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CENTRAL AFRICA: 15 YEARS AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR.
THE INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

1. Introduction

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 not only marked the beginning of the end of the Cold War; it also heralded the advent of an opportunity for Africa to emerge as an independent player in world politics for the first time after centuries of external interference.

As a consequence of the Renaissance in the 14th century, Europeans began to acquire technical skills that enabled them to discover and later conquer large parts of overseas territories. At the same time, the former sub-Saharan empires and kingdoms declined and their cultural exchange with regions north of the Sahara diminished for reasons that have yet to be fully explored. Consequently the arms technology gap between the North and the South widened. Resistance to Christian and Muslim slave traders crumbled and the global slave trade inflicted terrible losses on Africa. Following the gradual disappearance of the slave trade in the 19th century there were some successful efforts to build new nations, but they collapsed in the wake of the European colonial invasion in the second half of the 19th century. Africa was not in a position militarily to resist these conquests.

The Atlantic Charter of 1941 raised hopes when, in return for American support against Hitler, President Roosevelt induced Winston Churchill to promise the dissolution of the British Empire and the end of British colonialism after the defeat of Nazi Germany. In 1947, the United Kingdom left India and in 1949 the Netherlands gave up its colonies in south-east Asia as a trade-off for the prospective benefits of participation in the Marshall Plan. But the Cold War postponed sub-Saharan Africa's decolonization to the 1960s, when East-West détente appeared on the horizon. However, the establishment of independent African democracies in the 1960s was still hampered by rivalry between the Communist world and the Western world for influence in Africa. The anti-Communist West soon lost confidence in democracy and entrusted allied military regimes with the fight against the "Communist threat". Apartheid in South Africa also survived, being regarded as a tool to halt any Communist encroachment in sub-Saharan Africa.

The "wind from the East" fanned by Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* was to profoundly alter world politics, however. The most spectacular event was Nelson Mandela's release from prison on 11 February 1990, which signalled the end of apartheid. The "battle for Africa", which had been waged by both sides over many years with the help of dubious proxies, lost its importance. As a result Africa acquired increased scope for action. Namibia became independent in 1990 and the conflicts in Mozambique and Angola triggered

by the Cold War were settled in 1992 and 1994¹. Democratization also had a chance, but in Central Africa the democratic winds blew less strongly after 1993. The *Pax Americana* of the Cold War was replaced by cooperation with a new generation of military rulers. But they have failed to fill the security vacuum and chaos still prevails.

Almost 15 years have passed since the end of the Cold War. What follows is a tentative balance of the outcome for the Great Lakes Region in Central Africa.

2. Africa and the “wind of change” 1990-1993

In 1990, François Mitterrand and George Bush Sr. engaged in unprecedented cooperation to help Africa free itself from the – mostly military – regimes that had been established during the Cold War.

Travelling to South Africa to greet Nelson Mandela, Secretary of State, James Baker, accompanied by his “Mister Africa”, Herman Cohen, made a stop-over in Kinshasa in March 1990. He announced to Mobutu Sese Seko that a new era was about to begin in U.S.-African relations.² In future there was to be no place for Mobutu and other Cold War “cronies”. On 24 April 1990, Mobutu complied with American wishes and resigned as President of the State Party, which had hitherto been the legal basis of his power.

Speaking at the Franco-African summit held in the French resort of La Baule in June 1990, Mitterrand declared the end of the special Franco-African relations established by De Gaulle’s “Mister Africa”, Jacques Foccart, during the Cold War. Mitterrand told his audience that moderate democratization would be the precondition for further French support.

Thus in a “concerted” French-American action the train to democracy was put under steam in sub-Saharan Africa. Some African leaders wondered where this new “liberation” would end. One head of an African secret service foresaw the significance of the new wind. In May 1992, he wrote: *“Africans no longer have a choice, for both the East and the West – and all states – have to become reconciled with one another and speak the same language. (...) It is only a matter of time and it all depends on the process adopted by each country to initiate the inevitable changes.”*³

Often acting under pressure from the younger generations, sub-Saharan Africa started to introduce the inevitable changes⁴. Round tables and national conferences mushroomed everywhere. America financed Zaire’s National Sovereign Conference, for instance, which was designed to prepare the ground for the democratic era after Mobutu. Even the Rwandan President, Juvenal

¹ Peace agreements were signed between the Angolan government and the pro-Western Unita in 1994. In 1998, Unita resumed serious fighting against government-held positions in the south of the country with the covert help of the Clinton Administration. In fact, the Angolan civil war not fully terminated until the Unita leader, Jonas Savimbi, was killed on 22 February 2002.

² Confirmed by Herman Cohen in an interview in French on 16 October 2002 with the website Congopolis (www.congopolis.com).

³ Confidential document. Name known to the author.

⁴ Lazare Ndayongeje rightly states that *“democracy is taking hold in Africa”*, *Internationales Afrikaforum*, Bonn, 2/2004, p. 157.

Habyarimana, who had expressed doubts about the “new wind” during the summit at La Baule in June 1990, announced on 28 April 1991 that his state party MRND was ready to renounce its monopoly on power despite the civil war that had been forced on him since 1 October 1990 by the Tutsi exile organization, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

Democratization had become a part of the popular agenda. But by the time President Clinton took office on 20 January 1993 the “wind of change” had lost momentum. The Franco-American “entente” began to suffer when Herman Cohen was obliged to leave office as Assistant Secretary of State for Africa. Nevertheless, Franco-American cooperation in Central Africa did produce one final result. France and the United States succeeded in arranging the Arusha Power-Sharing Agreements⁵ of 3 August 1993 that were intended to settle the Rwandan civil war. They stipulated that French soldiers were to leave Rwanda after the establishment of a transitional government.

3. The Great Lakes Region and democratization after 1993

In late 1993, the democratic train got derailed somewhere between Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda and Uganda. The Somalia disaster had transformed the U.S. commitment in Central and East Africa. As Sidney Blumenthal put it, Clinton “fled” Africa in October 1993: *“On October 3, 1993 (...) gleeful crowds dragged the corpses of American soldiers through the streets and burned them before television cameras. Within days, Clinton announced a U.S. withdrawal.”* (BLUMENTHAL 2003:61) Secretary of Defense, Leslie Aspin, was held accountable for the disaster and was forced to resign shortly afterwards. Clinton promised the nation that he would only send American soldiers to Africa if national interests were affected. The decision to rule out any military intervention had serious consequences. For some the problem was how the fight could be waged against the fundamentalist regime led by General Omar al-Bashir and – initially - the philosopher Hassan al-Turabi, which had seized power in a military coup d’état in Khartoum in 1989, if there was to be no U.S. military involvement. From that point onwards, all the surrounding states were assessed in terms of their usefulness in the battle against the Khartoum government.

The Bush administration had also been interested in Sudan, where oil reserves had recently been discovered. However, George Bush Sr. had adopted a different approach, since the exploitation of these resources was conditional upon peace in the region and an end to the conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan.

3.1 Sudan 1990-2001

Most people expected that Clinton with his “leftist” leanings would pressurize the Bashir-Turabi regime into a process of democratization in line with the Bush-Mitterrand approach that had been adopted after the end of the Cold War. But things took a different course. Clinton and Madeleine Albright, the

⁵ The Arusha procedure is described in JONES 2001.

new American Ambassador to the U.N., considered Sudan to be a “rogue state” and the number one enemy in Central Africa⁶. They therefore opted for a proxy approach (“get others to fight your war”)⁷, a well known strategy that had been applied during the Cold War.

