The UN Security Council, Indifference, and Genocide in Rwanda

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I was on the Delta Shuttle from New York to Washington on April 6, 1994 when I first learned, by way of the *New York Times,* that the plane carrying President Habyarimana of Rwanda had mysteriously crashed as it approached the Kigali airport. My first response was to study the photograph of the dead president; after closely covering his comings and goings for the past several months, it struck me as odd that the first time that I would see his face was in a newspaper article announcing his death. Then I felt frustration bordering on exasperation. As a political officer at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations who was assigned to cover Rwanda, I had spent the last part of March consumed by the negotiations on the mandate extension of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR). Although many of the Security Council debates on whether to extend a mandate and under what conditions have a scripted quality that foreordain renewal, this instance was uncharacteristically lengthy and contentious.

UNAMIR was charged with overseeing the implementation of the Arusha Accords, the blueprint to end the civil war between the Tutsi-backed Rwandan Patriotic Forces (RPF) and the Hutu-dominated Rwandan government, and to install a new, more representative, government. For some months, the Rwandan government had been dragging its heels and failing to produce the transitional government, leaving many on the Security Council increasingly irritated. The U.S. position was that the Rwandan government should be notified that unless it quickly established the transitional government, the UN operation would be ended. How strong these signals should be, and how serious the threat to close the operation should be, was a principal point of contention during the negotiations over the mandate's extension. The Security Council approved an extension just as the mandate expired in early April, the United States was satisfied that its concerns had been communicated to the Rwandan government, and I was relieved to have Rwanda off my desk and be able to turn my attention to other matters. The president's death changed all that, for bad and for good. Exhausted from the hectic pace, I would now not have my long awaited break. Still,

Rwanda rarely commanded front-page news as it was now doing, and I could look forward to a departure from the daily monotonous routine.

As it so happens, I was on my way to Washington to meet the various people in the State Department from whom I received my instructions on Rwanda and other peacekeeping operations. Beginning in January 1994, I had been assigned primary responsibility for the peacekeeping operations in Rwanda, Burundi, and Mozambique, and had become the backup officer for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Such responsibilities entailed a never-ending stream of phone calls to various parts of the State Department that had some input into these operations, primarily the Bureau of International Organization and secondarily the Bureaus of Central and East African Affairs and Political-Military Affairs. Before the death of Habyarimana, the agenda for my trip to Washington had been to make the rounds, meet my bureaucratic counterparts, and discuss the various operations. Now I was anxious to hear about what was happening in Kigali.

I was greeted by my contact person from International Organization, who had little news but was eager to bring me upstairs to the recently established Situation Room. The "Sit Room"—something assembled at the outset of any crisis as a nerve center for receiving and coordinating information—had three banks of phones, roughly 20 people milling in and out, and a makeshift map of Rwanda hung on the wall, the only marker of why we were all there. As we entered the room, my contact person requested everyone's attention to relay news of the current situation in Kigali, which was rather sparse and highly speculative. She then asked each of us to introduce ourselves. When my turn came, I was given a special introduction by my contact: I was the person at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations who followed Rwanda. The subtext was that I was a Rwanda expert. My credentials established, those nearest to me immediately asked me to provide basic background on the country, as well as information about the military locations and strengths of the government, RPF, and UN forces; their anticipated moves; and what the Security Council was likely to do. To my amazement, I handled these and other questions with a degree of assuredness and authority expected of someone of my position. I offered to call my contacts at the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in order to gather more information on developments on the ground; I did, and my UN contacts gave me what they had, which was more alarming and complete than what I just had heard in the Sit Room. I relayed the information to those around me, solidifying my credentials as an expert on Rwanda. I declined the invitation to stay for the night shift on the pretext that I would be of greater service in New York. My contact agreed, although I doubt she cared one way or the other.

That I might be presented as a Rwanda expert still strikes me as rather incongruous. After all, I teach international politics at the University of Wisconsin, feel most comfortable in the world of theory rather than in the world of facts, and any claim I have to regional expertise is limited to the Middle East. That I became an expert on Rwanda is thanks to the Council of Foreign Relations, which offers a fellowship program that places academics in the U.S. foreign policy bureaucracy to both carry out research and become part of the policy-making

process. Building on a long-standing interest in Third World security, I had proposed to examine how such issues were being handled after the Cold War. The UN, through its peacekeeping operations, had become highly involved in Third World security; therefore, the U.S. Mission to the United Nations seemed to be the perfect venue for examining such matters. The U.S. Mission agreed to host my year, and I was placed in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, reporting directly to the ambassador who covered security affairs and to the Mission's Political Section. At the suggestion of my immediate superior, I adopted the title of Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations. I proudly accepted my security passes (see Figure 1), the first tangible evidence that I was a bona fide member of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.

When I arrived at the U.S. Mission in August 1993, I was assigned to help cover Somalia. After the United States announced in October its intention to withdraw from Somalia by March 1994, my responsibilities for Somalia rapidly shrunk, and in my position, there was little to do but pray that the United States might withdraw without incurring additional casualties or further harm to its reputation. Consequently, I was assigned to other parts of Africa. When Rwanda became part of my "account," I knew little more about it than how to find it on a map and that it was the country with the gorillas; my first association with

Figure 1
The security passes of Michael Barnett when he worked at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. These passes must be worn whenever entering, inhabiting, or exiting the premises of the UN; they allow movement within the UN without an escort. The security pass on the left also displays status through the easily recognized word *adviser*. This pass is thus one of the first and most tangible signs of "being an expert." Photo reproduced courtesy of Judith Pierotti.

Mozambique was the song of that title by Bob Dylan. My lack of knowledge seemed to trouble only myself. My superiors were, perhaps, reassured by the experience I had gained covering Somalia and the fact that they would closely supervise my activities, and they knew better than I that in-depth knowledge of the country was not necessary to carry out my daily activities.

Among my duties as a political officer were reading cable traffic on my issues, writing talking points for the U.S. ambassadors, hosting various Washington officials when they visited the UN, covering the Security Council when my issues were on the agenda and then writing cables on its proceedings, and generally acting as a conduit between Washington and the UN. Sometimes I would be asked to work on long-term "policy" issues, such as peacekeeping reform and Security Council expansion. These I felt more comfortable with because they were more consistent with my academic training and background. But the Mission had little real use for long-term policy planning and great demand for another political officer—that is, someone who could help with the overwhelming workload—and I recognized that I would learn much more by becoming integrated into the daily routines than by working on policy projects that would be disregarded. In any event, I was a seasoned veteran of Rwanda for nearly four months when President Habyarimana of Rwanda was killed and all hell erupted.

Becoming a Bureaucrat

That I might be plausibly presented as a Rwanda expert can only be understood in the context of the culture of the foreign policy bureaucracy. Like all bureaucracies, the foreign policy bureaucracy organizes and privileges knowledge in particular ways, and in this context the knowledge that mattered most was not the particulars about Rwanda but rather the culture of the policy-making process in the U.S. government and the UN. Specifically, my standing as an expert derived from the following factors. As a political officer I was, by definition, an expert. Rwanda was my account; I was its owner and hence a Rwanda expert. It hardly mattered that when Rwanda became part of my account I knew little of its political, economic, and social structures. Nor did my daily routine allow me to devote any real effort to "get smart" on the subject; I was responsible for other operations and my days were consumed with back-to-back "fires" that needed immediate attention. No one ever asked me for my credentials and it would not have mattered. The other political officer at the U.S. Mission who covered Africa could claim greater expertise by virtue of having covered the topic in recent years, not from any formal training or visits. That she had never visited Africa was a legacy of post–Cold War budget cuts: travel money was becoming increasingly scarce and largely consumed by those at the top. Expert status had very little to do with areal knowledge and much to do with bureaucratic position.

My status also derived from my possession of the "facts" of the bureaucracy: who handled what issues, who had access to key decision makers, who my counterparts were in other missions to the UN and other departments in Washington, what had transpired in the Security Council, and what the precise language

of past mandates was. Over time, I accumulated a stock of facts regarding the issues that I covered, and I became fluent in the acronyms of the UN and the policy process. Knowledge of some of these facts and having the Rwanda account went some distance in defining me as an expert.

