottle and thrown it into the sea.

The Belgian government was well informed, with considerable information from its embassy in Kigali, and from a small intelligence cell attached to the Belgian peacekeeping units. Belgium had contributed 450 soldiers. The Belgian Foreign Ministry cabled their UN ambassador in New York: 'It would be unacceptable if Belgian troops were to find themselves as passive witness to a genocide about which the UN would do nothing.'⁹ Their ambassador was instructed by his government to lobby to reinforce the peacekeepers in Rwanda but he was told that there would be no increase in the mission for Rwanda because the US and the UK were opposed for financial reasons. Both these permanent members had been reluctant about the creation of UNAMIR and had argued that the UN was overstretched. The US had wanted only a symbolic UN presence in Rwanda. In the Council there had been arguments in favour of helping Rwanda, particularly from the Nigerian Ambassador, Ibrahim Gambari. Rwanda was one of the poorest countries in the world and the US had encouraged Rwanda to democratize. There was a moral obligation to see Rwanda through its transition.

An international peace agreement for Rwanda, the Arusha Accords, ending a three-year civil war between the Hutu government and a Tutsi rebel army, had been signed in August 1993. This agreement was comprehensive and wide-ranging, providing for political, military and constitutional reform. Under the terms of the Arusha Accords a neutral international force was to be deployed to monitor Rwanda's transition but in order to cut costs, the US had argued for a reduction in the role of the UN peacekeepers. Under the terms of the Accords the peacekeepers were to ensure security throughout the country but the Council decided that the peacekeepers should assist in ensuring the security of only the city of Kigali. Under the Accords the peacekeepers were to confiscate arms and neutralize the armed gangs throughout the country. The US refused this provision and, mindful of the military fiasco in Somalia, insisted that the mission for Rwanda must be traditional peacekeeping, providing no more than a neutral buffer between two former enemies.

At the outset there had been high hopes for the mission. In New York diplomats and officials at UN headquarters convinced themselves that their

⁸ UN Commission on Human Rights, Report by Mr B. W. Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, on his mission to Rwanda from 8-17 April 1993 (E/CN.4/1994/7/Add.1), 11 August 1993.

⁹ Belgian Senate. Commission d'enquête parlementaire concernant les événements au Rwanda. Rapport 6, December 1997.

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mission in Rwanda would be a success. Keating later blamed officials in the Secretariat for the optimism and claimed that the officials had been very discreet with the information about the realities in Rwanda. The non-permanent members of the Council came to see Rwanda not as the smouldering volcano that it really was, but rather as a small civil war. The situation was much more complex and dangerous than was ever revealed to the Council.¹⁰ 'We were kept in the dark', said Keating of the non-permanent members.¹¹ 'With better information the Council might have proceeded quite differently.'

In the Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations, published in August 2000 and chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi, one telling paragraph reveals: 'The Secretariat must tell the Security Council what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear, when recommending force and other resource levels for a new mission, and it must set those levels according to realistic scenarios...'.¹²

By the time the UN troops arrived in December it was probably too late to make a difference. On the face of it their assignment was unambiguous. A three-year civil war ended in peace, with a handshake between the Hutu government and the mainly Tutsi rebels. But it was not so simple. The plans for genocide were well advanced. The genocide was to be used as a political weapon intended to eliminate all opposition to Hutu Power. Hutu Power was a rabidly anti-Tutsi ideology, racist and nationalistic and opposed to power sharing.

In the first few months of 1994, Rwanda became increasingly violent and Force Commander Dallaire asked for reinforcements. No troops were available from anywhere. He lacked sandbags, petrol, and even petty cash and at one point he was obliged to borrow money from another UN agency. The mission lacked essential personnel—no humanitarian or human rights experts, no public affairs officers. Dallaire had estimated he would need 4,500 troops. The Security Council agreed 2,500.