Mitterrand was unlikely to comply with the intended “regime change” in Khartoum. He was apparently not informed about Washington’s Sudan policy and could not understand the effects this new policy had on the Rwandan problem. After the Somalia disaster of 3 October 1993, Madeleine Albright used all the tricks in the book to minimize a U.S. contribution to the UNAMIR peace keeping force envisaged in the Arusha Agreements. These activities were the first signs that the U.S. wished to reduce its commitment in favour of power sharing in Rwanda, help Museveni and his friend, Paul Kagame, to win the Rwandan war, and find other anti-Khartoum allies.

After the RPF victory in Rwanda in 1994, UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali was considered in Washington to be a “French and Sudanese sympathizer”. He became a prominent victim of the approach to Sudan. Richard Clarke reveals a strange deal: *“Albright and I and a handful of others (Michael Sheehan, Jamie Rubin) had entered into a pact together in 1996 to oust Boutros-Ghali as Secretary-General of the United Nations, a secret plan we had called Operation Orient Express (...). The entire operation had strengthened Albright’s hand in the competition to be Secretary of State in the second Clinton administration.”* (CLARKE 2004:201/202). This pact was forged after an attempt – attributed to the Khartoum regime – to kill Egypt’s President Mubarak during a conference of the Organization for African Unity in Addis Ababa in June 1995. *“Following that event, Egypt and we (joined by other countries in the region) sought and obtained the United Nations Security Council’s sanctions on Sudan.”* (CLARKE 2004:140)

Unfortunately, all the neighbouring countries ready to fight Bashir had bad democratic records, thus ruling out any “democratic option”. The U.S. government decided to support the rebels in Southern Sudan. *“The war was reinvigorated by the Clinton Administration’s support for the SPLA faction led by John Garang, and by Washington’s encouragement of several of Sudan’s neighbours to assist the rebels”* (HOILE 2000:110)⁸.

As will be shown below, all the wars that took place in the region (Rwanda, Burundi and Congo/Zaire) were influenced by that option. Before coming back to these tragic events we will first follow the “Sudan line” in 1998.

Sudan 1998: A war that did not happen

⁶ In late 1997, for example, John Prendergast, then the National Security Council Director for Eastern Africa, stated that the government of Sudan was viewed as *“the principle threat to U.S. security interests on the continent of Africa today”*. (Quotation in: HOILE 2000:18)

⁷ *ibid.*:17.

⁸ David Hoile’s European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council (ESPAC, London) is blamed by some NGOs for being partisan towards the Sudanese government. His political role cannot be analyzed here. At any rate, his writings give a different picture of what is normally considered to be “politically correct”.

Between 1994 and 1998 the strategic setting for the battle against Khartoum underwent a complete change. In 1994, the former rebel leader, Paul Kagame, had been installed in Rwanda with the help of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and financed by Western allies. In Burundi, former President Pierre Buyoya had returned to power thanks to a Western-sponsored coup in July 1996 and Laurent Kabila had been “enthroned” in the renamed Democratic Republic of Congo in May 1997. France’s military forces had left the region. Given this new “rapport des forces”, it was foreseeable that there would be an attempt to oust the Khartoum regime. In December 1997, Madeleine Albright publicly encouraged John Garang to prepare for the conquest of power in the Sudanese capital.⁹

On 25 March 1998, Clinton attended a strange meeting in Entebbe. The key participants (Afewerki/Eritrea, L. Kabila/Congo-Kinshasa, Kagame/Rwanda, Museveni/Uganda and Zenawi/Ethiopia) were military rulers who had no intention of introducing a genuine democratic order. Clinton was joined by these leaders in signing a communiqué on a “U.S.-Africa partnership to promote human rights, democracy and stability”.

Rather than promoting democracy the meeting was intended to prepare for war against Khartoum with the help of this so-called “new generation of African leaders”. But the war never took place. Shortly after Clinton left Africa, an absurd war broke out between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Laurent Kabila, whose anti-democratic record – according to different reports in the press – had made Clinton feel very uneasy in Entebbe, used this war as an excuse to leave the anti-Khartoum alliance and try to get rid of his Rwandan “protectors” in late July 1998. As a result the anti-Khartoum alliance collapsed.

The bomb attack in Sudan in 1998

While the planned war failed to materialise, the joint U.S.-U.K. policy initiative to topple the Sudan government continued.

Although Richard Clarke (CLARKE 2004: 180 ff) would like to make the world believe that the bombing of a chemical plant in Khartoum on 20 August 1998 in retaliation for the Al Qaida attacks on the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam was a success story, in fact it was a failure¹⁰. This attack only exacerbated anti-American feelings, because the Sudan government had apparently not supported Osama bin Laden after he left Sudan in 1995. The failed attempt to kill bin Laden the same day in Afghanistan reinforced his belief that he was protected by “providence” and so he stepped up the fight against the “American devil”.

Despite the improved relations between Sudan and Egypt, there was no change in the policy to bring about a regime change in Khartoum before the

⁹ „It was Madeleine Albright’s trip to Africa in December 1997 that first signaled a major change in the administration’s priorities.” (ROSENBLUM 2002:197).

¹⁰ The German Ambassador to Khartoum, Werner Daum, wrote: “Within a few days it was established that the factory belonged to a private businessman who was not a fundamentalist. On the contrary, he was found to be a prominent opposition figure.” (See: Daum, Werner, “*Universalism and the West: An Agenda for Understanding*” *Harvard International Review*, Vol. XXIII, 2/2001.)

end of the Clinton era. Even Jimmy Carter, who cannot be suspected of excessive sympathy with Muslim fundamentalism, disapproved of this inflexible approach in 1999. *“The people in Sudan want to resolve the conflict. The biggest obstacle is U.S. government policy. The U.S. is committed to overthrowing the government in Khartoum. Any sort of peace effort is aborted, basically by policies of the United States. Instead of working for peace in Sudan, the U.S. government has basically promoted a continuation of the war.”*¹¹

The crusade against the Islamic regime in Khartoum was designed to deter Arab opposition to a peace settlement with the Palestinians, but it proved abortive. Indeed, it destroyed the positive impact of America’s intervention on behalf of Muslim groups in the Balkans.

3.2 Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi 1993-2001

As explained above, the wars that took place in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire/Congo after October 1993 were largely the result of an attempt to oust the regime in Khartoum by force but without American soldiers.

The first allies to understand the significance of that strategy were Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and RPF leader Paul Kagame.