More fundamentally, my standing as an expert derived from my ability to formulate questions and responses, to pose talking points, to use language, and to carry on conversations in ways that were consistent with the understandings and discourses of my superiors and my colleagues. In other words, I had to understand the subtext to conversations, what was said and not said, how information was framed, the symbols that were emotionally charged, what knowledge was relevant, and how arguments were constructed and topics debated. The foreign policy bureaucracy, like all organizations, has its own culture to the extent that it has its own discourse, symbols, and norms of interaction, in both practices and language choice, that mark insiders from outsiders. Whether I was accepted and effective was dependent on acting in a manner that was consistent with that culture.

My socialization into this culture was a slow and often awkward process. When I first arrived at the U.S. Mission, I knew little of the language and understood few of the symbols. My colleagues could speak full sentences in acronyms that I had never heard of, use slang that referred to events and processes of which I had no knowledge, and easily transform nouns like "demarche" into verbs. Being unable to speak the language or understand the subtext to conversations left me feeling generally alienated and often confused. My exhaustion at the end of the day was a testimony not only to the grueling and charged pace, but also to my ignorance of the discourse and symbols that circulated as I went through the day. To constantly question all that passed before me proved tiring and quite frequently provided fodder for my colleagues' amusement, causing them to make playful but derogatory references to my "academic" status. Ironically, participants from peacekeeping operations who passed through New York would similarly comment that colleagues at the UN existed in an "ivory tower," while they lived in the "real world." Events that would make my colleagues at the Mission take notice would have little effect on me; other events that would cause me to panic would leave my colleagues simply bored. My only other experiences that nearly matched this sensation of being in another world was when I was in my first year in graduate school and when I was doing field research in Cairo for my dissertation. Still, within several months I became comfortable with the cultural terrain.

A good illustration of this was my experiences learning to write "reporting cables," one of my most important duties as a political officer. Reporting cables are accounts of events, meetings, and developments that might be relevant to U.S. policy or someone, somewhere, in the foreign policy bureaucracy. There are rules to cable writing, and junior officers take a detailed course in this craft (and other aspects of diplomatic protocol) before they are given their first post. Although my job entailed endless hours writing cables, I received little guidance on its ins and outs, and consequently, learned by trial and error. Some aspects of

cable writing were relatively straightforward to learn, such as how to set up the cable, who should be on the distribution list, and its formal organization. Less straightforward but more central to the effectiveness of the cable, however, was articulating the bureaucratic culture that the cable was to reflect and represent.

A good cable has various characteristics, and at first my cables had few of them. Initially my cables were "academic," reminiscent of my notes from graduate seminars: exhaustive, analytical, dense, aspiring to reach some mythical archimedean point that was attentive to the complexities of the issue, the details of the meetings, and the views of all those in attendance. But this approach completely overlooked the basic point that cables are political documents. As political documents, cables are expected to provide a narrative that weaves together various perspectives that derive from personal, bureaucratic, and U.S.-centered positions. My task as a political officer was to report on events in which my immediate superiors were directly involved or interested, or for which they had bureaucratic responsibility. Simply put, I had to "clear" these cables by the same individuals about whom I was reporting or who had a direct interest in the issue. Not surprisingly, they were concerned not at least as much with making sure that they were represented favorably and protected from bureaucratic rivals as with "getting the story right." A good cable, I learned, is not only clear and succinct; it also offers an account that is consistent with the interests, both personal and bureaucratic, of one's superiors. For instance, my cables had to portray the U.S. ambassadors as sharp, alert, and probing; on numerous occasions I had to rewrite a cable because it did not quite capture the language of a superior or place her or him in the best light. Rarely would I record the gaffes of my superiors, no matter how consequential, and I learned that I was free to rearrange the sequence of events if it served a political purpose.

My cables were also expected to reflect the bureaucratic interests and worldview of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in general and of the Political Section in particular. Those in Washington believed that we in New York had "gone native"—that is, that we were unreflectingly pro-UN and pro-peacekeeping, insufficiently sensitive to U.S. "national interests," and naive about U.S. domestic and Washington politics. We in New York believed that those in Washington had little understanding of the "politics of the UN" or how resolutions were crafted and drafted, and saw our job as having to explain to Washington how the UN and the Security Council worked and how the policies we proposed were, in fact, consistent with the U.S. national interests. Therefore, my bureaucratic interests were not limited to defending and expanding my turf, but also included learning a definition of the "U.S. national interest" that was consistent with my bureaucratic position at the UN. Over time I learned a conception of the "U.S. national interest" that supported the UN and peacekeeping. In fact, "players" at the U.S. Mission achieved this designation not simply by virtue of their position in the bureaucracy, but also through their ability to translate between and articulate the views of the U.S. Mission and Washington.

Furthermore, my own assignment and position shaped the interests I reflected and promoted in my cables. My bureaucratic interests included protecting

my turf, as well as looking for opportunities to increase my visibility or capture an additional high-profile policy issue. When I first began covering Somalia, I was "tagged" to follow closely the issue of the Somali police force. Specifically, there was considerable interest in "standing up" the Somali police force to, first, help the UN with its task of maintaining security and, second, expedite the return of "law and order" to Somalia and the withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia. Soon thereafter, my immediate superior and I began using our expertise on Somalia to highlight the importance of civilian police in UN operations more generally. Not only were these important issues that were generic to other operations, but the promotion of this issue also promoted our profile. We were good bureaucratic actors—that is, good entrepreneurs.

Weaving these various views—personal, bureaucratic, and U.S.-centered—into a coherent narrative was something that had to be learned. Over time I became quite capable of presenting information so that it paralleled how other bureaucrats understood and organized the world; slowly I learned how to couch and frame my issue in ways that made sense to those on the distribution list. An effective cable is one that is likely to be read, and a cable will only be read if it organizes knowledge in a manner that conforms to the intended reader's organization of knowledge.

Slowly I acquired more than the skills of a political officer; I developed the mentality and mindset as well. After several months, I became more comfortable with my position, and better able to understand and share in the symbols, gestures, and utterances of my colleagues. Said otherwise, not only had I entered the bureaucratic world, but the bureaucratic world had entered me. My long days of intense interaction with my colleagues were slowly transforming how I understood, identified, and presented myself. Whereas once I had effected certain practices and discourses because of their instrumentality and strategic value, now I did so because they felt comfortable and consistent with who I was and how I understood myself. At various instances when I comfortably effected the language and the practices of a political officer, my colleagues commented on my "socialization" with chuckles and tongue-in-cheek congratulations. If once I thought of "me" and "them," I now began thinking in terms of "us." Although my identity as an academic and a visitor never disappeared for either my colleagues or myself, my presentation and practices were less strategic and mimetic and more authentic.

My new identity was tied to a particular set of interests. Whereas once I was bewildered by my colleagues' logic as they defended or promoted a particular policy, I soon became sympathetic to and supported their positions. More dramatically, if once I judged, promoted, and criticized policies depending on how they related to my "academic" preferences, I now had "swallowed a dose of reality" and was situating policies according to whether they were good or bad for the interests and reputations of, first, the United States, and, second, the UN. I more fully identified with my role as a representative of the United States to the UN, and I slowly identified with, developed a greater loyalty to, and took my identity from, these entities. I began to defend the policies of the United States

and the potential of the UN not simply because to do otherwise might cause my colleagues to sanction me for disloyalty, but because I came to identify with these organizations. I was now a Rwanda expert.