The half-heartedness of the Security Council's commitment to Rwanda was plain to see. Dallaire wanted to be allowed to seize weapons. If arms continued to be distributed—an estimated 85 tons of munitions was spread around the country—then his peacekeepers would be unable to carry out their mandate. Permission to seize weapons was denied by officials in the UN Secretariat and Dallaire tried many times to persuade them otherwise. In his cables in the weeks immediately before the genocide Dallaire used the phrase, 'the situation is deteriorating rapidly' eleven times.

'Genocide', one of the Polish peacekeepers said, 'hung in the air'. So terrified were the Tutsi that some left the country, and others prepared for emergency evacuation. In Kigali the International Committee of the Red Cross and Médecins sans Frontières began contingency planning for a huge number of

¹⁰ 'The Security Council Role in the Rwanda Crisis', statement by Ambassador Colin Keating, Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the UN, at Comprehensive Seminar on Lessons Learned from UNAMIR, 12 June 1966, unpublished.

¹¹ In April 1994 the non-permanent members of the Security Council were the Czech Republic, Djibouti, New Zealand, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Spain, Argentina, Brazil and Rwanda.

¹² Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations, Executive Summary, A/55/305.

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casualties. Indeed, the Clinton administration was so fed up with the lack of progress towards peace in Rwanda and the continual delays in the peace process that US pressure was put on Security Council members to close the mission altogether. Some non-permanent members of the Security Council argued that Rwanda should be given a reasonable time to achieve democracy especially in the light of UN resources spent elsewhere, particularly in the former Yugoslavia. Most peace processes were long and complex. Under the terms of the Arusha Accords Rwanda was being asked to create democracy in just two years. But warnings were sent to Rwanda, threats that the international community was fed up with delay.

There was consternation in Rwanda about these threats to withdraw. The Prime Minister in a temporary government, created in accordance with the peace agreement, and intended to last 37 days, was Agathe Uwilingiyimana, a Hutu moderate. In an interview only days before the genocide began she had made a last appeal for her country:

When you have a dictatorial regime...for twenty years how do you expect this dictatorship to give up power without any pressure...the international community helped us to persuade the president that the war could end...why doesn't the international community go the last step...Extremists will always be wrong...the people of Rwanda want peace.¹³

On 5 April 1994 the Security Council met to decide what to do about its mission to Rwanda. Peacekeeping missions are usually given six-month operating periods and after that the Security Council has to decide the conditions for extending or even ending the mandate. American diplomats argued that unless Rwanda's delayed peace agreement was put back on track then the mission should close. Others argued that Rwanda needed time. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had prepared a report on UNAMIR for the Council and it gave an account of the delays in the peace agreement and described how most of the violence in Rwanda could be attributed to armed banditry. The report was optimistic in tone, pointing out that the ceasefire in the civil war was still holding. A ten-page military assessment Dallaire had written, highlighting his serious deficiencies in capability and equipment, was not contained in the report.

At 7.10 pm the ambassadors filed from the room at the back of the Council chamber where their secret deliberations are held. In a formal and open meeting they unanimously agreed a compromise and voted a resolution stipulating that unless the transitional institutions provided for under the Arusha Accords were established in Rwanda within the next six weeks then UNAMIR would pull out completely. Within hours of this vote the President of 20 years, Juvenal Habyarimana, had been killed. Over the airwaves in Kigali, via the hate-radio RTLMC, the Tutsi were blamed for his death.

¹³ François Ryckmans, *Chapeau Magazine*, Rwanda, 15 March 1994. Broadcast, Radio Télévision de la Communauté Française de Belgique (RTBF).

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From the beginning, from 6 April, the weaknesses in UNAMIR were terrifyingly obvious. With Kigali a fortress, an arsenal for the Rwandan army and the elite Presidential Guard, Dallaire informed New York that his Belgian troops were isolated in fourteen different places by road blocks. He had no supplies of petrol, and food and water for only one or two days. He was critically short of ammunition and medical supplies and the majority of his troops were untrained, under equipped and had run for fear of their lives. On the morning of 7 April ten Belgian peacekeepers were murdered, lynched by Rwandan soldiers. Dallaire was ordered by New York not to risk further losses. 'If there is no risk, they could have sent Boy Scouts, not soldiers', he would say later.¹⁴ Within six days of the beginning of the genocide every aid agency, every UN agency, all the development and cooperation missions had closed their offices with the vast majority of Rwandan staff abandoned to their fate. Every embassy, apart from the Chinese, had closed. No one has ever explained why there was such a speedy exodus from Rwanda. During this time everyone, whether Hutu or Tutsi, who had wanted power sharing was targeted: every journalist, every lawyer, every teacher, every clerk, every student, every civil rights activist was hunted down in a house to house operation and killed. And while pro-democracy politicians were being killed, the Hutu Power politicians were whisked away under the escort of the Presidential Guard.