Before autumn 1993, the U.S. government had favoured power sharing between the Rwandan government and the RPF exile groups that had tried to fight their way to power since the first invasion of 1 October 1990. The “tricky twins”, Museveni and Kagame, were therefore obliged to accept the Arusha Agreements in August 1993. But given the obvious weakness of the Rwandan Army after the RPF attack on 8 February 1993 and the clear indications made during the Arusha negotiations that France wished to extricate itself from the Rwandan *bourbier* (quagmire) as soon as possible, Museveni and Kagame contacted their Anglophone friends to convince them that a full RPF victory would be in their own best interests, too. A new Rwanda might also be useful in transporting supplies to the border between Zaire and Sudan in support of John Garang’s SPLA. Museveni had offered to help fight Khartoum on condition that his military-controlled system of “democracy without parties” be protected from democratization. For Museveni, cooperation with the U.S. and U.K. against Khartoum had the additional advantage of presenting the rebellion of the “Lord’s Resistance Army” in Northern Uganda as part of the activities pursued by Khartoum. Lynda Chalker, the long-standing conservative Head of the Overseas Development Administration and Minister for Overseas Development (1986-1992), had introduced the former Marxist, Yoweri Museveni, to the “good society” after his military victory in 1986, which had been achieved with the help of Rwandan Tutsi exiles living in Uganda since the 1960s. Museveni suggested to his new allies in London and Washington that they should help him solve the “Tutsi problem”. If they would support him in sending his Tutsi exiles back home to Rwanda, he said,

¹¹ ‘Carter, Others Say U.S. Has Faltered in Africa’, *The Boston Globe*, 8 December 1999. (Quoted from HOILE 2000:125/126).

his regime would be stabilized¹² and in return he could concentrate on the “Sudan problem”.

In addition Museveni and Kagame managed to convince their partners of the crucial need to get rid of “Mitterrand’s friend”, Juvenal Habyarimana, who was the main obstacle to military victory. The stage was thus set in the autumn of 1993. Decisions were also taken on who should be held accountable for the inevitable “collateral damage” that this operation would incur. On 6 April 1994, the Rwandan presidential aircraft “fell” from the sky in what is still presented as a “mystery”. As a result President Habyarimana, his Burundian colleague Ntaryamira and the most important Rwandan military leaders were killed. Within a period of just six months, therefore, a second President of Burundi had been killed following the murder of Melchior Ndadaye on 21 October 1993. The elimination of the Hutu presidents and the chaos it created were regarded as supplementary security measures for the resumption of the civil war in Rwanda. Nobody seemed concerned by these assassinations. They were a consequence of the long tradition of impunity that had prevailed in Burundi since the 1972 genocide against the Hutu elite¹³. On 7 April 1994, just a few hours after the the shooting down of the presidential aircraft, Paul Kagame, who was never short of the necessary military supplies via Kampala, launched the aggression that was ultimately to take him to Kigali on 4 July 1994. After driving the Rwandan army, followed by millions of Hutu refugees, out of the country, the RPF set up a new government on 19 July 1994. Between 6 April and 17 July Rwanda had been witness to a fully-fledged genocide against the Tutsi population, carried out mainly by the Interahamwe youth militias with their machetes, accompanied by mass slaughters of Hutus in the areas conquered by Kagame’s troops. Kagame established a state order that has been called a dictatorship by the Belgian specialist, Filip Reyntjens (REYNTJENS 2004). Rwandan troops twice invaded neighbouring Zaire/Congo. During the first campaign 1996/1997 thousands of Hutu refugees driven out of the camps in Zaire were killed in the Congolese forests.

The “missing link” between the aggressive policy towards Sudan and the events in Rwanda was Roger Winter, the long-time head of the state-sponsored U.S. Committee for Refugees. Winter had long-standing ties with the Rwandan Tutsis in Ugandan exile. He was one of the organizers of the Washington conference in 1988 at which the “liberation war” of the RPF was discussed confidentially for the first time.¹⁴

But Winter was also a friend of John Garang. In Washington he interpreted Garang’s rebellion as a liberation movement¹⁵. Like Museveni, Garang had found a British “sponsor” after the defeat of his friend, Mengistu, in Ethiopia in 1991. The conservative Baroness Caroline Cox, currently President of the NGO “Christian Solidarity Worldwide”, was very interested in fighting the

¹² See especially MAMDANI 2001: Chapter 6.

¹³ For the genocide against the Hutu intelligentsia in 1972, which was never officially investigated, see especially LEMARCHAND 1996. Daniel Kabuto (KABUTO 2003) recently published a short novel describing the fate of a victim of the 1972 events.

¹⁴ MUSABYIMANA 2003:30.

¹⁵ HOILE 2000:118.

Islamic fundamentalists and welcomed John Garang as an ally, overlooking his “dirty Marxist past”. Along with Museveni, Garang, Zenawi and Afewerki, the military victors in Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1991 were happy to be protected from the “wind of change” by joining the new anti-Khartoum alliance.

3.3 Zaire/Congo

3.3.1 The first “Albright War” and the “enthronement” of Kabila I

In addition to the Tutsi population in Rwanda and the unknown numbers of Hutus killed to satisfy the RPF’s lust for revenge after its victory, the Rwandan Hutu refugees in Eastern Zaire and the Congolese population at large became the victims of the RPF’s triumph.

The two Congo wars undertaken by Rwanda and Uganda with foreign support can be characterized as “Albright wars” because of the Secretary of State’s major involvement in their planning. The first war aimed at ousting Mobutu and preventing Etienne Tshisekedi from succeeding him broke out shortly after President Clinton’s re-election in November 1996. At that time Madeleine Albright was nominated for the position of Secretary of State, to be assumed in January 1997. Together with her new Assistant Secretary of State, Susan Rice, and Gayle Smith, who was responsible for Africa in the National Security Council, she formed a “triumvirate”¹⁶ that prepared a “new African order”. The aforementioned Roger Winter helped to broker the Congo “liberation war” that was aimed at bringing Laurent Kabila to Kinshasa.¹⁷

Kagame had succeeded in convincing his allies, who were soon “*driven by an acute guilt syndrome after the genocide*” (REYNTJENS 2004:179), that Rwanda’s security was endangered by the refugee camps which had been set up in Eastern Zaire. In the beginning, the Pentagon told the Congress that these refugees would soon be returning to Rwanda.¹⁸ When this did not happen and the American public subsequently tired of spending vast sums of dollars, the “final solution” materialized. The fate of the Rwandan refugees during the “long march to the West” has been documented by several participants¹⁹. The most recent publication is by Antoine Mpayimana (MPAYIMANA 2004). In 2000, Beatrice Umutesi, a former NGO employee in Rwanda, issued a haunting report on what she suffered when fleeing through the Congo forests. (UMUTESI 2000). Gaspard Musabyimana has written the best documented book on the fate of the Rwandan refugees (MUSABYIMANA

¹⁶ Susan Rice and Gayle Smith recently acknowledged: “*As U.S. officials (...) we helped plan several subsequent military interventions in Africa.*” (Quoted from: www.allafrica.com; 6 June 2004).

¹⁷ Roger Winter explained at a House hearing on 4 December 1996 how he organized a meeting between Kabila and an American delegation in Kigali in November 1996.

¹⁸ Vincent Kern from the Pentagon said in a hearing in the Senate on 25 July 1994: “*We think that, while there obviously are certain dangers in people returning, Rwanda is safe to return to.*”

¹⁹ The first critical book was written by Jean Pierre Godding, a Belgian aid worker: *Réfugiés rwandais au Zaire. Sommes-nous encore des hommes?* Paris, L’Harmattan, 1997.

2004). Maurice Niwese provided testimony of his sufferings in the form of a narrative and a novel (NIWESE 2001; NIWESE 2003).

