

BUSH AND OTHER WAR CRIMINALS MEET IN RWANDA : THE GREAT “RWANDA GENOCIDE”-- COVERUP

Prof. Peter Erlinder, ICTR Lead Defense Counsel

President ADAD, the ICTR Defense Lawyers Association ©

As George Bush begins his much bally-hoed African safari, he has already begun to heap praise on Rwandan President Kagame as a “model for Africa .” But, recently issued French and Spanish international “war-crimes” warrants and new evidence at the UN Rwanda Tribunal have exposed Kagame as the war-criminal who actually touched-off the 1994 “Rwanda Genocide” by assassinating the previous President and who is benefiting from a decades-long U.S.-sponsored “cover-up” of Pentagon complicity in massacres committed by Kagame’s regime, which even Britain’s Economist has called “the most repressive in Africa.” [1]

Multiple “War Crimes” A Warrants Issued for Rwanda’s Leaders

Just last week, a Spanish Judge issued 40 international warrants for current and former members of Kagame’s government, including senior staff at Rwanda ’s Washington Embassy. The warrants charge Kagame’s clique with war-crimes and crimes against humanity, that may even fit the definition of “genocide.” But, these are not the only international arrest warrants issued for Rwanda’s current leaders.

French Judge Bruguiere (famous for indicting “the Jackal”) has also issued international warrants against nearly a dozen members of Kagame’s inner circle, too. Bruguiere also met with Kofi Annan in late 2006 to personally urge the U.N. Rwanda Tribunal to prosecute Kagame for the assassination of Juvenal Habyarimana, the war-crime that reignited the four-year Rwanda War and the massive civilian killings in the war’s final 90-days.

Could it be that no-one in the Bush Administration was aware of these pending charges against their Rwandan hosts...or is it that they just don’t care? In either case, the French and Spanish international arrest warrants have pierced the wall of U.S./UK/Rwandan propaganda about who bears responsible for the massive tragedy that unfolded in Rwanda ...but the “official story” has actually been unraveling for some time (although largely un-reported in the U.S. media).

Chief UN Prosecutor del Ponte in 2003: “ Rwanda ’s Leaders Guilty of War Crimes”

In the summer of 2003, Chief Prosecutor for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda (ICTR), Carla del Ponte, publicly announced that she would soon begin prosecuting members of Kagame’s Government for the same kinds of crimes charged in the French and Spanish warrants. But, nearly 5 years later not one case has been filed against one member of Kagame’s government, nor against Kagame himself.

The del Ponte announced prosecutions did not go forward because she was replaced, within 90-days of her announcement, by Abubacar Jallow, a US/UK-approved Prosecutor who pledged not to prosecute on Kagame's side....no matter what the del Ponte and the European judges' findings! Prosecutor del Ponte's long-time press-aide, Florence Hartmann, published a book in Paris in September 2007, that explains exactly how del Ponte was replaced.

Chief UN Prosecutor del Ponte was called to Washington just after her 2003 announcement and threatened with removal from office by Bush' "war-crimes ambassador", Pierre Prosper, because of the political quid pro quo between Washington and the Kagame regime that is spelled out in detail in the book. (Ironically, Prosper was a former ICTR prosecutor under del Ponte, and must have had access to the same information motivated her announcement) . When she refused to ignore her UN-mandate, to prosecute all crimes committed during the 1994 Rwanda War, she was sacked by the U.S. and U.K. [2]

ICTR Chief Investigator in 1997: "Rwanda's Kagame Assassinated Previous President"

But this is not the first time that crimes of Kagame have been "covered-up" at the ICTR. According to sworn affidavits placed in the ICTR record in early 2006, more than 10 years ago, ICTR Lead Investigative Prosecutor, well-respected Australian QC Michael Hourigan, recommended that Kagame, himself, be prosecuted for the assassination of Habyarimana. But, in 1997, then-Chief UN Prosecutor Louise Arbour of Canada ordered him to drop the Kagame investigation; to forget it ever happened; and, to burn his notes ! Hourigan resigned rather than comply and copies of his original notes are now part of the ICTR public record for all to see. [3]

The "Rwanda Genocide" Cover-up on Clinton's Watch

The Hourigan affidavit makes clear that the "Rwanda Genocide"-- Cover-up has been going on for at least a decade...but the reasons for the cover-up did not become clear until late 2007, when a senior Clinton Administration diplomat, Brian Atwood, was confronted with UN documents describing a 1994 "cover-up" meeting with the Rwandan Foreign Minister in Kigali and the UN's Kofi Annan. According to the UN documents, U.S.-sponsored human rights reports by investigator, Robert Gersony, had documented massive military-style executions of civilians by Kagame's troops, during and after the final 90-days of the four-year Rwanda War. [4]

The former Rwandan Foreign Minister at the meeting, Jean Marie Ndagiyimana, testified at the ICTR that, rather than participate in the proposed "cover-up," he resigned and went into exile where he remains today. His ICTR testimony confirmed that Clinton's USAID Chief for Africa, Brian Atwood, and the chief of the UN Department of Peace Keeping

Operations Kofi Annan, were both in his office in late October 1994 urging him to assist in the "cover-up" the war-crimes committed by Kagame's forces. [5]

The "Inconvenient Truth" Behind the Cover-up : Pentagon Complicity in the 1994 Rwanda War

The damning "Gersony Report" included first-hand evidence of tens of thousands of civilians being massacred by Kagame's troops in eastern Rwanda, later confirmed by similar reports by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The U.N. Document (also in the ICTR record) says that Annan told the Foreign Minister that public knowledge of the Report would be "embarrassing to the UN" and the U.S. Former Clinton-diplomat, Brian Atwood, not only confirmed he was at the meeting, but explained that he had engaged Gersony, and that Gersony's findings of war-crimes being committed by Kagame were "...an inconvenient truth" for both the United States and the UN.