In New York the meetings held by the Security Council to discuss what to do about Rwanda took place behind closed doors. Twenty years ago, when most council meetings were still held in public, it would have been possible to hear the options discussed, and know the position of each government. Today it is easier for diplomats. The debates take place behind closed doors in a side room and it is here that the deals are concluded that make up UN policy. The ambassadors only go into public session to vote resolutions and to make set speeches. All the important work is done behind closed doors. It was not always this way. In the UN's first years the Council had operated in the full glare of publicity. The debates held by the Council were in public. In 1946 the then British ambassador, Sir Alexander Cadogan, had expressed his approval of open Council meetings, of public diplomacy, as exemplified in the debates in the Council, for it made it necessary for states to justify their national behaviour in the eyes of the world. Every nation was amenable to some extent to world publicity.¹⁵

Throughout the genocide the Security Council was in almost constant secret session, meeting sometimes twice daily and long into the night. There was a crowded agenda. In early April 1994 the Council was preoccupied with a worsening situation in Bosnia, where there was a Serb bombardment of

¹⁴ Interview with Lt-Gen. Romeo Dallaire, September 1994.

¹⁵ Sir A. Cadogan (New York) to Mr Clement Attlee (received 2 April), No. 79 [UN 2345/18/78] Enclosure, *The United Nations in 1946*. See Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, edited by H. J. Yasamee and K. A. Hamilton, assisted by Isabel Warner and Ann Lane. Series 1, Vol. VII. *The United Nations: Iran, Cold War and World Organisation 1946-1947* HMSO, 1995.

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Gorazde and while NATO's response to it was filling the front pages. But having established a mission for Rwanda, the Council was responsible for its future. The meetings in the Council were long and tortuous and there was endless debate. These meetings would usually have remained secret forever were it not for a leak from within the Council.

From the outset, those states which had advocated a tough line on compliance with the Arusha Accords a few weeks earlier, the United States and Britain, were now inclined to carry out their threat to withdraw the force although the immediate reaction in the Council was to concentrate on whether or not it was possible to get a ceasefire in the renewed civil war. One of the ambassadors occupying a non-permanent seat, Karel Kovanda of the Czech Republic, recalled the initial period: 'No one was sure what, if anything, needed to be done. Into this absolutely bizarre situation came the big powers...who said they could do nothing.'¹⁶

At each informal meeting there were briefings from senior Secretariat officials, from the Secretary-General's inner office. The debate in the Security Council is often shaped by the recommendations from the Secretary-General acting on advice from officials in the Secretariat who receive all the cables from the force commanders. When it came to Rwanda in April 1994 no such recommendations were forthcoming. Some of the non-permanent members speculated that either the Secretariat had no options at all, in which case it was not up to the task of managing the conflict, or it was overwhelmed to the point of paralysis. In the first four weeks of the genocide in Rwanda a systematic and continuing slaughter, taking place miles away from the fighting in the civil war, was not once debated at any length in the secret meetings of the Security Council. The discussion was almost entirely focused on the resumption of the fighting in the civil war.

At a meeting on Monday 11 April, the Council was told about the thousands of people seeking safety wherever they could, in hospitals and in churches and wherever they saw the UN flag, and yet the next day, 12 April, the Council was told of 'chaotic, ethnic, random killings'. The Council discussed the creation of an 'interim government' in Rwanda, a government entirely comprised of Hutu hardliners. In meetings to come there were requests by the non-permanent members for UN officials to provide them with the views of both UNAMIR's Force Commander and the Secretary-General. But for the first two weeks the Secretary-General was absent from New York on a tour of European capitals and in that time they were never told the views of the Force Commander. Among the non-permanent members, complaints continued to surface that no options for action had been presented.