But the destruction of the refugee camps in Eastern Zaire and the death of their inmates in the Congo forests was not the principal aim. Laurent Kabila, a long-time American foe, was given a U.S.-hired aircraft with an American pilot to organize the seizure of power in Kinshasa by the Rwandan and Ugandan-led coalition, AFDL. On 17 May 1997, Laurent Kabila was “enthroned”, while Etienne Tshisekedi, the leader of the most important democratic party, UDPS, could not understand why he was being prevented from succeeding the moribund Mobutu Sese Seko.²⁰ He had been elected prime minister by the National Sovereign Conference on 15 August 1992 but prevented from taking office by a Mobutu intrigue.

When the U.S. became aware in 1996 that Mobutu’s days were numbered, they hurried to find a successor who would be ready to continue supporting John Garang in Southern Sudan from Zairian territory. The nationalist Tshisekedi was unlikely to play that role. The Anglophone world preferred an ally who would be fully dependent on them. Kagame and Museveni proposed Laurent Kabila and their suggestion was accepted. As described above, he was due to play his part in the “war that never happened”.

3.3.2 A war to enthrone Kabila II (“little Jo”²¹) in Kinshasa

When Laurent Kabila broke with his Rwandan “godfathers” on 2 August 1998 he became an enemy of Madeleine Albright, who just 18 months earlier had been his fervent supporter. Susan Rice and the Pentagon helped Kagame to organize the second Congo military intervention. This was initially successful but then ended in failure because Kabila was able to forge a coalition with Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia to support him. Nonetheless, Rwanda and Uganda were able to occupy vast parts of Congo. Running out of time after George W. Bush had won the presidential elections in November 2000, the “triumvirate” must have been happy that somebody was ready to kill Kabila I on 16 January 2001. Three days before leaving office on 20 January 2001 Madeleine Albright – together with a strange coalition of supporters including Kampala, Kigali, Luanda²², Harare, Paris, London and Berlin – succeeded in “enthroning” a certain Joseph Kabila²³ in Kinshasa. At that time Kabila II was almost unknown to the rest of the world. He spoke only Swahili and English

²⁰ In a conversation with the author in Leuven on 5 August 2000 he held the Bishop of Kisangani Monsengwo accountable for plotting against him. In fact, Monsengwo had acted as an envoy on behalf of the United States, France and Belgium in 1993/1994 to maintain Mobutu in office in view of the coming tasks.

²¹ Quotation of a student leader in Kinshasa. In: AFRICA INTERNATIONAL, No. 378 (July/August 2004), p. 7.

²² President Dos Santos, in particular, quickly lost sympathy with Laurent Kabila’s method of government.

²³ On 15 April 2002, a man identifying himself at a press conference in Pretoria as Etienne Kabila, son of Laurent Kabila, affirmed that Joseph Kabila is only an adopted son of Laurent Kabila. Who knows if that is true?

but neither French, the official language in the Democratic Republic of Congo, nor Lingala, the widespread *lingua franca*.

3.4 Clinton and Africa

Sidney Blumenthal is probably correct when he writes: *“For Africans there was never before an American president like Clinton – given his commitment to Africa’s progress in economic development, the conquest of AIDS, and the advancement of human rights. On his trip to Ghana, more than one million people greeted him²⁴, the largest outpouring he had ever seen.”*

(BLUMENTHAL 2003:654) But this globally positive assessment fails to match his administration’s poor democratic record in Central Africa. With American help the democratic movement collapsed in 1993 – with fatal consequences for the region. Democratization was given no further impetus during Clinton’s period in office. In a much-acclaimed article Peter Rosenblum draws a very critical balance of the African policy pursued during the Clinton era (ROSENBLUM 2002). The main points are:

- the price paid for the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front’s seizure of power by military force in Kigali and its disregard of the Arusha Agreements was twofold: the genocide against the Tutsis and the deaths of thousands of RPF Hutu victims;
- Pierre Buyoya was given the support that enabled him to take power in Bujumbura by military means in July 1996;
- Rwanda was allowed to kill thousands of Rwandan refugees in the Congo forests in 1996/1997;
- the leader of the democratic party UDPS, Etienne Tshisekedi, was prevented from becoming Mobutu’s democratically elected successor;
- the choice of Laurent Kabila soon proved to be a mistake;
- the democratization process was hampered – or at least slowed down – in Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia;
- U.S. policy towards Sudan was ideologically motivated and very ambiguous as regards the peace process (even the Nobel Peace Prize winner, Jimmy Carter, was very critical); and
- only days before leaving office the Clinton administration opted to bring Joseph Kabila “to power” in Kinshasa, even though he was absolutely powerless and far from being legitimized.

There is no doubt that Clinton profoundly regrets not having saved the Tutsi population in Rwanda in 1994 and having been one of the “bystanders to genocide” (POWER 2001). Regrettably, he fails to explain in his recent book *My Life* why Washington opted for an RPF victory that was to trigger the genocide.

4. Excursus: Present knowledge of the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the Kagame regime

²⁴ On 23 March 1998.

In large parts of the world the initial explanation given for the Tutsi genocide is still the “official doctrine”. According to this explanation, some extremist groups within the Hutu-dominated Habyarimana state planned the extermination of the Tutsi minority once and for all and they took the civil war as a pretext to put their plan into practice. In the first years after the assassination of the two presidents on 6 April 1994, these extremists were held accountable for the shooting down of the presidential aircraft. As this version became more and more unlikely following many testimonies by RPF dissidents to the effect that the RPF leader, Paul Kagame, was responsible for the attack, there was a shift in the line of argument. From then on it was asserted that the genocide would have occurred even without the terrorist crime. The fact that the genocide had happened was taken as evidence that it had been planned in detail. Hard facts to prove it appeared unnecessary. People who asked for verifiable evidence risked being blamed as sympathizers of those who had committed the genocide. *Leave none to tell the story*, the most comprehensive work (DES FORGES 1999) on the Tutsi genocide, has been published by the Human Rights Watch consultant, Alison Des Forges. Her assumptions about the planning of the genocide before the assassination of Habyarimana are based mainly on anonymous documents. Alison Des Forges helped to model the Arusha-based International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) on the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1946. Nuremberg was rightly based on the hypothesis that a limited number of “planners” had conceived the holocaust. In contrast to the protocols of the Wannsee Conference held in Berlin on 20 January 1942 there is no document to prove that the genocide was planned. The Tutsi genocide, however, was much more spontaneous than the extermination of the Jews by the German authorities. Hence the ICTR structure is inappropriate to the Rwandan case and things are not proceeding satisfactorily.

Irrespective of whether it was planned in advance or not, the outcome of the Rwandan Tutsi genocide was monstrous. However, the lack of any irrefutable evidence for the planning theory results in different analyses of the Rwandan case. The genocide happened because it “proved feasible” when the United States, the United Kingdom and Belgium made clear that they would not prevent the killers from spreading out in the country and doing “their job” after an initial phase of political killings perpetrated mainly by the Presidential Guard. The first sign that the militias might transform these killings into full genocide against the Tutsi population came on 12 April 1994, when the Belgian blue helmets left the compound of the ETO vocational training school and looked on as a waiting mob killed some 2,000 people, most of them Tutsis. The next signal was the withdrawal on 15 April 1994 of the well-equipped European soldiers after they had evacuated all the “whites”. The ultimate “permit to proceed” resulted from the decision taken by the UN Security Council on 21 April 1994 to reduce the contingent of UN blue helmets to the symbolic number of 270 poorly equipped soldiers. Linda Melvern’s first book *A people betrayed* (MELVERN 2000) provided extensive evidence of how the international community had consciously abandoned the

Rwandan people.²⁵ In fact, the Tutsi were sacrificed in order to facilitate the military victory of the returning nephews of the former Tutsi nobility. As already outlined above, the interests of the “sponsors” of that victory are linked to the “Sudan syndrome”.