Rwanda

The 24 hours after the death of President Habyarimana on April 6 produced the feared bloodshed. With only 5,000 lightly-armed peacekeepers scattered throughout Rwanda, UNAMIR was unprepared to confront the wave of terror unleashed by Hutu extremists against Tutsis and Hutu moderates. UN troops were instantly confronted by two increasingly untenable tasks: protecting the lives of civilians and defending themselves. The tension between these two goals became immediately apparent when ten Belgian peacekeepers were brutally murdered while protecting moderate Hutu politicians during the first days of the violence; the remaining Belgian troops were widely believed by UNAMIR and the Security Council to be marked for assassination. Whether or not the non-Belgian peacekeepers were at immediate risk from Hutu forces, they were running dangerously low on fuel, water, and food; moreover, resupplying or rescuing them was becoming increasingly questionable as the airport became a major battleground, raising the real possibility that any approaching aircraft might suffer the same fate as Habyarimana's. To make matters worse, the RPF was now assembling and preparing to march on Kigali. Therefore, the meager and badly supplied UN forces were confronted by two wars: the Rwandan government's terror campaign against its "enemies" and the brewing civil war between the government and RPF.

Back in New York, the Security Council had to decide quickly about both the future of UNAMIR and the UN's response to the growing violence. The Security Council was in almost constant session, meeting sometimes twice daily and long into the night. As I watched and participated in the debate over the Security Council's response during this critical period, I (and others around me) came to believe that the only responsible decision was to reduce UNAMIR's presence and mandate. Three factors, in my view, were most important for producing this consensus.

First, the Secretariat, namely Boutros Boutros-Ghali's office and DPKO, gave an impression of distance and aloofness from the emerging tragedy, which only reinforced the disinclination among many member states in the Security Council to propose a greater role for UNAMIR.[1] During these first days of the crisis, one of my responsibilities was to meet with officials at DPKO to try and ascertain their thoughts on UNAMIR's future and on how the UN ought to respond. In doing so, I became increasingly alarmed by their "business-as-usual" approach. Few who I encountered displayed much urgency. Two other incidents also contributed to my view of a Secretariat that was not up to the task. During a meeting between DPKO and representatives of the member states contributing troops to UNAMIR, the latter bitterly complained that they were unable to receive any information on the whereabouts or safety of their troops—or even to get DPKO to return their phone calls. As they walked out of the meeting, many

of those representatives grumbled that they could not afford to place the lives of their people in the hands of a cavalier UN. One story making the rounds was that a member of the Secretariat said that the UN need not be overly concerned with their troops since "they are not our boys." In the UN's world, according to the delegate who told me the story, jeeps are more valuable than people. Although I cannot say that the incident ever occurred, it sounded plausible to me and, more important, very plausible to others.

Boutros-Ghali also emanated indecision to the point of paralysis, if not complacency. He happened to be in Europe in early April and opted to stay there rather than return to New York. This decision, in my view at the time, reflected a disturbingly distant stance from the unfolding tragedy and demonstrated a troubling abdication of responsibility and leadership. A more distressing episode concerned a reported conversation between him and Belgium's former Foreign Minister Willy Claes. With ten peacekeepers already dead and its remaining soldiers at risk, the Belgian government was debating whether to withdraw its troops. Claes called Boutros-Ghali to ascertain the Secretariat's thinking and how Belgium's decision might affect the future of UNAMIR. According to an authoritative source, despite the urgency of the situation Boutros-Ghali responded by saying that he would "get back to him in four or five days."

Most consequential, however, was the failure of the Secretariat to offer any options to the Security Council regarding the future of UNAMIR. The Secretariat, through its recommendations and reports, shapes the Security Council's deliberations and potentially its decisions. The Secretariat's agenda-setting influence was potentially enhanced in this instance because few, if any, member states had independent sources of information, and they therefore relied heavily on the Secretariat for intelligence and policy recommendations regarding UNAMIR's future. Yet the Secretariat's reports were evasive and noncommittal. My overall impression, shared by others on the Security Council, was that the Secretariat was "not up to the task" of crisis management, being either overwhelmed or insensitive to the dead peacekeepers and the escalating violence. At that moment, I became convinced that the Secretariat should not be given the responsibility of commanding troops in dangerous situations and that UNAMIR's size and responsibility needed to be reduced.

A second reason for the consensus to reduce UNAMIR's role was that no country was willing to contribute its troops for an expanded operation or mandate. Although there was a brief discussion concerning the possibility of UNAMIR's intervening to halt the escalating bloodshed and to protect the civilian populations, I was (and still am) unaware of a single member state who offered their troops for such an operation. Consequently, those on the Security Council, largely the nonpermanent members, who were arguing for an intervention force had little ammunition: the Secretariat, who would be responsible for carrying out the mandate, was silent, and silence was widely interpreted as disapproval. No troop contributors were volunteering for an expanded force. Indeed, soon after the death of its soldiers, Belgium, which represented the backbone

of UNAMIR, announced its immediate withdrawal, and no state offered re-placements.

Third, with UNAMIR's mandate to oversee the Arusha Accords effectively over, with no country willing to send its troops into an increasingly chaotic en-vironment, and with access to the airport increasingly precarious, the Security Council had to protect its peacekeepers and the UN's reputation. This was a line most forcefully argued by the United States; it and others consistently argued that the Security Council had a duty and obligation to protect the lives of the peacekeepers and that the failure to do so would make it harder to obtain troops for future operations and, perhaps, further the decline in the UN's reputation. Although the Security Council was divided over the extent and timing of the drawdown, there was a general recognition that peacekeepers, unprotected and exposed, could do little good and much harm both to themselves and the UN's reputation and future. I fully shared and supported this view. After nearly two weeks of endless and circular debate, on April 21 the Security Council decided to withdraw the bulk of UNAMIR and to leave in place a skeletal force to assist the valiant, but ultimately unsuccessful, efforts of UN Force Commander Gen-eral Romeo Dallaire to fashion a cease-fire agreement between the RPF and the government.

No sooner had the Security Council voted to reduce UNAMIR's presence than it and Boutros-Ghali revisited whether and how the UN might respond to confront the increasingly evident genocide. Boutros-Ghali now began to take a visible lead, using his bully pulpit to formulate options and to urge the Security Council and the member states to respond vigorously to the continuing massa-cres. The Security Council, highly embarrassed that its only answer to the bloodshed was a reduction of UNAMIR, began to debate the possibility of an in-tervention force. But there were no volunteers for such a force. It seemed that the daily reports of carnage and brutality only contributed to the belief that it was highly improbable that a modest-sized outside force could halt the terror, and no member state was enthusiastic about sending its troops into such chaos.

When the Secretariat finally unveiled its long-awaited plan in late April, it was greeted with considerable enthusiasm by the Security Council, although more because it created an image of a UN that was poised for action than because the plan was likely to contribute to ending the genocide. Simply put, this pro-posal was merely symbolic and highly impractical: it proposed to dispatch 5,000 troops to Kigali, acknowledged that these troops might not be located for months (if ever), and confessed that it had no real idea what they would do once they arrived. The United States rightly criticized the plan as little more than smoke and demanded that the Secretariat and others on the Security Council de-sign a realistic proposal rather than constructing a Potemkin village. The United States also circulated its own suggestions for protecting and providing relief to the growing number of refugees. Because the United States objected to this in-itial proposal, the United States was widely portrayed in the media as repre-senting the sole obstacle to military intervention by the U.N. But the U.S. posi-tion, in my view, only blocked the adoption of a proposal that was designed to

save face for the Security Council and diverted energy away from alternatives that might actually have helped those on the ground.

No international action would be taken until late June, when a UN-authorized French operation went to southern Rwanda to protect the refugees. The Security Council was unenthusiastic about France's proposed intervention. France had long-standing ties to the very Hutu military that was now accused of genocide, and the Security Council feared that France would use the pretext of a humanitarian intervention to intervene on behalf of its Hutu allies. But the Security Council set aside these concerns and reluctantly approved what was its only real option, by a vote of ten in favor and five abstentions. Soon thereafter, the United States and other countries contributed humanitarian assistance (although outside the UN umbrella) to try and alleviate the suffering of an estimated 2 million refugees. And in the fall of 1994, UNAMIR returned to Kigali in greater numbers, long after the RPF had captured the country, between 500,000 and 800,000 people had perished, and 2 million had become refugees.