According to Atwood, unknown to the State Department, "the Pentagon had been supporting Kagame since before the 1990 invasion, when he was the head of Military Intelligence for the Museveni government of Uganda." The "Gersony Report" tied the Pentagon to the crimes of Kagame's invading, Pentagon-trained and funded forces. More UN documents in the ICTR record reveal that the State Department was negotiating for a peaceful settlement of the war at the same time the Pentagon was supporting Kagame's invasion. The Clinton Administration enlisted Atwood and Kofi Annan in keeping evidence of Kagame's crimes from ever seeing the light of day, to prevent Pentagon involvement in the "Rwandan Genocide" from ever coming to light. [6]

The existence of a separate Pentagon foreign policy on Rwanda also tallies with the ICTR testimony of former Ambassador Robert Flaten, who testified that he seriously doubted that Habyarimana's supporters planned to kill civilians on a massive scale because the CIA and other intelligence agencies would have reported it when he was in Rwanda from 1990 to late 93. [7] He said that his requests for Pentagon-DIA spy satellite photographs showing the progress of the war in the countryside were turned down because of "clouds over Rwanda," during his entire 3-plus years in Rwanda. [8] He also noted that support from Uganda for the 1990 Kagame invasion coincided with increased Ugandan military funding by the U.S./U.K. Flaten also testified that he personally warned Kagame that "he would be responsible for massacres like just happened in Burundi, if Kagame broke the cease-fire and re-started that war.

In short, the evidence that now is in the public record shows that during the 1994 Rwanda Genocide, the Pentagon could have stopped the carnage with a phone call...and the State Department apparently did not know enough about the Pentagon's close ties to Kagame to ask them to do so, at least until USAID's Atwood was informed of Pentagon reaction to the "Gersony Report," in the summer of 1994.

Other de-classified State Department documents show that it was the invading Kagame forces that were the aggressors, and were blocking the State Departments efforts to

implement the Arusha Accords, peace agreement. [9] The UN's General Dallaire has testified that Kagame would not agree to a ceasefire to use troops to stop the massacres because "he was winning the war." [10] And, now we know what Dallaire may not have known, until later...Kagame was winning with the Pentagon's help.

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The "Rwanda Genocide" – Cover-up of Pentagon complicity in Kagame's crimes is almost complete, as the U.S. cuts Rwanda Tribunal funding to shut it down by the end of 2008. Carla del Ponte's replacement, Abubacar Jallow, will be conveniently unable to carry out the prosecutions that del Ponte urged in 2003, or those initiated by Judge Bruguiere in 2006, or Judge Ag____, just last week.

However, the international warrants are still in effect, the del Ponte book and Hourigan's affidavit have begun to unravel the whole sordid manipulation... .but, unless the "Rwanda Genocide" Cover-up makes it onto Page One in Europe and North America, it may be too late for the ICTR detainees...who are being held responsible for the crimes of the Kagame regime, a bit like the UN holding the Japanese responsible for Hiroshima and the Germans for the fire-bombing of Dresden.

With U.S. and U.K. support, Kagame's government is actively campaigning to have all ICTR matters transferred to Rwanda and has issued 40,000 warrants for Kagame's Hutu and Tutsi opponents in the worldwide Rwandan diaspora. (A movement that includes such as figures Paul Rusesabagina, the real hero of the Hotel Rwanda).

Correcting the Historical Record and Ending the Cover-up

But, I have to disclose my own bias because, under the laws of Rwanda , I too am a criminal "negationist" for writing this essay and President Kagame has personally denounced me as a "genocidaire" for my work as an ICTR defense lawyer. My former investigator is seeking asylum in Europe and the ICTR Prosecutor who replaced Carla del Ponte is now prosecuting defense investigator for asking too many questions in Rwanda, but denounced Judge Bruguiere's request for the UN to prosecute Kagame and Spanish Judge Abreau, as well.

An ICTR defense lawyer, like me, has to hope that, despite all that is now known about the manipulations of the ICTR by the U.S. and U.K. for their own political purposes, the ICTR Judges will not be influenced by the sacking of del Ponte and that they will carefully evaluate the evidence in my client's case...but it is hard to be too optimistic.

At least my conscience is clear, now that the Great "Rwanda Genocide"— Cover-up has been exposed. But, I wonder if the Judges, Prosecutors, other UN-ICTR officials (who now know about the manipulation of their best efforts) will be able to say the same, if they allow the ICTR "Rwanda Genocide"- Cover-up to continue?

During the week's festivities in Rwanda, the Presidents Bush and Kagame are sure to find much in common, as would Tony Blair, who has recently signed-on as an "unpaid"-advisor to Kagame. All three stand accused of war crimes, and are mutually benefiting from the US/UK/Rwandan "cover-up" of their own complicity in the "Rwandan Genocide" tragedy...that should put all three in the dock at the UN-ICTR.

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- [1] The Economist , April, 2004
- [2] Hartmann, Paix et chatiment: les guerres del la politique (2007 Flammarion, Paris)
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SOURCE: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=8137>

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Document available on = www.institut.com

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