The “official version” – that the Tutsi could not have been protected because of the ruthless determination of the supposed planners to carry out their plan come what may – has been treated extensively in the literature. Rakiya Omaar’s *Rwanda. Death, Despair and Defiance* (OMAAR 1994), which may rightly be termed the unofficial presentation of the RPF version of the events, was the first book “on the market”²⁶. Other important protagonists of the “official reading”, such as the Belgian journalist, Colette Breackman, and the French researcher, Gérard Prunier, “a one-time active ally of Museveni’s NRA”²⁷, who initially welcomed Paul Kagame as a “liberator”, later became very critical of his “new order” and revised the content of the books they published in 1994/5. Even Alison Des Forges, while fiercely defending the theory that the Tutsi genocide was planned, recently blamed Rwanda for ignoring fundamental rights by banning the much-respected human rights organization LIPRODHOR.²⁸ The author of the idea that the mere use of the words Hutu and Tutsi was a sign of racial thinking is the French historian, Jean-Pierre Chrétien, who spent most of his professional life in Bujumbura, where the Bagaza regime made this interpretation part of the state ideology. As indicated in its title, the OAU Report *A preventable genocide* drawn up by Ketumile Masire (MASIRE 2000) provided an affirmative answer to the question of whether the international community could have protected the Tutsis. But, 10 years after the events, this response is contested by the American researcher, Alan Kuperman, for instance, who maintains that the speed of the killings made an intervention impossible.²⁹

Kuperman’s assertions contradict the assurances given by the UNAMIR Commander, General Roméo Dallaire, and the findings of his Deputy Commander, Colonel Luc Marchal, who emphasised the availability of some 5,000 well-trained troops on 12 April 1994 during the evacuation of foreigners. If they had been deployed to stop the non-armed youth militias, Marchal says, a part of the Rwandan army would have been ready to join them (MARCHAL 2001:251/252). In that case more than 10,000 soldiers would have been on hand to halt the incipient genocide. Under these circumstances the RPF would no longer have been in a position to embark on the decisive conquest to seize power in Kigali and to ignore the provisions of

²⁵ For a short analysis of this book cf. STRIZEK 2002. Unfortunately in her second book in 2004 Linda Melvern yielded much more to the pressure exerted on her to line up with the “official version”.

²⁶ Published by the London-based organization *African Rights*. A part of its headquarters later moved to Kigali, proving that it was already part of the international RPF network before the military victory.

²⁷ JONES 2001: 43.

²⁸ Alison Des Forges as quoted by the Press Agency AFP on 2 July 2004.

²⁹ “In Rwanda, halting genocide is easier said than done.” *International Herald Tribune*, 25 June 2004.

the Arusha Agreements. In other words, the genocide would not have happened.

But the European soldiers left Rwanda and on 21 April 1994 the Security Council allowed the RPF to continue its conquest of power.

In his book *Shake hands with the devil* General Roméo Dallaire fiercely accuses the international community of having adopted a racist attitude in abandoning the Rwandan people (DALLAIRE 2003). (The concurrent events in Bosnia-Herzegovina were considered to be far more important for the “white world”). Dallaire’s book is a touching document of the suffering felt by a soldier who failed to shield the people he was supposed to protect.

Unfortunately General Dallaire doesn’t reveal all he knows in his book. In January 2004, Dallaire supplied very important additional information when testifying at the Arusha Tribunal. He said Paul Kagame had been warned by sympathizers about the consequences of the strategy he was pursuing. He confirmed the answer Kagame had given, i.e. that the Tutsi victims within the country were the necessary prize that had to be paid for his victory.³⁰

The most comprehensive book documenting the “critical version” of the background to the Rwandan catastrophe has been written by James Gasana (GASANA 2002). This book – though critical of the long-standing state party MRND – satisfies high standards of research in refuting the global planning theory. (Unfortunately no publisher has been willing to print an English translation.) A very detailed and valuable description of the RPF aggression from 1990 onwards has recently been published by Gaspard Musabyimana, a former civil servant during the Habyarimana era (MUSABYIMANA 2003). A very readable short analysis of post-independence Rwandan society has been written by Eneas Gakusi and Frédérique Mouzer (GAKUSI and MOUZER 2003). Léonard Nduwayo describes the events in the Giti Commune, where the Tutsis were protected by the Hutu population. Nevertheless, the RPF committed massacres against the Hutu population when conquering the region (NDUWAYO 2003).

The book published by the Paris-based journalist, Charles Onana, who hails from Cameroon, and the Rwandan RPF dissident, Déo Mushayidi (ONANA and MUSHAYIDI 2001), proved a sensation. They were the first to point to Paul Kagame as the person mainly responsible for the assassination of the two presidents³¹, although Marie-Roger Biloa, the publisher of the Paris-based monthly, AFRICA INTERNATIONAL, had pointed out much earlier that she did not believe Habyarimana had been killed by “Hutu extremists”.³²

Non-Africans, in particular Robin Philpot³³ and the author of this article, have always maintained “*That’s not the way things happened in Kigali*”³⁴ – the title

³⁰ Hironde Press Agency, 28 January 2004.

³¹ Kagame initially resorted to a Paris court in an attempt to get the publication banned, but later gave up when he realized that he would be unsuccessful.

³² In 2004 she wrote: “Nous étions bien seuls, il y a dix ans...” (We were quite alone ten years ago...), *Africa International*, No. 375/ April 2004, p. 3.

³³ The articles on Rwanda by Peter Molt from Germany also deserve mention in this context.

³⁴ Original title: “Ça ne s’est pas passé comme ça à Kigali”.