I left the U.S. Mission in June 1994 and returned to academic life. As I began to write on UN peacekeeping and its future, I highlighted the policy implications of Rwanda and other peacekeeping operations. Most of the lessons I drew derived from the need to protect the UN's resources and to better define the limit and scope of future UN operations in order to salvage its reputation and to ensure the continuation of the member states' support. Although troubled by the Security Council's failure to take even the most minimal steps to alleviate the suffering in Rwanda, I justified the lack of action by arguing that anything short of a massive and dramatic intervention would not have stopped the genocide, no states were offering troops for such a campaign, and another "loss" after Somalia would jeopardize the UN's future. Such horrors existed and would continue to exist, I told myself and others, and the UN could not be expected to intervene wherever danger and bloodshed occurred.

In April 1995, I was watching a television special commemorating the first anniversary of the genocide of Rwanda. The narrator emphatically contrasted the genocide and the refugee crisis with the minimal efforts of the international community. My first response was my standard line: there had been no effective basis for UN intervention, and the Security Council had a responsibility not only to Rwanda but also to the UN and its peacekeepers. Upon further reflection, however, I began to question why I, along with so many others in the Security Council and the Secretariat, had so quickly concluded that the needs of the UN overrode the needs of those who were the targets of genocide. Why, for instance, had neither the Secretariat nor any member state vigorously petitioned the Security Council to assemble an intervention force? Why were most member states apparently more exercised by the need to restrain the UN from any further involvement than they were by the need to dispatch assistance? How did the desire to protect the UN's reputation become a justification for not intervening? Raising such questions led me to pose the reason for inaction in a more brutal manner: the UN had more to lose by taking action and being associated with another failure than it did by not taking action and allowing the genocide in Rwanda. The

moral equation was: genocide was acceptable if the alternative was to harm the future of the UN.

The Bureaucratization of Indifference

I am increasingly drawn to the conclusion that the bureaucratization of peacekeeping contributed to this indifference to the suffering of the very people peacekeeping is mandated to assist. As I, for one, more closely identified with the United States and the UN, I found it easier to remain indifferent to the occasional evil in deference to their "interests." There is, in my experience, an intimate connection between the discourse of acting in the best interests of the international community, the bureaucratization of peacekeeping, and the production of indifference.[2]

The traditional view offered by international relations scholars is that states pursue their "security interests," and thus no matter how grieved member states were by the genocide in Rwanda, they were unwilling to commit money and manpower to any operation because it remained outside their "interests." This is part of the answer, but it does not adequately capture the dynamics of the Security Council's debate over Rwanda, nor explain why the Security Council agonized over its decision, nor why I and others were adamant that the UN's reputation was part of the moral calculus. What is missing from the traditional approach is an understanding of how the decision not to halt the genocide came to be understood and defined as ethical and moral.

Michael Herzfeld's *The Social Production of Indifference: Exploring the Symbolic Roots of Western Bureaucracy* (1993) offers a conceptual apparatus that I find useful for thinking about these issues. Herzfeld opens with a succinct concern: "How and why can political entities that celebrate the rights of individuals and small groups so often seem cruelly selective in applying those rights?" (1993:1). How is it possible, asks Herzfeld, for Western bureaucracies, which are supposedly rooted in a democratic context, to be so unaccountable to, and to demonstrate such little concern for, those they represent? Why, he continues, do citizens of a democratic society come to accept, if not expect, such arrangements? While I cannot do justice to the complexity of Herzfeld's provocative argument, he offers five observations that inform my discussion of the relationship between peacekeeping and indifference.

First, state bureaucracies are not only instruments of domination, but are also symbolic markers of boundaries between "peoples" and are expressive of the societies that produced those bureaucracies. As symbolic instruments of the nation-state, bureaucracies distinguish citizens from noncitizens, separate the "community of believers" from the "community of apostates," and articulate the criteria that define who belongs and who does not.

Second, identity is linked to the production of difference and indifference. Bureaucracies are constitutive of the identity of the community, differentiate between members and nonmembers of the community, and are expected to attend to members while ignoring nonmembers. "Compactly expressed . . . indifference is a rejection of those who are different" (Herzfeld 1993:33). The identity

of the bureaucracy, in other words, represents the emotional and cognitive mechanism for producing exclusion and apathy. Bureaucrats use identity to determine who will receive their attention and who will not, and for national bureaucracies, the most straightforward marker is citizenship.

Third, bureaucracies will selectively apply rights even among the members of the community. It is not the case that all members of society are treated equally or receive the same privileges; some are more equal than others. Privileged status cannot be reduced to economic and political power, for it depends as well on identity criteria such as race, religion, and gender.

Fourth, bureaucrats exhibit selective attention because they identify not only with their fellow citizens but also with their bureaucracy. Bureaucrats, in this respect, have something of a dual identity: as members of a particular national community they draw symbolic boundaries between themselves and those outside the national state, and as members of a bureaucracy, they draw boundaries between the bureaucracy and society. Simply stated, bureaucrats will often privilege the needs of, and take their identity from, the bureaucracy rather than the society that they ostensibly represent.

Fifth, a final reason for bureaucratic indifference is that bureaucrats pursue not only a bureaucratic agenda but also a personal one. Following Herzfeld, successful bureaucrats may be cynically defined as those who are able to manipulate the bureaucratic culture to achieve their personal goals; that is, they twist the language and rules of the bureaucracy to make it appear as if they are following the societal or bureaucratic interests when, in fact, they are pursuing their own.

How is it that society and even bureaucrats themselves cope with and explain their indifference? To address this issue, Herzfeld deploys the concept of secular theodicy, building on Max Weber's concept of religious theodicy. Briefly, Weber was interested in how religious systems account, in Herzfeld's words, for the "persistence of evil in a divinely ordered world" (Herzfeld 1993: 5). Weber observed that the "legitimation of every distinctively ethical prophecy has always required the notion of a god characterized by attributes that set him sublimely above the world" (Weber 1963:138). The more a religion holds to a conception of a transcendental deity, however, the greater is the problem of how to reconcile the "problem of the extraordinary power of such a god . . . with the imperfection of the world that he has created and rules over" (Weber 1963: 138–139). Different religions have offered different responses that allow them to maintain their belief in these transcendental principles, notwithstanding the existence of the occasional evil. Such responses constitute "theodicy," as Herzfeld uses the term.

Herzfeld transports the concept of theodicy from the religious to the secular domain of "Western" nation-states, suggesting that (1) these states exhibit a secular transcendentalism bound up with the nation; (2) individuals who are part of the nation-state must cope with evils committed and ignored by the state's bureaucracy that potentially call into question the nation's transcendental values; and (3) theodicy serves the pragmatic goal of providing "people with the social means of coping with disappointment" (1993:7). Both religious and secular

theodicy, therefore, derive from the "principle of the elect as an exclusive community, whose members' individual sins cannot undermine the ultimate perfection of the ideal in which they all share" (1993:10), and both exhibit their own forms of theodicy as a way of "propping up belief in a flawed world" (1993:7).

Herzfeld argues that Western societies and their bureaucrats explain the presence of evil, and even justify their own indifference, with reference to abstract moral principles associated primarily with their respective nation and secondarily with democracy. The citizens of these states are able to excuse acts of repression and accept daily bureaucratic indifference by maintaining a continuous belief in the transcendental purpose of their nation-state. Such faith, notes Herzfeld, "permits genocide and intracommunal killings, to be sure, but it also perpetuates the pettier and less sensational versions of the same logic" (1993:33). Indifference is excused and explained by members of society because of the operation of secular theodicy.