The account of the secret and informal meetings leaked to me from within the Council reveals that at this point, while US diplomats were expressing doubts about the viability of the force, it was the British ambassador, David

¹⁶ Interview with Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic, Ambassador Koral Kovanda, July 1994.

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Hannay, who came up with four options.¹⁷ The first was to reinforce the troops and give the peacekeepers a stronger mandate to intervene to halt the bloodshed. But this, Hannay warned, would be a repetition of Somalia. Peacekeeping was not appropriate for civil war, for situations where there was no peace to keep and where fighting factions were unwilling to cooperate. Inadequate efforts were worse than no efforts at all.

Secondly, UNAMIR could pull out completely but the negative signal to public opinion would be damaging. Thirdly, the troops could stay on although he did query what they could effectively do since there was no evidence that UNAMIR was in any position to protect civilians.

The fourth and last idea was to pull most of them out leaving behind 'some elements' and although this might initially attract public criticism, it seemed to be the safest course. Hannay warned the Council that the decision could not be delayed. The Americans agreed. No country should be expected to send soldiers into this chaotic environment. It was doubtful whether the peacekeepers could even be resupplied. If the UN failed to protect its own soldiers then the Security Council would have serious difficulties obtaining any more troops for other UN operations. The US did not want to be seen to be responsible for the gradual depletion of an isolated force, but the peacekeepers could be flown out and kept in a neighbouring country and then go back in at some later date. It was highly improbable that an outside force could halt the terror in Rwanda.

The Nigerian ambassador, Ibrahim Gambari, pointed out that tens of thousands of civilians were dying. The meeting adjourned. The ambassadors decided to ask once again for the views first of the Secretary-General, and also of those states contributing troops to UNAMIR. The Council thought of one action—it called for a ceasefire. The African group at the UN was one step ahead. It wanted the Security Council to take urgent action to protect the lives of civilians and reinforce UNAMIR.

On 12 April Belgium announced that it was pulling its troops from UNAMIR: there was a preoccupation in government to avoid any more Belgian deaths. From now on there was an active diplomatic campaign by Belgium for the withdrawal of the whole of UNAMIR. There was an assumption, actively encouraged by Belgium, and supported by Britain and the United States, that only a massive and dramatic intervention would succeed in Rwanda, and that this was out of the question. Two of the Council's most powerful members, the US and Britain, had decided that intervention in Rwanda was not appropriate. And the preoccupation with civil war meant that no attention was given to the contribution that the peacekeepers would continue to make, even without reinforcements.

With a lack of public awareness of genocide because of the initial inadequate and misleading press coverage there were no choices given and no risks were taken. The media's failure to report that genocide was taking place, and thereby

¹⁷ Melvern, *A people betrayed*, p. 153.

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generate public pressure for something to be done to stop it, contributed to the international inaction.¹⁸

The Secretary-General's report on Rwanda arrived at the Security Council on 21 April. It presented no new options, nor did it give a clear picture of the situation in Rwanda. It focused on the civil war and described 'anarchy and spontaneous slaughter'. It claimed that 'unruly soldiers' had carried out the killing of Rwanda's politicians. There was a 'political and ethnic dimension' to the killing. Boutros Boutros-Ghali quite firmly believed that the most important task was a ceasefire in the civil war. A plan to protect civilians in Rwanda, prepared by officials in the Secretariat, was not in the report. In portraying what was happening in terms of civil war, this report undermined the moral case for military intervention; military intervention in a civil war was presented as totally impractical, for it would lead only to a 'repetition of Somalia'. That day the Security Council voted to withdraw the bulk of the peacekeepers giving the impression that the whole world had abandoned Rwanda. It had not. Dallaire remained with 470 volunteer peacekeepers, together with a medical mission run by the International Committee of the Red Cross headed by its chief delegate, Philippe Gaillard. But not once, in the secret Security Council meetings of this time, was there any debate at all about what these people were managing to achieve, nor any discussion about how reinforcements might help them.