Robin Philpot gave to his book (PHILPOT 2003). The publications by Strizek³⁵ – mostly in German and issued by Alois Graf von Waldburg-Zeil, the co-editor of INTERNATIONALES AFRIKAFORUM – were among the first (in 1994) to dismiss the notion that the downing of the Rwandan presidential aircraft on 6 April 1994 had been the work of “Hutu extremists”. None of them could have had any interest in killing the very important Hutu passengers on board. On the contrary, their death paved the way for the military victory of the RPF troops. Many authors³⁶ do not exclude the possibility that extremist circles may have planned the mass murder of Tutsis, but they criticize the international community for its lack of activity in preventing the genocide. They also stress the refusal of the RPF to save the Tutsis and condemn the killings that took place in the zones it controlled. Most interesting in this respect is the conclusion recently presented by the French university professor, André Guichaoua, after 10 years of intensive research. While upholding the assertion that members of the former Habyarimana regime planned to commit genocide³⁷, Guichaoua states that the RPF decided at the end of 1993 to eliminate Habyarimana. Kagame was fully aware of the consequences for the Tutsis. He knew that the assassination of Habyarimana would “*liberate the most fanatic elements within the enemy camp.*”³⁸ Guichaoua confirms that the RPF used terrorist methods, killed the most important politicians in the Habyarimana opposition and attributed the crimes to Habyarimana. Guichaoua points, in particular, to the cases of Emmanuel Gapyisi and Félicien Gatabazi and reveals the names of their RPF murderers³⁹. (Up to now most observers have believed the RPF version that they were murdered by “Hutu extremists”.) Some French authors (Verschave, Hatzfeld, recently Patrick de Saint-Exupéry and others) still pretend – as Paul Kagame does – that the genocide was prepared with the help of France, despite the fact that the French soldiers had left Kigali for good before Christmas 1993 and that the genocide was mainly executed with machetes. French soldiers were not “trained” to teach the militias how to handle such “arms”. Further scrutiny is needed of the role played by the mass media irrespective of the findings of the ICTR mass media trial. After gaining victory, the RPF succeeded in hiding the recordings of its propaganda station, Radio MUHABURA, and in blaming only Habyarimana for having produced dangerous political propaganda with the help of the RTLM radio station. Initially, in July 1993, RTLM was merely the “regime’s answer” to MUHABURA,

³⁵ Two books published by *Weltforum-Verlag* (Cologne/Bonn), one booklet on behalf of missio Aachen and a series of articles in *INTERNATIONALES AFRIKAFORUM* (Bonn), especially STRIZEK 2002 and STRIZEK 2003.

³⁶ cf. STRIZEK 2003 for more detailed information on this literature.

³⁷ There is cause for doubt as to whether this position is still consistent with his findings on the role played by the RPF.

³⁸ Interview with Stephen Smith, *LE MONDE*, 7 May 2004.

³⁹ According to Stephen Smith (*LE MONDE*, 7 May 2004) their names are Lieutenant Godffrey Kiyago Ntukayajemo and Sergeant Eric Makwandi Habumugisha.

the propaganda station founded by the RPF. As Jean-Marie Biju-Duval⁴⁰ has pointed out, prior to 6 April 1994 RTLM engaged – in strictly legal terms – in the broadcasting of political propaganda, although its message may be interpreted as extreme. Only after the assassination of Habyarimana did RTLM become the non-legal voice of hatred and incitement to mass killings. At that moment, Radio RTLM objectively helped Kagame to convince his friends that he could no longer cooperate with the Hutu partners of the Arusha Agreements. How was it possible that RTLM only called publicly for an end to the killings of the Tutsi⁴¹ in June 1994 when it became aware of the counterproductive effect of its radio propaganda? In the light of the Ruzibiza testimony some people feel that the RPF could have infiltrated undercover agents into the RTLM crew.

In fact, the public testimony given by Abdul Ruzibiza (RUZIBIZA 2004), an RPF dissident now living in Norway, has provided an astonishing account of Kagame's strategy. Ruzibiza, an offspring of the Nyiginya, the former royal family, grew up inside Rwanda and joined the RPF, subsequently rising to the rank of officer. After the victory, when becoming aware, firstly, that his family could have been saved by the RPF and, secondly, that the Rwandan-born Tutsis were being "tossed aside" by the returned exiles from Uganda, he left the country and became one of the most important witnesses for the French judge, Jean-Louis Bruguière. On 10 March 2004, the French daily *Le Monde* revealed the findings of the judge's long-prepared investigation. Bruguière concludes that Paul Kagame must be held accountable for shooting down the presidential aircraft on 6 April 1994 and thus of triggering the Tutsi genocide. The following quotations indicate the thrust of Ruzibiza's accusations:

*"I am convinced that the genocide was the result of the problems caused by the war started in 1990, especially by the behaviour of the Rwandan Patriotic Army RPA in the areas it had conquered. (...) I am convinced and I affirm that the RPA massacred people of all ethnic groups with the objective of sowing anarchy to facilitate its seizure of power, even if the price was the extermination of a whole people. (...) I believe from the bottom of my heart that the allegations that President Paul Kagame was responsible for giving the order to shoot down Habyarimana's plane are true. (...) I am convinced that, if the RPF had so wanted, the genocide would not have taken place. I am also convinced that, even if the government and Interahamwe had planned to exterminate Tutsis as part of the genocide, the RPA had already acquired the necessary power to reduce the damage from a million dead to less than one hundred thousand. This means that the RPF did not give any assistance to the threatened people even though it had the means to do so."*⁴²

⁴⁰ Jean-Marie Biju-Duval, Defence Counsel for Ferdinand Nahimana, has analyzed the verdict of the Media Trial of 3 December 1994 in public conferences. (Document made available by J.-M. Biju-Duval).

⁴¹ RTLM on 25 June 1994: "As for us, we must ensure that no one is victimized because of his appearance or regional origin, but rather for his acts." (Quoted from § 419 of the Media Trial verdict of 3 December 2003).

⁴² Translated from Kinyarwanda by Rwandan National Forum (RNF), Washington, D.C., 31 May 2004.

In an interview with *Voice of America* on 2 May 2004 Ruzibiza explained that Kagame disdained the Tutsis in Rwanda and justified his policy by saying that Tutsis living inside Rwanda had actually become like Hutus under the Habyarimana regime. He reveals also that a lot of Tutsis had been infiltrated into the Interahamwe militias to help them to organize their “work”.⁴³

Only a few weeks later a former RPA Lieutenant, Aloys Ruyenzi, submitted a similarly surprising testimony (RUYENZI 2004). A long-term employee together with Kagame in the Ugandan Directorate of Military Intelligence and one of his bodyguards after the victory, he was a key eye-witness of many crucial events. Among his most important statements are:

- *“Major-General Paul Kagame personally ordered the shooting down of President Juvenal Habyarimana’s plane. (...) I attended the final meeting at which the plan was hatched. I was there physically and I even know the names of those who carried out the shooting.*
- *Before the plan to get rid of Juvenal Habyarimana was hatched, meetings had been going on to prepare the final assault on Kigali. (...)*
- *All the reports unanimously stated that the Tutsis would be wiped out if the war resumed. (...) Major-General Paul Kagame did not care at all about those threats.(...) It is sufficient to recall that Kagame himself used to say that the Tutsis living in Rwanda were opportunists and reactionary elements who had refused to flee [after 1959].*
- *What he does will inevitably lead to a new wave of ethnic conflict and Tutsis will again be the main victims.”*

Ruzibiza and Ruyenzi are not the only dissident RPF witnesses. Before them Christophe Hakizabera, Jean-Pierre Mugabe, Deus Kagiraneza, Major Furuma, Joseph Sebarenzi, Valens Kajeguhakwa and others had revealed details of Kagame’s inhuman strategy.⁴⁴

The most important “black hole” still concerns the decisions made in Washington and London regarding support for the RPF victory and the knowledge these two capitals had about the preparations for the assassination of the two presidents on 6 April 1994. They did all they could to prevent an investigation. And why doesn’t the French government publish the Bruguière Report? Regarding the UN Security Council’s decision of 21 April 1994 to withdraw the UNAMIR, Madeleine Albright stated in an interview on 25 February 2004 that she merely called in the aforementioned Richard Clarke to the National Security Council but not the National Security Adviser, Tony Lake. Why? *“I think he probably was busy. I don’t know.”* This answer is not very convincing for a person who affirms: *“I wish it had been possible for us to do more. (...) I have reviewed the record a lot, and I don’t think actually that we could have done more. (...) It was a secretly planned genocide ...and then a volcanic explosion of this horror. This is my firm belief; that even if we had been able to get anybody there, it could not have been stopped because it*

⁴³ On the basis of a translation into French of the interview with Phocas Fashabo in the Kinyarwanda language.