The very bureaucrats who are often responsible for dispensing such disappointments also exhibit secular theodicy. Bureaucrats are notorious for buck-passing, invoking bureaucratic rules as limits on their autonomy and responsibility, and authoring and authorizing various laws that seem far from the values that define the community. But bureaucratic indifference is almost never paraded as such. Rather, the bureaucrat, who is a representative of the collectivity, dismisses the needs of the individual and excuses the particular instance of indifference by referring to the sanctity of the transcendental. Sometimes bureaucrats will feign concern but will use the veil of transcendentalism and the common good to camouflage their unwillingness to act; they would do something or intervene if they could, bureaucrats will insincerely profess, but they must obey the rules of the organization that are designed to foster the common good even if it allows for the occasional injustice. But not all such appeals by bureaucrats to the transcendental are strategic. References to the transcendental also enable bureaucrats to live with themselves while acting indifferent and permitting injustices. To be a servant of the state that espouses transcendental values while following bureaucratic rules means that disappointments are delivered on a daily basis and the occasional sin is excused, ignored, or justified with reference to abstract moral principles. A secular theodicy, in other words, displays itself. As representatives of the common good, bureaucrats can remain comfortably indifferent to the individual under the cloak of community, and the existence of transcendental principles is not undermined by what they witness or dispense. Such indifference is a testimony to the dominance of the interests of the organization over those of the individual, a testimony to the primacy of the transcendental over the particular. In general, the notion that actions occur with reference to, and are embedded within, a community context allows bureaucrats and other members of society to accept disappointments, if not evil.

There are important differences between national and international bureaucracies, such as the UN, but the comparison between national bureaucracies and the UN is apt for three reasons. First, both the national and international community are invested with transcendental principles by their members; where

Herzfeld looks to the nation-state, I look to the international community. Indeed, UN officials, according to David Rieff (1996:20), often talk about the UN as if it were a church, suggesting that they are guardians of a religion whose tenets are transcendental. Second, the UN is founded on the "principle of identity" and the existence of a "community, whose members' individual sins cannot undermine the ultimate perfection of the ideal that they all share" (Herzfeld 1993:10). The UN symbolically defines who is and is not part of the "international community," selectively applies the rights of the community among its members, and produces difference and indifference by differentiating members of the community from nonmembers. Third, UN officials and member states identify with and protect the UN's interests and reputation, strategically and sincerely evoke the discourse of the transcendental while ignoring the plights of the individual, and express their own brand of indifference and secular theodicy. These three observations provide the starting point for revisiting the Security Council's debates on Rwanda.

A complex and contested feature of the UN is the definition of its constituency, that is, of the "international community." In the history of the UN, the "international community," and concomitantly the UN's constituency, has been defined in three often contradictory, yet often conflated, ways: in terms of individual persons, in terms of collective "peoples" (largely defined according to identity-based categories of nationality, ethnicity, or even gender), and in terms of sovereign states. The UN charter declares that it is accountable to individuals and peoples who have universal rights that are before and beyond the state. Consistent with this, throughout its 50-year history, the UN has claimed both that it represents the peoples of the world and that there exist universal rights and principles that defy state boundaries. At the same time, however, the UN Charter also observes that a guiding principle of international society is state sovereignty and the principle of noninterference. The UN is an intergovernmental organization, its membership is limited to states, only states are part of the General Assembly and the Security Council, and states alone determine its policies. Throughout its history, the UN has generally promoted and honored the principle of sovereignty, which has meant that any tension over the UN's constituency—that is, who constitutes the international community—has most often been resolved in favor of states and against individuals and peoples. This is evident in the UN's peacekeeping operations during the Cold War. The first peacekeeping forces and military observer missions were introduced in the context of decolonization. Decolonization potentially unleashed a Pandora's box of explosive questions concerning the relationship between the state and the nation, and peacekeeping operations and observer missions were designed and deployed with an eye to the politics of territorial restraint and juridical sovereignty. Reflecting a General Assembly that insisted on bracketing the domestic and honoring sovereignty, these UN operations did not concern themselves with human rights, ethnic conflict, or humanitarian missions. Throughout the Cold War, the UN favored the security of states over the security of peoples and individuals.

As policymakers and scholars began to imagine the post–Cold War order, they, first, used the UN as a vehicle to contemplate a global order founded on non-threat-based principles, and, second, began to reconsider the UN's promise and possible contribution to global security. This debate over the post–Cold War order also involved a reconsideration of the concept of "international security." During the Cold War, the UN reflected and expressed a statist definition of "international security" that focused almost exclusively on interstate conflict. The end of the Cold War, however, unleashed a spiraling number of proposals and statements that called for shifting the definition of "international security" away from states and toward individuals and peoples. Those in and around the UN increasingly voiced the concept of "human security" in various guises, suggesting that what matters is the security of peoples and individuals and not states, that states are often a source of insecurity rather than protection, and that domestic rather than interstate conflict is a greater threat to most individuals' security in today's world. Boutros-Ghali, for instance, would frequently stress the "human" foundations of security, arguing that the UN must be as concerned with the security of peoples and individuals as it is with the security of states.

Tied to these questions of "whose security" was a reconsideration of the working definition of the international community, which resuscitated the tension between the community as defined by sovereign states and the community as defined by peoples and individuals. When the UN and member states focused on state security and interstate conflict, it generally reflected and forwarded a definition of the international community that was defined by and limited to sovereign states. But beginning in the mid-1980s and accelerating after the end of the Cold War in the face of the new security challenges, the working definition of the international community was expanded to more fully include individuals and identity-based groups residing within states. UN officials increasingly sounded the view that the UN's constituency was not only states but also the citizens of these states. There was, if you will, a shift of representation, as various statements from the Secretariat and the Security Council offered that the UN was to protect not only the community of states but also individuals and peoples.

Peacekeeping operations reflect the UN's growing prominence in global affairs, the reconsideration of the definition of security, and the debate over the UN's constituency and working definition of the international community. To begin with, the UN's post–Cold War popularity translated into an explosion of peacekeeping operations. There were just 11 operations between 1956 and 1988, and no new operation was authorized between 1978 and 1988. Between 1988 and 1995, by contrast, the Security Council authorized 24 new operations. The UN was anxious to prove its promise, and the permanent members of the Security Council, who now found the UN to be a useful place to dump intractable conflicts, encouraged that sentiment. These and other factors contributed to an explosion of peacekeeping operations.

Perhaps more impressive than the growing numbers were the ambitious tasks assigned to these "second-generation" peacekeeping operations that

reflected a changing definition of security. Prior to 1988, peacekeeping concerned interpositioning lightly-armed UN troops between two states that had agreed to a cease-fire. Peacekeepers were now being deployed not to monitor a cease-fire between two states but to promote domestic conflict resolution and to facilitate the post-conflict process of "nation-building"; soon the UN was running elections, creating new police forces, repatriating refugees, and overseeing the demobilization of armies and the reintegration of deeply divided societies. "Operation Provide Comfort," the UN's assistance to the Kurds of Iraq, inaugurated a new chapter in humanitarian intervention, and crises in Somalia and Bosnia stirred further movement in this direction. Many UN officials with whom I spoke recalled a sense of excitement and exhilaration during these first post–Cold War days; not only were they unshackled from the Cold War, but their activism was directed at helping people rather than states. "There are greater rewards," recalled one official with whom I spoke at the time, "from helping the victims of political turmoil than its instigators." While some member states feared that the UN was now treading on state sovereignty, other member states and UN officials championed this more ambitious agenda and cosmopolitan outlook that suggested a UN that was on the verge of fulfilling its initial but long-delayed promise.

As the UN became increasingly concerned with human security, however, it continued to operate in state-centric terms: human security most often meant "saving failed states." For many member states and UN officials, "democratic" states became the type most worthy of emulation. States that conducted periodic elections, had a competitive party system, and had legal guarantees of press freedom were identified as "democratic" and were accorded legitimacy and prestige by many member states and UN officials. Democracy so defined was equated with being "civilized" and was said to be a foundation of "peace" and "security." That "democratic states do not go to war with one another" became a cliché for many member states and UN officials, and Boutros-Ghali himself stated that "democratic" states are more legitimate than others and are less likely to have domestic conflicts or become embroiled in regional wars (1995). It should come as no surprise, then, that UN officials were busily forwarding numerous proposals that concerned how the UN might help expand the number of "democracies." In sum, being a "democracy" came to define full membership in "the elect" of the UN's "international community."