The impression given was that the situation was impervious to action. Dallaire's own estimate that some 5,000 troops could largely prevent the slaughter of civilians was not even put to the Security Council as an option in the crucial three weeks of killing—during which time most people died in large-scale and systematic slaughter and in places where the Tutsi had thought they would be safe—in schools, in churches, and in clinics. It remains incredible to Dallaire that people had been massacred by the thousands almost every day and yet the world remained impassive. The UN Security Council, for the first time in its history in possession of overwhelming proof of genocide, thought only of one action—to create a committee of experts to 'evaluate the evidence'.¹⁹ The Security Council and the Secretariat failed even to resupply the 470 volunteer peacekeepers left behind with Dallaire in Kigali.

In view of the enormity of the genocide and the continuing questions surrounding what happened, Kofi Annan, then Secretary-General, announced in March 1999 that an independent inquiry would be set up to establish the facts. Nine months later a report was produced that blamed everyone—the Secretary-General, officials in the Secretariat, and the member states on the Security Council. Similarly, the Report of the International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, created by the OAU report, left no doubt that each part of the UN system had to assume and acknowledge its respective part of the responsibility for the failure of the international

¹⁸ The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwandan Experience. Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, Copenhagen, March 1996, ch. 2, p. 36.

¹⁹ Security Council Resolution 935 of 1 July 1994 mandated the creation of a Commission of Experts.

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community. Two governments directly involved, France and Belgium, have each held inquiries into government policies, the Senate Commission in Belgium and the National Assembly in France. The OAU panel identified the United States, Belgium and France as governments with the greatest responsibility. However, one of the Belgian Senate recommendations was that every country on the Security Council in 1994 had a duty to conduct its own internal inquiries. To date, no known investigation into UK policy with regard to Rwanda and the political and bureaucratic processes by which decisions were made, has taken place. The decision-making process within the government of Prime Minister John Major may never be known. However, in December 1999 I interviewed David Hannay. He said that the British were 'extremely unsighted' over Rwanda. There was no British embassy there. There were no British interests. Rwanda was a long way down the list of priorities and the telegrams about Rwanda, received from British embassies in Brussels, Paris and Washington were not treated as high grade. During the genocide, a great amount of time and resources were being channelled into the problems of Bosnia and in trying to disarm Iraq, and the British mission in New York was over-stretched. Hannay says the information coming from the Secretariat was insufficient: like Keating he complained about the inadequate briefings available to the Security Council. According to Hannay, Boutros-Ghali controlled the flow of information to the Council, allowing only those officials with his permission to brief ambassadors. In all the discussions held about Rwanda before the genocide began, the focus had been on how to implement the Arusha Accords. 'Events proved', said Hannay, 'we were looking in the wrong direction, and that the Secretariat was telling us to look in that direction.' He had seen none of the Force Commander's cables from Rwanda because the Council was not meant to be involved in the day-to-day running of peacekeeping missions. Even so, Hannay is convinced that there was nothing the UN could have done to prevent the genocide in Rwanda, not with a Hutu-led government intent on it. Even had the Security Council recognized the killing as genocide it would not have saved any lives. Hannay said that he was not a lawyer and was therefore not in a position to decide whether or not what was happening was genocide. 'We knew a lot of Tutsi were being killed by a lot of Hutu', he said. The Council could not conjure up troops and although he believes that Dallaire did a fantastic job, Hannay remains deeply sceptical of Dallaire's belief that 5,000 troops could have prevented much of the slaughter. In any case, to have mounted an enforcement mission with so few troops was totally against American military doctrine.

Some years later, in December 1998, in a BBC Radio Four interview Hannay talked specifically about the genocide convention in relation to Rwanda: '...nobody ever started to say who will actually do the intervening and how will it be done', he said.²⁰

²⁰ Misha Glenny, 'War Radio', BBC Radio 4, 10 Dec. 1998.