⁴⁴ For a more detailed list of RPF dissidents see REYNTJENS 2004:181/182

*was just so – volcanic is the only word.*⁴⁵ After 10 years she just repeats the “official version.”

The number of Hutus killed in the area conquered by the RPF during and after the war still remains a secret. Charles Karemano has described in a very touching way how the RPF systematically killed even those Hutus who had demonstrated their neutrality or sympathy for the “new order” (KAREMANO 2003). Seth Sendashonga, a Hutu and long-standing member of the RPF, was the first Minister of the Interior in the new government formed on 19 July 1994. When he realised that these killings were intended to systematically discourage the return of the refugees from Zaire, he left the government together with Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu in August 1995 and sought exile in Kenya, where he was murdered on 16 May 1998.

Research is also needed in respect of the role played by General Dallaire, since Jacques Roger Booh-Booh, his “political boss” in Rwanda, severely criticized his policy. Before 6 April 1994, Dallaire was accused of not having passed on to New York the information provided by Booh-Booh concerning the RPF’s preparations to resume the war. After the downing of the presidential aircraft, Booh-Booh blamed Dallaire for having interfered politically in favour of Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, although he had no mandate to do so⁴⁶. Was her death a few hours later the result of Dallaire’s lack of wisdom in urging her to speak to the nation on Radio Rwanda?⁴⁷

The whole truth about what happened in Rwanda before and after the Tutsi genocide cannot be established as long as all the powers involved in the UN Security Council decision of 21 April 1994 to abandon the Tutsi population are determined to keep the main documents and evidence classified for as long as possible.

5. The George W. Bush administration and Africa since January 2001

When he took office in January 2001, President George W. Bush inherited a very unpleasant situation in Central Africa:

- Rwanda and Uganda occupied a large part of the re-named Democratic Republic of Congo;
- the war between the North and the South continued in Sudan;
- Burundi was still ruled by a military regime;
- Joseph Kabila had just been installed in Kinshasa, where he depended on military support from leaders such as Robert Mugabe, Sam Nujoma and Eduardo Dos Santos who, when seen through his ideological glasses, were very unpleasant;

⁴⁵ Ghosts of Rwanda. 1 April 2004. Downloaded from:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts>.

⁴⁶ “L’ONU savait tout et n’a rien fait” [“The United Nations knew everything and did nothing”]. Interview with *AFRICA INTERNATIONAL*, May 2004, pp. 22-23.

⁴⁷ The barely considered testimony given by Colonel Aloys NTIWIRAGABO in Nairobi on 20 May 1997 on the death of 10 Belgian blue helmets on 7 April 1994 suggests that the Prime Minister had no desire to deliver a speech on the radio but merely wished to be protected.

- in Southern Angola the U.S. still was covertly supporting the anti-Dos Santos rebel, Jonas Savimbi.

The new administration was especially unhappy with the ongoing wars in regions where only peace would serve U.S. interests in the supply of oil. Africa was accorded new significance in American foreign policy decision-making when two conservative Afro-Americans were appointed to important positions in Washington: Colin Powell as Secretary of State and Condoleezza Rice as National Security Adviser.

Only ten days after coming to office, Colin Powell took the occasion of the annual Prayer Breakfast⁴⁸ with the U.S. president to invite Paul Kagame and Joseph Kabila to discuss the “Congo file”. As a military man, he was quite aware that the ongoing occupation of large parts of Congo territory by Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe was likely to trigger a guerrilla war. Like others, he may have suspected his predecessor of promising that the two Kivu provinces in Eastern Congo would become part of the Rwandan state by way of compensation for the proxy war to bring Laurent Kabila to power in Kinshasa on 17 May 1997. Colin Powell was opposed to such a transfer and he therefore declared publicly on 1 February 2001 that the integrity of Congolese territory must be respected. At a meeting in New York on 13 September 2002, he succeeded in persuading President Bush to force Kagame to withdraw from Congo, as had been agreed between Kabila II and Paul Kagame in Pretoria on 30 July 2002. Kagame complied in October 2002, and on 17 December 2002 a global political agreement on the sharing of power between the prevailing forces in Congo, the setting up of transitional institutions and the holding of presidential elections in June 2005 was signed in Pretoria.

Shortly after, with the Iraq war looming, Kagame found new supporters in Washington by declaring himself to be a part of the “coalition of the willing”. Ignoring the promises he had given in September 2002, Kagame attempted to use this cover to maintain his military influence in Eastern Congo, but was forced to withdraw by the French-led Artemis operation in Bunia in June 2003. In May 2004, Kagame sought to exploit the troubles in Darfur and thus thwart the peace process in Congo by supporting a rebellion within the new Congo army. The rebels failed and Kagame had to allow Colonel Mutebesi and 300 of his mutineers to cross the Rwandan border.

Colin Powell has tried hard to find a solution to the problems in Congo. Unfortunately, he cannot be sure when he leaves office in January 2005 that the presidential elections scheduled for June 2005 will actually be held. In Rwanda he had to accept “Soviet-style” presidential elections in August 2003. He cannot be happy with that “democratic performance”.

Sudan: Danforth Report, peace agreements and the Darfur crisis

From the very beginning the Bush Jr. administration took a new stance on Sudan. The country was no longer just an Islamic fundamentalist foe. The U.S. needs peace between the North and the South if it is to participate in the

⁴⁸ This meeting, organized by the ultra-conservative protestant Prayer Breakfast Network, is a big event in Washington’s annual political calendar. The group is especially interested in fighting the Islamic regime in Khartoum.

exploitation of the Sudanese oil resources that are to be found in both parts of the country. The Sudanese government responded positively to the new approach and used the situation after 11 September 2001 to confirm that it did not support bin Laden and was ready to cooperate with the American secret services. Bush nominated former Senator John Danforth⁴⁹ as his special envoy to Khartoum. On 14 May 2002, Danforth presented a remarkable report (DANFORTH 2002). He did not unilaterally blame the Khartoum government for the stalemate in the peace process. He also blamed the Christian extremists for blocking an understanding. He said the prerequisite for peace was an agreement on how the oil revenues should be distributed between Khartoum and the South. The new American approach facilitated negotiations between the government of Sudan and the SPLA. But when a global peace treaty was ready to be signed, a rebellion suddenly broke out in Darfur province in 2003. The resulting repression spawned refugee movements into Chad. The whole peace process was once again at stake. Colin Powell and Kofi Annan hurried to Khartoum in late June 2004. Both clearly stated to the government that it had to assume its responsibilities and prevent the pro-government militias from plundering and killing. Only if the refugee problem is solved can the global peace agreement between the government and the SPLA be saved and signed, as foreseen, in Washington.