Most of the post–Cold War peacekeeping operations have been a direct extension of the view that domestic stability in general and democracy in particular are related to international order and define membership in the international community. The operations in Namibia (UNTAG), Cambodia (UNTAC), El Salvador (ONUSAL), and Haiti (UNMIH), for instance, aspired to end civil wars and to forward democracy. Indeed, as the UN looked to end an operation it deployed the symbol of a "free and fair" election. Few genuinely believed that one election at the end of a peacekeeping operation was enough to institutionalize "democratic" practices, but the ritual of the election symbolized how peacekeeping operations were to help rehabilitate fallen members of the international community.

This highly ambitious and increasingly crowded security agenda over-whelmed a bureaucratically and organizationally underequipped UN. The first formal statement by the Secretariat concerning the future of the UN was Bou-tros-Ghali's *An Agenda for Peace,* undertaken in 1992 at the request of the Se-curity Council in response to the growing number of peacekeeping operations and security issues being handed the Security Council. *An Agenda for Peace* was soon followed by numerous reports, including those by the Clinton administra-tion and the Contact Group on Peacekeeping Reform at the UN. The UN also un-dertook various reforms that were designed to rationalize and expand its activi-ties, including an enlargement and reorganization of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; the establishment of a Department of Humanitarian Affairs and Electoral Assistance Unit; and the creation of standby arrangements for military forces. These reforms and developments were absolutely essential if an antiquated and inefficient organization was to meet the challenges of the day and to carry out its mandated responsibilities.

This bureaucratization also encouraged member states and the Secretariat to develop a vested interest in peacekeeping and the UN. Some UN and member state bureaucrats championed UN operations because they benefited materially from their involvement in UN operations. But many also believed that peacekeeping represented an important instrument for interstate and intrastate conflict resolution, and came to identify with the idea of the UN as transcending power politics. The common denominator was an identification with the UN's interests and future. The UN now had a constituency.

The bureaucratization of peacekeeping also impacted on the UN's decision making about these operations. Whereas in the early 1990s, it seemed that no op-eration was too small, large, or complex for the UN's attention, by the fall of 1993, many member state and UN officials argued that the UN was stretched too thin and was increasingly ineffective; it was time, they said, to exhibit greater self-restraint. This sobriety was driven in part by the "failures" of Somalia and Bosnia, and the Security Council now began to develop criteria for deciding whether to approve or extend a peacekeeping operation. These included whether (1) there was a genuine threat to peace and security; (2) regional or subregional organizations could assist in resolving the situation; (3) a cease-fire existed and the parties had committed themselves to a peace process; (4) a clear political goal existed and was present in the proposed mandate; (5) a precise mandate could be formulated; and (6) the safety of UN personnel could be reasonably as-sured (UN 1994a). In short, with bureaucratization came rationalization.

The emergence of these criteria contributed to the production of indiffer-ence. Much discussion at the UN revolved around how to better publicize "suc-cess stories," how to portray so-called failures as successes (or at least to dem-onstrate that the UN was not to blame), how to promote greater sensitivity to the conditions under which peacekeeping was likely to be effective, and how to en-sure that the UN was not saddled with operations that had little chance of suc-cess. There was an important shift in the discourse of peacekeeping, as officials in and around the UN took greater care to protect the organization's interests,

reputation, and future. The desire by UN officials and member states to pick winners and to avoid failures meant that the UN was as interested in its own security as it was in human security.

The concern for the UN's reputation and interests affected the selection of operations. To begin with, the desire to identify the conditions under which peacekeeping was effective meant that it was less likely to be deployed during instances of humanitarian crises or severe domestic turmoil. Perhaps the first instance in which the needs of the organization were explicitly cited and used to justify inaction was the Security Council's decision not to intervene in Burundi in October 1993, when nearly 100,000 persons died in ethnic violence. Living in the immediate shadows of Somalia and President Clinton's 1993 address to the General Assembly in which he challenged the Security Council to just say no, many members of the Security Council argued against intervention on the grounds that there was "no peace to keep" and that the UN needed to avoid obvious quagmires. Many UN officials and delegates breathed a sigh of relief when the Security Council opted to abstain from the conflict, whispering that the UN had to conserve its energies for "winners." The decision not to intervene in Burundi symbolized a shifting sentiment at the UN concerning the feasibility and desirability of humanitarian intervention. Those who opposed intervention contended that such crises are a by-product of wars, wars are defined by instability, and a modicum of stability is a precondition for effective peacekeeping. The UN could only be effective when there was a "peace to keep."

Moreover, whereas once the Security Council and the Secretariat routinely noted that they had a responsibility to help those who could not help themselves, they were now suggesting that they could only help those who were willing to help themselves. The same UN officials who once had forcefully argued for the need to protect war's victims were now defending their inaction in Bosnia on the grounds of preserving the UN's neutrality and impartiality. The language that began to creep into nearly all Security Council statements was that an operation was justified only so long as the parties of the conflict demonstrated a resolve to work toward political progress; the Security Council, for instance, emphasized how "the people of Somalia bear the ultimate responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and for rebuilding their country" (UN 1994b). But who were the "people" of Somalia? of Bosnia? of Rwanda? By and large, "the people" no longer meant the victims of violence but those who controlled the means of violence. The UN was stepping away from its initial post–Cold War concern for human security and returning to the traditional tenets of peacekeeping that stressed the need for stability as a precondition of deployment and the focus on state security. This shift, according to many, was defensible on the grounds that the UN could only help those who were willing to help themselves, and that it was absolutely necessary to protect the UN's reputation and future.

The siren of secular theodicy was detectable in these developments. Many at the UN appealed to the interests of the UN, represented as a symbol of both the international community and universal human rights, to reconcile the uncomfortable tension between the transcendental and their reluctance to act.

While the UN was still committed to the same transcendental values, they argued, the conditions under which it would henceforth become involved in attempting to secure and promote those values had been justifiably tightened. The secular and politically expedient decisions that were being offered in place of action were clothed in universalism and the need to protect the international community's defining organization. The occasional evil could be tolerated so long as it did not damage the greater collective good. These developments and this discourse imprinted the Security Council's debate over its response to the violence in Rwanda in April 1994.

A Return to Rwanda

Member states could not simply and silently watch the unfolding genocide from the sanctuary of the Security Council. Rather, as "agents" of the "international community," they had to negotiate the fluid and contested relationship between their respective "national interests" and the "international community." States serve on the Security Council and thus represent state interests. Delegates are, after all, citizens of their states and representatives of their governments, from which they receive their instructions. What matters to these states are national interests. Yet what are these "national interests," and are these "national interests" inconsistent with the concerns of the "international community"? I noted earlier that, from my bureaucratic position, I learned an interpretation of the "U.S. national interest" that supported a more prominent role for the UN and involvement in activities that were not directly connected to traditional understandings or core definitions of national security. Although there were numerous occasions when events that exercised the Secretariat remained outside my conception of what should animate and involve the United States, over time my understanding of U.S. interests became more fully connected to the UN and its operations. "Working" these UN issues had shaped my definition of U.S. interests, and my learning a definition of U.S. interests had shaped my support for the UN.

My experiences and observations thus suggest that members of the Security Council view themselves not simply as handmaidens of states but also as representatives of the international community. What is the "international community" and what are its interests? Earlier, I argued that there has been a continuous, although varying, degree of tension between the notion of the international community as comprised of sovereign states and the international community as comprised of peoples and individuals. One of my observations of the workings of the Security Council was that while its members pursue their state (or "national") interests, there also is a strong hint of cosmopolitanism in their language and movements. For instance, the Security Council's documents refer to itself as a representative of the international community. While it is easy to dismiss such language as diplomatic blather, states take such blather seriously and oftentimes shift their policies accordingly. The Security Council is not alone in presenting itself as the representative of the international community and as responsible for protecting its interests; other actors—notably the media,

nongovernmental human rights groups, and other states who are not on the Security Council—also identify the Security Council in this manner. During the debate over Rwanda, those in the Security Council referred to themselves as the "international community," and when the meeting adjourned, the president of the Security Council greeted reporters who asked if the "international community" had formulated a policy.

In general, the existence of the UN and the participation by member states in the Security Council remind member states that they should avoid starkly self-interested strategies and pursue more enlightened policies that reflect a sense of cosmopolitanism. Interstate cooperation at the UN, therefore, is not merely a technical feat but is also, as Durkheim might suggest, a connection to a moral order (Zabusky 1995:23, 113). Through their discourse and practices, member states not only address particular problems but also connect themselves and their activities to a set of transcendental values.

Throughout the Security Council debates, there was a tension between, first, state interests and the obligations to the international community, and, second, the competing demands on the Security Council that derived from its responsibilities to the UN and the Rwandans. While pained by the unfolding bloodshed, member states did not view their interests as suitably engaged to justify the involvement of their own troops for a risky intervention. Rwanda was outside most states' understanding of their "national interests," at least to the extent that they were willing to sacrifice their troops for such a cause. For most members on the Security Council, and particularly for the permanent members, Rwanda was distant from any strategic considerations. Since this was an intra- rather than an interstate conflict, whether this crisis constituted a threat to international security was also an uncertain and contested point. Still, no state represented its unwillingness to get involved as a matter of strategic calculations; rather, member states couched their reluctance in terms of the needs of the UN.

The United States, for instance, argued that the Security Council's overriding responsibility was to its peacekeepers, and if there were more fatalities the consequences would be more criticism of, and a dimmer future for, the UN. To further support its case for withdrawal, the United States employed the previously discussed six criteria for whether the Security Council should approve or extend an operation. Although these criteria were not formally adopted by the Council until early May, they had become widely accepted informally during the previous several months. Consequently, the United States was able to argue persuasively that by the Security Council's own criteria, which were intended to rationalize and formalize its debates and decisions, UNAMIR had no business being in Rwanda. UNAMIR's immediate withdrawal was in the best interests of the UN.

The Clinton administration's stance was also designed to protect itself and the UN from a hostile U.S. Congress. During the earlier debate over the mandate extension in late March, the United States advocated reducing UNAMIR to send a strong signal to both the Rwandan government that it needed to establish a transitional government, and to Congress, which had declared open season on

the UN, that the administration could be tough on peacekeeping operations. Such displays of "toughness," suggested one administration official at the time, would benefit the UN because the administration would better shield it from further congressional attacks. "Tough love," he offered.

Two points bear emphasizing. First, to make the case for intervention required connecting such action to interests. Yet the language of interests is largely the language of states, and state interests were hardly engaged by the unfolding tragedy in Rwanda. Indeed, member states and members of the U.S. Mission framed any prospective intervention in the language of obligation. I, for one, viewed the violence as tragic but could not make the necessary strategic link to justify the deployment of U.S. troops. Simply put, Rwanda activated the language of obligation rather than interests, but to expect and justify the possible sacrifice of one's troops generally demands a connection to the language of state interests rather than of international obligations. Second, those member states who opposed intervention for self-interested reasons were reluctant to publicly display such calculations; much more morally palatable and defensible was the argument that the Security Council had an obligation and interest to protect its peacekeepers, and, relatedly, the future of the UN. Moral oratory draped self-interested actions. Indifference was presentable through the appeal to the transcendental.

Some nonpermanent members of the Security Council, however, demanded robust action to protect civilians, couching their arguments in terms of the "international community," referring thereby to a moral order that transcended state boundaries. But at the time, I feared that such language was designed to lure the United States into doing the work of and for the "international community." Over the course of the year, I became increasingly frustrated by the fact that when a humanitarian nightmare unfolded somewhere in the world, the world looked to the UN, and then the UN looked to the United States. Accordingly, I was suspicious that when other states evoked the "international community," they were, in fact, pointing to the United States. New Zealand and Czechoslovakia, whom I often referred to as the "conscience of the Council" in both derision and admiration, supported robust action by the UN and were critical of those members who resisted intervention. While they were arguing for action, however, they were not volunteering their own troops and were insinuating that the United States should take the lead. As some of us at the U.S. Mission joked about other proposed and existing UN operations, the international community seemed willing to fight down to the last U.S. citizen. The rhetoric of the international community, then, became something to fear and reinforced my defense of U.S. interests. In general, member states used the language of the international community and the defense of the UN to hide their own unwillingness to get involved and sometimes to implicate others.

Where was the Secretariat during these discussions? Earlier, I noted that its comments were limited to sketchy and noncommittal appraisals, failing to offer any concrete recommendations and thus forfeiting its agenda-setting powers. At the time, I attributed its lack of direction to "not being up to the task" of crisis

management. Yet a highly authoritative and exhaustive report on Rwanda suggests not amateur but instrumental and strategic behavior (Adelman and Suhrke 1996). During the first, highly critical days after Habyarimana's death, the Secretariat was receiving concrete recommendations from its Force Commander, General Romeo Dallaire, who was cautiously optimistic that a limited military intervention could halt the bloodshed. The Secretariat, however, did not communicate UNAMIR's recommendations to the Security Council. I can only speculate as to why the Secretariat failed to do so, but one very real possibility is that it feared becoming embroiled in a conflict that spelled failure. While the motives are unknown, the consequences of the Secretariat's noncommittal stance are more certain: its failure to offer any recommendations or to hint that an intervention had any possibility of success played directly into the hands of those in the Security Council who demanded UNAMIR's immediate withdrawal. Member states were not the only ones who could hide their agenda.

There was a second reason why these meetings were so volatile: as representatives of the international community, member states were having to choose between their responsibility to the Rwandans and to the UN. This tension, which was a central and underlying feature of the debate, slowly gravitated toward the view that, however tragic for the Rwandans, the only responsible and feasible option was to withdraw UNAMIR. To place peacekeepers in harm's way would not only betray a singular responsibility of the Security Council but potentially lead to a further deterioration in the UN's stature. In the shadow of Somalia and in the midst of the drama of Bosnia, there was little doubt that a failure in Rwanda would translate into even greater trouble for the UN. The Security Council's reluctance to act, in this view, was morally defensible because it protected the international community's organization.

Elevating the survival of the UN over the Rwandans was facilitated by two additional factors. First, those who were responsible for and oversaw Rwanda (and other operations) were "experts" in the same way that I was an expert on Rwanda; expertise derived from my bureaucratic roles and responsibilities rather than my intrinsic knowledge per se. My expertise concerned UN operations rather than Rwanda; my colleague had spent a career at the U.S. Mission covering Africa, but at the time had never stepped foot on the continent. Our expertise, then, derived from our knowledge of the UN rather than those countries that were part of our "portfolio." The result was that I was more committed to the survival of the UN than I was to the Rwandans.

Second, being able to elevate the UN's organizational needs over the events in Rwanda was also facilitated by distance: discussions were occurring among UN officials and member states in New York while the tragedy was unfolding in Rwanda. While those in New York expressed genuine anguish for what was occurring in Rwanda, it was easier for them to identify with those with whom they interacted on a daily basis. That Rwanda was a member of the Security Council did not help me bridge the distance; its representative was a member of the ruling coalition, and therefore linked to the architects of genocide. As the Security Council debated the unfolding genocide, I would glance at him

sitting quietly and passively during the deliberations, wondering how the Security Council could tolerate his presence without dressing him down and desiring to see him evicted from the room as soon as possible. Looking back, he served as a reminder to me that the international community would have to tolerate the occasional evil in order to maintain its central organization—the UN.

After endless deliberations, the Security Council voted on April 21 to reduce UNAMIR's presence and mandate, and to leave in place only those troops that were required to assist General Dallaire's efforts to gain a cease-fire. For those who opposed this decision but failed to offer troops to back their diplomatic pleas, this was the best that could be gotten. And those who insisted on reducing UNAMIR were reluctant to demand a complete withdrawal for fear of portraying themselves and the Security Council as morally bankrupt. By maintaining a token presence, the UN was able to symbolize its continued concern and, perhaps, help effect a cease-fire.