6. Who wants democracy in Africa?

The democratic principle is universal and does not apply only to certain types of societies and continents. The 21st century will be the “true century” of democracy, whereas in the 20th century it was only verbally accepted in the communist part of the world. In Africa, the democratic principle was applied in a formal manner during the first wave of independence in the 1960s. Even the West lost faith in it, though, when fighting the “communist threat” and committed a “democratic sin” in favouring allied military regimes. The end of the Cold War enabled a democratic wind to blow once more in Africa, but a second democratic sin was committed when new setbacks – mainly in Central and East Africa – were accepted without any resistance.

“For they know not what they do...”⁵⁰: A new revolutionary romanticism

In “old Europe” some people seem to regret the good old days when solidarity could be demonstrated with wars of national liberation. In those times it was still possible, despite the numerous victims of these wars, to be inspired by Frantz Fanon and feel that one was on the side of “the wretched of the earth”. This tradition has meant that up till now most rebellions have been considered as just, regardless of the fact that after the end of the colonial regime in Southern Rhodesia in 1980 and the independence of Namibia in 1990 there is no longer any room for “liberation from colonialism”.

⁴⁹ He became the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations when John Negroponte was appointed Ambassador in Iraq on 1 July 2004.

⁵⁰ Translation of *Denn sie wissen nicht, was sie tun*, the German title of the James Dean film *Rebel without a Cause*

During the Cold War this phenomenon could be observed on the anti-communist side of the political spectrum in the case of Renamo in Mozambique and the Savimbi rebellion in Angola. The sympathizers with those movements were not really concerned about the victims. The same applies to the “progressive” supporters of so-called “national liberation” rebellions. The Rwandan Patriotic Front provides a good example. Objectively it is a right-wing movement. As is now blatantly obvious, the refugees merely wanted to regain the power their parents had lost in a democratic referendum in September 1961. But the RPF was in a position to revive older traditions stemming from the late 1950s when the Soviet Union attributed the “social revolution” in Rwanda to the work of backward Catholics and neo-colonial interests. In line with that tradition, the RPF employed “anti-colonial” rhetoric and succeeded in mobilizing left-wing supporters by exploiting the mistakes – and sometimes crimes – of the Habyarimana regime, which was on the point of being ousted in democratic elections. But that outcome would have been less “revolutionary”. The same applies to Congo. Instead of helping the democratic leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, to follow Mobutu, the “rebels” – led by the old revolutionary, Laurent Kabila, and inspired, as they claimed, by the ideals of Lumumba – succeeded in convincing the “right believers” of the need to conquer the country. Jean Ziegler and Claire Short may be quoted *pars pro toto*. Jean Ziegler, the famous Swiss professor, politician and human rights advocate, suggested that the African anti-colonial rebellions, for which he expressed his admiration in his famous book *Les Rebelles* first published in 1983, justified the wars waged by Kagame⁵¹ and Kabila. Claire Short served as the “left-wing fig leaf” for the two Congo wars inspired by Madeleine Albright. The Congo interventions were justified as providing necessary help for the rebellion staged by the oppressed Banyamulenge people living in Eastern Zaire/Congo. The harm the Congolese population were forced to suffer and the systematic killing of the Rwandan refugees did not appear to be a cause of concern to the “right believers”. Up to now nobody seems really concerned about the non-democratic system established by Museveni in Uganda or about the breakdown of the democratic process that followed the civil war in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The prestige earned as military winners of the “national liberation war” was sufficient to gain their diplomatic approval. To many the establishment of democracy would appear to be a “neo-colonial” enterprise. The sympathy for the uprising launched in 2003 by the Darfur rebels of the Sudanese Liberation Army SLA and the Justice and Equality Movement JEM in Western Sudan “*in response to frustration about what they claim to be decades of political oppression and economic neglect by the Sudanese government*”⁵² is the most recent example of this “revolutionary nostalgia”. The rebels had no chance of winning and knew that Khartoum would react

⁵¹ In order to support the RPF state Ziegler launched a campaign against James Gasana that was rejected by a Swiss court. He later interfered to prevent the publication of James Gasana’s book (see Ramon Arozarena in GASANA 2002:4/5).

⁵² MANS 2004:292

fiercely. The civil population has had to pay the price of this new type of proxy war.

In France, Jean-Pierre Chrétien and the representatives of the left-wing organization, SURVIE, have never ceased to admire the revolutionary approach of the “new generation of African leaders”.

In Germany, Uschi Eid of the Green Party (who was once a student member of a communist group) adopted Ziegler’s view when working in Eritrea after the FPLE victory in the 1990s. She is still the most fervent supporter of the RPF in Germany. In his capacity as Director for Africa at the Federal Foreign Ministry, Harald Ganns, a social democrat, established a link between American right-wing positions and the German “progressive” community. These two extremes had a joint interest, albeit for diametrically opposed reasons, in not sending soldiers to Rwanda in 1994. Ganns is said to have persuaded the Liberal minister of Foreign Affairs, Klaus Kinkel, to accept the military victory of Paul Kagame and to give him unconditional support. The German (left-wing/Green) daily TAGESZEITUNG (TAZ) and its African desk editor, Dominic Johnson, provide evidence of an astonishing phenomenon. This paper has often written in advance about actions taken at some later stage by the Clinton Administration with respect to Central Africa. TAZ has sometimes played the role of the “Voice of Kagame” in Germany.

7. Conclusion

Africa aspires to democracy, as do many people in many parts of the world. The populations – not the established rulers – in Central Africa welcomed the “wind of change” that began to blow following the end of the Cold War. Democratic parties sprang up like mushrooms after a summer shower. Apart from the UDPS in Zaire, perhaps the most promising example was Melchior Ndadaye’s FRODEBU, which won both the parliamentary and presidential elections in Burundi in 1993. Ndadaye was killed shortly afterwards by the military. As was the case in Burundi, people in other countries have been deeply disappointed at seeing their efforts thwarted by the “new generation of African leaders”, encouraged in particular by the Anglophone world. The promising democratic movements and parties have had no chance to recover. Nobody effectively supports the democrats in exile. The EU has maintained a “democratic discourse” but *de facto* it has accepted the Museveni model of “democracies without parties”. France disagreed with the Clinton Administration’s policy on Sudan but did not dissent on the matter of democratization. President Chirac cannot be considered a fervent supporter of democracy in Africa.

The history of post-Cold War developments in the African Great Lakes Region would appear to confirm the pessimistic saying attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, that “*war is the father of all and the king of all*”. War had a chance, democracy did not. Warlords dominate the transitional government in Congo and real power lies with the military in Rwanda, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan. There seemed to be prospects for peace and democracy before the Iraq war, but a stalemate ensued in the Great Lakes Region when Rwanda and Uganda were compensated for lining up

with the “coalition of the willing”. In Burundi, groups with links to the army are endeavouring to postpone the elections scheduled for November 2004. If that happens and if the presidential elections planned for June 2005 in the Democratic Republic of Congo fail to take place, “Africa’s first world war”⁵³ will continue.

The end of the Cold War put an end to apartheid in South Africa and strengthened democracy in a couple of African states. For the time being, however, and at least until a peaceful stabilization has been achieved in Iraq, the prospects for democracy in the African Great Lakes Region remain bleak.

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⁵³ Madeleine Albright used this term at the UN Security Council meeting she attended on 24 January 2000.

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