Still, the Security Council remained "seized of the matter" (a phrase that ritualistically closes nearly all Security Council resolutions) and continued to meet on a daily basis. Sitting through these long-winded meetings could be tortuous: information could as easily have been distributed without convening the Security Council. Why then remain in almost continuous session?

One reason was to give all members the opportunity to express their moral outrage. At the end of each day's debate, the President of the Security Council would announce to the press that the Security Council was disturbed by the violence and would continue to follow events closely. Indeed, there was a nearly rhythmic quality to the deliberations during these first weeks. On any one day, hours would be spent by the Security Council exchanging information and extolling the need for concrete action; pleased that it had demonstrated sufficient concern, the following day's meeting would be highly abbreviated.

A second reason was that these meetings provided an opportunity for member states to proclaim that they represented the interests of the international community. Because such interests were now defined as keeping a safe distance, this language was evoked as often to argue for restraint as it was for action. This became painfully apparent as the Security Council continued to meet through April with growing evidence of genocide. At first, the Security Council was reluctant to utter the word *genocide*. Its very mention had the raw, discursive capacity to demand action; its mere rhetorical presence might be enough to shame and embarrass the Security Council into doing what it resisted. Accordingly, there appeared to be a tacit understanding to avoid such inflammatory language. As the days passed, however, a member state would occasionally implore action because of genocide, but soon thereafter the discussion slowly converged on the belief that little could be done, that the Security Council had to protect the UN's interests, and that no member of the Security Council should use such explosive—that is, irresponsible—language outside the room.

Third, to have Rwanda on the Security Council's agenda meant giving the appearance that the Security Council cared, thereby enabling it to veil its indifference. While member states were unwilling to assemble an intervention force,

they also did not want to appear indifferent. By filling the halls of the UN, remaining in constant session, and generating a flood of documents and statements, the Security Council could display the facade of action, when in fact few states wanted anything of the kind. This suggests that one function of the UN was to distribute accountability to the point that it becomes irretrievable. Who was to blame for the lack of response to Rwanda? Everyone. The mere presence of the UN allowed states (and the Secretariat) to shield themselves from responsibility, to point fingers in all directions, and to avoid accountability or culpability.

In this way, under the watchful eyes of the Security Council, 500,000 to 800,000 Rwandans fell victim to genocide. No one can be certain that a modest intervention at the outset of the crisis might have halted this tragedy, but the record is that the Security Council did little until it was too late and safe. And the stark truth is that while some states called for intervention, few if any volunteered their own services. In this regard, the UN's indifference reflects the indifference of the member states. Yet the bureaucratization of peacekeeping shaped the Security Council's debates and contributed to the production of indifference. The Security Council saw itself as a representative of the international community. One of the dilemmas it faced was choosing between its charge in Rwanda and its protection of the peacekeepers. Any more peacekeeping fatalities, I and many others argued in the halls of the Security Council, would undoubtedly mean more criticism and fewer resources for the UN. This was the moral equation and the justification for inaction. Such inaction was made palatable and morally tenable, invested with ethical distinction, as it was given support by appeals to the transcendental value of preserving the international community's central organization. Officials in and out of the UN were able to explain the evils of Rwanda and their own indifference by pointing to the secular religion of the international community and its cathedral, the UN.

Conclusion

As I continue to think about peacekeeping and the lessons of Rwanda, I do so differently than when I completed my tenure at the U.S. Mission. To be sure, many of my initial "policy-relevant" recommendations still inform my views of peacekeeping, its functions, and its future. On the one hand, I continue to recognize that professionalizing peacekeeping was absolutely necessary if peacekeeping was to have a future. But on the other hand, I now also perceive that this bureaucratization entailed that those in and around the UN come to have a stake in and identify with the bureaucracy, begin to evaluate strategies and actions according to the needs of the bureaucracy, and, accordingly, begin to frame discussions and justify policies in a different manner. I became part of this bureaucratization process. I, too, altered how I judged and evaluated UN peacekeeping. Sometimes this meant that I had a heightened awareness of the complexities of the issues involved and the stakes of the game. Yet at other times, this involved a shift in what I thought was desirable and valuable; I became as interested in protecting bureaucratic and organizational interests as I

was in employing the UN to help those it was supposed to serve. The UN might be above power politics, but it is not above politics.

This rendition of the politics of international organizations is somewhat more complicated, therefore, than that offered by many political scientists who subscribe to a liberal view of international organizations. Self-proclaimed liberals and neoliberal institutionalists are interested in identifying the conditions under which states cooperate, eschew short-term gains for long-term benefits, and abide by international agreements. International organizations are identified as an important instrument in the search for interstate cooperation, as they increase transparency in actions, establish common norms of behavior, and contain monitoring mechanisms that allow states to overcome collective action problems associated with interdependence choice.[3] At the extreme, however, liberals equate international organizations with progress, and neoliberals celebrate their existence as evidence that states have been able to put aside immediate gratification for long-term harmony.

International organizations have certainly played an important role in encouraging states to cooperate, but that is not the only role they are capable of playing. International organizations can become, first, a site for new political identities and definitions of interests that are inconsistent with their original intent and, second, a locus of authority far removed from those whose lives they affect and in whose name they operate. I have no desire to essentialize bureaucracies or to suggest a global "banality of evil," but I do want to call attention to this often unrecognized feature of international organizations. Although Herzfeld limits his discussion to "Western" bureaucracies and is reserved about whether his discussion travels to non-Western or international contexts, there is evidence that his analysis and the story of Rwanda are not isolated phenomena. Stacia Zabusky's *Launching Europe* (1995) demonstrates how Herzfeld's analysis can survive the journey from state to interstate politics; Liisa Malkki's (1996) reflections on the UNHCR in Central Africa offer similarly disturbing observations about the relationship between international organizations and the individuals in whose names they act. And evidence from Bosnia, eloquently argued in David Rieff's *Slaughterhouse* (1995), also suggests a relationship between the bureaucratization of peace-keeping, the concern for the organization's interests, and the production of indifference. In general, an intriguing, though equally disturbing, implication is that the dynamics and developments that Herzfeld locates among "Western" states are increasingly globalized phenomena. A more nuanced understanding of the consequences of global bureaucratization should be on the intellectual agenda of an era defined by globalization-cum-bureaucratization.

But the UN is more than a site of indifference, a place where state inaction and organizational interests come to have an ethical content and moral luster. The Security Council and the UN are also sites of a struggle over individuation and connection, a place where member states define themselves and their interests through their engagement and confrontation with a set of transcendental values. In this regard, the UN offers sanctuary to contemplate a moral order that

transcends local confines, a place where member states mimic, learn, and express a set of transcendental values that are above, beyond, and before the sovereign state. It is this UN, as the international community's secular cathedral, that allows many, including myself, to maintain a belief in the transcendental, even in the face of the occasional evil that exposes the sins of the members.

Notes

1. Because the UN is an international organization that is also representative of states, it can be understood as both the sum of its parts and as an independent actor. I will refer to the Security Council, the 15 member states who are designated to preside over matters of international peace and security, when discussing the UN as a representative of its member states. I refer to the Secretariat when considering the UN as an independent actor, and I refer most frequently to the office of the secretary-general and DPKO.

2. I want to add two critical caveats. First, I am representing my personal reflections after a period of distance and attempting, as best as possible, to represent and interpret the events unfolding around me; I have no doubt that others would tell a different tale. I observed these events from the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, and I expect that those residing in Rwanda, the UN, or other delegations would offer a different view. Second, I have tremendous respect for the integrity and values of many of those with whom I worked; these were highly dedicated individuals who worked long hours and labored under difficult conditions. I have no doubt that they would object to my characterization of their supposed indifference.

3. For an overview of liberal theories of international relations, see Zacher and Matthews 1995; for a neoliberal statement, see Keohane and Martin 1995.

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